

Procedures and criteria for nomination and appointment of external members of validation and review panels

1. The University values the contribution made by external peers to its programmes of study. Input is sought at various stages of programme development and operation e.g. during design and validation, for external examining (including minor amendments to programmes and modules), for internal review and occasional major modifications.
2. We seek to appoint external members to validation and review panels who will be able to offer an informed, rigorous, critical and constructive scrutiny of our proposed or existing provision. External panel members will most often be drawn from higher education institutions but may sometimes be independent consultants or practitioners from industry, commerce or the professions. Where external panel members are appointed at least one of them will have relevant academic expertise. This may be supplemented by relevant professional, industrial or commercial expertise, either from the same individual(s) or from any additional external panel member(s).
3. External panel members are nominated by the relevant school to meet the requirements agreed during discussion of the validation or review process at the planning meeting arranged by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Unit. The nomination form to be completed by the relevant department can be found in Annex W of the Validation Handbook. The form, preferably accompanied by a curriculum vitae or other supporting information, is submitted to the Principal Quality Assurance Officer in the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Unit for consideration by the Deputy Vice Chancellor or Vice Chancellor. Where existing or proposed programme(s) seeks (re)accreditation by a professional or statutory body, then that body may be represented on the panel if that is their practice, either as one of the planned external members or in addition, depending on their expertise and intended contribution. Where appropriate, the balance of external and internal panel membership will encompass academic, professional and practitioner expertise and perspectives
4. External panel members will demonstrate their capacity to make the required contribution to the validation or review process by evidencing a sufficiency of the following criteria:
 - 4.1 Academic and or professional qualifications appropriate to the programme(s) or subjects(s) under scrutiny, in respect of both the subject and level of those qualifications.
 - 4.2 Sufficient standing, expertise and experience to judge comparability of academic standards in the relevant subject at the relevant level. This may be indicated by:

- 4.2.1 present (or last if retired) and previous post(s);
 - 4.2.2 range and depth of experience across Higher Education and/or the professions and/or relevant employment;
 - 4.2.3 current and recent active involvement in research and/or scholarly and/or professional activities in the relevant field of study.
- 4.3 A proposed external panel member should preferably have sufficient recent and relevant experience of acting as an external panel member, or comparable related external experience, to indicate competence in the role.
- 4.4 If a proposed external panel member does not have experience of external involvement in either of these capacities, then the nomination should be supported by:
- 4.4.1 internal involvement in validation, review, accreditation, recognition or similar activities;
 - 4.4.2 other relevant and recent experience likely to support the proposed role.
5. In making the nomination and in agreeing to be nominated, the relevant Department and the nominee will confirm to the best of their knowledge that the following conditions apply. The Academic Quality and Standards Unit will make any such queries as it sees fit in order to verify the facts.
- 5.1 A proposed external panel member should not normally be affiliated in any way (nor have been so affiliated within the previous five years) to a subject area in an institution from which the relevant School currently draws or supplies (or has drawn or supplied within the previous five years) an external panel member or external examiner, unless discrete subjects are involved.
 - 5.2 A proposed external panel member should not normally be affiliated to the University in any way (nor have been so affiliated within the previous five years), nor have been closely associated (professionally or personally or otherwise) to someone who is affiliated to the University (or has been so affiliated within the previous five years).

6. A proposed external panel member should not be or be likely to be:
 - 6.1 personally associated with the sponsorship of current or future students studying the programme(s) under scrutiny;
 - 6.2 involved in the assessment of students following the programme(s) under scrutiny;
 - 6.3 in a position to influence significantly the employment of existing or potential students following the programme(s) under scrutiny;
 - 6.4 involved with student placements or training in the panel member's organisation.

7. The aim of the criteria for nomination and appointment is to help ensure impartiality of judgement and achieve objectivity which is not compromised. It is however to be understood that decisions about the nomination and approval of external panel members will often require a balance to be struck such that the criteria will need to be weighed against each other. The aim will always be to ensure that the proposed external panel member is appropriate, competent and impartial to fulfill the function. This applies particularly to the need to make judgements about academic standards and quality and will imply that at least one of the proposed external panel members must normally be or have been in a position requiring familiarity with the relevant subject benchmark statement(s), the framework for higher education qualifications, the code of practice and the requirements of programme specifications.