

Quality Manual: External Examiners

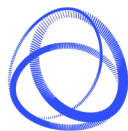
This chapter covers the role of the External Examiners for assuring the quality and standards for the University's taught awards. This chapter should be read in conjunction with the External Examiner Handbook as well as the University's Regulations for Taught Awards.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The University operates a formal two stage process overseen by the Progression and Award Board of Examiners. The two formal stages include a Module Ratification Process (MRP) and a Progression and Award Board.



- 1.2. To support this process, there are two separate External Examiner roles, the Module External Examiner and the Progression and Award External Examiner.

2. MODULE EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

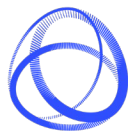
- 2.1 Subject specialist External Examiners are appointed to modules rather than to courses. This allows modules that are shared across more than one course to have a consistent external perspective from a single External Examiner. It also allows the University to make the best use of the specialist knowledge of our External Examiners.
- 2.2 A Module External Examiner will not normally be appointed to more than 400 credits of modules. However, while all modules will have an appointed External Examiner to enable consultation where a modification is proposed, not all modules will have samples of assessed work to be reviewed, such as those at level 0 and level 4. This means that an External Examiner's overall credits may be higher than 400 but this will not involve more work.

3. PROGRESSION AND AWARDS EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

- 3.1 The role and responsibilities of the Progression and Award External Examiner are to contribute to the decision of the Progression and Award Board (PAB) in respect of the Board's role as set out in [the Boards of Examiners for Taught Awards Procedures](#).
- 3.2 Each PAB will normally have a single PAB External Examiner. PAB External Examiners are appointed at institutional level, rather than to a specific PAB, allowing for some flexibility in setting up the PAB. PAB External Examiners do not need to be subject specialists as the PAB does not focus on individual assessments.
- 3.3 All PABs are held at an Institutional level to align with the calendars set by the Assessment and Award Management Team in the operational schedule of Board of Examiners.
- 3.4 It is expected that PAB External Examiners will also be Module External Examiners.
- 3.5 For information on the specific roles and responsibilities of External Examiners, please see the External Examiner handbook and the External Examiners' section of the University's Regulations for Taught Awards.

4. CONDITIONS FOR TERM OF OFFICE

- 4.1 The duration of an External Examiner's appointment will normally be for four years and 3 months, with an exceptional extension of one year to ensure continuity.
- 4.2 An External Examiner may be reappointed in exceptional circumstances but only after a period of five years or more has elapsed since their last appointment.
- 4.3 At any point in time an External Examiner may not normally hold more than one external examiner appointments for taught courses/modules in addition to their appointment at the University.



- 4.4 An application for an extension to an External Examiner's term of office will need to be made by the Primary contact (usually the Course Director) to the External Examiner Appointments Panel.

5. RIGHT TO WORK (RTW) CHECKS AND STAFF LOGIN DETAILS

- 5.1 The University has a responsibility to check that External Examiners have the right to work in the UK before work commences.
- 5.2 No External Examiner can be appointed until they have completed a successful right to work check.
- 5.3 No External Examiner can be set up on the University's staff record system (enabling the payment of fees and expenses, and access to the VLE) or review student work until they have completed a successful right to work check and have been formally appointed to the role by the University's External Examiner Appointments Panel.

6. AMENDMENT TO DUTIES

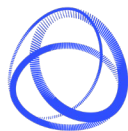
- 6.1 An External Examiner may be invited to take on additional duties in the form of either an extension of term or change to modules examined, or both.
- 6.2 Where an External Examiner is willing to make a change, then applications to amend the duties of an External Examiner should be made by the relevant Primary Contact and approved by the University's External Examiner Appointments Panel.

7. CHANGE OF JOB OR PLACE OF WORK

- 7.1 If an External Examiner changes their job or place of work they must notify the University. The Primary Contact should decide whether the External Examiner can still fulfil the role and responsibilities to the required standard.
- 7.2 Where the change in workplace results in a change of location outside of the UK, and the External Examiner does not retain a UK bank account, the Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) Team should check with HR and Payroll whether the External Examiner's record requires to be updated so that they can be paid into a foreign bank account.
- 7.3 The Primary Contact should ensure that the External Examiners contact details are up to date and to notify the University's Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) Team where necessary.

8. DISCONTINUATION OF APPOINTMENT DUE TO RESIGNATION OR RETIREMENT

- 8.1 Where an External Examiner is unable to continue with the role until the end of their appointment, or where an External Examiner is likely to be unavailable for an extended period of time during their appointment, the External Examiner should notify their Primary Contact in writing, as soon as possible. Notification should be in sufficient time to enable appropriate alternative arrangements to be made so as not to impact on the assessment process and the student experience.



- 8.2 Resignations by External Examiners will be reported to the Education Committee.
- 8.3 If an External Examiner retires from their home HEI during their term of office, then they will be permitted to remain in office as an External Examiner for the University for a further 2 years. During this time, it is expected that a replacement for the External Examiner will be sought by the Primary Contact.
- 8.4 In all cases, the Primary Contact must notify the Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) Team and seek a replacement External Examiner to ensure continuity.

9. EARLY TERMINATION OF CONTRACT BY THE UNIVERSITY

- 9.1 The contract with an External Examiner for a taught award may be terminated by the University before the end of the External Examiner's term of office as set out in the Early Termination process available on [the QAE External Examiner webpage](#)
- 9.2 Where possible, early termination should be considered as a final resort.
- 9.3 No External Examiner contract may be terminated without the final approval of the Chair of the Education Committee.

10. RIGHTS OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

- 10.1 To support External Examiners in undertaking the role, the rights of External Examiners are as follows:
 - 10.1.1. External Examiners should have adequate access to all student work from the modules of which they are examining.
 - 10.1.2. External Examiners are entitled to meet students for the purposes of induction or where there is a need to oversee practical assessments and should be given reasonable opportunity to do so. This also includes via online meetings if necessary.
 - 10.1.3. External Examiners are guaranteed full independence to make judgements about the examination process and award of qualifications and no Examiner shall be dismissed for exercising such judgement;
 - 10.1.4. No arrangement for marking made by Course Directors shall limit in any way the role of the External Examiner.

11. THE PRIMARY CONTACT

- 11.1 All Module External Examiners must have a Primary Contact assigned to them from the point of approval. The Primary Contact will normally be a Course Director, Module Leader or Academic Link Tutor from the group of courses the External Examiner's modules reside.
- 11.2 For details on the responsibilities of the Primary Contact, please see the External Examiner handbook available on the [QAE External Examiners webpage](#)

12. BRIEFING AND INDUCTION

- 12.1 Every newly appointed External Examiner should receive a course briefing at the start of their appointment.
- 12.2 Every Primary Contact should arrange and provide for their External Examiner a course specific briefing which should allow the opportunity for meeting with other course team members and students. This briefing should include assessment submission dates .
- 12.3 The University's Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) Team will provide an annual University-level briefing on the main arrangements for Boards of Examiners and the relevant academic regulations.
- 12.4 Further details on induction and briefing arrangements can be found in the External Examiner handbook available on the [QAE External Examiners webpage](#).

13. REVIEWING STUDENT WORK

- 13.1 In line with the University's marking and moderation policy available on the [QAE webpage](#), External Examiners will be required to review a representative sample of work from across the mark bandings.
- 13.2 A representative sample is considered to be a sample of work from marks or grades spread across the range, including fails.
- 13.3 There is no requirement for all failed pieces of work to be in the moderation sample.

14. CONFIRMATION OF MODULE OUTCOMES (MODULE RATIFICATION PROCESS)

- 14.1. Module External Examiners are full members of the Module Ratification Process (MRP) panel, where the modules they oversee are being ratified.
- 14.2. Full details of the MRP can be found in the [Boards of Examiners for Taught Awards Procedures](#).

15. ATTENDANCE AT BOARD OF EXAMINER MEETINGS

- 15.1. The University runs its Board of Examiner meetings online via MS Teams and therefore it is anticipated that External Examiners will attend these meetings virtually.
- 15.2. Progress and Award Board External Examiners are full members of the relevant University Board of Examiners and their involvement is crucial to the Board process. It is expected that there will be an External Examiner at each meeting of the Board of Examiners, except where a Board is only considering student reassessment or where the Board has delegated responsibility to confirm student outcomes from the appropriate Progression and Award Board.

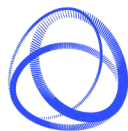
- 15.3. No meeting of the Board of Examiners that considers student progression or award outcomes shall take place in the absence of an External Examiner, unless the Academic Registrar authorises the meeting to proceed as scheduled, in which case a report outlining these instances will be submitted to Academic Board.
- 15.4. External Examiners attending any meeting of a Board of Examiners of which they are a member must do so from a location where they will not be disturbed by others and where the confidentiality of the Board of Examiner meeting will be maintained for the whole duration of the meeting.
- 15.5. Full details of the Progression Award Boards can be found in the Boards of Examiners for Taught Awards Procedures.

16. ANNUAL REPORTS

- 16.1 The purpose of a Module External Examiner annual report is to: -
 - 16.1.1. Enable the relevant Course Director(s), course team(s), the School, and the Academic Board and its committees to judge whether academic quality and standards are being maintained;
 - 16.1.2. Make any necessary improvements; and to further develop the relevant course(s), immediately or at the next review as appropriate
- 16.2 . It follows that this report is vital in the whole process of course review.
- 16.3 The purpose of a PAB External Examiner annual report is to provide assurance to Deans of School and the Academic Board and its committees of the following:
 - 16.1.3. the written University procedures for progression, award and classification are being observed; that threshold standards are being maintained;
 - 16.1.4. the standards set for the award are appropriate for the level of the qualification.
- 16.4 Module External Examiner and PAB External Examiner Reports should be completed on the formal University templates.

17. RESPONSES TO EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORTS

- 17.1 Once the External Examiner annual report is received, it is expected that all relevant course teams will contribute towards a written response to a report covering their modules. This should be on the University template available on the [QAE External Examiners webpage](#) as a single document, which will highlight any good practice identified, discuss issues raised and draw attention to any actions that will be taken.
- 17.2 The consideration of a Module External Examiner's comments and the response is the responsibility of the whole relevant course team and not of a single individual or select group of individuals; as such should be discussed at such bodies as Course Boards , and Student Voice Fora.
- 17.3 External Examiner reports can be made available to students upon request.



17.4 The Associate Dean of Education shall:

- i. consider for approval the response written to a Module External Examiner report;
- ii. ensure that appropriate action is taken in response to all issues raised by a Module External Examiner or ensure that the reasons why no action is taken are noted. Such actions will be communicated to all stakeholders in the relevant modules, including the Module External Examiner and, where appropriate, external bodies. Such actions will be monitored and evaluated through the course monitoring process.
- iii. ensure that when a Module External Examiners raises a significant issue, one that if not rectified threatens the standards of a module or course, the issue is reported to the University.

17.5 The Quality Manager is expected to:

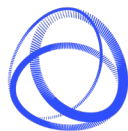
- i. read all Module External Examiner Annual Reports for all courses managed by their School;
- ii. liaise with the Associate Dean of Education on any issue of serious concern raised in an External Examiner's report;
- iii. inform the Head of Quality (Curriculum and Standards) of any serious issue of concern to the University arising in Module External Examiners' reports;
- iv. Liaise with the appropriate School regarding any issue which is related to joint working;
- v. ensure that any issue of significance, is reported to the Education Committee using the Significant Issue form.

17.6 The Head of Quality (Curriculum and Standards) shall:

- i. inform the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of any issue of serious concern to the University, to enable the Vice-Chancellor to be made aware. This will enable the Vice-Chancellor to take any immediate action needed in the light of a serious issue raised in a report by a Module External Examiner;
- ii. submit an annual report on issues raised in Module External Examiner reports to the Education Committee, for consideration by the Academic Board normally in the Easter Term.

18. CONSIDERATION OF EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORTS IN RELATION TO PROGRESSION AND AWARD BOARDS

- 18.1 On receipt of a PAB External Examiner report, the Director of Academic Operations will write an annual institutional response to all PAB External Examiners addressing issues raised by PAB External Examiners and outlining appropriate action to be taken.



19. PAYMENT OF FEES

- 19.1. External Examiner fees are authorised by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) Team to the amount of the fee set at the beginning of the term of office in the Confirmation of Appointment letter and/or any subsequent Confirmation of Amendment to Duties letters.
- 19.2. No External Examiner shall receive payment until the University has received their annual report.
- 19.3. The fee for a Module External Examiner is based on the total credits for modules in their appointment in which samples of assessments are reviewed. Not all modules will have samples of assessments to be reviewed, such as those at level 0 and level 4, and therefore will not count towards a Module External Examiner's fee.
 - i. For credits up to 240 a fee of £300 will be paid;
 - ii. For credits between 245 and 320 the fee will be £400;
 - iii. For credits more than 320 credits the fee will be £500.
 - iv. PAB External Examiners receive a fixed fee of £100 per PAB attended.
 - v. For short courses the fee will be £50.
- 19.4. External Examiners for the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology are an exception to this rule; fees are paid at the end of the academic year when the course team can assess the division of labour. Fees can therefore change year on year for those External Examiners.
- 19.5. As long as an External Examiner has submitted their payment details to the University's Payroll team, and a Right to Work check has been satisfactorily undertaken, the University will process the fee payment. No further action is required by the External Examiner after submitting their annual report.
- 19.6. Essential additional visits will attract an additional fee of £50 per half day. Payment for additional days visits, if not set out in the Confirmation of Appointment Letter and/or any subsequent Confirmation of Amendment or Extension letters, requires a claim to be submitted to the Quality and Standards Office on an annual basis.

20. CLAIMING EXPENSES

- 20.1. Expenses incurred relating to the External Examiner role outside of the contract fee will be reimbursed by the relevant School.
- 20.2. All expenses claims must be submitted on the University Outside Parties Claim form which is located on the [Finance webpage](#).
- 20.3. Claims must be made in line with the University Guidance on outside party payment (expenses).