



**Higher Education Services
External Examiner Procedure**

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Higher Education Services External Examiner Procedure

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The procedure enables FutureLearn to recruit External Examiner Appointments to its validated provision. Coverage of external oversight of External Examiners will be assigned to all components of a programme that contribute directly to the conferral of a validated qualification. It is the duty of the Programme Leader and/or Head of Programmes to propose suitable candidates for External Examiner roles, ensuring nominees meet the eligibility standards outlined in this policy.

1.2 The Academic Registrar holds responsibility for reviewing nominations and confirming appointments, in accordance with the procedures defined in this document. The Academic Quality Lead will maintain a comprehensive register of all External Examiner appointments. This record will include:

- Name and professional title
- Employing institution
- Assigned programmes or modules
- Appointment dates and term duration
- Any additional details relevant to monitoring and governance.

1.3 The register will be reviewed regularly, and any issues identified will be referred to the appropriate Programme Leader, Head of Programmes, or the Student Engagement, Quality and Programme Committee for further action.

1.4 This procedure does not include OPM sub-contractual arrangements, for example, Brunel University and Roehampton University. The document should be read alongside the following:

- Brunel University (BU) [External Examiners | Brunel University of London](#)
- Roehampton University (RU) [Quality and Standards: External Examining | University of Roehampton, London](#)
- QAA [External Examining Principles](#)

2.0 Criteria for Appointing an External Examiner

2.1 Successful candidates for the role of External Examiner will usually demonstrate the following:

- i) Knowledge and understanding of the UK sector's agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality.
- ii) Competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study, or parts thereof.
- iii) Relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate.
- iv) Competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures.
- v) 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.
- vi) Familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed.
- vii) Fluency in English, and where programmes are delivered and assessed in languages other than English, fluency in English and the relevant language(s).
- viii) Meeting the applicable criteria set by professional, statutory, or regulatory bodies.
- ix) Awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula.

x) Competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

3.0 Conflict of Interest Considerations in External Examiner Appointments

3.1 All nominations for External Examiner roles will be reviewed to ensure there are no conflicts of interest. Any identified conflict must be resolved before an appointment can be confirmed. FutureLearn will not approve candidates who fall into any of the following categories or situations:

3.2 Disqualifying Circumstances

- i) Individuals who currently serve on the governing body or committees of FutureLearn or its academic partners, or who are employed by either.
- ii) Candidates who have close personal, professional, or contractual ties to staff or students associated with the programme.
- iii) Individuals who would be required to evaluate colleagues enrolled as students on the programme.
- iv) Anyone who holds a position that could unduly influence the academic or professional outcomes of students on the programme.
- v) Those actively engaged in substantial collaborative research with staff directly involved in teaching, managing, or assessing the relevant modules or programmes.
- vi) Former employees or graduates of FutureLearn, unless at least five years have passed since their departure and all students they taught or studied with have completed their studies.
- vii) Candidates involved in reciprocal external examining arrangements with similar programmes at other institutions.
- viii) Successive appointments from the same department and institution as the outgoing examiner.
- ix) The appointment of multiple External Examiners from the same academic department within a single institution.

4.0 Term of Office

4.1 The term of office for an External Examiner will normally be four years, with an exceptional one-year extension to ensure continuity. An External Examiner may only be permitted to be nominated again after a lapsed period of five years or more. External Examiners normally hold no more than two External Examiner appointments for taught programmes at any one point in time. Academics who have recently retired may be considered for appointment but are limited to a two-year term.

5.0 External Examiner Nomination and Appointment Process

5.1 Nominations for External Examiner roles must be submitted using the designated [External Examiner Nomination Form](#), in the appendix, and must include a current curriculum vitae along with any relevant supporting materials, such as proof of academic or professional qualifications.

5.2 The Programme Leaders and/or Heads of Programmes are responsible for forwarding completed nomination forms and accompanying documentation to the Academic Quality Lead, who will oversee the process and ensure that all materials are reviewed by the Academic Registrar.

5.3 When considering a nomination, the Academic Registrar will:

- **Review the Candidate's Suitability:** Evaluate the nominee against the established appointment criteria. If the nominee does not fully meet the criteria, a justification must be provided, including any additional support or guidance required. These details must be formally documented. For instance, a nominee from industry or the professional sector may lack formal academic qualifications but possess substantial expertise relevant to the discipline. Such cases will be reported to the Student Engagement, Quality and Programme Committee.
- **Assess for Conflicts of Interest:** Identify any potential conflicts and determine how they will be addressed prior to confirming the appointment.
- **Verify Compliance with Term Limit:** Ensure the proposed appointment adheres to the regulations concerning duration and renewal of terms.

5.4 All decisions made by the Academic Registrar whether to approve or reject a nomination will be formally recorded, along with the rationale.

6.0 Confirmation and Onboarding

6.1 Once an appointment is approved, the Academic Quality Lead will ensure that the External Examiner receives all necessary documentation, including the contract and terms of engagement. A comprehensive induction and briefing will be arranged to take place promptly.

7.0 Monitoring

7.1 The policy will be kept under review and formally reviewed every three years by the Academic Registrar.

Appendix

External Examiner Nomination

Nomination submitted by:

1. Is the nomination for Programme or Module External Examiner?	
2. Programmes/modules for which the appointment is requested:	
3. Name of Examiner being replaced (if applicable)	
4. Proposed date of appointment	

Nominee details

5. Nominee name:	
6. Is the nominee currently employed / contracted by FutureLearn or the partner university?	
7. Current position/Job Title	
8. Current Institution/ Employer	

9. Nominee email address:	
10. Nominee correspondence address	

Experience

11. Details of Nominee's previous/current experience as an external examiner	
12. Please enclose full CV	Enclosed/Not Enclosed

Conflict of Interest

13. Please detail any potential conflict of interest	
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