



# Taught External Examiner Policy

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# Purpose of this policy

This policy applies to all taught course External Examiners, including those examining the taught course components of postgraduate research awards. It applies to all academic departments or units at the University of Essex; it also applies to all Partner institutions unless specifically agreed otherwise.

This policy does not cover External Examiners for research degrees.

This policy document collates and simplifies all taught course External Examiner policy information. It therefore includes relevant sections from the following related policies:

- [Assessment policies for undergraduate and taught postgraduate awards \[AP\]](#)
- [Marking Policy \[MP\]](#)
- [University of Essex Ordinance 45 \[O45\]](#)

Information contained in other policies have been referenced throughout this policy document using the codes in square brackets provided above for further reading and ease of cross-referencing in future policy updates.

## Glossary of terms

### Nominator

The nominator is the person who is responsible for approving the nomination within the department (for example, the Head of Department). While the course lead or other academic member of staff may recommend an External Examiner for appointment, and a suitable member of the professional services team will submit the appointment to Quality and Academic Development to be processed, neither of these two roles are considered to be nominators.

### Department

'Department' can be read as interchangeable for 'school' or other equivalent.

### Approver

The approver is the Academic Lead responsible for approving an External Examiner nominee for appointment (for example, the Faculty Dean or Partnerships Dean, or a nominee).

## Partnerships

The University of Essex has partnerships with institutions in the UK and internationally. Our Partnerships team manages the University's partnership activity, and a directory of our current partnerships is available on our webpages, alongside additional contextual information about the oversight processes for these Partners.

Due to the different academic delivery models in place with Partner Institutions, there may be some variations in the operation of the External Examiner processes. This could include, but not limited to, timelines for the academic year; the number of Exam Boards across a year; where courses are delivered on an exclusively part-time basis; and requirements for the review of Level 4 modules in some instances.

For the purposes of this policy, 'Partnerships' are included under references to 'departments' unless a partnerships-specific note is included.

# Introduction

## External Examiners definition and purpose

External Examiners are part of University quality assurance processes and are normally academics from other higher education institutions, but may be from industry, business, or the profession, depending on what is appropriate for the course. They provide an impartial view of the course and independent advice to ensure courses meet the academic standards and quality expected across the sector.

External Examiners review whether:

- the programme meets its stated aims
- the assessments and types of assessment in modules are appropriate and of comparable standard to other institutions
- the marking has been applied fairly on assignments and the marking scheme/grading criteria have been properly and consistently applied
- the assessment process complies with University of Essex Rules of Assessment and the curriculum remains current

## Types of External Examiner

The University of Essex has two types of External Examiner: Award External Examiners and module External Examiners. Both types of External Examiner may also be responsible for Apprenticeship provision. Essex Pathways Department utilises Programme External Examiners who follow similar responsibilities to Award External Examiners.

### Award External Examiners

Award External Examiners have overarching responsibility for the standards of the awards to which they are assigned. They are required to attend Exam Boards for those awards. They will also be module External Examiners for the modules in the awards to which they are assigned, but not for any modules to which a separate module External Examiner is assigned.

### Module External Examiners

Module External Examiners have responsibility for ensuring the standard of any particular modules to which they are assigned and will be appointed for their specialist subject knowledge. They do not attend Exam Boards unless they are also Award External Examiners.

If it is deemed the case that more than one specialist area is covered in a module, and it would therefore be appropriate to have more than one External Examiner, permission to appoint additional External Examiners to match the areas of specialism can be sought from the Faculty Dean.

## **Quality Framework for External Examining**

The External Examiner system is governed by Ordinance 45 of the University of Essex:

*Every taught award of the University shall have an Award External Examiner. No more than one Award External Examiner should be appointed per award unless otherwise specified by a professional, statutory or regulatory body. In the case of Joint or Multi-disciplinary awards one Award External Examiner should be appointed from the lead department and at least one module External Examiner should be appointed from the other department(s). Exceptions to these principles may be made in special circumstances with the approval of the Faculty Dean, in discussion with the PVC (Education).*

*The Senate may designate awards of the University other than degrees, for which External Examiners should be appointed [O45].*

All modules that contribute to an award must be allocated to an External Examiner. Responsibility for individual modules must not be allocated to more than one External Examiner, but an Award External may have overarching responsibility for any module allocated to a separate External Examiner as part of an award.

### **Availability of External Examiner information for students**

The Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code (2018) advice and guidance states that it is a requirement that all institutions publish the names, position and home institution of External Examiners to all students. This information is published on the module descriptor and programme specifications. More recently, the QAA published a set of External Examining principles. Principle nine states that institutions should "Enable students to understand the value and purpose of External Examining".

Students should not contact External Examiners directly and should instead direct queries to [external.examiners@essex.ac.uk](mailto:external.examiners@essex.ac.uk). External Examiner reports are discussed at Student Voice Groups.

# Nomination

## Terms of appointment

External Examiners are appointed for up to four consecutive years [O45]. In exceptional circumstances, a fifth year may be considered, with the permission of the approver, to ensure continuity. An individual may not be re-appointed as an External Examiner after completing their term unless exceptional circumstances apply, and five years have elapsed since their last appointment.

An existing External Examiner can hold a role in more than one department at the University (for example, where there is overlap in discipline), however, the External Examiner can only be appointed for a four-year term from the start of their first appointment. When appointing an existing External Examiner, departments should check whether the term the External Examiner can serve is sufficient for the award needs.

External Examiners shall be appointed by the Chair of the relevant Faculty Education Committee or nominee appointed by the Chair, or by the Dean of Partnerships or nominee appointed by the Dean of Partnerships, under powers delegated by the Senate [O45].

External Examiners should not start work until their Right to Work check is complete, and contract issued. Any work conducted before Right to Work check completion is in contravention of UK employment law.

External Examiners must formally accept the invitation to become an External Examiner sent by Quality and Academic Development, which includes a schedule of their awards, modules and their fee. Their appointment is not confirmed until this step has been completed.

Appointments may be terminated with two months' notice by either party [O45].

## Nomination responsibility

Partner Institutions and heads of department are responsible for nominating External Examiners.

The nominator has the responsibility to ensure they have appropriate evidence that the proposed External Examiner meets all nomination criteria.

There may be some instances when an External Examiner does not meet all criteria, for example, where the field to be covered is highly specialised and the pool of possible External Examiners is very limited, or where External Examiners are drawn from a business or profession. In such instances, the nominator should provide a written case for exception which addresses those criteria the proposed External Examiner does not meet, alongside the nomination form.

Factors affecting the number and range of External Examiner appointments in a department include:

- workload – quantity of assessed material being examined
- academic diversity of the provision
- capacity of individuals to make competent judgements against external reference points, e.g. Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
- professional, statutory and regulatory body requirements
- joint and multi-disciplinary courses
- diversity of assessments, electronic delivery, performances/presentations, work-based learning

## **Nomination criteria**

All External Examiners should:

- meet the appropriate Right to Work requirements for employment
- have competence and experience in the academic fields covered by the programme
- have relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined and any appropriate practical experience. Those overseeing specific course types, such as degree apprenticeships, should have or be willing to develop knowledge and awareness of these qualification types
- have academic and teaching experience at the level of the modules or award being examined, including designing and operating a variety of appropriate assessment procedures. Examiners may be appointed for their professional or industry knowledge but each Exam Board must include at least one External Examiner with experience and knowledge of UK Higher Education sector standards and benchmarks, and with recent teaching and examining experience
- have sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command the respect of colleagues
- have familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be examined
- fluency in English and, where programmes are delivered and assessed in languages other than English, additional fluency in the relevant language
- meet applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies
- have awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula
- have competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the learning experience

- normally reside in the UK. Approval to appoint an Examiner from outside the UK will be granted only exceptionally
- typically hold no more than two appointments at different institutions for taught programmes/modules at any one time. (External examining of individual candidates for research degrees is not counted for the purposes of this requirement)

## Impartiality

To ensure impartiality and that potential conflicts of interest are identified and resolved prior to appointment nominators should not nominate anyone to whom the following applies:

- was a previous External Examiner for taught courses (unless exceptional circumstances apply and five years have elapsed since their last appointment)
- is a member of a governing body or committee of the University or one of its collaborative partners, or a current employee of the University or one of its collaborative partners [O45]
- is a close friend, spouse/partner, or relative of a member of staff
- is a close friend, spouse/partner, or relative of a student on the programme of study
- is required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study
- is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study
- is significantly involved in recent or current collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme(s) or module(s). The advice of the relevant Executive Dean or nominee should be sought where the extent of involvement is in question
- is former staff member or student of the University or one of its collaborative partners (unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the External Examiner have completed their programme)
- is from the same department in the same institution as a colleague who was the previous External Examiner for the relevant programme
- will oversee provision in the same department as a member of staff currently holding an External Examiner post at their home institution
- is from the same home institution department as a current External Examiner at the University of Essex

# Fees and expenses

All fees for the work completed are paid upon receipt of the annual report. Quality and Academic Development will arrange for fees to be paid once a submitted report has been processed. External Examiners responsible for both undergraduate and postgraduate (taught) provision must submit two separate reports and will be issued two payments.

Fees are paid to the same timeline as University of Essex staff salary payments.

Fees and expenses paid for work undertaken are published separately and made available to all External Examiners.

# External Examiner responsibilities

Principles governing the role of the Award and module External Examiners.

## Academic standards

External Examiners comment on the academic standards of the award and/or module(s) and the quality and coherence of the course.

External Examiners should determine the appropriateness of the academic standards set for the programmes and/or modules for which they are responsible, considering whether:

- the programme and its component parts continues to be current and coherent and the outcomes are aligned with relevant qualification descriptors set out in the applicable Qualification Framework
- there is alignment with relevant subject benchmark statements
- the standards of the award are commensurate with standards at other higher education institutions with which they are familiar
- professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements are being met (where appropriate)
- assessments in modules of the same level are of comparable standard

External Examiners need not be routinely engaged in Level 4, unless required by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies. Any special agreements for External Examiners to review Level 4 provision should be discussed with them at the time of appointment. Externals should be offered the opportunity to request to view Level 4 assessment instruments and sample work if they have concerns.

## Student performance

External Examiners are asked to consider the overall standards of student performance by reviewing the classification profile of the cohort and its comparability with achievement at other higher education institutions with which they are familiar. This will involve viewing student work, including reading essays or examination scripts or viewing performances.

## Assessments

External Examiners should comment on the assessment process, whether it is properly designed and applied, and whether it is carried out in a way that is fair and equitable to all students, and supportive of the achievement of learning outcomes.

External Examiners are routinely asked to comment on draft coursework assignments and examination questions, enabling them to inform our current practice in addition to their role in reviewing good practice.

## **Replication of coursework material**

Responsibility for ensuring that opportunities for students to replicate coursework in unseen examinations are - as far as possible - eliminated, lies with teaching staff and External Examiners when they review draft examination papers. This is one of the reasons for requiring departments to supply their External Examiners with coursework questions used on the scheme or course for which they are responsible.

module External Examiners are asked to review draft examination papers in the light of coursework assignments in order to comment on the effectiveness of the departmental mechanism. The module External Examiner should report any apparent cases of overlap to the department.

Notwithstanding the above, it is recognised that in some contexts and disciplines it may be desirable for students to be allowed to replicate coursework material. It is for departments, in consultation with their External Examiners, to determine what constitutes acceptable replication of coursework. [AP]

## **Arbitration**

Where two internal markers are unable to reach agreement or are unable to engage in reconciliation for any reason, in exceptional circumstances the work may be sent to the External Examiner as an arbitrator. The External Examiner must be given access to written comments from internal markers on the piece(s) of work involved. [MP]

## **Review of student work**

Unless the External Examiner has been sent work specifically to arbitrate on a dispute between internal markers, the External Examiner's role is not to act as a second marker. The module External Examiner is providing an independent overview of the consistency of approaches to assessment. As such, the module External Examiner's primary concern is with the overall marking standard in the module rather than with marks obtained by individual students. The External Examiner should not alter the marks of any individual student directly and unilaterally. They may act as an arbitrator in specific circumstances. [MP]

Where the External Examiner has concerns about internal marking, they should discuss with the internal markers whether it would be more appropriate for the department to:

- re-mark relevant assessed work for the whole cohort
- scale the marks for all students

# Exam Boards

## Membership

Award External Examiners have the responsibility to be a member of and attend Exam Boards as required and to assess the extent to which the determination of awards is sound and fair.

Decisions as to the classification of a degree and the conferment of a Bachelor's degree shall normally require the consent of the appropriate Award External Examiner. If the Award External Examiner cannot consent, the decision requires the consent of a two-thirds majority of the Exam Board, including the Chair. The exception to this is when the Exam Board is suspended under [Regulation 6.28](#), when the Chair should consult with the Award External Examiner before suspending the Exam Board. [O45]

Therefore, the Award External Examiner shall normally be present at any Exam Board at which recommendations are made for the award of degrees, diplomas or certificates. module External Examiners are not required to attend Exam Boards.

In instances of Exam Boards which contain only Level 4 and Level 5 provision, Award External Examiners are only required to attend if one or more Level 5 exit awards will be conferred. As this information may not be available until close to the Exam Board date, the External Examiner should prepare to attend. The department may contact the External Examiner prior to the Exam Board to advise that their attendance is not mandatory but welcome.

External Examiners are not required to attend any meeting of the Exam Board which contain only Level 4 provision unless there are specific Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body requirements which necessitate it. In such instances, the department should advise the Award External Examiner accordingly. [AP]

External Examiners need not attend pre-Board meetings or Exam Boards for reassessments. However, practice may need to vary due to professional body requirements [AP].

It is appropriate for one joint meeting to be convened to consider all courses with a Year Abroad. The meeting shall be chaired by a Faculty or Partnerships Dean or a senior member of academic staff. Membership shall comprise one representative from the relevant departments. The quorum, including the Chair, shall be four. External Examiners are not expected to attend these meetings. [AP]

The Award External Examiner should sign the relevant Exam Board paperwork as evidence that the process has been conducted properly. [AP]

Where an Exam Board at which a particular External Examiner is not present proposes to make a decision which rejects the advice of that External Examiner, this should be communicated to the External Examiner and their consent obtained in writing before a final decision is taken by the Exam Board and communicated to students. In cases where the External Examiner does not agree to the Exam Board's proposal, and where the Exam Board wishes its decision to stand, the Faculty or

Partnerships Dean should be informed. The Faculty or Partnerships Dean shall then chair a reconvened meeting of the Exam Board at which the External Examiner shall be present. [AP]

Award External Examiners are not required to attend both the Interim and the Final Exam Board for postgraduate taught awards. However, departments will still need to seek Faculty or Partnerships Dean's approval where the External is going to be absent from one of these meetings. In cases where the External has been given approval to be absent from an Interim Exam Board meeting, Senate has confirmed that Interim Exam Boards for taught postgraduate/graduate programmes should have the authority to confirm a student's eligibility for the award of a certificate or diploma as an exit award, where there is no External Examiner present, provided the External Examiner has reviewed the usual sample of work in advance. [AP]

External Examiners are included in the quorum in the case of undergraduate courses but excluded in the case of taught postgraduate ones. [AP]

Only the External Examiner of the administering department is required to be present at the joint degree Exam Board. [AP].

The Award External Examiner is asked to comment on whether the Exam Board operates with fairness. They should be made aware of the outcome of any previous meeting to consider extenuating circumstances relating to the degree class of individual students and they should be satisfied that decisions in this regard are appropriate and consistent.

## **Absence from Exam Boards**

When, for good reason, it is not possible for the Award External Examiner to attend a mandatory Exam Board, their absence must be approved by the appropriate Faculty Dean.

Where an External is going to be absent from an Exam Board, the department must seek approval in advance using the Request for approval for External Examiner absence from Exam Board pro-forma, which asks for the following information:

- the reasons for the request
- arrangements to ensure that the Award External Examiner's views are available to the Exam Board in advance of its meeting
- arrangements to resolve matters in which the views of the internal examiners on the Exam Board differ from those of the Award External Examiner
- the written agreement of the Award External Examiner concerned
- where there is not sufficient time to make alternative arrangements for the Exam Board the Faculty Dean may appoint a suitable substitute

## **Marks scaling**

When scaling is recommended the module External Examiner must be given the opportunity to have access to all the student work involved (whether coursework or examination scripts) [AP]. Further information regarding the scaling process can be found in the assessment policy.

## **Posthumous Awards**

For a taught award, in the event of a candidate's death, the Exam Board may confer the award of a degree, diploma or certificate post obitum provided that it is satisfied that there is sufficient evidence that the candidate would have successfully completed the intended award and that the candidate had successfully completed at least two-thirds of the programme of study. [AP]

The signature(s) of the External Examiner(s) present at an Exam Board are required on an Exam Board coversheet alongside that of the Chair, to indicate that procedures have been correctly followed. Where an Exam Board is required to take place virtually or remotely, confirmation that procedures have been correctly followed can be obtained via email. [AP]

## **Reporting**

External Examiners are required to produce an annual report to the Vice-Chancellor which provides clear and informative feedback to the University on all areas included within the External Examiner remit. Please see the "Reporting" section later in this policy for further details.

## **New courses and developments**

New courses and developments benefit from independent and impartial input and advice, by providing a comparison with the quality and standards of similar courses and awards elsewhere, and by offering feedback on the course and module design. External Examiners are therefore usually consulted over developments and are asked to comment during the development process and/or in the annual report.

Feedback from the External Examiner is required for all category 1 new course proposals. Category 1 courses are constructed entirely from existing provision or a small number of new modules.

In most instances, review of category 1 new course materials is considered to be a component of an External Examiner's core roles and responsibilities and is encompassed within the agreed annual fee. In the rare situations where new course materials are seen to represent a substantial increase in workload for an External Examiner, a discretionary additional payment may be made. The allocation of an additional fee is to ensure parity of workload and pay for External Examiners across the University of Essex, and its allocation will be determined by Quality and Academic Development in consultation with the External Examiner's appointing Department.

# Apprenticeships

External Examiners for apprenticeships should also review the [supplementary guidance](#) to ensure they are prepared for the specific responsibilities and core duties in relation to examining apprenticeship provision.

## Communication between award and module External Examiners

The department will arrange for liaison between the Award External Examiner and the module External Examiner(s) responsible for the relevant modules that they have not had responsibility for, in order that the Award External Examiner may be assured that there are no areas of concern which might affect the overall quality and standard of the award. In circumstances where this is not possible the External will have the right to see a sample of work for the purposes of duties stated in 1a and 1b (see below).

## Termination of the External Examiner contract

Appointments may be terminated with two months' notice by either party. However, as the role of the External Examiner in contributing to the management of standards and quality is important, failure to fulfil this role needs to be addressed promptly. Therefore, in the case of breach of contract, or where a conflict of interest comes to light, a contract may be terminated immediately following completion of the termination procedures.

A contract with an External Examiner will be terminated in the following circumstances:

- failure to fulfil the role
- conflict of interest

### Failure to fulfil the role

An External Examiner may be considered to be in breach of their contract when:

- (1) Despite reminders, they have failed to submit an annual report, or have submitted an incomplete report.
- (2) They have failed to attend an Exam Board without due notice.
- (3) They have failed to attend two consecutive Exam Boards.

Termination of a contract may be triggered by the department notifying Quality and Academic Development or in respect of (1) above, by Quality and Academic Development alerting the department.

## **Termination in the case of breach of contract**

The procedure for early termination of an External Examiner's contract in the case of breach of contract is as follows.

In the case of (1):

- the University will send an e-mail reminder to the external that the report has not been submitted
- following discussion between Quality and Academic Development and the department, the external will be advised in writing by Quality and Academic Development that they are in breach of contract and will be given one final opportunity to submit their report by a revised deadline
- if the report is still not received, the External will be given notice in writing by Quality and Academic Development, of the automatic termination of their contract in the following two weeks. This letter is copied to the relevant Executive Dean or nominee. The External will be advised that they have the right of appeal to the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education)

In the case of (2) and (3):

- Quality and Academic Development will email the External requesting a written explanation of their absence from Exam Boards
- following discussion between Quality and Academic Development and the department, a recommendation will be made to the appropriate Executive Dean or nominee regarding the dismissal/continuing appointment of the external
- the external will be advised of the Executive Dean's or nominee's decision by Quality and Academic Development and will be given notice of termination if appropriate. The external will be advised that they have the right of appeal to the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education).

## **Termination in the case of conflict of interest**

The procedure in the case of a new conflict of interest, or existing conflict of interest coming to light, during the term of office which prohibits the External from carrying out the full range of their duties is as follows:

Where the conflict of interest is brought to the notice of or identified by, the department or by Quality and Academic Development, the External Examiner will be notified of the conflict and asked for comment by a given date by the department. After this date, the department will notify the approver and Quality and Academic Development of the outcome and any appropriate action required.

# Reporting

External Examiners are required to produce an annual report to the Vice-Chancellor which provides clear and informative feedback to the University on all areas included within the External Examiner remit.

In addition, the report should:

- confirm that sufficient evidence was received to enable the role to be fulfilled (where evidence was insufficient, the External Examiner should provide details)
- state whether issues raised in the previous report(s) have been or are being addressed to the External Examiner's satisfaction
- address any issues as specifically required by the relevant professional body
- give an overview of the External Examiner's term of office (when concluded)

Reports should normally be submitted within four weeks after the final Exam Board (or final work reviewed for module External Examiners) and no longer than three months after the Exam Board to be considered 'received', since reports received after this point can no longer contribute meaningfully to other quality assurance mechanisms. However, where this is not applicable, for example where multiple Exam Boards are held across a year. In such cases, an External Examiner may be advised to provide a 'snapshot-in-time' report at a set point each year.

The External Examiner fee will be paid on receipt of a completed annual report.

Where an interim report is required, for example, for any Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body purposes or for postgraduate taught provision, this should be submitted in the same way as the annual External Examiner report.

External Examiners should be aware that their reports will be sent to any Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies associated with the programme.

## Responses to External Examiner reports

Heads of Department should discuss External Examiner reports at a team level and make a considered and timely response to each External Examiner, typically via email (for Partnerships) and via the External Examiner Report Portal (for internal departments). The response should outline any action taken (or the reason why there will be no action if this is the case) in response to the External Examiners' recommendations.

Departments should also outline any action in the Annual Review of Courses Reports.

Under some circumstances, comments relating to areas which relate to all faculties across the University may be responded to by the PVC (Education), Dean Undergraduate and/or Dean Postgraduate, in liaison with the Faculty Deans and/or Executive Deans as required. Departments should still include the response to these areas in their ARCs.

In the exceptional case of any serious concerns, any External Examiners for University of Essex programmes are entitled to write directly to the Vice-Chancellor in confidence on any unresolved matter which concerns them.

As a last resort, where these concerns are not addressed, are systemic and not a one-off case of ineffective practice, the matter should be raised with the Office for Students (OfS).

External Examiners contribute greatly to the development of our provision and are asked to identify examples of good practice and potential areas for development. These will be reflected upon in Annual Review of Courses reports and at Periodic Review.

External Examiners should be aware that their reports will be:

- sent to any Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies associated with the programme.
- made available to students via their representatives on Faculty Education Committee and on departmental Student Voice Groups or equivalent, although not published, and therefore should not refer directly to individual students or staff.

Each Partner Institution holds copies of the External Examiner reports which students can request to have access through their relevant Partner Institution.

## **Role of Faculty Dean**

The Faculty Dean does not routinely consult with the Head of Department on departmental level issues, unless they are of particular concern and require urgent action. The Faculty Dean considers External Examiner reports to identify issues which cross departments and/or which merit consideration at the level of the faculty or at University level via the appropriate committee.

Undergraduate External Examiner issues for faculty consideration are normally referred by the Faculty Dean to the Autumn Term meeting of the Faculty Education Committee. Taught postgraduate External Examiner issues are normally referred by the Executive Dean or nominee to the Spring Term meeting of the Faculty Education Committee.

## **Overview of External Examiner Reports**

Faculty Deans provide a verbal overview from their Faculty at committees such as Faculty Education Committee.

A summary of the findings across all Partners will be presented at the relevant Joint Partner Committee meeting and Academic Quality Standards Committee.

Quality and Academic Development review all External Examiner reports and use these and provide overviews of key themes to the Academic Quality and Standards committee as part of their annual cycle of quality assurance.

## **Correspondence**

Copies of correspondence between Heads of Department, Faculty Deans and External Examiners should be retained by departments. Records and extracts of relevant Exam Board minutes will be held by the Assessment Team.

Copies of correspondence between the Course Leads at the relevant Partner Institution and External Examiners will be retained by the Partner Institution.

# Appendix A: Information provided to External Examiners

## From Quality and Academic Development

### Upon appointment:

The Quality and Academic Development team will provide all new External Examiners with the following documentation upon appointment:

- contract and payroll information
- the list of courses and modules for which they are responsible
- the previous External Examiner report (if available)
- a link to the roles and responsibilities of External Examiners
- a link to the previous training webinars and corresponding materials

### Beginning of a new academic year

The Quality and Academic Development team will send the following to all current External Examiners at the start of the academic year:

- welcome to the academic year
- links to the Rules of Assessment and the Assessment Policies (including Marking Policies)
- the list of course and modules for which they are responsible (provided upon request)

## From departments

### Before the first week of term one

The Department should send the following to all External Examiners before the first week of term one:

- a copy (or link to) the relevant Student Handbook(s)
- a copy of the marking criteria (including, if relevant, information relating to professional competencies)

- teaching, learning and assessment (including reassessment) strategies
- Expected dates of Exam Boards including clear guidance on which Exam Boards are mandatory and which are optional
- information relating to the requirements of any professional, statutory or regulatory bodies (PSRBs) or accrediting bodies
- information relating to the indicative workload of the External Examiner for that academic year, including:
  - the moderation policy and indicative sample sizes
  - types of assessment used in the module(s)
  - the timing of the work
- information about the courses and modules for which the External Examiner is responsible for including:
  - programme specifications (unless included in full in the Student Handbook)
  - programme-level statistical data
  - module information including module maps, module outlines and statistical data (including the number of students)

## **During the academic year**

The Department should send the following to all External Examiners during the academic year:

- examination assessment questions (and coursework assignment briefs as necessary to ensure there is no overlap) must be sent annually or with a frequency in line with the examination period(s) by a date(s) set by the Assessment Team
- confirmed arrangements for the Exam Board(s) as soon as they become available including dates
- the Extenuating Circumstances policy, including information about how the department implements this policy
- the Annual Review of Courses report. This should relate to the most recently completed academic year and should be sent to the External Examiner after it has been submitted to the University
- student work for review (work samples)

In addition, the University expects that there will be formal or informal communication between the department/school and the External Examiner relating to curriculum development, course changes and new courses.

## Work samples

Samples should be supplied of sufficient size to enable judgement as to whether internal marking has properly assessed performance. Where the cohort is very small, all assessed work should be seen. The External Examiner has the right to see the work of any or all students on the programme or module concerned.

External Examiners should be sent the following as a minimum for each module:

- at least 10% of examples across all classifications (including fails). If the cohort is under ten, all student work should be seen. Samples should include all of a sampled student's work and classifications should be calculated on the module aggregate unless there is a variation to the Rules of Assessment requiring students to pass all assessments. The full range of assessed work (dissertations, examination scripts and so forth) should be sent [MP].
- overall marks profile for the cohort
- examples of marking from all markers
- evidence of moderation, and how final marks were agreed
- samples should be electronic unless at the specific request of the External Examiner for hard copies. Approval must be sought from the Faculty Dean for exceptions.

All assessed coursework (which is to be interpreted as part of an examination for purposes of Ordinance 44 ASC.M.191/06 31 May 2006) must be available for consultation by External Examiners. (An exception to this rule may be made in departments which operate with very high volumes of small assessed coursework assignments, but only with the explicit written agreement of the current External Examiner(s) and the relevant Faculty or Partnerships Dean.) [AP]

Where defined answer sheets are used these must be made available to the External Examiner. [MP]

## Document Control Panel

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