



SCHOOL REVIEW SELECTION CRITERIA & PROCESS FOR EXTERNAL REVIEWER/S

Number of External Reviewer/s

1. There will normally be two External Reviewers. In cases where a large school or group of Schools is/are being reviewed or where there are reasons for a more in-depth review¹, more than two External Reviewers may be appointed, at the discretion of the Chair (PVC). The Chair, in discussion with the Dean of the Faculty concerned as appropriate, will decide how many External Reviewers are required, and their required skills, background and experience. The total number of External Reviewers may vary from one School Review to another. The External Reviewers will be expected to look holistically at school activities, and to comment on all aspects of the review. They should take a proactive role during the Review: in particular, taking the lead on discussions during Review sessions, with the support of the Chair.

2. External Reviewers, as recognised experts in their fields, should be entirely independent and professionally objective. They should provide critical judgement, ensure the objectivity of the review process, and help to determine how the school compares to similar schools they have had experience of. Reviewers should bring an informed and unbiased view to the assessment of the School. External Reviewers should judge whether the plans of the School are appropriate, considering such factors as the current condition of the School, trends in relevant academic areas, the nature of the School, and the characteristics of the stakeholders and customers it serves. All Reviewers will be provided with a list of key themes/issues prior to the Review and these (including any additional themes/issues arising closer to the Review) are discussed during a Panel meeting at the beginning of the Review visit. External Reviewers are free to address other issues that arise during the course of the Review.

School Nomination of External Reviewer(s)

3. The Chair decides the skills, background and experience required of the External Reviewers at the start of each Review process, and advises the School of their requirements. Although External Reviewers will be expected to have appropriate research and education standing, the Chair may also decide that the reviewer should have other skills, such as academic leadership experience.

4. The School will then be asked to provide a **long list**² containing the names of suggested external academics who could act as External Reviewers on the Panel. The long list will allow the Chair to select their first preference candidates, as well as a number of reserve candidates. In areas where the subject is accredited, externals from the accrediting body may be appropriate, and in Reviews where there are more than two externals, one of the Reviewers may be industrially- or professionally-based, rather than from another academic institution. In some cases, a consultant with a specific expertise may be nominated (the Chair and Dean will decide whether this is appropriate).

5. Although the precise skills, background and experience required will be decided by the Chair, in general

¹ As an example, a more in-depth Review may be considered more appropriate following the Research Exercise Framework, or after a recent HE Review.

² Up to 8-10 names where possible: a minimum of six is preferred External Reviewers.

A) External reviewers SHOULD:

- be familiar with the subject taught in the relevant programmes of study and have a good knowledge of a similar degree, diploma, certificate, etc,
- be sufficiently knowledgeable and expert in their individual field to have an expectation of how the subject will develop in the next few years,
- be familiar with UK higher education, so as to provide assurance that their judgement in matters of standards and future developments in the field are sound,
- be balanced, in terms of geography, gender, minority representation and experience, and
- where possible, provide a balance in representing the programmes and areas within the School.

B) External reviewers SHOULD NOT:

- be an external examiner in the School concerned, or have carried out this role within the previous 3 years,
- have held a post at the University of Bristol for at least three years prior to the Review data, and not have had formal links with the University during the previous three years (e.g. acting as an auditor, reviewer, collaborator, consultant etc.),
- have any potential conflict of interest³. Every effort should be made to ensure that External Reviewers have no direct links (personal or professional) i.e. research collaborations with the School,
- be from a School where there is an external examining arrangement with the host School,
- have been an External Reviewer for the previous School Review,
- be based overseas (unless in exceptional circumstances). The preference must always be to identify suitable External Reviewers from within the UK and/or Europe,
- have any direct contact with the School under review and vice-versa, outside of the Review process.

C) It is DESIRABLE that:

- where nominees from outside the higher education system - e.g. from industry or professional bodies, or who are consultants - are submitted, because they have knowledge/experience of the appropriate area of study, this should be clearly indicated to the Chair/Panel,
- External Reviewers have some previous experience of external examining for taught programmes (Schools should indicate where this is not the case).

³ Schools must disclose in writing to the Chair any potential conflicts of interest for an External Reviewer in conducting the review.

Selection of External Reviewers

Once the Chair has determined the required skills background and experience desirable in External Reviewers, Schools should send their External Reviewer nominations, including links to website bios or CVs (if available), to the Review Co-ordinator.

The School may indicate its priorities and preferences with regard to the strategic make-up of the Review Panel, which the Chair will take into consideration. The Chair has final responsibility for the make-up of the Review Panel.

6. Once the preferred External Reviewers have been selected by the Chair, the Review Co-ordinator will then approach the potential external reviewers to invite them to take part in the Review. (n.b. In some circumstances the Chair may deem it appropriate for the Head of School to approach agreed Externals, to invite them to participate in the Review, directly. This should be agreed with the kick-off group, and the School should liaise with the Review Co-ordinator accordingly).

Reimbursement and Fees

7. For a review duration of 1.5 days including an evening dinner, the University offers a fee of £1,000 for External Reviewers (less deductions for tax and National Insurance), plus reasonable expenses and accommodation costs.