

Dear Dr. [name of examiner],

I am contacting you to inquire as to whether you would be willing to act as external examiner for a PhD student at McGill. All theses submitted for the Doctoral degree at McGill University are appraised concurrently by an external authority on the subject of the thesis and by members of the University. I would be most grateful if you could act as that external authority.

The thesis title is given below, and I have attached the abstract to this email, to give you a better idea of the thesis contents. I believe that your expertise in the area would make you ideally suited to examine this thesis. The thesis is approximately [###] pages long.

If you are willing to undertake this, you will be asked to submit written comments and questions for the oral defence, as well as an overall evaluation (note that, at McGill University, external examiners are rarely invited to the oral examination). A one-page report form and Guidelines will be sent to you along with the thesis. Comments and questions concerning the thesis are expected (one or two pages) in order to assist the oral examination committee at the student's defence, as well as providing useful feedback for the student. I expect that you will receive the thesis in [month] and you will have approximately four weeks for reading. Unfortunately, we are unable to provide an honorarium for evaluating the thesis.

If you believe that there is a conflict of interest that may prejudice your objective judgement of the thesis (see checklist below), please tell me.

Please note that McGill does not allow contact between the examiners and the student, and that any contact with the supervisor must avoid discussion of the quality of the thesis, or its detailed contents.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

[your name]

[title]

[affiliation]

Thesis Title: [thesis title]
Supervisor(s): [Supervisor(s) name(s)]
Author: [student's name]
Department: [student's home department]
Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, please let me know.

- Have you co-authored or otherwise carried out research in collaboration with the student or the supervisor within the last five years? Yes or No

- Do you knowingly have a financial interest in an entity that could benefit from the thesis research? Yes or No
- Have you previously read the thesis, or parts of it, or evaluated the student's thesis research (e.g., as an advisor, supervisory committee member, or evaluator for progress tracking)? Yes or No
- Have you previously examined or been examined by the student's supervisor (within the last five years); e.g., the former student or former supervisor of the student's supervisor? Yes or No
- Do you have a former or pending affiliation with the student's academic unit (within the last five years); e.g., graduated from the same academic program or been offered an academic appointment in the unit? Yes or No (examiners of doctoral theses only)
- Have you held an academic appointment at McGill within the last five years? Yes or No (examiners of doctoral theses only)
- Have you engaged in (or intend to engage in) discussions/negotiations with the student or supervisor relating to future employment or supervision? Yes or No
- Do you have a personal or financial relationship to the student or the supervisor? Yes or No
 - Relationships that might appear to have a conflict of interest include:
 - A past or present spouse or partner
 - A close family member
 - A past or present business partner
- Have you engaged in other activities that could be interpreted as conflict of interest? Please specify.