

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

TERMS OF REFERENCE: EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

1. Purposes and Functions

The General Academic Regulations of the University provide for the appointment of External Examiners to “moderate all formal examinations” (Regulation 6.4). The function of External Examiners can be amplified as follows:-

- 1.1 to show externally that academic standards of the National University of Science and Technology are comparable with those of the international university community and to ensure that the assessment system is fair and fairly operated in the marking and classification of candidates;
- 1.2 to act as an independent source of assessment in specialist subjects not only confirming or amending the internal marks but commenting and giving advice on course content, balance and structure, degree programmes on assessment procedures and other matters relative to the programmes;
- 1.3 to moderate borderline cases between ‘pass’ and ‘fail’ and between different classes within the marking scheme and to help adjudicate in cases of conflicting marking;
- 1.4 to confer with the appropriate panels of Internal Examiners and assist the panel in preparing recommendations for the appropriate Boards of Examiners. The External Examiner may, with the concurrence of the Chief Examiner (normally the Chairperson of Department), call any candidate for viva voce examination;
- 1.5 to attend, wherever possible, and advise the appropriate Board(s) of Examiners;
- 1.6 The above functions must be carried out with due regard to the University's General Academic Regulations and Faculty Regulations for specific programmes.

2. Selection, Appointment and Period of Service

- 2.1 Appointment of External Examiners shall be made by the Senate on the recommendations of the Departmental Boards. Nominations from Departmental Boards should be accompanied by an outline of the proposed External Examiner's credentials. Nominations should be made only after the Chairman of Department has secured the proposed External Examiner's agreement to being so nominated.
- 2.2 Only persons of sufficient seniority and experience to be able to command authority and offer the expertise required should be appointed; normally, but not exclusively, at Professorial level,

- 2.3 An External Examiner should not normally be appointed from a department of a university or institution where a member of the inviting department is serving as an examiner.
- 2.4 Former members of staff should not be invited to become External Examiners before a lapse of at least three years or sufficient time for students taught by that member of Staff to have passed through the system, whichever is the longer.
- 2.5 The number of External Examiners for any particular department should be sufficient to cover the range of subjects taught by that department. Normally, there shall only be one visiting External Examiner per department but, in addition, one or more Alternate Examiners may also be appointed for a department where necessary. An Alternate Examiner may be asked to review and revise draft examination papers, to advise on syllabuses and to hold himself ready to visit the University at the time of the examination should the External Examiner be unable to attend. He may also be called upon to comment, by correspondence, on certain aspects of the examination if the Internal Examiners and the visiting External Examiner deem this necessary.
- 2.6 Appointments of External Examiners shall normally be for one year but may be renewed, normally for a maximum of three/four further successive years.
- 2.7 External Examiners from outside the university system, eg from industry or from a relevant profession, may be appointed in certain circumstances.
- 2.8 The Deputy Registrar shall formally notify External Examiners of their appointment.

3. **Review of Question Papers**

- 3.1 The Senior Assistant Registrar, on behalf of the Deputy Registrar, shall forward to each External Examiner a draft copy of question papers, marking schemes and course outlines prepared by the Internal Examiners.
- 3.2 In respect of Examinations to be held in April/May, these dates should normally be submitted to the External Examiner by 31st January.

In respect of Examinations to be held outside the April/May examination period, the drafts shall be submitted to the External Examiner at least six weeks before the scheduled examination date.
- 3.2 The External Examiner shall be asked to review these drafts and to satisfy himself that they are appropriate to the examinations for which they are prepared. The External Examiner may propose amendments to any paper and return his comments together with the drafts to the Senior Assistant Registrar Examinations.

The latter will arrange for the collection of these by a courier as soon as they are ready.

- 3.4 The Senior Assistant Registrar shall refer the comments back to the originating department for consideration. The department concerned shall make such amendments as are necessary, prepare and proof-read the final copy of the question paper in the approved format and return these to the Senior Assistant Registrar for printing and security until the date of the examination.

4. **Reports from External Examiners**

Each External Examiner is requested to provide a confidential written report at the end of his examining duties to the Vice Chancellor, and not to the Chairpersons of Departments or anyone else. External Examiners are encouraged to make any comments as they wish, including observations on teaching, course structure and course content, as well as the examinations themselves.

It is stressed that reports should be submitted under confidential cover directly to the Vice Chancellor, who will ensure that they are given due consideration and, at his discretion, may copy all, or parts of, the report to the department concerned, the Dean of the Faculty, Senate or other body as he deems appropriate.

5. **Travel and Accommodation Arrangements**

- 5.1 In their informal negotiations with External Examiners, Chairmen of Departments should indicate the period for which External Examiner's attendance will be needed and if possible, establish in advance specific dates on which the External Examiner would be able to come to Zimbabwe or if in Zimbabwe already, travel to Bulawayo and return to his home. Chairpersons of Departments should also establish a specific physical address including contact telephone number and fax number to which travel tickets should be sent in due course.

- 5.2 Chairpersons of Departments should communicate this information to the Assistant/Senior Assistant Registrar who will proceed to make travel and accommodation bookings. Normally, External Examiners will be accommodated at a Hotel but alternative accommodation arrangements may be permitted where requested, subject to approval by the Registrar.

- 5.3 In terms of the Exchange Control Regulations and the authority granted thereunder to the University to engage External Examiners, the University must make bookings with the national airline, Air Zimbabwe, wherever possible.

The Examinations Office will normally make bookings through an international agency, which will in turn, deliver travel tickets to the External Examiner at the address specified normally his home or place of work.

- 5.4 The University will provide daily transport between the hotel(s) and the University. The External Examiner will be expected to meet the costs of any local transport, which is not directly concerned with his examining duties.
- 5.5 The Chairperson of Department concerned will be responsible for meeting the External Examiner on his/her arrival in Bulawayo, attending to his/her needs whilst on appointment to the University and generally providing the liaison needed between the University and the External Examiner.