



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 academic leads 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 UK Quality Code for Higher Education [Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards](#) Expectation A3.4 and [Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality, Chapter B1: Programme design, development and approval](#) and Indicator 5 in particular have been taken into account.

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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 taught award or credit-bearing provision cannot be the external member of the Programme Approvals Board for two succeeding academic sessions.
7. [Quality Framework Section 1b: Designing and developing taught award or credit-bearing provision](#) sets out the process in detail.

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During the academic approval process of taught credit-bearing modules

8. External academic peers are not required to participate in the approval process for taught credit-bearing modules.
9. [Quality Framework Section 1c: Academic approval of taught award or credit-bearing provision](#) sets out the process in detail.

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

10. The role of the external member of the Programme Approvals Board 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.

11. Suitable candidates are likely to be a senior academic 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.

12. Responsibility for the selection and appointment of external members of the Programme Approvals Board or a Collaborative Provision Committee's approval panel is devolved to schools. The School Academic Lead for Quality in liaison with the school Quality & Standards team point of contact will appoint external Board and panel members and arrange for them to be briefed on their role.

13. Current external examiners cannot be appointed as an external member of the Programme Approvals Board or a Collaborative Provision Committee's approval panel.

14. A former external examiner may be considered for the role if five academic years have passed since they ceased their appointment.

15. External members of the Programme Approvals Board 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 Board or panel for four succeeding academic sessions.

16. See [Quality Framework Section 1c: Academic approval of taught award or credit-bearing provision](#) and [Quality Framework Section 4e: Academic approval of taught award or credit-bearing provision delivered in partnership](#) for detailed information on the appointment of the Programme Approvals Board and a Collaborative Provision Committee's approval panel and the academic approval processes in general.

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During module and programme monitoring

17. Only appointed external examiners are required to participate in module or programme monitoring activities See [Quality Framework Section 2a: Annual monitoring of taught award or credit-bearing provision](#) for detailed information on the annual monitoring process for taught award or credit-bearing provision.

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During the programme review process

18. The role of the external member of a programme review 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.
19. In addition the programme team can consult with external examiners about any proposed changes.
20. 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.
21. 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.
22. 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 in a programme review event.
23. Current external examiners cannot be appointed as a programme review external panel member.
24. A former external examiner may be considered for the role if five academic years have passed since they ceased their appointment.
25. See [Quality Framework Section 2b: Programme review](#) for detailed information on the appointment of a programme review panel and the review process in general.

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During the school review process

26. The role of the external member of a school review panel is to provide comment and feedback on the effectiveness of the management of the student learning experience across the school. The external academic peer also provides input on developments in learning and teaching practices and provides independence and objectivity to the decisions taken.
27. Suitable candidates will offer breadth and depth of experience in the management of higher education provision, and relevant, current knowledge and expertise of developments in higher education. Equivalent individuals from the University would include deans of schools, school academic leads, members of formally constituted university-level committees and individuals with experience of undertaking similar activities on behalf of a professional, statutory or regulatory body. Note a subject specialist is preferable but not essential.
28. An individual who has been involved in the design or delivery the school's provision or who has been involved in any research, consultative or collaborative work with the school, is not permitted to participate in a school review event.
29. Current external examiners cannot be appointed as a school review external panel member.



30. A former external examiner may be considered for the role if five academic years have passed since they ceased their appointment.

31. See [Quality Framework Section 2c: School review](#) for detailed information on the appointment of a school review panel and the review process in general.

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During the first year review process for taught award or credit-bearing provision delivered in partnership

32. External academic peers are not required to participate in the first year review process for taught award or credit-bearing provision delivered in partnership.

33. See [Quality Framework Section 4g: Additional monitoring and review activities for taught award or credit-bearing provision delivered in partnership](#) for detailed information on the appointment of a first year review panel and the review process in general.

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Appointing external examiners and external academic peers

34. Detailed information on the University's external examining system is available on the [Quality & Standards team web site](#). 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.

35. External academic peers are appointed by the school through standard Human Resource & Development casual staff processes.

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Responsibilities

36. Overarching University-level responsibilities for the quality and standard of taught award or credit-bearing provision are set out in the Introduction to the Quality Framework. For ease of reference school-level responsibilities are set out in a separate guidance document School-level responsibilities for academic quality and standards.

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Monitoring and reviewing taught award or credit-bearing provision

37. The process for monitoring and reviewing all taught award or credit-bearing provision delivered by the University is set out in [Quality Framework Section 2: Monitoring and review of taught award or credit-bearing provision](#).

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Monitoring the effectiveness of the Quality Framework

38. The process for monitoring the effectiveness of the Quality Framework including the effectiveness of the implementation of the design, development and approval process for taught award or credit-bearing provision is set out in the [Introduction to the Quality Framework](#) .

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