

The Role of the External Reviewer

The aim of external review is to obtain expert feedback on a proposed programme by objective, respected peers. The external reviewer should be a recognized expert in the proposed area of study. It is the responsibility of the programme proposer/s to provide the names and contact details of three potential external reviewers when submitting a proposal for a new programme. External reviewers should be well-respected peers who are academics or recognized experts in the field and who are not affiliated to the University of Malta in any way.

Proposals for new programmes are normally referred to only one of the identified reviewers. The decision on the choice of reviewer rests with the Programme Validation Committee (PVC) which may decide to appoint an External Reviewer who is not identified by the proposer. In order to eliminate any form of bias, information pertaining to the choice of reviewer is withheld from programme originators.

The external reviewer is required to evaluate the course content and provide comprehensive feedback on various aspects of the proposed programme such as the programme description/goals, the rationale for the proposed programme, the study-unit descriptions, the intended learning outcomes, the sequence of the content, the reading lists provided and the proposed teaching and assessment methods.

In particular, the external reviewer is asked to consider whether:

- (a) The programme appears to include study-units that address core issues as relevant to the area of study;
- (b) The learning outcomes as articulated are sufficient and appropriate to the area of study;
- (c) There is evidence that the course is similar to related courses offered by reputable institutions;
- (d) The course is pitched at a level that is typical of a qualification (i.e. postgraduate diploma/certificate, postgraduate degree) in the area especially as evidenced from the reading lists.

The material provided to the external reviewer for the purpose of this review consists of the Stage 2 proposal form, as well the study-unit approval forms for all study-units comprising the programme. Following consideration of this material, the external reviewer submits an evaluation of the programme content in the form of a short report addressing the main strengths and weaknesses of the proposed programme.

Following this, an anonymised copy of the external reviewer's report is made available to the programme proposer/s. In addition, the proposed programme is discussed in light of the external reviewer's comments at a meeting of the PVC. Recommendations are then made with respect to any required amendments to the proposed programme as highlighted by the external reviewer's report. These recommendations are communicated in turn to the programme proposer/s, whose responsibility it is to ensure that the required amendments are effected before the programme is approved or otherwise.