

# An overview of External Subject Advisers

## About External Subject Advisers (ESAs)

### Who are they?

An External Subject Adviser (sometimes referred to as an ESA) is an individual associated with Validation Service provision, primarily to provide the University with a source of independent subject specific expertise. ESAs are subject experts with appropriate academic expertise who meet a set of appointment criteria. In rare cases individuals with industry expertise can also be considered as ESAs although a second ESA with academic experience would be appointed alongside them. ESAs are appointed for a term of four years.

The primary purposes of an ESA are:

- Take an overview of the curriculum and advise the University and its partner(s), regarding the relevance, appropriateness and currency of the curriculum
- Advise the University and its partner(s) on the appropriateness of proposals for curriculum modifications and developments and approve any curriculum modifications
- To meet with students to gain their feedback on their experience of the programme, and review the resources available to students on the programme, including staff CVs.

## The role of UK Validation Services with ESAs

UKVS has a number of responsibilities in relation to appointing and supporting ESAs.

### Appointments

- UKVS is responsible for ensuring nomination forms are sent to AQS for approval of appointment and upon receipt of this approval UKVS are responsible for informing the ESA and collaborative partner.
- UKVS is responsible for issuing an appointment letter to newly appointed ESA and conducting a 'Right to Work' check.
- If a collaborative partner does not have an individual to nominate as an ESA, UKVS are responsible for ensuring vacancies are filled.

### Support

- UKVS is responsible for meeting with newly appointment ESAs to provide information on the role and answer any questions.
- UKVS is responsible for arranging a Briefing Day for ESAs as an introduction or a refresher to the role and a chance to network with other ESAs.
- UKVS is responsible for receiving ESA claim forms and arranging payment for ESA expenses. UKVS can also assist ESAs with travel and accommodation for visits.
- UKVS is responsible for receiving and acknowledging receipt of ESA Visit and Annual Reports.
- UKVS is responsible for logging and tracking the actions raised by ESAs in their reports.

## Appointment of ESAs

### Criteria

- ESAs will be expected to have academic experience teaching and assessing at least at the same level of the validated provision.
- ESAs normally need one or more of the following credentials:
  - o Experience as a QAA Academic Reviewer, or Auditor
  - o Experience as an External Examiner at another institution
  - o Representing a PSRB in accreditation activity
  - o Other contribution to the debate about subject quality at a national level, for example through Subject Associations
  - o Distinction by way of scholarship and research within the subject
- ESAs shall be entirely independent of the collaborative partner.

### Process

- The Partner identifies the potential ESA and completes Part A of the [ESA Nomination Form](#). The Nominee then completes Part B of the ESA Nomination Form. Section C is completed by the Programme Area Manager (or equivalent) and Higher Education Manager (or equivalent) at the collaborative partner.
- UK Validation Services (UKVS) receives the Nomination Form and CV of the proposed ESA.
- Academic Quality Services (AQS) reviews the form and completes section C.
- The Nomination Form is then sent to the Appointments Panel for approval.

## Key Responsibilities of an ESA

### Visits

ESAs are required to undertake visits to the partner each year - they: aim to undertake a maximum of 3 visits and must undertake at least one to fulfil the requirements of the role. One visit must include attending a Programme Management Board (PMB) and one visit must include time to gather feedback from students. The content of the visits may vary slightly depending on how far the ESA is into their tenure. An example of visits is detailed below.

Year(s)	Activity
1	<b>Visit One:</b> Attend an ESA Briefing Day and meet with both UKVS and the partner <b>Visit Two:</b> Attend a PMB and meet with students <b>Visit Three:</b> End of year visit to discuss AQM and future developments
2-4	<b>Visit One:</b> Attend a PMB and meet with students <b>Visit Two:</b> Mid-year visit to review resources <b>Visit Three:</b> End of year visit to discuss AQM and future developments

### Reports

ESAs are required to submit a [Visit Report](#) summarising each visit. These reports should also include any student feedback gathered at that visit. ESAs must also submit an [Annual Report](#) at the close of the academic year and at the deadline date specified in the [Annual calendar of quality monitoring activities for collaborative provision](#). ESAs have access to an Annual Report template to ensure all necessary topics are covered.

## Fees

- ESAs receive a one off payment of £400 which will be processed upon receipt of their [annual report](#) and a [claim form](#) which can be sent to [ukvs@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:ukvs@dmu.ac.uk)
- ESAs supporting a partner prior to approval receive a flat fee of £450, on submission of a [pre-validation report](#).
- ESAs are also entitled to £90 per visit to the partner or DMU, which will be processed upon receipt of a completed [visit form](#) and [claim form](#).
- ESAs can complete a claim form for reasonable expenses occurred on visits such as travel, accommodation and subsistence.

## ESAs and External Examiners

Programmes approved through the Validation Service will have both an ESA and an External Examiner, both of whom are recruited through DMU.

ESAs should not be involved in considering the assessment of students or viewing student marks, this is the remit of the External Examiner.