



# External Examiners

## Meeting with students guidance

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# Meeting with students

Students play an essential role in our quality assurance and enhancement processes at Essex. The University believes that it can be helpful for External Examiners to meet students as part of their role. The Quality Assurance Agency also encourages these meetings in their External Examining Principles.

These meetings both enhance the student understanding of the role of External Examiners and provides the External Examiners a valuable means of gathering feedback from across the course(s) they are responsible. This could be at either Award or module level.

Meeting with students can be difficult, especially as there is currently no compulsory requirement for External Examiners to attend the University in person. External Examiners are offered the opportunity to visit campus at least once during their appointment term and this visit could encompass meetings with students. However, Zoom or other video link resources can be used as an alternative during term time to facilitate virtual meetings.

## Organising meetings

Student representatives should attend any meetings organised. Departments/schools may wish to extend the invitation to all relevant students, but student representatives should always be included, where possible. Members of academic staff from the department/school may not influence or attend the meeting.

The Department/School should explain the purpose of the meeting and the role of the External Examiner to the students as part of the invite.

## Indicative agenda

Whilst the meeting is to primarily seek feedback from students, it is recommended that some questions or themes are prepared in advance to help guide discussions and provide a more valuable feedback session.

External Examiners are encouraged to discuss any relevant issues, but may wish to consider:

- How useful students have found feedback on assignments.
- Student experiences of year abroad, work-based and placement learning, and joint courses.
- What the students are particularly enjoying or finding challenging.
- Whether students feel they have opportunities to apply what they have learnt.
- Whether they feel that the curriculum is inclusive.
- Should the External Examiner be responsible for an End-point assessment module, they may wish to discuss experiences of this with apprentices.

External Examiners should be encouraged to reflect on their meeting with students in their annual report.

## Informing students

Departments/Schools should ensure that students are fully aware of the role that External Examiners play, and what their responsibilities entail. For example, it should be made clear to students that:

- **External Examiners only advise on academic matters**

Feedback on non-academic issues, such as parking or accommodation, should be voiced through the appropriate University channels.

- **External Examiners cannot influence individual circumstances**

External Examiners cannot and will not change or influence individual assessment marks, complaints or academic appeals, except under exceptional circumstances in accordance with the University's policies.

Students must not contact External Examiners outside of the structured meeting. External Examiners will not respond to any students contacting them directly and will refer all such instances to their department contact.

Quality and Academic Development can support training for students in engagement with all quality processes. Additionally, advice can also be sought from the Students' Union.

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