

Last Updated: January 2018

Suitability Criteria for Appointment of External Examiners

Consideration of the suitability of proposed External Examiners is determined by evidence of the following criteria:¹

- a) knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality;
- b) competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study, or parts thereof;
- c) relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate;
- d) competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures;
- e) sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command the respect of academic peers and, where appropriate, professional peers;
- f) familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed;
- g) fluency in English, and where programmes are delivered and assessed in languages other than English, fluency in the relevant language(s) (unless other secure arrangements are in place to ensure that External Examiners are provided with the information to make their judgements);
- h) meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies;
- i) awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula;
- j) competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

Consideration of the suitability of proposed External Examiners is further informed by:

- k) concern that individuals should not be over-extended by their external examining duties. (A nominee who already holds two or more similar appointments at first degree level will not normally be appointed);
- l) that the individual is not a member of a governing body or committee of the appointing institution or one of its collaborative partners, or a current employee of the appointing institution or one of its collaborative partners;
- m) that an appointment would not establish a close reciprocal external examining arrangement, for example between programmes teams (or their equivalents) or between departments (or their equivalents);
- n) that the individual is not someone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study;
- o) that the individual has, or has had within the last five years, no close professional link with the programme or department to which s/he is to be attached, or any close personal connection with staff or students;
- p) that he/she has not held appointment as External Examiner for the same programme within the previous five years;
- q) that the outgoing External Examiner is not succeeded by a colleague from the Examiner's home department and institution;
- r) that no other External Examiner from the same department of the same institution has been appointed on the programme of study;
- s) that the individual has not been significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme(s) or modules in question.

In order to ensure that nominations meet points k) to s) above, departments keep a register of the external examining commitments of their own staff which is updated annually through the departmental Learning, Teaching and Quality Groups (LTQGs).

¹ It should be noted that, in accordance with the current Home Office regulations, the University is also required to obtain proof of each External's right to work in the UK. This is our legal obligation, overseen by the Human Resources Department.