

Guidelines for the Selection of External Program Assessors

The following Guidelines are used by the MPHEC when consulting with experts in the field (either consultants or readers) during the assessment process (see the *Policy*). Institutions are encouraged to follow these same Guidelines when hiring consultants to assess a program prior to submission to the MPHEC. As noted in the Policy, institutions are required to consult with an expert in the field who is not in a biased situation, and who is to carry out a site visit, when submitting a proposal for a new graduate-level program.

1. External assessors should possess an advanced academic credential (normally a doctoral or terminal degree) in the discipline, and hold or have held an academic appointment at the senior level (normally at the rank of full professor).
2. External assessors should have experience in the design, delivery or administration of a similar program offered at a degree-granting institution and, preferably, experience in conducting program assessments in the discipline (e.g., as an appraiser for an accrediting body, or as a reviewer of a degree program).
3. External assessors should possess relevant professional credentials and/or related work experiences of substantial depth and range that relate to the proposed program.
4. In addition, an external assessor would (preferably, for an undergraduate program; particularly, for a graduate program):
 - Have experience in graduate teaching and, as appropriate, graduate thesis supervision and/or graduate clinical or applied studies supervision, and
 - Be experienced in the administration of graduate programs (e.g., as Chair of a department with graduate programs, graduate program coordinator, Chair of the graduate studies committee, member of a faculty or university graduate or research council/committee)
5. In order to avoid potential conflict of interest and to ensure objective assessments, any connection between an external assessor and the submitting institution/its staff must be disclosed to determine whether steps are necessary to avoid (potential) conflict of interest situations. At a minimum, an assessor would be considered in a conflict of interest, and therefore be excluded from consideration, were any of the following to apply:
 - The assessor is from the same immediate department, institution, research group, centre, institute, company or other type of institutional subdivision as any university or partner institution/organization directly involved with the proposed program.
 - The assessor has worked for, studied at, or collaborated/published with the university or any partner institution/organization directly involved with the proposed program within the last seven (7) years.
 - The assessor has been a colleague or supervisor of any faculty/staff referenced within the submission as directly involved with the proposed program within the last seven (7) years.
 - The assessor is or has been a close personal friend, or is a relative of a member of the faculty/staff associated with a proposed program.
 - The assessor has had longstanding or serious professional or personal differences with the faculty/staff associated with the proposed program.
 - The assessor for some other reason believes that s/he cannot in good faith provide an objective review of the proposed program.
6. External assessors will be provided with terms of reference (Generic Terms are provided in Appendix 4B which can be amended as circumstances require) to conduct the review, including specific issues/areas to be addressed.