# External Examiner Appointment Process Guidance Notes

The appointment of an External Examiner is subject to a number of requirements which are set out within HR law and practice, and Quality Assurance Agency guidance. This means that there are number of factors that we must assure ourselves of before any External Examiner appointment can be confirmed. You can find more specific information on these in the Code of Conduct for Boards of Examiners and Aston’s recruitment policies and practices.

These codes and practices exist to support the effectiveness and impartiality of the External Examining system as well as comply with regulatory and legal requirements.

## Period of Service:

External Examiners are normally only able to serve a maximum term of four years. This can be extended through a waiver of regulations where there is compelling reason to do so.

The date at which an appointment is due to end is noted on the External Examiner spreadsheet for each College. College Quality Officers will be able to access this information and will remind programme Directors, or nominated representatives, when an External Examiner is nearing the end of their period of service. An updated spreadsheet of all External Examiners, which highlights those in the final year of their service, is produced by the Central Quality Team at the start of each academic year.

Prior to the previous External Examiner completing their period of service, Programme Directors, or nominated representatives, should seek and identify a suitable replacement. Time should be allowed for, both the identification of suitable candidates and, the approval process within the College and via Senate to be completed prior to the start of the academic year for which a new External Examiner is required.

## Pre Appointment Questions and Right to Work Checks

The *Recommendation for the Appointment of an External Examiner for a Taught Programme or Modules* contains the items that need be confirmed and verified in sections B and C. These should be ticked off on this form as part of the initial discussions with the potential Examiner. Checks should also ensure that there are no reciprocal arrangement with cognate programmes with the institution where the Examiner works (A list of Aston Staff Examining at other institutions is available on the External Examiner Shared Drive, which College Quality Officer will be able to check against). A further check should be made to ensure that no other examiners from the same institution are reporting to same Examination Board (An up-to-date list of current examiners, their institutions and Board they report to is also available on the External Examiner Shared Drive).

Waivers of Regulations may be sought where a potential examiner does not fully meet all aspects of the criteria providing there are good reasons to do so. The quality Team will be able to provide further guidance on waivers of regulations, if needed. However, the Right to Work in the UK must be met and evidenced in all cases.

Right To Work checks are a legal requirement. Where a potential Examiner holds a UK or EU passport, a copy of the documentation will normally be sufficient at this stage, but the College will need complete a full Right Tow Work check prior to processing any fee payments However, for non-EU passport holders, a full right to work check will be required before any recommendation for appointment can be approved. The right to work in the UK is a legal requirement of any appointment.

## Information and Documentation Required

Information about the potential External Examiner and the specific programme(s) and/or module(s) should be recorded in section A of the *Recommendation for the Appointment of an External Examiner for a Taught Programme or Modules*. This is also where the criteria for selection should be completed, which should outline the reasons that this particular individual is desirable for the role. This should be supported by an up-to-date CV for the potential External Examiner and should part of the basis of the selection criteria.

## College Approval

The Recommendation form along with a copy of the External Examiner’s CV should be submitted to the College’s Learning and Teaching Committee, or one of its delegated sub-committees, for College approval.

The College LTC, or sub-committee, may identify further issues that need to be resolved. This may be further information required or a need for a Waiver of Regulations. If these issues cannot be resolved, it may be necessary to identify a new potential External Examiner and to discuss the reasons with the previously recommended candidate.

Once approved by the College Learning and Teaching Committee, or a delegated sub-committee, the recommendation can be sent for Senate approval. The Examiner can only begin to discharge their duties once Senate approval has been granted and the External Examiner has accepted the role.

## Senate Approval

The Recommendation for Appointment form, CV and Right To Work documentation is then sent to the Central Quality Officer for further verification. Any issues identified at this stage will be referred back to the College for resolution. If these issues cannot be resolved, it may be necessary to identify a new potential External Examiner and to discuss the reasons with the previously recommended candidate.

Once any outstanding issues have been resolved, the recommendation is considered by the Pro Vice Chancellor Education, or a nominee, for approval. If the Pro Vice Chancellor Education has any connection to the programme of study, approval may be sought from the Vice Chancellor.

Where the appointment is not approved, the Central Quality Officer will contact the College. If the concerns can be addressed, the recommendation may be re-submitted with further information or clarification. Where these issues cannot be resolved, it may be necessary to identify a new potential External Examiner and to discuss the reasons with the previously recommended candidate.

The Central Quality Team maintains a list of all approved appointments which is circulated to Senate meetings.

## Contacting the External Examiner

Once approved, the Central Quality team will write to the potential External Examiner informing them of the approval of the recommendation and asking them to confirm their acceptance of the appointment by returning a signed Acceptance Form.

The information sent to the potential External Examiner at this stage will include:

* Titles of the programme(s) and/or module(s) for which they will be responsible
* A link to induction information
* A link to General Regulations, Regulations on the Conduct of Boards of Examiners and the Assessment Regulations and Policies
* Fee Information
* Information on using The staff Portal and making Expense Claims
* The Acceptance from
* A Bank details notification form
* Worker Privacy notice

The letter will also be copied to the College Quality Officer, or nominated contact, and a copy will be stored in the College’s External Examiner folder on the External Examiner shared drive. Access to this drive is restricted to Specified Quality Officers and nominated contacts only.

## Acceptance of the Appointment

Once a completed Acceptance From has been returned by the External Examiner to the Central Quality Team, the External Examiner may begin to discharge their duties. If this is not received, the College should contact the potential External Examiner to remind them that this needed in order for them to commence the role. Failure to complete and return the form will be considered non-acceptance of the role and it may be necessary to identify a new potential External Examiner and inform the previous potential External Examiner of this.

## Issuing Network Details

Upon receipt of the completed acceptance form, the Central Quality Team will update the spreadsheet and forward the documentation to HR who will issue network details for the newly appointed External Examiner to the College Contact. The College Contact should ensure that these details are passed on to the Examiner as soon as possible for them to be able to access our systems and information.

## Further Actions Following the Acceptance of Role

### Induction

The induction of External Examiners is important in ensuring that they understand their role, the organisation and its support mechanisms. This will support them in undertaking their role and facilitates an effective working relationship.

Aston’s approach to the induction of Taught Programme External Examiners is set out in the External Examiner Framework document.

### Right To Work Check

If a full right to work check has not already been completed, this will need to be undertaken the first time the External Examiner comes onto campus, or via video call where attendance on campus is not possible. This should be carried before any fee payments become due. College Quality Officers and other College staff are trained to carry out these checks and further support can be obtained by contacting Human Resources.

### Information Provision

There will still be some key information that the College will need to provide in order for the Examiner to carry out their role. This should include:

* All relevant programme and module specifications
* Any student or programme handbooks
* Learning and Teaching Strategies if separate to the programme specifications
* Information about any relevant professional issues, such as fitness to practise, and any features that relate the specific discipline
* Dates of Examination Boards

## Further Sources of Information:

* <http://www.aston.ac.uk/staff/hr/recruitment/immigration/>
* <http://www.qaa.ac.uk//en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/external-expertise>
* <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/clipp/quality/a-z/externalexaminers-framework/index>
* [Aston Regulations Including The Code of Conduct for Boards of Examiners](https://www2.aston.ac.uk/clipp/quality/a-z/general-regulations)
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>