

## Extract from the Quality Manual, Part 9 September 2021

### 4 Criteria for the Appointment of External Examiners

The following are the minimum criteria for consideration of proposed external examiners. The notes beneath each criterion provide a checklist of issues considered both in selecting and nominating external examiners and are used during scrutiny of nominees for approval.

#### 4.1 ***An external examiner's academic/professional qualifications should be appropriate to the awards/department to be examined.***

The examiner:

- Should demonstrate competence and experience in the subjects covered at the Board.
- Have relevant academic or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being examined, or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate.

#### 4.2 ***An external examiner should have appropriate standing, expertise and experience to maintain comparability of standards.***

The examiner should:

- Show evidence of knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance and enhancement of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality;
- Have sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command the respect of academic peers/professional peers as appropriate.
- Demonstrate fluency in English (or for courses delivered and assessed in a language other than English, fluency in the relevant language).

Standing, expertise and breadth of experience may be indicated by:

- The present [or last, if retired] post and place of work.
- The range and scope of experience across Higher Education/professions.
- Current and recent active involvement in research/scholarly/professional activities in the department of study concerned.

#### 4.3 ***An external examiner should have enough recent external examining or comparable related experience to indicate competence in assessing students considered at the Board. The examining experience will normally be in an external context.***

The examiner should be able to demonstrate:

- Competence and experience in designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject.
- Competence and experience in operating assessment procedures.
- Awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula.
- Familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award in which students are to be assessed.
- Where relevant, evidence of meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies.

If the proposed examiner has no previous external examiner experience at the appropriate level, the application should be supported by either:

- Other external examining experience.
- Extensive internal examining experience.
- Other relevant and recent experience likely to support the external examiner role.

Proposed examiners without experience as external examiners should, where possible, join an experienced team of external examiners and the school will allocate a mentor. Where there is only one external examiner they should work initially alongside another experienced external examiner in a related area. This initial period should include involvement in the final stages of assessment for the award.

**4.4 *External examiners should be drawn from a wide variety of institutional/ professional contexts and traditions in order that the Department Award/ Department Progression Board benefits from wide-ranging external scrutiny.***

There should not be:

- More than one examiner from the same institution in the team of external examiners in a department or associated department.
- A reciprocal arrangement involving cognate courses at another institution.
- Where a UEL department sources a new examiner from the same department and provider as an outgoing examiner, the module allocation of the new examiner must differ in its entirety from the module allocation of the outgoing examiner.

*Where restructure of departments results in there being two examiners from the same institute in the same department the examiners may continue to the end of their contract. However, their contract term should not be extended.*

In order to facilitate this, Schools should hold details of the external examiner appointments held by members of staff at other institutions.

**4.5 *Examiners should not be over-extended by their external examining duties.***

External examiners should hold no more than two external examiner appointments for taught courses/modules at any point in time. An examiner should not be allocated in excess of 15 modules.

The External Examiner Peer Review Team will expect to see convincing arguments in support of proposals for a heavier workload for an examiner.

**4.6 *There should be an appropriate balance and expertise in the team of external examiners for each department.***

The proposed examiner should complement the external examining team in terms of expertise and examining experience. There should be an appropriate balance between academic and professional practitioners. If the department contains modules associated with courses leading to a professional award at least one practitioner with appropriate experience should be in the team. The phasing of appointments to the team should be structured to ensure continuity.

Lead External Examiners should have sufficient external examining experience to take an overview of the range of awards for which the Board is responsible.

**4.7 *External examiners should be impartial in judgement and should not have previous close involvement with the institution which might compromise objectivity.***

Over the last five years, the proposed examiner should not have been:

- A member of staff, a governor, a student, or a near relative of a member of staff associated with the department or award.
- An external examiner on a cognate department or award in the institution.
- Involved as external examiner for the modules or associated awards when they were approved by another validating body.

The proposed examiner should not be:

- Personally associated with the sponsorship of students.
- Currently a member of a governing body or committee of UEL or one of its collaborative partners, or a current employee or teacher on a course leading to a UEL award at a collaborative partner institution.
- In a close personal, professional or contractual relationship with a member of staff or student in the area associated with the Board.
- Required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students in the area associated with the Board.
- In a position to influence significantly the future employment of students in the area associated with the Board.

- Significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment in the area associated with the Board.
- Likely to be involved with student placements or training of UEL students in the examiner's organisation.