Guidance on the use of External Advisers for Programme Approval

1. Schools should identify a suitable external adviser to comment on the new programme proposal, as detailed in section 3.2.2 of Annex C of the Code of Practice for Taught Programmes of Study (https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/taught/annexc.html) or section 3.3 of Annex B of the Code of Practice for Research Programmes (https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/research/annexb.html). The role of the external adviser is to provide expert subject-area advice and comment during the design stage, prior to consideration of the proposal by the School Education Committee or the School Graduate Studies Committee, as appropriate to the proposal.

2. The external adviser should be either an academic in a relevant discipline, a member of a professional or statutory body, an employer with strong links in the subject area or a key person from a relevant business or industry.

3. The external adviser may not be a former Kent staff member or student unless a minimum of five years has elapsed.

4. External advisers should complete the pro forma and are asked to comment on (as appropriate to the proposal):
   - Potential market for the programme.
   - Curriculum content of the programme – are all subjects included that would be expected in order to achieve the award title, and does the programme fit together as a coherent entity?
   - Is the programme subject area appropriate and set at the correct level?
   - Does the programme content articulate/progress in an appropriate manner and at the correct level?
   - Does the programme content reflect the relevant QAA subject benchmark statement (if applicable)?
   - Does the programme content reflect any relevant professional or statutory body guidelines?
   - Any other areas of note considered appropriate by the external adviser.

5. The School should make a brief written response addressing the issues and comments raised by the external adviser and detailing how these have been taken on board. Both the external commentary and the School’s response should accompany the programme proposal throughout the programme approval process.

6. External advisers, where their contribution is made in attendance as part of a faculty panel, should be appointed and remunerated under the same terms as external reviewers in periodic programme review.
7. While it may, in some cases, be appropriate for someone who has acted as an external referee or adviser in curriculum redesign or in the development of a new programme to become an external examiner subsequent to fulfilling the advisory role, such an appointment would require formal justification by the School concerned, so as to prevent any appearance of conflict of interest with regard to the contribution made by the external adviser in programme approval.

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