



General guidelines for qualifications and impartiality for external examiners

The Chairmanship of the external examiner corps for engineering programs has agreed on the following general guidelines for qualifications and impartiality for external examiner's in the engineering degree programs.

External examiner qualifications

The general requirements for education and experience, which are a prerequisite for appointment as external examiner, are set out in the Ministry of Higher Education and Science's two separate examination orders.

One applies to University programs (BEK 22 of 9 January 2020) and thus to undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as master's programs and other part-time programs. The external examiner's roles are described in Chapter 10 and the external examiner's qualifications are described in section 57:

57. To be appointed as external examiner, a person must have

- 1) a relevant research-based education at master's (candidatus) level;*
- 2) comprehensive and up-to-date knowledge of the scientific disciplines of the field, including theory and methodologies;*
- 3) specific competencies within one or more academic subareas included in the programme or the central subject; and*
- 4) up-to-date knowledge of the application of the programme or the central subject, including knowledge of the employers' situation and needs.*

The second executive order applies to Academy Profession and Professional Bachelor Study Programmes (BEK 18 of 9 January 2020). for diploma engineering and (technical) diploma programs. The external examiners roles are described here in Chapter 6 and the external examiner's qualifications are described in section 27:

An external examiner must have

- 1) comprehensive and up-to-date knowledge of the preconditions, objectives and methods of the programme element;*
- 2) specific competencies within one or more academic sub-areas covered by the programme; and 3) up-to-date knowledge of the application of the programme, including knowledge of the employers' situation and needs.*
- (2) Before an examination, the educational institution informs the external examiner of the rules applicable to the programme, including this ministerial order, and provides the external examiner with other material of importance to the external examiners' activities.*



Section 57 and 27 do not state that an external examiner must be an expert in the subject area. However, this is a common position among many educators at the educational institutions, especially in connection with final projects. The position of the Chairmanship based on the above-mentioned is that the external examiner does not need to be an expert in the field. The external examiner must have a good professional insight into the subject. The professional insight must be acquired through both education and work experience. The external examiner's role is, in addition to having professional insight into the subject area (the quality assurance role), also to ensure that the exam is conducted correctly according to the applicable rules (the legal security role).

In addition to the above-mentioned general requirements in section 57 and 27, the Chairmanship of the Engineering programs has decided that, in general, 5 years of relevant professional experience (including teaching experience) in the relevant field of study after completing the professional bachelor's or master's degree program is required to be appointed as external examiner. For persons with a Ph.D. the requirement is reduced to at least 3 years of relevant experience.

Impartiality for external examiners

Section 3 and 6 of The Danish Public Administration Act (Forvaltningsloven) contain the general provisions on impartiality in the performance of duties in public administration. The rules also apply to the external examiner's.

Section 3 states that one is incompetent if one himself, one's family or one's relative has a special personal or financial interest in the outcome of the case, or if there are other circumstances which cast doubt on one's impartiality.

Section 6 states that if you are aware that there is a condition for yourself or others, as mentioned in section 3, you must notify whom it may concern (the examiner) as soon as possible, unless it is obvious that the situation is of no importance.

The general requirements for impartiality, which an appointed external examiner in the engineering programs must also adhere to, are described in sections 53 and 54 for the University programs and in sections 28, 29 and 30 for the Academy Profession and Professional Bachelor Study Programmes in the above-mentioned examination orders. See both provisions below, highlighted in blue:

53.-(1) External examiners must not be employed at the university, or at the faculty if the university is divided into faculties, where they are to work as external examiners, unless the assignment concerns a programme or a central subject, see section 49(2), other than that on which the external examiner is a researcher and teacher. However, the university's board members, rector, deans, heads of department and others in similar positions must not work as external examiners at the university. It must be avoided as far as possible that internal examiners take grading assignments for each other (mutual grading).

(2) The external examiners' activities are covered by the Public Administration Act, including the provisions on disqualification and secrecy.

54.-(1) In the absence of an external examiner where it has not been possible to summon a new external examiner, the university may appoint a person as external examiner who fulfils the requirements set out in section 57.

(2) The university notifies the chairmanship of such appointment according to subsection (1) as soon as possible.

28.-(1) *In consultation with the educational institution(s), the chairmanship allocates the assignments for external grading among the external examiners in the body in accordance with the rules set out in subsection (2). External examiners must not be employed with, or within the past two years have been employed with, the institution at which they are to work as external examiners.*

(2) *Unless special circumstances apply, when allocating external examiners, it must be ensured that:*

1) *external examiners from more institutions and external examiners from the relevant sections of the labour market (employer examiners) are involved in planning the work of the external examiners on a given programme;*

2) *new external examiners are regularly introduced when distributing the assignments;*

3) *no external examiner is asked to act as external examiner for the same internal examiner within a period of two years except within the same examination period, the same semester or the same six-month period.*

29. *In case of the sudden absence of an external examiner and the like where it has not been possible to summon a new external examiner, the educational institution appoints a person as external examiner who fulfils the requirements set out in section 24 and section 28(2). The institution must notify the chairmanship of such appointment as soon as possible.*

30.-(1) *External examiners must*

1) *ensure that examinations comply with the objectives and other requirements stipulated in ministerial orders or under ministerial orders;*

2) *contribute to ensuring and assure that examinations are conducted in compliance with the current rules; and*

3) *contribute to ensuring and assure that students receive uniform and fair treatment, and their achievements are assessed in a reliable manner that complies with the rules on grading and other rules governing the programme.*

(2) *The external and internal examiners must make notes about the performance and their deliberations for personal use for drafting an opinion in a possible appeal. The notes must be kept for one year.*

(3) *The external examiners' activities are covered by the provisions set out in the Danish Public Administration Act (Forvaltningsloven) on disqualification and secrecy.*

Projects made in collaboration with a company

In connection with projects carried out in collaboration with an external company, and where the company contributes with guidance during project preparation, it has previously been the position of the Chairmanship that the external examiner must not be employed in the same company. Often, however, such projects are bound by confidentiality and it can be difficult to find an external examiner from another company, which can result in the project not being carried out at all. In this situation, in the opinion of the Chairmanship, it is allowed to find an external examiner from the same company, but only if that external examiner is located in another organizational unit in the company and has nothing to do with the project.

In any case, any external examiner should refrain from participating in an exam if there is the slightest doubt about the external examiner's impartiality according to the above-mentioned guidelines - with the external examiner himself, or if anyone else might even have the slightest objection.

Update contact information

Finally, the external examiner must remember to update his personal data, contact information, and



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place of work at CensorNet.dk. It is important that the external examiner has always specified the most frequently used e-mail address (preferably private e-mail) otherwise; it is not possible to recruit that external examiner. It is important in the re-appointment that the external examiner attaches an updated and complete CV. CV's can only be changed/updated by contacting the External Examiner Secretariat, and the Chairmanship must be informed about updating the CV and its purpose. Only the Chairmanship and the External Examiner Secretariat can see the external examiner's CV.