

UNIVERSITY of CUMBRIA ACADEMIC PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES

APPENDIX 4c

Guidelines for the selection and approval of potential External Examiners

Guidelines for the selection and approval of potential External Examiners

1. Criteria for appointment

- 1.1 The criteria for the appointment of External Examiners are set out in Appendix 4b. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide advice on the recruitment process and to point out factors to be taken into account when selecting potential External Examiners and/or to be drawn to the attention of the External Examiners Panel in submitting nominations for approval.

2. Timescales

- 2.1 Departments should plan well in advance for experienced External Examiners to take over from an existing examiner when their appointment comes to an end. The completed application form should be submitted to the Secretary of the External Examiners' Panel before the last meeting of that Committee in the preceding academic year.

3. Recruitment of potential external examiners

- 3.1 It is recognised that from time to time, there can be difficulties in finding suitable nominees who possess the relevant experience to undertake the role of an External Examiner. The following may be helpful to Departments in recruiting potential external examiners.

3.2 Other Institutions

- 3.2.1 Other academic institutions operating similar programmes, (identified from the Universities' Entrance Guide and the UCAS Handbook obtainable from the Admissions Office) can be a source of potential External Examiners. The Programme Leader could make tentative telephone enquiries to another institution to establish the particular focus of the programme and whether there are staff who may be willing and sufficiently experienced to act as an External Examiner.
- 3.2.3 In making such investigations, Departments should take into account the University's wish to involve External Examiners from a wide range of UK institutions. Departments should not limit themselves to those institutions with whom staff already have a close association or which are geographically near to this institution.

3.3 Current external examiners

- 3.3.1 With respect to the replacement of an External Examiner, Departments may wish to enquire whether the out-going examiner is able to recommend an appropriate successor from another institution other than their own.

3.4 Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies/Associations

- 3.4.1 Professional bodies often publish their own list of approved External Examiners and professional associations (eg Association of Business, Council of Deans) which can be used as a source for nominations.

3.5 External Events

- 3.5.1 Attendance at conferences, workshops, seminars, etc or acting on the validation panels at other institutions may yield possible contacts for potential future External Examiners, as may any links with other institutions for research purposes.

3.6 Higher Education Academy Registers of External Examiners

- 3.6.1 Many of the Subject Centres established on the Higher Education Academy's website have developed Registers of External Examiners as a potential source of External Examiner nominations, which can be accessed.

4. Demonstrating that the criteria for appointment are met

- 4.1 The criteria for the appointment of External Examiners and the candidate's ability to satisfy these must obviously be taken into account when considering potential External Examiners. In exceptional cases the Department may wish to propose a nomination for a Subject External Examiner who does not fully meet the criteria outlined in section 1.2 of 4b. The proposer must provide a detailed case with the nomination (see Appendix 4d Procedure for appointing External Examiners) detailing the level of alternative experience and abilities, and how they intend to support the new External Examiner in the first year of office. The External Examiners Panel will identify any recommendations for approval which do not meet the criteria listed in 1.2 of Section 3b.
- 4.2 The requirement for a formal mentoring arrangement will be identified as part of the scrutiny by the External Examiners Panel. More details on the role of the mentor and the process of appointment are included at the end of Appendix 4d.
- 4.3 It is important to demonstrate that, although a nominee may not fully meet all criteria, they must have an overall balance of experience and be able to judge comparability. The following guidance is provided on the range of evidence which needs to be provided in the supporting statement to the External Examiners' Panel as part of the decision making process so that a judgement can be made about whether a nominee is appropriate, including on the basis of the overall profile if all the criteria are not fully met. Inexperienced External Examiners will be asked to confirm the support they have received from the Department and/or the Mentor in their first year of appointment.

Note: It is necessary to demonstrate that a nomination meets the criteria for an Award External Examiner to whom the mentorship scheme does not apply.

5. Statement of support

Statements of support from the proposer for Subject External Examiners should cover the following: -

5.1 Experience and Attributes

5.1.1 The External Examiners' Panel will look for evidence of the nominee's:

i. Professional Experience

At least 3 years' relevant experience and normally 5 years. For academic staff, this should cover teaching, designing and operating a variety of assessment. Non-HEI nominees must have a high degree of specialist knowledge of the relevant field.

ii. Education/Qualifications

Qualified at least to the level of (and normally above) the subject area of the award for which the External Examiner will be responsible. Additionally, it would be helpful if there were evidence that the applicant is the holder of a recognised teaching qualification.

iii. Skills and Abilities

It is expected that academic nominees will have experience of assessment techniques which test a range of cognitive and/or practical skills. Evidence to demonstrate this could include:

- a. Scholarly activity in the subject area [eg conference papers, published papers, books or refereed articles]
- b. Ability to make comparison with similar provision [eg through validation experience or through experience of another institution or employer]
- c. Interest in curriculum development [eg through membership of programme development, team or internal review or validation mechanisms]
- d. External recognition [eg through membership of a professional association or industry awards]
- e. Involvement in subject benchmarking or internal/external quality review
- f. Member of an organisation with a high reputation for quality and standards
- g. Ability to communicate positively to influence quality enhancement.

iv. Collaborative Provision

Proposals for External Examiners for Collaborative Programmes must have previous External Examining experience. It is desirable for proposals for Collaborative Provision to have experience of collaborative activity.

6. Review of the process

This process will be reviewed regularly taking account of best practice and Sector policy.