

Guidelines for Departments on the Nomination and Appointment of Taught Course External Examiners

1. Nomination Process

- 1.1. Each year, during the summer vacation, the Registry will write to departments requesting nominations for external examiners for the forthcoming academic session.
- 1.2. Nominations must be made using the College's external examiner nomination form which is available to download at the following link:

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/external-examining/>
- 1.3. CVs of nominees are not accepted so it is important that the nomination form is completed in full.
- 1.4. Nominations will be presented to the Vice Provost (Education). Once approval has been granted, the Registry will inform departments of the Committee's decision and will write to all external examiners confirming their appointment.
- 1.5. External examiners are appointed normally for a period of **four years** only. In exceptional circumstances an external examiner may be re-appointed to serve a 5th and final year, for example, to ensure continuity in particular for collaborative courses, in cases where the subject matter is only taught at a limited number of institutions or to act as a mentor to a new external who has no previous external examining experience.
- 1.6. External examiners should not normally hold more than two external examiner appointments for taught courses at any point in time.

2. Criteria for Appointment

- 2.1. The external examiner should normally have:
 1. Knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality;
 2. Competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study, or parts thereof;
 3. Relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined and/or extensive practitioner experience, where appropriate;

4. Competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and running assessment procedures;
 5. Sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command the respect of academic peers and, where appropriate, professional peers;
 6. Familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed;
 7. Fluency in English, and where programmes are delivered and assessed in languages other than English, fluency in the relevant language(s) (unless other secure arrangements are in place to ensure that external examiners are provided with the information to make their judgements);
 8. Where applicable, have met criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies;
 9. Awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula;
 10. Competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.
- 2.2. In addition to this, Departments should note that former staff (including those with honorary appointments) and students can only be appointed as external examiners after a period of **not less than five years** has lapsed and all students taught by or with the external examiner have completed their programme(s). Retired staff can be considered if they provide sufficient evidence of continuing involvement in the academic area in question and with current developments in higher education teaching, learning and assessment.
- 2.3. Where the nominee has no previous experience as an external examiner for any institution, appointment should, wherever practicable, be made to a team of external examiners and/or with agreement that a more experienced external examiner will act as a mentor.

3. **Other important points to note:**

- An external examiner who has previously acted as a taught course external examiner for the College may be re-appointed in exceptional circumstances but only after a period of five years has lapsed since their last appointment;
- Reciprocal arrangements involving cognate programmes at other institutions are not allowed;
- The succession of an external examiner by a colleague from the examiner's home department and institution is not allowed;

- The appointment of more than one external from the same department of the same institution is not allowed;
 - Departments should balance the benefits of engaging someone who is already familiar with the programme and its rationale, perhaps through approval of the programme, with any risk to their ability to provide a fully independent perspective;
 - To avoid potential conflicts of interests, external examiners should not normally be appointed if they are any of the following:
 - i. A member of a governing body or Committee of the appointing institutions or one of its collaborative partners, or a current employee of the appointing institution or one of its collaborative partners;
 - ii. Anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme of study;
 - iii. Anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study;
 - iv. Anyone who is, or will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study;
 - v. Anyone who holds an honorary contract with the College.
- 3.1. Care should be taken when making nominations for external examiners with significant involvement in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme(s) or modules in question. In cases where this arises, the Vice Provost (Education) will carefully assess the risk involved in making this appointment.
- 3.2. External examiners will also be asked to declare if they are aware of any potential conflicts of interest as part of their acceptance to act as external examiner for the College.

4. Eligibility to work in the United Kingdom

- 4.1. To comply with Home Office legislation, Imperial has a legal obligation to ensure that all those undertaking work have the legal right to do so. Therefore, when selecting a nominee for appointment as an external examiner for the College, it must be ensured that the nominee is eligible to work in the UK. For full criteria, please see the College guidance concerning evidence of eligibility to work in the UK which can be found at

<http://www.imperial.ac.uk/human-resources/procedures/immigration/recruiters-guidance/right-to-work/>

- 4.2. External examiners are asked to provide photocopied evidence of their eligibility to work in the UK at the nomination stage and Departments are

asked to ensure that the document(s) provided are on the Home Office list of accepted documents before submitting the scanned document with the nomination form to the Registry. Final approval cannot be confirmed, or contract issued, until the appropriate documentation has been received by the Registry.

- 4.3. At the time of their first visit to the College (for example to attend the External Examiners' Induction Day or for a Board of Examiners' meeting) external examiners will be asked to bring the original document(s) for a visual check, and at that stage the scanned copy previously submitted will be verified. It is hoped that the majority of examiners will attend the induction day and that the document check can be undertaken by the Registry. Where this is not possible, a Registry representative or the Department will be asked to do this at the examination board. Unfortunately we will be unable to process payments to external examiners until their eligibility to work in the UK has been confirmed.
- 4.4. Please note also that this check must be completed for all nominees, regardless of their nationality.

5. Role and responsibilities

- 5.1. Further details about the role and responsibilities of external examiners can be found in the Examination Regulations:

<http://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/regulations/>

And on the External Examiners website:

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/external-examining/>

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