

Quality Framework

Appointing External Academic Peers

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Overview and purpose

1. The purpose of this section of the Quality Framework is to provide guidance to School Associate Deans, Learning & Teaching/ School Academic Leads for Quality Enhancement and school support staff on the appointment of external academic peers during quality enhancement and assurance activities. Detailed information on the role of external academic peers as part of our design, development, approval, monitoring and review activities is set out in relevant sections of the Quality Framework as indicated throughout this section.
2. The inclusion of external academic peers during the design, development and approval of taught award or credit-bearing provision enables the University to be confident that the requirements of the [Scottish Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework](#) and the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) have been taken into account.

Appointing an external academic peer

During the design and development of taught award or credit-bearing provision

3. The role of the external academic peer during the design and development of taught award or credit-bearing provision is to provide feedback and comment on the appropriateness of the proposal. Particularly, subject area expectations regarding the content, academic challenge and learning, teaching and assessment practices.
4. Suitable candidates are likely to be an academic who can demonstrate breadth and depth of experience in the design and delivery of higher education provision, and relevant, current knowledge and expertise of developments in the subject area at the level of the provision being considered. It may be appropriate for this role to be fulfilled by an existing external examiner.
5. Responsibility for the selection and appointment of external academic peers, if not appropriate to use the external examiner, to participate in the design and development of provision, is devolved to schools.



6. An external involved in the design and development of new taught award or credit-bearing provision cannot subsequently be the external member of the Programme Approval Panel.
7. Specific expectations are detailed in Section 1 of the Quality Framework.

During the academic approval process of taught award or credit-bearing programmes including taught award or credit-bearing provision delivered in partnership

8. The role of the external member of the University Approvals Panel or a Collaborative Provision Committee's approval panel for taught award or credit-bearing provision delivered in partnership is to provide independent and objective subject expertise to the decision-making process. They will comment on the academic standard and the quality of learning opportunities associated with each proposed taught award or credit-bearing programme to ensure that this provides a coherent package of learning.
9. Suitable candidates are likely to be senior academics who can demonstrate breadth and depth of experience in the design and delivery of higher education provision at the level of the provision being considered. Equivalent individuals within the University would include a school academic lead, subject group leader, a senior teaching fellow or teaching fellow. The individual concerned will be able to demonstrate current knowledge and expertise of developments in the subject area which align with the objectives of the proposed provision.
10. Responsibility for the selection and appointment of external members of the University Approvals Panel or a Collaborative Provision Committee's approval panel is devolved to schools. However, the School Academic Lead for Quality Enhancement (or nominated coordinator for collaborative programmes) is required to discuss and agree the appointment of external panel members with the Head of Quality & Enhancement (or their nominee) and arrange for them to be briefed on their role.



11. Current external examiners cannot be appointed as an external member of the University Approvals Panel or a Collaborative Provision Committee's approval panel.
12. A former external examiner may be considered for the role if five academic years have passed since they ceased their appointment.
13. External members of the University Approvals Panel or a Collaborative Provision Committee's approval panel are permitted to participate in a maximum of two meetings in two academic sessions. Having participated in two meetings, individuals will be prohibited from being appointed to a panel for four succeeding academic sessions.
14. Section 1 and Section 4 of the Quality Framework set out the responsibilities for panel members involved in the approval of taught and credit bearing provision.

During module and programme monitoring

15. Only appointed external examiners are required to participate in module or programme monitoring activities See Quality Framework Section 2 for detailed information on the annual monitoring process for taught award or credit-bearing provision.

During the Institution-led Review (ILR) of Taught Provision process

16. The role of the external member(s) of an ILR panel is to provide comment and feedback on the academic standard and the quality of learning opportunities associated with each programme and whether these meet sector expectations. The external academic peer also provides input on developments in the subject area, in learning and teaching practices and independence and objectivity to the decisions taken.
17. Suitable candidates are likely to be an academic who can demonstrate breadth and depth of experience in the design and delivery of higher education provision, and relevant, current knowledge and expertise of developments in the subject area at the level of the provision being considered.



18. In selecting an external academic peer it will be necessary to ensure that the individual's experience and background aligns with the objectives of the provision being reviewed.
19. An individual who has been involved in the design or delivery of the provision under review or who has been involved in any research, consultative or collaborative work with the school, is not permitted to participate on an ILR panel.
20. Current external examiners cannot be appointed as ILR panel members.
21. A former external examiner may be considered for the role if five academic years have passed since they ceased their appointment.
22. See Quality Framework Section 2b for detailed information on the appointment of an ILR panel and the review process in general.

Appointing external examiners and external academic peers

23. Detailed information on the University's external examining system is available on the [Department of Learning & Teaching website](#). This includes comprehensive information and guidance for staff who wish to appoint a new external examiner or extend the contract of an existing external examiner.
24. External academic peers are appointed by the school through standard Human Resource & Development casual staff processes.

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