



# QH Supplement 5E: Appointing external specialists for academic approval

## 1. Principles

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- 1.1 An external member is appointed to every Course Design and Approval stakeholder consultation and an external specialist is required to comment on all medium impact proposals for modifications to courses.
- 1.2 This external will provide an independent, objective and informed perspective on the proposal being considered.
- 1.3 An external may be drawn from a higher education institution or may be a practitioner from industry, commerce or a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB). For some stakeholder consultations, two external members may be required (academic / practitioner) – this will be determined at the course approval planning meeting.
- 1.4 Where an existing or proposed course is seeking (re)accreditation from a PSRB then that organisation may provide the external.

## 2. Qualifications, experience and expertise

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- 2.1 The course sponsor (leader) normally seeks a suitable external – but may consult with the Head of Department and School Standards and Quality Manager (SSQM).
- 2.2 A proposed external should be able to provide the following:
  - a. a comparative judgment on the standard and quality of the proposal (based on their familiarity with similar courses outside NTU);
  - b. an understanding of current developments in the academic or professional field;
  - c. a familiarity with the knowledge and skills that employers and / or the professions require;
  - d. an appreciation of effective learning, teaching and assessment practices in the subject.
- 2.3 A proposed external should preferably have sufficient recent and relevant experience of acting as an external validation, review or accreditation member, or

have comparable related external experience that indicates competence for the role.

- 2.4 If a proposed external is inexperienced in terms of external scrutiny, then they will need to have had recent:
- a. internal involvement in validation, review, accreditation or similar activities;
  - b. other relevant and recent experience likely to support the proposed role.

### 3. Independence

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- 3.1 An external should not be associated with the University in any way (currently or within the past five years) or have been closely associated (professionally or personally or otherwise) with someone who has a relationship to the University (currently or within the past five years).
- 3.2 For example, the external should not be:
- a. personally associated with the sponsorship of current students studying the course under scrutiny;
  - b. involved in the assessment of students following the course under scrutiny;
  - c. likely to be in a position to influence significantly the employment of existing or potential students following the course under scrutiny.

#### Further information

- While the external may subsequently become an external examiner for the course, an NTU appointed external examiner (currently or within the past five years) may not act as the external at approval.

### 4. Approval of the external

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- 4.1 The criteria for appointment are intended to help ensure impartiality of judgement and achieve objectivity.
- 4.2 However, the University accepts that decisions about the suitability of an external will often require a balance to be struck such that the criteria will need to be weighed against each other.
- 4.3 The support of the SSQM should be sought for the course sponsor's preferred external (there is no need for referral to SASQC/or the completion of nomination forms) before sign off by CADQ.
- 4.4 CADQ retains the right to submit the proposal to the Chair of ASQC, or the course design and approval sub-committee, for consideration if there is doubt about the impartiality or expertise of the individual.

### 5. Administration

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- 5.1 For external members, the course sponsor should make initial contact with a proposed individual in order to ascertain their appropriateness and their availability for the stakeholder consultation. Following initial contact, CADQ will make formal contact with that individual.
- 5.2 In compliance with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, external members are required to undertake a Right to Work check. The course sponsor should inform the proposed external of this requirement when making initial contact. Following sign off of the proposed external, CADQ and HR will liaise with the external colleague regarding the process.
- 5.3 A fee is payable to an external specialist participating in a stakeholder consultation. CADQ will arrange payment for one external member. Additional external members will normally be paid by the School.
- 5.4 For external specialists considering proposals for significant modifications, it is the School's responsibility to identify and engage the individual. The arrangements for the external's submission and consequent consideration is the responsibility of SASQC. CADQ's role here is to agree the appropriateness of the proposed specialist.

<b>Policy owner</b>
CADQ

<b>Change history</b>			
<i>Version:</i>	<i>Approval date:</i>	<i>Implementation date:</i>	<i>Nature of significant revisions:</i>
Sept 2016	30.09.16	01.10.16	Included reference to required Right to Work checks for external DAG members
Jan 2017	24.01.17	24.01.17	Additional reference made to external specialists considering significant modifications
Sept 2017	12.09.17	01.10.17	None
Sept 2018	12.09.18	01.10.18	None
Sept 2019	11.09.19	01.10.19	None
Sept 2020	16.09.20	01.10.20	Removal of references to the thematic changes route for approval Reference to current COVID-19 approval arrangements included
Oct 2021	21.10.21	21.10.21	Replacement of reference to DAGs with Design Sprints.
Sept 2022	22.09.22	01.10.22	Arrangements for payment of external members clarified.
Nov 2023	02.11.23	23.11.23	Minor change to name of supplement to remove 'guidance'.
Sept 2024	19.09.24	01.10.24	None

<b>Equality Impact Analysis</b>		
<i>Version:</i>	<i>EIA date:</i>	<i>Completed by:</i>