



**This guidance document is primarily intended for:**

Assistant Registrars in the Faculty School  
 CPAC, F/SLTQC, BoS members  
 Programme Development Teams  
 Boards of Studies

## Guidance Note on Appointment, Role and Expectations of External Reviewers for New Programmes

(including appendix with a list of prompts for the External Reviewer's written submission)

### 1. Appointment of External Reviewers

- Two academic reviewers who are familiar with UK academic standards in relation to the proposed programme should be nominated for new programmes. For programme variants where a substantial portion of the programme already exists one External Reviewer may be appointed, but please consult Academic Registry on this before nominations proceed. Where a proposed programme is multi-disciplinary more than one External Reviewer will normally be required;
- All Reviewers must be external to the University of Bath, and should be entirely independent and professionally objective. See the appointment criteria for External Examiners in [QA3](#), which should be applied in principle;
- External Reviewers are nominated by Programme Development Teams but appointed by the Chair of the relevant Faculty/School Board of Studies;
- External Reviewers with professional expertise may also be appointed, such as from industry, or relating to relevant professional accreditation(s);

### 2. Role of External Reviewers

- The role of External Reviewers is to provide independent and professionally objective advice to the Courses and Partnerships Approval Committee (CPAC), formerly Programmes and Partnerships Approval Committee (PAPAC), which considers the detailed academic case for new programmes. Consequently, External Reviewers are not members of the Programme Development Team, and have a direct reporting line to CPAC, and its Chair;
- However Programme Development Teams are encouraged to engage constructively with the External Reviewer(s) from the time of appointment, seeking appropriate advice and feedback as the full proposal develops. This ensures that the External Reviewers' input has the maximum enhancement impact and reduces the prospect of any fundamental issues of concern needing to be raised at CPAC;
- The culmination of an External Reviewer's input into the programme approval process is a written submission to CPAC, commenting on the content of the full proposal documentation. However, the written submission may be dispensed with if the External Reviewer is available to attend the relevant Committee meeting itself, and is prepared to deliver their opinion verbally;
- There may be occasions when the Chair of the Courses and Partnerships Approval Committee requests the attendance of at least one External Reviewer in person, to assist the Committee. This is likely to happen when an innovative form of programme, or one in a new area of a discipline, is proposed. Development teams or the Assistant Registrar in the Faculty/School should contact the Academic Registry at an early stage for advice on the necessity for personal attendance, and in consequence, select a particular nominee with capacity to attend;

- Where an External Reviewer does not attend the relevant meeting of CPAC, they are invited to be contactable at the time of the meeting to help resolve any queries that may arise or provide further advice;
- Where the External Reviewer(s) submits a written report, the leader of the programme development team should normally provide a written response to the points raised by the External Reviewer(s). The Secretary to the Committee will circulate this response to the Members in advance of the meeting.

### 3. Written submission

- All External Reviewers are invited to comment on the
  - aims and learning outcomes including alignment with the appropriate level in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and any relevant subject benchmark statements
  - curriculum
  - assessment methods
  - learning opportunitiesof the proposed programme. A series of prompts in relation to each of these headings may be found in the Appendix, based on guidance provided in the QAA Quality Code and [Chapter B1 Programme Approval and Design](#) in particular. They are not intended to be an exhaustive list.
- External Reviewers may also comment on any other aspect of the detailed programme proposal, but are invited to comment particularly on any matter(s) that are within their specific areas of expertise;
- The External Reviewer(s) has a key contribution to make in terms of enhancing the proposal and so dialogue with the programme team should commence ideally during the developmental phase prior to consideration by CPAC. External Reviewers may also wish to identify further enhancement opportunities to CPAC;
- Matters relating to the business and marketing case for a proposed programme will have been determined at the initial proposal stage, and therefore will not normally be considered at the full proposal stage, which is intended to focus on the detailed *academic* case.

*A template letter to send to External Reviewers, explaining the role and its requirements, is available from the Academic Registry*

Academic Registry  
September 2018

## APPENDIX

EXTERNAL REVIEWER WRITTEN SUBMISSION  
LIST OF PROMPT QUESTIONS

*External reviewers should focus on, but not necessarily be restricted to the following key areas:*

i) **Aims and learning outcomes**

- Are the aims and intended learning outcomes of the degree programmes, as stated in the programme specifications, clear and appropriate and in accordance with the level and title of the award?
- Are the intended learning outcomes appropriate to the overall aims?
- Have the intended learning outcomes been informed by published [Subject Benchmark Statement\(s\)](#) and by the [Higher Education Qualifications Framework](#)?
- Are the teaching, learning and assessment strategies clear?

ii) **Curriculum**

- Is the degree programme coherent, and of appropriate breadth and scope?
- Is there evidence that content and design are informed by recent developments in teaching and learning, by up-to date scholarship and research in the discipline, and by relevant professional or occupational requirements?
- Does the curriculum provide all students with the opportunity to achieve, and to demonstrate achievement of, the intended learning outcomes in terms of knowledge and understanding, intellectual skills, practical skills, and transferable skills?
- What evidence is there that graduates from the programme(s) will be well prepared for employment?

iii) **Assessment**

- Does the assessment design and process enable students to demonstrate achievement of the intended learning outcomes?
- Is there a variety of assessment methods appropriate to the content and learning outcomes?
- Is there an appropriate balance between formative and summative assessment?
- Can it be shown that the feedback to students will be adequate and appropriate?
- Does assessment promote effective student learning?
- Are there criteria which enable examiners to distinguish between different categories of achievement?
- Are the appropriate standards being met where a programme is professionally accredited?

iv) **Learning opportunities**

- Is there a suitable variety of teaching methods and student learning opportunities?
- Are the learning opportunities accessible to a diverse student body?
- Is there evidence that staff will be able to draw upon their research, scholarship or professional activity to inform the teaching?
- Where relevant, will effective use be made of placements? Are arrangements proposed to support placements appropriate?
- Are there effective arrangements for admission and induction?
- Will there be appropriate academic support for students?
- Is the collective expertise of the academic staff suitable for effective delivery of the curricula and for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes?
- Will there be suitable resources in terms of teaching accommodation, equipment, library stocks and IT facilities, and are these deployed in an effective manner?