

## External Examiners

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### Eligibility and selection

1. In the selection of a nominee for appointment as an External Examiner, the following criteria shall apply:
  - a. an appointee shall be external to the College;
  - b. an appointee shall normally be an academic member of staff from another UK higher education institution. Assessment Boards must seek permission from the Academic Standards Sub-Committee to appoint an External Examiner from overseas;
  - c. an appointee must have relevant current experience and expertise in the discipline being assessed, including the design and operation of assessment, in order to speak authoritatively on academic standards germane to the discipline and should be familiar with the standards and procedures of university-level education in the United Kingdom;
  - d. an appointee should have relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate;
  - e. an appointee must have competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience;
  - f. former lay members of Council, students or employees of King’s College London shall not be appointed before a period of five academic years has elapsed;
  - g. any individual who has been involved in the validation or approval of a programme as an external expert or similar will be excluded from acting as an External Examiner for that programme before a period of three academic years has elapsed;
  - h. an appointee shall not have any close personal, professional or contractual relationship with staff or students involved in the delivery of the programme nor be involved in any activity that could be considered a conflict of interest;

- i. an appointee shall not normally belong to an institution in which a member of staff of the College is appointed to act as an External Examiner in the same subject and at the same level. It is recognised that, in certain subjects, this situation might be unavoidable. In such instances a case must be referred to Academic Standards Sub-Committee by the Chair of the relevant Sub-Board;
- j. an appointee shall not belong to an institution to which an existing or exiting examiner belongs;
- k. an appointee shall not have been 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 programmes or modules in question;
- l. an appointee shall not hold an external examiner role for more than two universities.

## **Appointment**

- 2. Except as provided for below, an External Examiner is normally appointed for a period of four years with no option for an extension. On completion of the appointment, an External Examiner will not normally be eligible for re-appointment until a further five years have elapsed. In exceptional circumstances reappointment may occur earlier on agreement with the Vice Principal (Education).
- 3. External Examiners appointed to MBBS and BDS Part Boards will normally be appointed for a period of five years with no option for an extension. On completion of the appointment, an External Examiner will not normally be eligible for re-appointment until a further five years have elapsed.
- 4. Where a nomination is approved, the appointee shall be informed within one month of the date of the approval. Normally, the appointment will commence upon the expiry of the appointment of the previous External Examiner and will coincide with the start of the academic year.
- 5. If an External Examiner is no longer eligible to hold office (under the above or is unable or unwilling to fulfil the duties specified below), or there is a conflict of interest that cannot be satisfactorily resolved, their appointment shall be terminated on the recommendation of the Vice Principal (Education).
- 6. If either party has cause to terminate the appointment, this should normally be arranged to take effect at the end of an academic year, but in any case, is subject to three months' notice by either party.
- 7. A Sub-Board may request an extension of an External Examiner's appointment beyond four years in order to meet local requirements. Such a request must be approved by the Chair of the relevant Sub-Board and submitted through the Faculty for approval by the Assessment

Board Chair who will then notify the Quality, Standards and Enhancement team. Extensions will not normally be granted for more than one year.

8. An External Examiner is normally appointed to one programme or components of a programme. Additional programmes may only be assigned to an External Examiner's duties on approval from the Chair of Academic Standards Sub-Committee. Where required, King's Online Managed Programmes may be exempt from this requirement, but in no instance should they have more than 4 External Examiners appointed.

## **Induction and information**

9. The College will provide External Examiners with appropriate information relating to the Academic Regulations and procedures on an annual basis.

## **Duties**

10. External Examiners shall assist in the maintenance of the standard of awards of King's College London and advise if there is a falling below national standards in the subject area for which the External Examiner is responsible.
11. External Examiners shall seek to ensure that assessment processes are fair, rigorous and operated equitably.
12. External Examiners shall have regard to the totality of the degree or other programme in question and shall be involved in the decisions relating to the award of each degree or other qualification. Due to subject specialism in the cases of LLB, MBBS and BDS External Examiners shall have oversight of components of the degree.
13. In cases where part of the programme is delivered by partner institutions the External Examiner shall have oversight of the assessments being delivered.
14. External Examiners are required to comment upon and give approval to all draft examination papers and other forms of assessment with a significant contribution to the module and/or programme for which they are responsible. A record will be kept of all approvals.
15. External Examiners have the right to inspect any script or other assessed material relevant to the duties of the appointment and are required to sample scripts or other assessed material, including coursework.
16. External Examiners are required to advise whether marking schemes and schemes for the classification of honours or award of degrees and diplomas are consistent with internal and external standards.
17. External Examiners may be called upon to adjudicate in cases of conflict between internal examiners.

18. External Examiners may not change individual marks (except where adjudicating) but may recommend appropriate action to ameliorate systematic issues in marking.
19. External Examiners are ex-officio members of Sub-Boards and are invited to attend all meetings of the Sub-Boards to which they are appointed. They must, as a minimum requirement, attend the main meeting of the Sub-Board held to determine the results of assessments. They may be requested to attend other meetings as notified by the Chair. External Examiners should report to the Sub-Board any areas of good practice and key issues identified during the year.
20. In the case of first degrees in Medicine and Dentistry, External Examiners appointed solely for the purpose of conducting clinical examinations shall not be required to attend meetings of the Sub-Board.
21. The duties of External Examiners appointed solely to conduct clinical examinations in the Faculties of Medicine and of Dentistry shall be as determined by the Executive Dean of Faculty concerned.
22. External Examiners shall approve the results and the final award recommendations of the Sub-Board.
23. External Examiners are required to submit to the Principal, at the conclusion of the assessment period, a written report on the form provided. The report shall be submitted within one calendar month of the main meeting held to determine the results of students in the relevant academic year. The report shall include comment on the adequacy of the standard of the assessment and other matters relevant to the teaching and assessment of the programme or modules courses. The contents of the report will be brought to the attention of those teaching the programme or module, students on the programme or module, the Chair of the relevant Sub-Board, the Chair of the relevant Assessment Board and the Executive Dean of Faculty. Academic Standards Sub-Committee will consider an annual report on action taken further to issues raised in External Examiners' reports.
24. Failure to submit a report within two months of the meeting held to determine the results of students will result in a recommendation that the External Examiners' appointment is terminated.
25. External Examiners may be invited to attend any meeting convened to consider an appeal against the decision of the Sub-Board of which they are members.
26. External Examiners shall observe the Academic Regulations and Academic Policies regarding confidentiality of setting and marking assessments, proceedings of Sub-Boards and all results and awards.
27. External Examiners will be expected to attend the College for as much time as is reasonably necessary for the duties of the post to be properly discharged.
28. It is the responsibility of Chairs of Sub-Boards to ensure that External Examiners are given adequate notice of any meeting which they are required to attend. An External Examiner

unable to attend a meeting due to illness or other good cause should endeavour to be available for consultation. In such circumstances the absence of the External Examiner from the meeting will not render it invalid.

29. The Chair of a Sub-Board will determine the distribution of work between External Examiners. In those cases where External Examiners see a selection of scripts, the guiding principle for such selection must be that the External Examiners should have enough evidence to carry out their duties. In general, all scripts should be made available to the External Examiners on request, but their attention should be drawn to a sample of scripts from the top, the middle and the bottom of the range (including a sample of scripts assessed internally as first class/distinctions or failures) and to the scripts of students with a borderline overall classification. An External Examiner should also see all scripts where the examiners have been unable to reach agreement on the marks.

### **Procedure for investigating concerns about academic standards and quality**

30. External Examiners should raise issues or concerns they may have about academic standards and quality with the Sub-Board and in their report to the Principal. External Examiners have the right to raise any matter of serious concern in confidence in a separate report to the Principal.
31. Other concerns about the College's academic standards and quality (including concerns about the accuracy and completeness of information published by the College) should be raised in writing, in the first instance, with the relevant Head of Department/Division or Executive Dean of Faculty, who shall normally respond within 14 days. The Head of Department/Division or Executive Dean of Faculty may delegate the investigation of the concern to another senior staff member who may respond on behalf of the Head of Department/Division or Executive Dean of Faculty.
32. If the person who has raised the concern remains dissatisfied following the response from the Department/Division or Faculty, they may request a review of the Department/Division or Faculty's response by the Vice Principal (Education). The request for a review must be submitted in writing within 14 days of the response being issued. The Vice Principal (Education) will normally respond within 60 days of receipt of the request for a review and the response shall be final. The Vice Principal (Education) may delegate the review up to a Senior Vice President who may respond on the Vice Principal's behalf.
33. This procedure shall not be used for concerns or issues which have been or should more appropriately be raised under another College procedure. Third parties may not use this procedure for raising concerns or issues regarding the College's relationship with a particular student, as the College provides students with procedures for doing so.