

CORK INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA CHORCAÍ



EXTERNAL EXAMINERS – POLICY AND PROCEDURES

As Approved by Academic Council on 27th Nov 2001

CORK INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Guidelines for the Appointment of External Examiners
Adopted by Academic Council on 27/11/01

1. Principles:

- 1.1. It is the policy of the Institute that external peer involvement is essential to the operation of its examination processes.
- 1.2. The External Examiner shall be of high standing in the field of the course and fully competent to act as an External Examiner
- 1.3. The External Examiner shall be independent of Cork Institute of Technology.
- 1.4. The External Examiner shall take a full and active part in the examining process, in accordance with the academic regulations and procedures of the Institute.
- 1.5. *The External Examiner shall be expected to have a clear understanding of the national qualifications framework and the requirements of the Qualifications Act, 1999.*

2. Appointment of External Examiners

- 2.1. The Academic Council shall appoint External Examiners, normally two per course. *In making the appointments due regard will be given to the desirability of having continuity of at least one extern on a year to year basis.* The External Examiners shall be nominated by the Head of Department in consultation with the Course Board.
- 2.2. *The external examiner shall be appointed for a period of up to three consecutive years.*
- 2.3. *Normally, an external examiner would not serve consecutively for more than three years.*
- 2.4. Every effort will be made to ensure a balance in the academic, professional and industrial/commercial expertise of the appointed External Examiners.
- 2.5. The Head of Department in making a nomination shall ensure that:
 - a. The nominee shall normally have an academic qualification at a higher level than any undergraduate course being examined. (In exceptional cases, the External Examiner may be appointed on foot of recognised distinction in the relevant professional/industrial/commercial field).
 - b. The nominee shall have proven expertise in the broad subject areas being examined
 - c. The team of External Examiners shall have detailed knowledge of all the main course subjects, or shall have access to persons with such detailed knowledge. If required, additional subject External Examiners may be appointed following consultation between the Head, the Registrar, and the External Examiners.
- 2.6 The Head of Department before nominating any External Examiner shall inform all Internal Examiners of the proposed nomination and shall enquire of each Internal Examiner whether any factor exists (personal, social, professional, academic or commercial) which would inhibit or prevent the proper discharge by the nominee of his/her duties as an External Examiner. All such reported factors shall be recorded in writing and shall be notified to the Registrar along with the nomination.

3. Final Appointment

The nominee, before final appointment, shall confirm* that he/she

- 3.1. will be available to fully discharge the duties of External Examiner
- 3.2. has received the relevant academic regulations, procedures and mission statement of the of the Institute
- 3.3. will apply the Institutes procedures and regulations in an independent and professional manner in carrying out the duties of External Examiner.

*Such confirmation may form part of a contract or written agreement between the External Examiner and the Institute.

4. Extern Examiners - General Functions

- 4.1 Extern Examiners are appointed by the Academic Council to ensure adequacy of standards at examinations moderated by the Council. In particular, Extern Examiners should ensure that the appropriate standards with regard to Pass, Merit and Distinction/Honours are applied and that comparability of standards between institutions should be achieved and maintained as far as is feasible.

5. Course Extern Examiners

- 5.1 Extern Examiners are normally appointed as Course Extern Examiners, with responsibility for a course, or a range of courses. In these cases the Extern Examiner(s) concerned should deal with all subjects in the course(s), and should approach the task with a view to ensuring that each candidate's performance in the course as a whole is properly assessed, without undue emphasis on individual subject performance, subject to the requirements of the Institutes Marks and Standards Regulations.

6. Additional Extern Examiners

- 6.1 The Academic Council also appoints additional Extern Examiners to support Course Extern Examiners. Additional Extern Examiners are, normally, appointed in the subjects: Communications and Language Subjects and in such other subjects as the Council may deem necessary.
- 6.2 Where Course Extern Examiners require assistance in any of these subject areas they should consult with the appropriate Additional Extern Examiner. Additional Extern Examiners will not normally visit the institutions, unless required to do so as part of the specific course involved, in which case prior approval should be sought from the Institute.

7. Subject Extern Examiners

- 7.1 In some degree courses, and in some other courses, Extern Examiners are appointed as Subject Extern Examiners, with responsibility in relation to specific subjects. Subject Extern Examiners are required to ensure that each candidate's overall performance in the course as a whole is properly assessed, without undue emphasis on performance in an individual subject for which they have been appointed, subject to the requirements of the Institutes Marks and Standards Regulations.

8. Specific Duties of Extern Examiners

- 8.1 It shall be the duty of Extern Examiners to see the drafts of all examination question papers, marking schemes, worked solutions etc., before the question papers are sent for printing. Extern Examiners shall have the right to make such suggestions, criticisms, deletions, additions and amendments as they deem appropriate.

- 8.2 The Academic Council requires that Extern Examiners see a representative sample of examination material presented by candidates (approximately 5% where feasible), including borderline cases. The sample, which should be drawn on a basis agreed between the Intern and Extern Examiner(s), should include sufficient material to enable the Extern Examiner(s) to form a judgement as to the appropriateness of the marking at all levels of classification.
- 8.3 All Course Extern Examiners and subject Extern Examiners will be required to visit the institutions to which they have been assigned ONCE in each academic year. This visit will, normally, take place at the time of determination of final results in Summer, and it should conform to the arrangements made in this regard by each institution. In the case of courses or subjects in respect of which winter semester examinations are held in January or supplemental or repeat examinations are held in the Autumn, or at such other times as may be approved by the Academic Council, the arrangements for attendance of Extern Examiners in the institutions will normally be made by the institution. Extern Examiners should endeavour to discharge by correspondence as much of their work (including finalisation of examination papers and/or other tests) as it is feasible to perform in this manner.
- 8.4 Where it is considered necessary for an Extern Examiner to visit more than once per year, the department/school should seek prior approval indicating the special circumstances involved. Similar approval should be sought in the case of any proposed additional visits to the institute sought by Extern Examiners.

9. Oral/Performance based Examinations

- 9.1 Where oral/performance based examinations constitute a substantial part of the assessment procedure and are conducted in the absence of an Extern Examiner(s), the proceedings of any such examination or assessment conducted entirely by Intern Examiners should be recorded on video or audio-tape and an appropriate sample of the recordings sent to the Extern Examiner(s), or, if the Extern Examiner(s) so require, retained in the institution for scrutiny by the Extern Examiner(s). Alternatively, where special circumstances so require, the Intern and Extern Examiner(s) together may examine a representative sample of the candidates concerned.

10. Visitation of Institutions

- 10.1 When visiting an institution, the duties of Extern Examiners shall be as follows:-
- to review borderline cases and, if necessary, interview such candidates;
 - to agree with the respective Intern Examiner(s) the proposed final marks/grades for consideration by the appropriate Board of Examiners;
 - to attend appropriate meeting(s) of the Board of Examiners as required.
- 10.2 Where examinations are held at the end of a winter semester or First or Second Terms, in addition to end-of-year examinations, Extern Examiners shall, normally, deal with examination material by correspondence. The remainder of their duties shall be carried out during the Summer visit, or by arrangement, at prior additional visits if such are required for substantial reasons.

11. Extern Examiners' Reports

- 11.1 Extern Examiners are required to submit to the Registrar of CIT, not later than 1st October in each year, a full report on the examinations with which they are involved. One report covering the academic year will normally be sufficient. The report should be submitted in accordance with the standard Report Form supplied by the Academic Council.

12. Communications between Intern and Extern Examiners

12.1 Extern Examiners are required to acknowledge receipt of examination and assessment material received from the institutions. All communications between institutions and Extern Examiners shall be by registered mail, or other secure means of delivery. Institutions should ensure that all such mail is securely sealed, whether circulated internally or through the post. The use of fax, telex or electronic messaging systems is not authorised for these communications. Use of telephones should be restricted to logistics and operational matters; mobile telephones should not be used for any purpose in relation to examination material.

13. Special Arrangements in relation to Art and Design

13.1 In cases where there are written examinations in the History of Art and Design/Complementary Studies, it shall be the duty of Extern Examiners to see the drafts of the examination papers before printing. They shall have the right to make such suggestions, criticisms, deletions, additions and amendments, as they deem appropriate. Where this Examination Subject is examined by thesis, a representative selection of theses shall be submitted to the Extern Examiner.

13.2 On visitation, the duties of Extern Examiners shall be as follows:-

- To review the exhibition of candidates' work and to interview a selection of candidates;
- To agree the final marks/grades for each candidate; and
- To attend appropriate meetings of the Board of Examiners, as required.