



# **External Examiner Systems**

## **Faculty Dean User Guide**

Authors:	Quality and Academic Development
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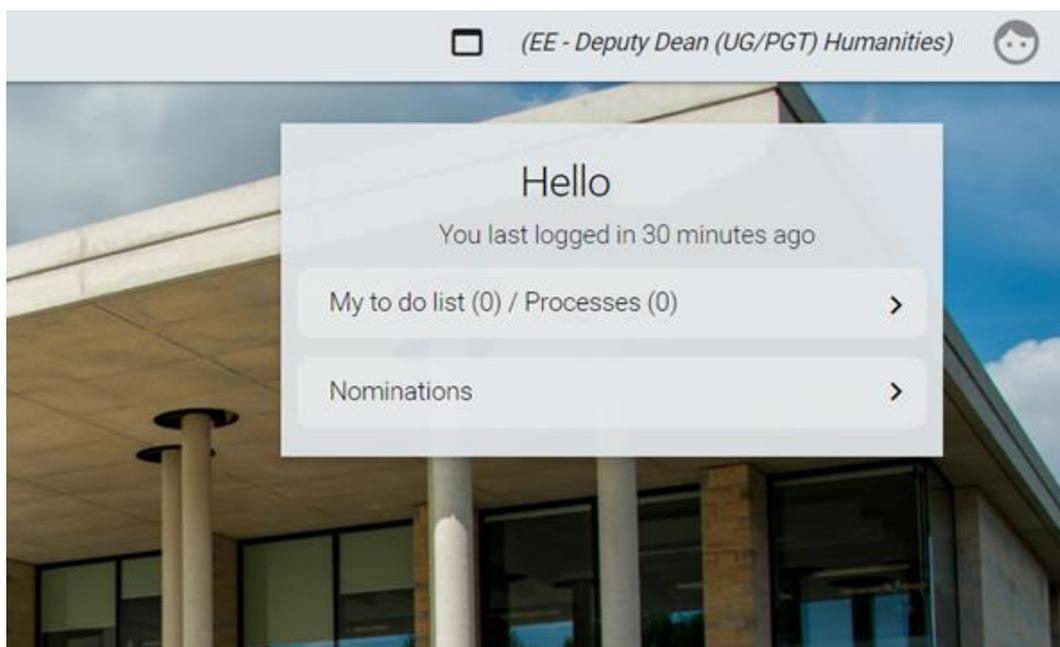
# Introduction

The [External Examiner Nomination Portal](#) is a system which will allow a Faculty Dean to supervise and monitor their Faculty's External Examiner nominations and appointments. Comments on each stage of the nomination process from other members of staff are recorded and information pertaining to the [criteria for External Examiner appointments](#) supplied. This will allow you to review the suitability of nominees, track the process of the nomination, and approve/progress or reject a nomination as appropriate.

## Home Screen

When you first log into iTrent, choose your role. To access the External Examiner Nomination Portal, choose the role **EE – Faculty Dean** (*Level of provision + Your Faculty*).

Your Nomination Portal home screen will resemble the below screenshot.



### My to do list (0) / Processes (0)

This button should be ignored. Users who hold other iTrent roles should note that External Examiner actions are not listed as Tasks or Processes and will not appear on your to do list.

### Nominations

This button will take you through to the **Nominations** screen. From this view you can create and process new External Examiner nominations and check the status of nominations ongoing.

## Recruitment summary

When an External Examiner nomination has been submitted for your approval, you will receive an automated notification email from iTrent. This email will inform you of the nomination (or 'requisition') name and reference. Click on the link within the notification to log into iTrent.

When you access the **Nominations** view, you will initially arrive at the **Recruitment summary** screen. This page gives a summary of all of the nominations currently in progress.

The screenshot shows the 'Recruitment summary' interface. At the top left is a 'MENU' icon. At the top right is the user's role: '(EE - Deputy Dean (UG/PGT) Humanities)'. Below the header is an 'Alerts' section showing '1 Requisition in total' and '0 Applicants in total', with a search bar. The main section is 'Open requisitions (1)', containing a table with one row of data. Callout boxes provide definitions for 'Menu', 'Requisitions', 'Your role', 'Name', 'Applicants', 'Start date', and 'Application end date'.

**Menu** – click this icon to display or hide the sidepane, including the search bar for searching for individual nominations.

**Requisitions** – a nomination is a 'requisition' within iTrent's terminology.

**Applicants** – when a nominee submits their personal details to the Nomination Portal, they are classed as an 'applicant'.

**Your role** – this should always read EE- Faculty Dean (Level of provision + Faculty). Click on the face icon in the corner to change to a different iTrent role or log out.

**Alerts**  
1 Requisition in total      0 Applicants in total  
Search by requisition, location, dates

Name	Applicants	Location	Start date	Application end date	Requisition end date
EE-Application Test (REQ03429)	0		26/11/2019	27/11/2019	

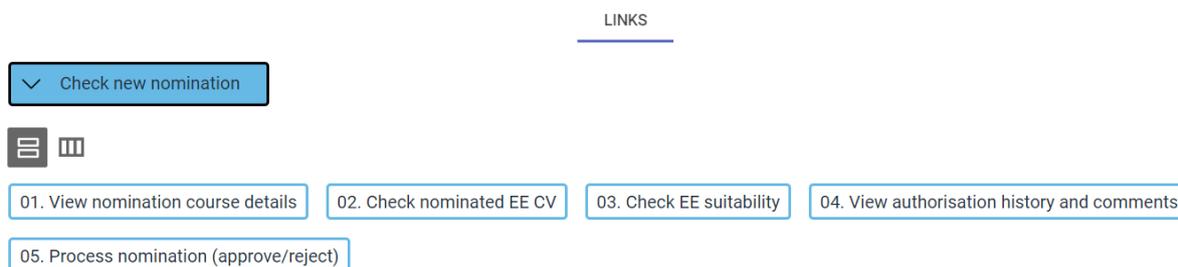
**Name** – this will display the name of your nomination and its unique requisition reference. This should always take the form: EE – *Name of nominee* (REQ#####).

**Applicants** – this indicates if the nominee has yet submitted their personal details online. If they have not, this column will read **0**; if they have, it will read **1**.

**Start date** – The date that the nomination was created.

**Application end date** – The date at which the weblink supplied to External Examiners to submit their personal details becomes inactive.

Scroll to the bottom of the **Recruitment Summary** page and you will see a number of links arranged in a numerical sequence. These are the stages that you will need to follow in order to check and approve the nomination. **Step 1: View the course allocation of the External Examiner nominee**



The first step is to check the proposed list of courses and/or modules that are to be assigned to the new External Examiner.

# Check new nomination

## Step 1: View nomination course details

01. View nomination course details

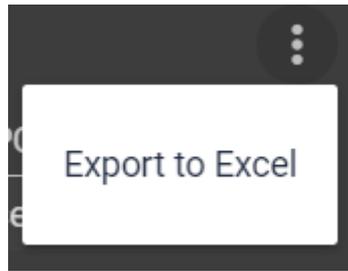
Click on the button **View nomination course details**. This will bring up the below menu in the side bar.

UDF category	No. of rows
EE - Course Details (Hum)	0
EE - Course Details (Partner)	0
EE - Course Details (SH)	0
EE - Course Details (SS)	6

Click on your Faculty to view a list of the proposed courses/modules to be assigned to the External Examiner.

Master Courses	Modules UG	Modules PGT/PGR
		BE PGT BE985 CO Research Portfolio
		BE PGT BE467 CO Managing for Ethics an...
BE CO PG00670 Management		
		BE PGT BE488 CO Operations and Supply ...
BE CO PG00430 Management and Organi...		
		BE PGT BE485 CO Management and Strat...

Click the below icon to export the list of courses/modules to MS Excel.



## Step 2: Checking the nominee's CV

The nominee's CV will have already been uploaded into the portal for you to review. To access and download this document, click the following button:

02. Check nominated EE CV

A list of the documents attachments associate with the nomination will then be available for access in the side bar. Click on the document name.

DOCUMENT ATTACHMENTS						
Document	Link	Filename	Document type	Date	Time	
Test applicant CV	No	Test Applicant CV.txt	EE - Nomination Supporting Doc...	10/03/2020	15:34	
Test applicant RTW	No	Test Applicant RTW.txt	EE - Nomination Supporting Doc...	10/03/2020	15:29	

This will bring up the following screen. Click **Download** to access the document attachment.

EE-Application Test

Document attachment details Test applicant CV ^ LESS

1. View authorisation comments
2. View courses/modules
3. Check nominated EE CV
4. Check external examiner suitability
5. Process nomination (approve/reject)

Document (required) Test applicant CV

Document type (required) EE - Nomination Supporting Docume v

Link

Filename Test Applicant CV.txt

DOWNLOAD

Click on the nomination name at the top of the screen to return to the **Requisition details** screen.

# Step 3: Checking the suitability of an External Examiner nomination

After reviewing the nominee’s CV, you can find further supporting information relating to the suitability of an External Examiner’s nomination stored on the portal under **check EE suitability**. This information has been provided directly by the External Examiner nominee as part of their application in order to support their eligibility to carry out the External Examiner role.

## 03. Check EE suitability

On the side bar menu, click the category **EE – Examiner Suitability**. This will take you to the following screen, where you can check information provided on the following criteria for appointment.

- **Experience as an External Examiner**
- **Other External Examiner responsibilities**
- **Details of any potential conflicts of interest**

UDF Details EE - Examiner Suitability - EE - SYSTEMS Testing Samantha Sunshine MENU

Experience as an external examiner

Test of experience as external examiner

Other external examiner responsibilities

Test of my other external examiner responsibilities

Are there any conflicts of interest? No

I do not have any conflicts of interest

The suitability info and CV provided by the nominee should be considered alongside the [criteria for External Examiner appointments](#). QUAD will have reviewed the nomination before providing it for approval, and will highlight any areas of concern within the nomination stage notes. Nominations where QUAD has identified potential complexities or where discussions may have added sensitivities or requirements for confidentiality may also be raised directly with the Dean via email.

Review of External Examiner nominations should incorporate consideration of the following:

### **Academic qualifications and examining experience**

- An External Examiner should have competence and experience in the academic fields covered by the programme, and qualifications/teaching experience to at least the level of the qualification being examined. In practice, this means that we have no requirement that all External Examiners hold a PhD, if they are otherwise qualified for the role.
- The criteria for appointment do not directly specify a minimum period of time a nominee should have had teaching experience for at a higher education level. However, we would informally expect that anything under five years would merit especial consideration by the approving Dean.
- We do not want to discount suitable early career academics or those without External Examiner experience from the role and a number of our appointments have not previously carried out a role of this kind. Previous experience of quality assurance or enhancement processes is preferable, and where the Dean believes additional support should be given to a new appointment in undertaking the role this can be transmitted to the appointing department via QUAD.
- There is no formal obligation that the External Examiner holds a current post at a Higher Education institution, only that they can evidence 'awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula' and 'familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be examined'. This means that recently retired academics or those not currently in employment can be eligible for the role.

### **Independence and impartiality**

- QUAD checks as much as practicable for potential conflicts of interest when the nomination is reviewed. This constitutes investigating research links or collaborations between the nominee and Essex staff. In many cases there are minor links of a professional nature which usually do not constitute a conflict of interest. Where the level of involvement between the nominee and Essex staff is ambiguous or problematic, QUAD will request additional info from the nominating department and update the Faculty Dean to inform the approval decision.
- If an academic currently acts, or has recently acted, as a research External Examiner for an Essex student this does not constitute either a conflict of interest or factor into workload considerations. The level of institutional integration of research External Examiners is considered to be so minimal that carrying out this role as well as a taught position is not of concern.

## Volume of work

- [External Examiner fees](#) are calculated on the basis of the number of modules they are responsible for. As much as possible we would want to ensure parity of workload within this fee structure across External Examiner appointments. Where the list of modules is particularly high, QUAD will highlight this for the approving Dean as a concern and may approach the department/school to ensure the workload is sustainable. In areas where this is concerning, there may be a preference to redistribute workload or appoint a supplementary module only External Examiner to support the award External.
- External Examiners should typically hold no more than two appointments for taught programmes/modules at any one time. This is to prevent e.g. clashes with workload, absence from exam boards. Sometimes there may be need for QUAD to work with a department to ensure workload is manageable for a particular External Examiner.
- The standard term of appointment for an External Examiner at the University of Essex is four years. Occasionally departments will wish to extend one of their External Examiner appointments to a fifth year. This is by exception only, and QUAD will liaise with the department to collect a supporting rationale, which will be provided to the Faculty Dean to inform their approval or rejection of the request.

## Exceptions

- Where a nominee does not fulfil all the specified criteria (for instance in disciplines which are very small or specialist, or where an External Examiner is drawn from business or a profession) the approving Dean may consider a request for exceptional appointment. A written case for appointment will be collected from the department by QUAD and provided to the Faculty Dean.

## Step 4: View authorisation history and comments

To check any comments that other users in the nomination/approval process have made on this nomination, you will need to click on the nomination name from the Recruitment summary home page and **View authorisation comments**.

Stage	Date	Notes	People resources
EE Stage 99: Reject/ Withdraw	15/04/2019	In my judgement, the proximity is ...	
EE Stage 3a: HoD supports/ QUA...	28/03/2019		
EE Stage 2a: Awaiting HoD check	26/03/2019		
Stage 1a: Web applicant	27/02/2019		

This will show you all the stages which the nomination has progressed through, as well as any comments which have been recorded from each stage.

If you choose to reject a nomination, the rationale for the rejection will be recorded in this section of the Portal. Please note that comments made in this section will be visible to all other individuals involved in the nomination (i.e. QUAD, Department Administrators and the Head of Department) so comments should be appropriate for all users to view. If discussions of a confidential nature are required with QUAD, please email [external.examiners@essex.ac.uk](mailto:external.examiners@essex.ac.uk) directly.

## Step 5: Progressing the nomination

Once you have made a decision on whether to approve, reject or request more information on a nomination, you will need to officially process the nomination.

### 05. Process nomination (approve/reject)

Click on **Process nomination (approve reject)**. This will bring up the below screen. Chose **EE Stage 4a: QUAD approved/Dean review** from the drop-down menu.

The screenshot shows a navigation bar with five steps: 01. View nomination course details, 02. Check nominated EE CV, 03. Check EE suitability, 04. View authorisation history and comments, and 05. Process nomination (approve/reject). Below this is a section titled 'Update information' with a label 'Stage selection (required)'. A dropdown menu is open, showing options: 'Please choose', 'Please choose', 'EE Stage 4a: QUAD approved/ Dean review' (highlighted in blue), and 'EE Stage 4b: More information (Dean)'.

When you have selected this option, you will be provided with a second drop-down menu. This is where your decision of whether to approve or reject is registered. From the drop-down select either:

- **EE Stage 5a: Dean approved/QUAD process** to fully approve the nomination and send to QUAD for the final stages of the appointment
- **EE Stage 5b: Dean approved/PVC review** if you wish to provisionally approve the nomination but feel it necessary to forward to the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education) for further review or
- **EE Stage 99: Reject/Withdraw** to reject the nomination. The latter option can also be selected if the nominee withdraws their application before appointment is made.

Please add any comments pertinent to your decision to the **Stage notes** text box, noting that these comments can be viewed by any colleague involved in the nomination process. If you do not support the nomination, please add the rationale of why you are rejecting the nomination so that the Department can inform the nominee.

The screenshot shows a form titled "Update information". It has three main sections: "Stage selection (required)", "Move to (required)", and "Stage notes". The "Stage selection" dropdown is currently set to "EE Stage 4a: QUAD approved/ Dean review". The "Move to" dropdown is open, showing a list of options: "Please choose", "Please choose", "EE Stage 4b: More information (Dean)", "EE Stage 5a: Dean approved/ QUAD process", "EE Stage 5b: Dean approved/ PVC review" (which is highlighted in blue), and "EE Stage 99: Reject/ Withdraw". Below these sections is an "Applicants" section with a checkbox.

It is important that you tick the checkbox in the Applicants section before clicking **Save**. This confirms that your decision is final and **without checking this the nomination will not be progressed**.

The screenshot shows the "Applicants" section of the form. It contains a table with two columns: "Applicant name" and "Applicant stage". The first row shows the name "(APP23227)" and the stage "EE Stage 4a: QUAD approved/ Dean review". To the right of the table is a checkbox that is checked, and a red box highlights this checkbox. Below the table is a green "SAVE" button.

## Next steps

Once you or the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education) have approved a nomination, QUAD will receive automated notification by email. QUAD will then create an appointment letter from the portal to send to the External Examiner.

Most External Examiners are appointed for four years, and Departments may feel there need to be changes to the nature of their contract over the period of their employment with Essex. In some cases, Departments may consider there to be exceptional circumstances around an appointment and request a

contract extension for one of their External Examiners, in which case QUAD will email you with the request and the Department's rationale for the extension.

Additionally, a Department may need to change an External Examiner's schedule of awards and modules. In many cases, this will be uncontroversial – for example, a module made inactive will be removed from an External Examiner's schedule until it is reinstated – but if the proposed changes are significant, QUAD will email you with a summary of proposed changes and a request for your approval.

## External Examiner reports

At the end of the examination process, the External Examiner will produce a report summarising their comments. These formal written reports form a key element of the process for maintaining academic standards at the University. Each External Examiner should submit one annual report per level of provision they are responsible no later than four weeks after their final examination board of the year.

External Examiners submit their reports via an [online Report Portal](#) and collated reports for each department are available for Deans via a [Sharepoint report](#). The Faculty Dean (Undergraduate) should review all UG reports in advance of the Autumn term Faculty Education Committees; the Faculty Dean (Postgraduate) should review all PGT reports in advance of the Spring term Faculty Education Committees. QUAD will support this process by providing all available reports in the run up to each Committee. QUAD will also flag any reports where there are additional considerations when they are initially reviewed.

Faculty Deans should provide oral overviews of External Examiner reports within their Faculty at their relevant Faculty Education Committee. This is so the Committees can ensure the effective implementation within the Faculty of the University's policies and procedures for assuring academic quality and standards, and enhancing academic quality and the student experience.

# Help and support

## Problems with your login

If you encounter any problems relating to your login, please contact our IT Helpdesk via [servicedesk@essex.ac.uk](mailto:servicedesk@essex.ac.uk) or 01206 87 2345.

## Any other issues or general External Examiner related queries:

Please contact the Quality and Academic Development team via [external.examiners@essex.ac.uk](mailto:external.examiners@essex.ac.uk) or 01206 87 3944.

# Useful links

- ▶ [Criteria for External Examiner appointment](#)
- ▶ [External Examiner role and responsibilities](#)
- ▶ [External Examiner fees and expenses overview](#)
- ▶ [Termination of External Examiner contract](#)
- ▶ [Approval and reporting structures \(examining\)](#)
- ▶ [Email QUAD](#)
- ▶ [ESIS report: schedules of all current External Examiners by department](#)
- ▶ [ESIS report: all current programmes with associated External Examiners \(including unallocated programmes\)](#)
- ▶ [ESIS report: all current modules with associated External Examiners \(including unallocated modules\)](#)
- ▶ [External Examiners reports by department and academic year](#)

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