

## Regulations for the appointment of External Examiners

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 No course or part of a course contributing to an award of the University should be without an external examiner at any stage. New external examiners should be appointed to overlap or immediately succeed their predecessors and outgoing examiners should remain in post after their last assessment until they are replaced.
- 1.2 All external examiner appointments are initiated by the Head of Institute and approved by Academic Board. Academic Board may delegate this authority to another committee to undertake this responsibility on its behalf. For certain courses they also have to be approved by relevant professional bodies.

### 2. Criteria for Appointment

- 2.1 An external examiner's academic/professional qualifications will be appropriate to the course to be examined. The subject of the examiner's qualifications should generally match what is to be examined in the course. Academic or, as appropriate, professional qualifications, must equate at least to the level of the qualification being examined. Where applicable, examiners must meet the criteria set out by professional and accrediting bodies.
- 2.2 An external examiner should be fluent in the English language and have appropriate standing, expertise and experience to demonstrate familiarity with, and maintain comparability of, the standards of the award being examined. This will typically be evidenced by present or last post and place of work, the range and scope of experience across higher education/professions, current and recent active involvement in research, scholarly and professional activity in the area of study concerned. Recently retired individuals are eligible for the role provided that they can provide evidence of continuing involvement in the subject area.
- 2.3 An external examiner should have enough recent external examining or at least three years internal examining experience to demonstrate competence in assessing students in the subject area. If the proposed examiner has no previous external examiner experience at the appropriate level, the application should be supported by other relevant and recent experience likely to support the external examiner role.
- 2.4 Where there is only one external examiner for a course, the person nominated should normally have previous experience as an external examiner. Proposed examiners without experience as externals should where possible, join an experienced team of externals, or where there is only one external, either start the appointment early so that they can work alongside the existing examiner, or work initially alongside an experienced currently appointed external, perhaps on a related course. This initial period should be for the first year.

- 2.5 External examiners should not have previous close involvement with the University which might compromise objectivity. There should not be:
- a) more than one examiner from the same institution in the team of external examiners;
  - b) reciprocal external examining between courses or Institutes in two institutions;
  - c) replacement of an external examiner by an individual from the same institution or an external examiner from an institution which has been a source of external examiners in the recent past (typically at least three years).

- 2.6 The proposed external examiner should not have been a member of staff, governor, student or near relative of members of staff in relation to the course, nor the examiner on a cognate course in the University during the previous five years. They should not be:

- a) anyone closely associated with the sponsorship of students on the course;
- b) anyone closely associated with placements or training;
- c) anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study;
- d) anyone in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study;
- e) anyone involved in collaborative research activities with a member of staff;
- f) anyone who has been directly involved in the approval of the programme.

- 2.7 External panel members from an internal periodic review panel may be nominated as external examiners where appropriate. However, appointed external examiners may not be used as participants in the University's course planning and approval process or as members of an internal periodic review either during their period of office or for at least three years after.

- 2.8 External examiners should not normally hold more than the equivalent of two substantial undergraduate external examiner appointments. If the examiner appears to exceed this norm the course team must provide arguments to support the nomination.

### **3. Appointment Period**

- 3.1 The appointment will normally be for four years (subject to annual re-appointment), from September to December and extensions to this period, typically of one academic year, must be approved and reported to Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee if there are exceptional reasons for re-appointment. The phasing of appointments to a team should be structured to ensure continuity.
- 3.2 External examiners may not be re-appointed to the University for a period of at least five years, except in exceptional circumstances where the pool of available examiners for a particular subject is severely restricted, in which case at least four years must have elapsed. In such cases a rationale for re-appointment must be presented for approval.

#### 4. Termination

- 4.1 All external examiners are entitled to submit their resignation for any reason. However, the University would expect that such action would not put the standards of awards in jeopardy. The University would therefore expect sufficient notice in order to make revised arrangements for awards.
- 4.2 The University reserves the right to terminate the contract of any external examiner, subject to the agreement of the Academic Board. Such action will only be taken where there is evidence that key duties are not being carried out, resulting in a lack of evidence of the standards of University awards and normally following efforts to rectify the situation. Such actions may include non-receipt of an annual report or routine non-attendance at Board of Examiner meetings.

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#### Revision History

Committee	Date	Change
Academic Board	12 October 2011	Update to Regulations Approved taking into account UUK recommendations from the Review of External Examining Arrangements in Universities and Colleges in the UK, Annexe B (April 2011) and Chapter One of the revised QAA Quality Code (October 2011)
Academic Board	14 October 2010	New Regulations Approved Replacing the remaining content of the "Regulations for the Assessment of Students/Regulations for External Examiners"