

Be honest with yourself regarding the potential conflict of interest that may exist with the proposed external examiner. Although you may be confident in your, and the proposed external examiner's, ability to remain impartial, perceptions are everything. The proposed external examiner MUST be at arm's length to both you and the student.

If the proposed external examiner is an assistant professor make sure that they have the experience of having supervised a doctoral student through to completion. Often this can be determined from a publically available cv.

If the proposed external examiner is not in an academic position, as is sometimes the case for the more applied fields, then it is recommended that you get them pre-approved by DGS (thesis@sfu.ca) before sending them an informal invitation. Include with such a request an articulation, not only of why the proposed external examiner is a suitable choice, but also why going outside of academia is the best choice. There are lots of good potential external examiners that work in the industry and business, for example. But there are also lots of potential external examiners in these exact same fields that have academic positions.

It is an awkward thing to have to un-invite a potential external examiner. As such, it is of benefit to be as certain as possible that the external examiner you have chosen will be approved by DGS. If you are uncertain, it is recommended that you get them pre-approved by DGS (thesis@sfu.ca) before sending them an informal invitation.

Whether you are submitting a potential external examiner for approval or pre-approval it is your job to provide the necessary evidence that they meet the aforementioned requirements. For the most part this is accomplished by attaching a cv. If there is anything atypical about the proposed external examiner vis-à-vis the aforementioned requirements attach a letter outlining why they are still an ideal choice for examiner.