



Recommendation on the Selection of Experts

Preamble

To ensure a high level of quality in research, teaching and administration, the University of Vienna integrates the expertise of international experts into various procedures and functions. This ranges from advisory functions on scientific advisory boards to external opinions on persons during recruitment as well as to the evaluation of faculties, centres and service units. The selection of unbiased and acknowledged experts is a necessary precondition for the maintenance of professional and fair external assessments. The present recommendation states fundamental principles for the selection of experts and regulates the handling of partiality. The recommendations shall be applied in their entirety in order to avoid excluding potentially valuable experts in advance as a result of a literal, i.e. word-for-word interpretation of these recommendations.

Fundamental principles

- Depending on the main focus of their task, experts must be active in the relevant field and acknowledged internationally.
- Experts should usually be recruited externally and from non-Austrian institutions.
- The rules of good academic practice should be adhered to in the selection of experts, and possible partiality, conflicts of interests or irreconcilabilities have to be avoided (see "Partiality").
- When it makes an enquiry about experts, the University of Vienna calls upon experts to disclose any partialities – also those which are not covered by this guideline. The competent body responsible for the procedure shall, on a case-by-case basis, decide whether experts should continue to be involved in the procedure.
- In order to avoid overtaxing the expert system, careful consideration should be given in every procedure to how many experts are required.
- In the case of groups of experts, care should be taken to ensure a balanced distribution in terms of gender, academic age and the institution and country of origin of the experts.
- Contact with experts should be conducted solely via a neutral contact point and never directly by the person, unit or applicant who/which is subject to an expert opinion.

Partiality

At the beginning of the procedure, potential experts should be given an opportunity to disclose any partialities, conflicts of interest or irreconcilabilities and to assess themselves whether this might hinder them from giving a fair expert opinion on one or several candidate/s. Partiality may exist if one or more of the following points apply:

- The expert has, or has had in the past, a close personal or professional relationship to the person subject to an expert opinion (such as a relationship, family ties, supervision of a doctoral thesis or habilitation, staff member, superior, or being the current job holder).
- The expert has published items (such as scientific papers or monographs) jointly as a co-author or co-editor with the person subject to the expert opinion during the past five years.
- The expert has cooperated intensively with the person subject to the expert opinion (on joint research or teaching projects, for example) during the past five years.