



SEC-2010-3-0326

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY (SECRETARIAT)

Notes of guidance on the appointment of External Examiners

1. External examiners are appointed by the Senate and are responsible to the University via the Vice-Chancellor. Reports are forwarded to the principal or equivalent of the institution concerned.
2. External examiners are members of the relevant Board of Examiners and, where appropriate, Assessment Boards.
3. Proposals for the appointment of external examiners shall be submitted to the Academic Standards and Quality Office on an approved proposal form, accompanied by a brief curriculum vitae, which together shall include the following information:
 - name and designation
 - current post (or, if retired, most recent post)
 - qualifications
 - expertise (academic and/or professional)
 - experience of examining either internally or externally
 - other current appointments as external examiner
 - proposed dates of appointment and programme subject areas (or modules) to be covered by appointment.

Proposals should be submitted as early as possible and normally not later than the end of the Autumn Term of the year in which the appointment is to commence.

4. External examiners must be able to take an independent, critical and informed view of the programmes for which they are appointed. They will be expected to be persons of seniority and experience who are able to command authority, that is to say they should normally be equivalent to the University's level of senior lecturer (i.e. principal lecturer in the post 1992 universities and in colleges of higher education). Other kinds of seniority, such as evidence of peer esteem and leadership, may however be deemed appropriate in certain circumstances, particularly in professional specialist areas.
5. External examiners should have experience of teaching and internal examining in the area of expertise and at the level for which they are to be appointed. It is desirable that they should also have experience of external examining elsewhere to provide a wider basis for comparison of standards. A less experienced external examiner may be considered for appointment to a team which includes more experienced external examiners.
6. External examiners who already hold two or more external examinerships at first degree level should not normally be considered eligible for appointment.

7. External examiners for ITT programmes should have knowledge and experience of initial teacher training and teaching.
8. External examinerships should not be reciprocal. The department concerned should state if a member of its staff holds an external examinership in the same institution at which the proposed external examiner is employed.
9. External examiners should not be concerned in course delivery, advice to students about the course or its examination and assessment, nor have been a consultant for validation within the last three years.
10. The examining team should not contain two examiners who are (or were recently) colleagues in the same department. Nor should such colleagues be appointed consecutively to take over from each other. Close acquaintances of the outgoing external examiner should also not be appointed consecutively.
11. Former members of staff or students of the University or of its associated institutions should not become external examiners before a gap of five years has elapsed.
12. External examiners shall be appointed for an initial period of three years, extendable by one year only. The maximum term of appointment is four years, after which time external examiners cannot be re-appointed until a period equal to their last term of office has elapsed. In very exceptional circumstances an appointment may be extended to five years, for example, when a small number of students are the final cohort on a scheme. Where an external examiner holds two examinerships in the same Institution, one of which may have commenced later than the other, the overall period of appointment as external examiner to the Institution shall not normally exceed four years.
13. Following approval of the appointment of an external examiner by, or on behalf of the University Senate, Academic Standards and Quality Office will send a letter of appointment to the external examiner concerned. A copy of this letter will be sent to the College officer responsible for the appointment of external examiners, the course leader concerned and the course consultant(s).
14. The letter of appointment will contain the following information:
 - dates of term of office and programme subject area modules for which responsible
 - information leaflet on external examiners duties including background to the assessment process and guidelines on external examiner's reports
 - information about fees and expenses
 - a copy of the report of the previous external examiner, which will include an end of term of appointment summary.
 - the assessment requirements and criteria
 - regulations

The College will make arrangements with the external examiner for a preliminary visit to the Institution to meet the course team and familiarise himself/herself with the programme, before undertaking assessment.