Taught Course Programmes - External Examiners

1. Principles

The ICR believes External Examiners to be a key aspect of the system for ensuring that its taught course awards are set and maintained at the appropriate level, and that the role of the External Examiners and the arrangements for their nomination and appointment and for responding to their reports should be clear and comprehensible, and consistent with the national framework.

2. Register of External Examiners

The Academic Governance and Events Manager will maintain a Register of all External Examiners appointed by the ICR, with their dates of office and affiliations. A list of all nominations, including those not resulting in appointment, shall also be retained confidentially.

3. Nomination and Appointment of External Examiners
Taught Courses Regulation TC.28.1.2 specifies that evidence will be sought of a nominee’s compliance with the person specification set out in Chapter B7 of the QAA’s *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*. Nominees will be expected to comply wherever possible with all relevant aspects of the person specification.

**Person specification**

The ICR has adopted the person specification set out in the QAA’s Quality Code. The italics indicate how evidence of a nominee’s compliance with the person specification should be recorded. In approving the person specification Academic Board noted that the ICR’s ability to ensure that the best person could be chosen for the job should not be restricted. Applications may proceed if evidence cannot be obtained, or if some aspects of the person specification are not met, and a note of the reasons why the nominee is nonetheless recommended should be included when the decision is put to Academic Board.

The QAA stipulates that institutions appoint external examiners who can show appropriate evidence of the following:

i) knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality

*tick box to confirm candidate has this to the best of proposer's knowledge*

ii) competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study, or parts thereof

*academic qualifications & employment*

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

*academic qualifications and employment*

iv) competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures

*tick box to confirm candidate has this to the best of proposer's knowledge*

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

*academic titles / up to 5 recent publications*

vi) familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed

*list teaching and / or previous external examiner experience*

vii) 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)

*tick box to confirm candidate has this to the best of proposer's knowledge*
viii) meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies
N/A

ix) awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula

tick box to confirm candidate has this to the best of proposer's knowledge

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

tick box to confirm candidate has this to the best of proposer's knowledge

b) Have any conflicts of interest been identified (please specify)

The External Examiner nomination form is at Annex A.

4. Information Provided to External Examiners on appointment

On appointment external examiners are provided with a number of documents (i) the current Learning and Teaching Strategy (ii) Course handbook (iii) The ICR’s Academic Regulations (iv) the Assessment Policy (v) Module Guides (vi) Marking Criteria and any other documents deemed appropriate at the time of appointment. The letter should also include a link to the QAA’s website regarding the UK Quality Code, and should include HR requirements regarding tax responsibilities and confirmation of right to work in the UK.

5. Reporting

5.1. The ICR requires its External Examiners to submit a report after each Examination Board using a standard form. Where required, action is taken as a result of the report and the ICR provides formal feedback to the External Examiners on the action taken.

5.2. Payment of fees to External Examiners is conditional on the receipt of written reports. Requests to submit reports will be sent to External Examiners after each Examination Board by the Academic Governance and Events Manager, to whom they should be returned, along with a deadline for submission.

Reports should be submitted on the standard report form. This form is part of the operating procedure and any amendments to it can be made only with TCC’s / Academic Board approval.

5.3. External Examiner reports are considered fully and seriously by the ICR.

Student representatives on TCC and on Academic Board are informed on election that their remit includes sight of external examiners’ reports and that they are welcome to comment on these, as on all other business before these committees.
Reports are initially sent to the relevant Course Directors for consideration by the Academic Governance and Events Manager, and a copy is sent simultaneously to the Academic Dean as Chair of the Examination Board and Chair of the Academic Board*.

Course Directors provide a report to the Taught Courses Committee (TCC) on their comments and where required provide details of the actions which will be taken. Where it is considered that no action should be taken detailed reasons must be provided. These reports should also inform TCC of the actions taken to implement the agreed recommendations of the previous set of External Examiners' reports.

The TCC considers the External Examiner reports along with the report from the Course Directors and submits a report to the Academic Board with their recommendations.

Academic Board considers the report from the TCC along with the External Examiner reports and agrees actions to be taken. The relevant extract from Academic Board minutes is sent to any Course Directors who are not members, and to the Course Manager, by the Academic Governance and Events Manager. Urgent or minor changes may be implemented immediately with written consent from all affected students.

Actions requiring either changes to the ICR regulations or changes to assessments should be introduced at the start of the next academic year; progressing students must be informed and agree to these changes. Course Directors are responsible for informing module leaders of actions required.

* If the Academic Dean / Course Directors consider that a serious concern has been raised requiring immediate action they will raise it as a matter of urgency with both Academic Board and TCC members.

5.4. The TCC should monitor the impact of agreed changes.

5.5. The Academic Dean is responsible for providing a timely formal response to external examiners. This will summarise comments raised by the Course Directors, TCC and Academic Board and the recommended actions. If the ICR has decided that the recommendations will not be taken on board then reasons must be provided to the External Examiners.

5.6. External Examiners may raise a concern at any point during the year if he or she believes it is too urgent to wait for the annual report. In addition if an External Examiner wants to raise a matter of particular importance or sensitivity, he or she may make a confidential report to the ICR’s Chief Executive. Any such report would then be dealt with as the Chief Executive considers appropriate, and a reply will be sent to the External Examiner within one month informing him or her what decisions have been made and any actions taken.

5.7. External Examiners also have an opportunity to provide an oral report at examination boards.

6. Annual Monitoring Exercise

Recommendations made by External Examiners are also considered as part of the annual course monitoring exercise. Module leaders receive details of recommendations made by External Examiners on their module feedback form. Consideration as part of the annual monitoring exercise should not prevent the earlier adoption of urgent or minor recommended changes.
7. Consultation of External Examiners

External examiners should be consulted on relevant draft new policies and regulations. Consultation may take place in the Exam Board meetings or the Assistant Director of Academic Services (Education Policy and Quality) will send them relevant drafts when time permits.

Early termination of Appointment

The Examination Regulations provide that the appointment may be terminated early by either side, subject to due notice being given. They set out non-exhaustive reasons why the ICR might wish to give notice of termination, and states that an External Examiner is normally expected to resign for non-attendance at Exam Board.

When circumstances arise which are considered as possible grounds for termination of a contract, the Academic Dean will write formally to the examiner to inform him that termination is being considered and to offer the examiner an opportunity to explain the circumstances and request that the termination is not effected. The Academic Dean, as Chair of Academic Board, will take the final decision and will notify the examiner, and Academic Board, in writing, of the circumstances of the case, its outcome and where appropriate notice period.

An External Examiner who wishes to terminate the appointment early should normally give 6 months' notice, and this should be included in the letter of appointment.

Student contact with External Examiners

The contacting of external examiners by students regarding any aspect of their programmes of study is prohibited. This is made clear in the Student Handbook, alongside the information about their names and titles, which the QAA encourages to be published.

Reference:

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B7: External Examining

External Examiner Nomination Form

Before completing this form, please review the ICR's Taught Course programmes – External Examiners Policy and Procedure, which details the criteria for the appointment of external examiners.

When completing this form you may use extracts from the proposed external examiner's CV but please do not submit a CV in place of this form.

You are reminded that external examiners are appointed normally for a period of four years only. An external examiner who has previously acted as a taught course external examiner for the ICR may be re-appointed in exceptional circumstances but only after a period of five years has lapsed since their last appointment.
Part One: Proposed external examiner

Full name of proposed external examiner:

Title of proposed external examiner (Professor of / Dr of ……):

Degree programme(s) on which the external examiner will serve: MSc Oncology

Current affiliation of external examiner and full address:

Email address:

Proposed external examiner’s academic and/or professional qualifications:

GMC registration no (if applicable):

Are there any potential conflicts of interests associated with this appointment? Yes/No

Please see the ICR Examination Regulations for further information. If Yes please provide further information in section 4 below.

If applicable, name of existing external examiner that will be replaced and their affiliation:

Signature: Course Director

Registrar

Date:

Part Two: Experience of Proposed External Examiner

Please complete the following section in full. This information allows the proposed external examiner’s eligibility and suitability to examine at the ICR to be considered.
Proposed External Examiner's Taught Course Teaching Experience

Please comment on the proposed external examiner's teaching experience.

Please specify:

2.1

- At what level(s) the proposed external examiner's teaching experience was gained, e.g. Undergraduate/ Postgraduate;
- At which institution(s) this experience was gained;
- How many years' experience has been gained;
- When this experience was gained.

2.2

The ICR's Taught Course programmes – External Examiners Policy and procedure states that an external examiner should normally have:

- Knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality;
- Competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and running assessment procedures;
- Awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula;
- Competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

External examiners should also where applicable meet criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies.

Please confirm (by ticking the box to the right) that on the basis of the information provided, the proposed examiner meets these criteria.

2.3 Prior Experience as an External Examiner
Please give details of any previous or current experience as an external examiner.

Please specify the level(s) at which external examining experience has been gained, e.g. Undergraduate/ Master's/ Research, the number of years' experience gained and at which institution(s) this experience was gained.

*Please note that external examiners appointed by the ICR should not normally hold more than 2 taught course external examiner appointments at any one time.*

If the proposed external examiner has no prior external examining experience, please give details of the training and mentorship that will be provided.

*b) Mentors would normally be an existing external examiner. If a mentor is being appointed, please confirm the name of this person and state whether or not they have agreed to act in this capacity.*

2.4 If the proposed External Examiner has no teaching/ examining experience at the appropriate level, on what grounds is this nomination being proposed?

Part Three: Publications

3 Please supply details of up to 5 recent full publications in peer-reviewed journals with full titles
Part Four: Further Information

Please supply any further information you consider relevant to the proposed external examiner for appointment.

4 E.g. current or previous relevant administrative post(s) held, evidence of training in teaching development, research interests.

If potential conflicts of interests associated with this appointment have been indicated in Part One, provide details of these here.

Please return completed form to: hilary.glover@icr.ac.uk.

Registry, 2nd Floor SRDB, Sutton.

If you have any questions about the form, please contact Amy Moore, Assistant Director (Education Policy and Quality), at amy.moore@icr.ac.uk

Process Flow Chart
Registry Procedure for the consideration of External Examiner Reports for Taught Courses

Responsibility: Overall responsibility for this procedure is with the Academic Dean but is delegated on a day to day basis to the Academic Governance and Events Manager, the Course Directors and the MSc Course Manager.

i) A standard form is sent by e-mail by the Academic Governance and Events Manager to External Examiners in:

1. the first week of April (Spring Exam Board)
2. the first week of October (Autumn Exam Board)

Examiners are asked to comment on the Examination Board, Conduct of Examinations, and Academic Standards as well as providing general comments and suggestions for the development of academic practice.

ii) External Examiners are asked to submit their report to the Academic Governance and Events Manager by the dates below or such other deadline as may be from time to time agreed:

1. the 30th April (Spring Exam Board)
2. the 30th October (Autumn Exam Board)

iii) On receipt of a copy of the External Examiner reports the Academic Governance and Events Manager will contact the finance department and request that the examiner payment is made.

iv) The Academic Governance and Events Manager will make a copy of the report for the file, and send a copy to the Academic Dean, Course Directors and the MSc Course Manager. He or she will check no individuals are named inappropriately in the reports, and will redact them as necessary before copying, in consultation with the Assistant Director of Academic Services (Education Policy and Quality) as necessary.

The report is considered by the Course Directors and the Academic Dean.

If the Academic Dean or Course Directors consider that a serious concern has been raised requiring immediate action they will raise it as a matter of urgency with both Academic Board and TCC members.

v) Course Directors prepare a summary report for the TCC including their comments on the points raised by the External Examiners and the actions they are recommending. If Course Directors consider that no action is required they should provide detailed reasons in their report. This should be sent to TCC members along with a copy of the External Examiner reports.

External Examiner reports should be listed as an agenda item for the summer and autumn TCC. Recommended actions should be clearly documented in TCC minutes.

vi) The Course Directors' Summary is submitted by the TCC (including their recommendations) to the Academic Board along with the External Examiner reports. Academic Board considers the reports and recommendations and agrees the actions which should be taken.
External Examiner reports should be listed as an agenda item for the summer and autumn Academic Board. Recommended actions should be clearly documented in Academic Board minutes.

vii) The relevant extract from Academic Board minutes is sent to any Course Directors who are not members, and to the Course Manager, by the Academic Governance and Events Manager.

viii) The Academic Dean sends a formal response to the External Examiners by the end of July / January respectively. This should detail the actions taken. If the ICR has decided that it is not appropriate to take action s/he should provide a detailed reason why.

ix) The Course Manager maintains a spreadsheet of actions taken in response to External Examiner reports.

x) Details of all correspondence will be held in the Registry.

xi) Comments made by the External Examiners also feed into the annual monitoring process for a Taught Course. External Examiner comments should be included in the Course Director’s annual monitoring report.

xii) Course Directors should be asked to report back to TCC on the impact of the actions taken, as part of their report on the following set of External Examiner Reports.

xii) Both the annual monitoring report and the External Examiner’s reports (redacted if necessary) should be uploaded to the virtual learning environment.