

Criteria for the appointment of an External Scrutineer

Input from independent external experts at the approval stage for new and significantly changed programmes is important to safeguard academic standards and ensure comparability for similar programmes across the UK higher education sector. All proposals for consideration by PMAP must be accompanied by a report from an independent external expert following the guidelines provided and on the template provided. The Chair of PMAP, when reviewing the documentation for a PMAP meeting, will return a proposal to the faculty/department if this requirement is not met.

External Scrutineers must be independent of UCL in order to be in a position to contribute objectively to the approval process. This means that the Scrutineer should not:

1. Be a current or recent external examiner at UCL. Previous external examiners may be used as long as there has been at least a five-year gap between the end of the external examiner's period of office at UCL and being used as an External Scrutineer.
2. Be a current or recent member of staff of UCL. Staff who have been employed at UCL must have a five-year period between their last employment at UCL and use as an External Scrutineer.
3. Have been retired from a position in an institution of higher education for more than three years. In such cases there must be evidence that the External Scrutineer has 'currency' in their specialist area of academic expertise, for example, through publication in refereed journals, conference presentations.
4. Be a recent student of UCL. Where the External Scrutineer used has been a student of UCL there must be at least a five-year gap between receiving a UCL award and being used as an External Scrutineer.
5. Be a member of staff or work for a current partner organisation with which UCL has worked with in collaboration. Where a member of staff of a previous partner organisation is used there must be a five-year gap between the termination of the partnership and being used as an External Scrutineer.
6. Where it is appropriate to use someone from industry (normally programmes with a profession accreditation element) you must evidence how their experience qualifies them to comment on the academic content of a programme of study. For example, evidence of presentations or papers submitted to conferences or publication in refereed journals.

To achieve greater consistency in relation to the comments, suggestions and analyses that External Scrutineers provide for programme and/or module proposals all comments should be made on the External Scrutineer Report template.

A programme will not be submitted to a PMAP for approval without External Scrutineer comments being provided on this template. PMAP may also return the External Scrutineer's report if the comments are considered to be inadequate, for example where each section of the template does not have an entry.