

Criteria and guidance for the engagement of External Examiners

Person specification

External Examiners will need to demonstrate (with appropriate evidence) the following:

i	Have a minimum of 2 years experience (aligned with LJMU definition) of an academic position within UK Higher Education and/or a good demonstrable understanding of the UK Higher Education Sector.
ii	They have appropriate experience in programme design and student assessment at the level of the award(s) for which they are being nominated.
iii	They have the necessary academic experience and subject knowledge to assess standards in an effective manner, identify good practice, and recommend enhancements to enable informed course development. <i>(NB - This is not applicable to professional/industry/practitioner External Examiners)</i>
iv	They have sufficient experience in quality assurance to enable them to discharge their role effectively.
v	They comply with all relevant employment legislation, including safeguarding, as appropriate/applicable.
vi	They have 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).
vii	They meet applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies (where applicable).
vii	They have a minimum of 2 years' experience in the UK. <i>(NB - This is not applicable to professional/industry/practitioner External Examiners)</i>
ix	<u><i>For External Examiners engaged to oversee professional or practical elements (for example, professional placements)</i></u> - Have relevant professional experience.
x	<u><i>For External Examiners of Apprenticeship programmes</i></u> - Have experience to enable them to oversee the work-based aspects of the programme and End Point Assessment.

xi	<i>For External Examiners of Apprenticeship programmes - Have a robust knowledge and understanding of the applicable Apprenticeship Standard(s)</i>
xii	<i>For External Examiners of Apprenticeship programmes – Have an awareness of current changes taking place in relation to Higher Education apprenticeships and an ability to keep up to date with developments in an ongoing way?</i>
xiii	<i>For External Examiners of Apprenticeship programmes - Have experience of being actively involved in the delivery, operation and management of a Higher Education Apprenticeship programme(s)?</i>
xiv	<i>For External Examiners of Distance Learning programmes. – Have experience of managing and facilitating online learning.</i>

In addition, the following are required by Liverpool John Moores University:

- Nominees should normally have both **recent** and **relevant** External Examiner experience. Recent experience is defined as their most recent External Examiner position concluding no more than 2 years prior to the start of their period of engagement at the University. Relevant experience will be judged in relation to **both** discipline and Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) level.
- Nominees should normally have held an academic position, within a UK Higher Education Institution, during the two years leading up to the commencement of their engagement.
- Nominees for collaborative provision programmes must normally have both recent and relevant experience. Should a programme team wish to nominate a potential External Examiner for collaborative provision, who does not have both recent and relevant experience, then a rationale for this decision must be included within the nomination form. This rationale should also include, evidence-based, assurances with regard to their suitability, based upon their experience and expertise.

Decisions on the approval of such arrangements will be risk-based, and will be conditional upon:

- a) Allocation of mentor, and
- b) The External Examiner completing, as a minimum, the following sessions from the university's suite of External Examiner training, during their first year of engagement:
 - The Role of the External Examiner.
 - LJMU Academic Framework Regulations and their use in practice.
 - Marking, Moderation and Boards of Examiners.
 - External Examiner Annual Reports

The mentoring arrangement must be proposed at the point of nomination, and must comply with the university's agreed [Criteria, as set out in 'Points to Consider – Mentoring Arrangements'- available here](#)

Academic Registry will monitor the External Examiner's successful completion of the above training sessions.

Where a proposed External Examiner does not fully meet the university's requirements relating to previous External Examiner experience, External Examiner Panel may make a risk-based judgement, based on the nominee's overall profile, as to whether a mentor is required.

Conflicts of interest

Nominees will not be engaged as External Examiners where they are:

i	A member of a governing body or committee of the engaging body or one of its partners, delivery organisations or support providers, or a current employee of the engaging body or one of its partners, delivery organisations or support providers
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 knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study
v	Anyone significantly involved 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
vi	A former member of Liverpool John Moores University staff (within the past 5 years, or where there are still active students who were taught by the nominee)
vii	A former Liverpool John Moores University student (within the past 5 years, or where there are still active students who were taught with the nominee)

In addition, nominees will not normally be engaged as External Examiners if their engagement results in:

viii	A reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another higher education provider? <i>Please check the University External Examiner Database on WebHub</i>
ix	The succession of an External Examiner by a colleague from the examiner's home department and provider? <i>Please check the University External Examiner Database on WebHub</i>
x	The nominee holding a total of more than two substantial undergraduate engagements concurrently, or equivalent
xi	The engagement of an individual who has acted as External Advisor/External Panel Representative for the Validation/Periodic Programme Review of the programmes for which they have been nominated.

In exceptional circumstances (e.g. in extremely specialised subject areas where a limited number of institutions offer similar programmes), Liverpool John Moores University may consider different 'Departments' to be defined as different subject groups. This would depend greatly on the organisation of the examiner's home institution in comparison with Liverpool John Moores University, and such nominations would be carefully considered on a case-by-case basis. Programme teams would be required to demonstrate clearly that no direct conflict of interest would arise from such an engagement.

There may be other circumstances in which a potential conflict of interest would need to be considered. In these instances, programme leaders should make the circumstances explicit on the nomination form, and should also give an explanation of how conflicts of interest would be managed. They should also give an explanation of why there is no alternative to this nomination.

Former External Advisors/External Panel Members

Individuals who have previously acted as External Advisors/External Panel Representatives for Validation or Periodic Programme Review Panels should only be considered in exceptional circumstances, and for exceptional reasons, i.e. if the programme is focused upon a niche discipline that is not delivered widely throughout the Sector.

In the event that an External Advisor/External Panel Member is subsequently engaged as the programme's External Examiner, this will normally be subject to a reduced tenure of 3 years, with no option to extend their period of engagement for an additional year.

Period of engagement

The duration of an External Examiner's period of engagement will normally be for four years. Exceptional extensions of one year to ensure continuity will be considered.

Where a former External Advisor/External Panel Representative has been engaged as an External Examiner, their period of engagement will normally be limited to 3 years.

An upcoming periodic programme review cannot be the sole reason for seeking to extend the period of engagement of an incumbent External Examiner.

An External Examiner may be reengaged in exceptional circumstances but only after a period of five years or more has elapsed since their last engagement.

External Examiners normally hold no more than two external examiner engagements for taught programmes/modules at any point in time.

First-time External Examiners

An External Examiner should normally have enough recent external examining or comparable related experience to confirm competence in assessing students in the subject area. If the proposed External Examiner has no previous external examining experience at the appropriate level, the nomination could be supported by either:

- Other external examining experience (for example, external examination of PhDs, external examination of professional/work related activity, etc).
- Extensive internal examining experience.
- Other relevant and recent experience likely to support the External Examiner role.

However, where applicable, such nominees should preferably only be engaged where they form part of a team of experienced External Examiners on a programme, or where a mentor has been identified.

All new (inexperienced) External Examiners will normally be allocated a mentor. This mentor should be a more experienced External Examiner who is engaged with a cognate programme, and is examining at the same level at Liverpool John Moores University during the initial stages of the new nominee's period of engagement.

As stated above, External Examiners for collaborative programmes should always be experienced External Examiners.

Nominees who have not held an academic position, within UK Higher Education, 2 years prior to the commencement of their proposed engagement

Should a programme team wish to nominate:

- A potential External Examiner from outside of Higher Education or,
- A potential External Examiner who has not held an academic position, within UK Higher Education, 2 years prior to the commencement of their proposed engagement.

A robust rationale for this decision must be included within the nomination form. This rationale should provide evidence-based confirmation as to how the programme team has been assured that the nominee has a current and up to date knowledge and understanding of UK Higher Education.

Teams of External Examiners

Where teams of External Examiners are used, there must be an appropriate balance and expertise within this team. The proposed External Examiner must complement the External Examining team in terms of expertise and examining experience. There must be an appropriate balance between academic and professional practitioners. The range of academic perspectives necessary to the programme should be represented in the External Examining team. If the programme is associated with, or may lead to, a professional award at least one practitioner with appropriate experience should be in the team. The external examining experience in the team as a whole must be sufficient and wide ranging. If the team of External Examiners is large, a Chief External Examiner may be nominated. Where the University has identified a Chief External Examiner, they must have sufficient external examining experience to take an overview of the programme of study and ensure that a consistent standard is maintained across subjects. The phasing of engagements within the team should be structured, to ensure continuity.

For guidance on new/inexperienced External Examiners who are engaged with as part of a team, please see *Points to Consider – Mentoring Arrangements for External Examiners*, [here](#).

