

# External Examiner Procedure

<b>Approved by:</b> Education Committee	<b>Effective date:</b> 01 April 2026	<b>Next review:</b> March 2029
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## Procedure statement

This procedure sets out the University's requirements for the appointment, management of duties and change of circumstances of External Examiners of all taught awards whether delivered directly or collaboratively.

## Who needs to know about the procedure?

- Deans of School
- Deputy Deans
- Associate Deans of Education
- Course Directors
- Academic Staff
- Professional Services Staff
- Quality Assurance and Enhancement

## Purpose of the procedure

The purpose of this document is to set out the University's approach to ensuring external engagement for assuring the maintenance of quality, academic standards, and comparability across the HE Sector of the University's taught awards, on a continuous basis.

## Contacts

The University Quality Assurance and Enhancement team is responsible for:

- Providing guidance and templates
- Coordinating the approval of appointments and early terminations by the External Examiner Appointment Panel on behalf of the Education Committee
- Reporting appointments to the Education Committee
- Maintaining the database of External Examiners
- Coordinating the payment of fees and expenses to External Examiners

The team can be contacted by emailing: [external-examiners@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:external-examiners@canterbury.ac.uk)

# External Examiner Procedure

## Contents

1. Introduction .....	3
2. Selection and Criteria for Appointment.....	3
3. Conflicts of Interest.....	4
4. Conditions for Term of Office.....	5
5. Process for Approval of Nominations, Amendments and Extensions.....	6
6. Process for Early Termination of Appointment.....	7
7. Rights and Responsibilities of External Examiners.....	9
8. Fees and Expenses.....	10

## External Examiner Procedure

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The University operates a formal two stage process for the ratification and conferment of awards 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 (PAB).
- 1.2. To support this process, there are two separate External Examiner roles, the Module External Examiner and the Progression and Award External Examiner. This policy defines the process of their appointment, details the expectation of their role and the administrative aspects involved.
- 1.3. This procedure does not cover the appointment of External Examiners for Postgraduate Research Courses.

### 2. Selection and Criteria for Appointment

- 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 and/or more than location, including partner institutions, 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. All modules from the taught provision must be allocated to a Module External Examiner. This includes modules where a moderation sample may not be required (e.g. foundation year or non-credit bearing modules) This is to ensure external oversight of any taught provision module such as when a change is required.
- 2.3. Course teams are required to nominate Module External Examiners for approval by the External Examiner Appointment Panel. In making recommendations for the appointment of the Module External Examiner, they shall ensure that the proposed External Examiner demonstrates:
  - 2.3.1. Knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality;
  - 2.3.2. Competence and experience in the fields covered by the modules (and related courses(s) of study);
  - 2.3.3. Relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the modules/qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate;
  - 2.3.4. Competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures;
  - 2.3.5. Sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command the respect of academic peers and, where appropriate, professional peers;

## External Examiner Procedure

- 2.3.6. Familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the level of the modules/award that is to be assessed;
  - 2.3.7. Fluency in English, and where modules / courses are delivered and assessed in languages other than English, fluency in the relevant language(s) (unless other secure arrangements are in place to ensure that External Examiners are provided with the information to make their judgements);
  - 2.3.8. Suitability to meet any applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies;
  - 2.3.9. Awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula;
  - 2.3.10. Competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.
- 2.4. On nominating a Module External Examiner, recommendation can be made in addition to nominate them as Progression and Award Board External Examiner. The proposed Progression and Award Board External Examiner must also demonstrate:
- 2.4.1. Knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality;
  - 2.4.2. Competence and significant experience of managing assessment processes and in applying academic regulations;
  - 2.4.3. Suitability to meet any applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies.
- 2.5. A Module External Examiner can also be nominated as Progression and Award Board External Examiner during their tenure if not originally appointed as such via an amendment to their appointment.

### 3. Conflicts of Interest

- 3.1. The University does not appoint as an External Examiner anyone who falls in the following categories or circumstances:
  - 3.1.1. A current employee of the University, one of its collaborative partners or a member of the University's governing body or committee;
  - 3.1.2. In a close personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the course;
  - 3.1.3. In a close professional or contractual relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the course including but not limited to:
    - 3.1.3.1. Required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the course;

## External Examiner Procedure

- 3.1.3.2. Anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence the future of students on the course;
  - 3.1.3.3. Significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the course(s) or modules in question;
  - 3.1.4. A former staff member or student at the University unless a period of five years has elapsed, and all students taught by or with the external examiner have completed their course(s).
- 3.2. Nor may there be:
- 3.2.1. A reciprocal arrangement involving a cognate subject group at another institution;
  - 3.2.2. The succession of an External Examiner from an institution by a colleague from the same subject group in the same institution;
  - 3.2.3. The appointment of more than one External Examiner from the same subject area of the same institution;
  - 3.2.4. Any External Examiner appointed whilst holding two or more External Examiner appointments for taught provision/modules at any point in time.

## 4. Conditions for Term of Office

- 4.1. The University has a legal responsibility to check that External Examiners have the right to work in the UK before work commences. As such no External Examiner will be appointed without having undergone a successful right to work check.
- 4.2. The duration of an External Examiner's appointment will normally be for four years and three months normally starting in September, with an exceptional extension of one year to ensure continuity.
- 4.3. An extension of term may only be granted at the end of the initial period and in exceptional circumstances. Extensions are for a maximum of one year. All requests for extensions of terms for External Examiners must be submitted to the External Examiner Appointment Panel accompanied by a rationale. Exceptional circumstances may include:
  - 4.3.1. Imminence of Board of Examiners: a lack of appointed External Examiner to a module could delay student progression/awards;
  - 4.3.2. Extensive changes to a course: if a course is having to enact far reaching change, such as an entire restructuring a whole suite, having an External Examiner who has experience of both formats and can oversee the change may be helpful to enhance the quality of the new provision;

## External Examiner Procedure

- 4.3.3. Thesis major corrections: an External Examiner will be granted an extension of term if they are overseeing a thesis which has a revised deadline due to major corrections required.
- 4.4. 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.
- 4.5. A Module External Examiner will not normally be appointed to more than 400 credits of modules for which they are required to review samples of assessed work. They may, however, be appointed to additional modules where there is no work to review.
- 4.6. Only in exceptional cases will appointments with a credit limit of over 400 credits be permitted. Such instances will be looked at on a case-by-case basis, taking into account a number of factors such as:
  - 4.6.1. The amount of time before a Board of Examiners;
  - 4.6.2. The amount of time it takes to look for and appoint a replacement External Examiner;
  - 4.6.3. If the course is in teach-out and it would not be appropriate to appoint a new External Examiner to take on additional credits for such a short period of time;
  - 4.6.4. Where a nominated External Examiner is unable to confirm completion of sampling of scripts of examinable modules they have been allocated to in time for marks being ratified;
  - 4.6.5. The course has a very small number of students so the workload is sufficient to carry out despite the higher credit limit;
- 4.7. Any exceptional circumstances leading to a higher credit load should be considered strictly as a temporary and interim solution.
- 4.8. Such arrangements should be regularly reviewed to ensure they remain appropriate and do not place a heavy workload on the External Examiner.
- 4.9. All requests for amendments to module allocation for Module External Examiners must be submitted to the External Examiner Appointment Panel accompanied by a rationale.

## 5. Process for Approval of Nominations, Amendments and Extensions

- 5.1. A nomination form shall be completed by the Primary Contact (usually the Course Director) and submitted along with the nominee's CV to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team (QAE) who will undertake a quality check.
- 5.2. Upon satisfactory quality checks, QAE will submit the nomination form and CV to the External Examiner Appointment Panel, who has delegated authority from the Education Committee to appoint External Examiners for taught provision on its behalf.

## External Examiner Procedure

- 5.3. The External Examiner Appointment Panel members shall be:
  - 5.3.1. Head of Subject or equivalent for the relevant School
  - 5.3.2. Associate Dean, Education for the relevant School
  - 5.3.3. Dean of the Graduate College (for DClin provision only)
  - 5.3.4. Quality Manager for the relevant School
  - 5.3.5. Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement
- 5.4. The University has a responsibility to check that External Examiners have the right to work in the UK before work commences. Upon approval of the nomination by the External Examiner Appointment Panel, QAE will complete the Right to Work in the UK check.
- 5.5. No External Examiner can be appointed until they have completed a successful right to work check.
- 5.6. 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 External Examiner Appointment Panel.
- 5.7. An amendment and/or extension form shall be completed by the Primary Contact and submitted to QAE who will undertake a quality check.

## 6. Process for Early Termination of Appointment

### *Termination at the Request of the External Examiner*

- 6.1. Where an External Examiner is unable to continue with the role until the end of their appointment, or likely to be unavailable for an extended period of time during their appointment, they should notify their Primary Contact at the University in writing, as soon as possible.
- 6.2. Notification should be in sufficient time, ideally to finish the academic year up through the contract end month (normally November), to enable appropriate alternative arrangements to be made so as not to impact on the assessment process and the student experience.
- 6.3. Upon receipt of the notice of intent to terminate early, QAE will issue the External Examiner with a Resignation of Contract Letter.

### *Termination for Other Reasons*

- 6.4. 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 in one or more of the following circumstances:

## External Examiner Procedure

- 6.4.1. External Examiner non engagement with contractual obligations; as set out in the External Examiner Handbook;
- 6.4.2. Changes to the University which impact on the External Examiner contractual engagement as set out in the External Examiner Handbook.
- 6.5. Where 6.4.1 applies, the External Examiner Primary Contact shall submit an Early Termination request to the External Examiner Appointment Panel
- 6.6. Upon sign-off of the Early Termination request by the Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, a notice of termination shall be issued to the External Examiner.
- 6.7. The External Examiner shall have seven days to respond to the notice before the next stage of the termination process begins.
- 6.8. At the end of the notice period, on receipt of a response from the External Examiner, QAE will notify the External Examiner Appointment Panel and Primary Contact to convene a meeting for all parties to discuss and agree further action.
- 6.9. In cases where no response is received from the External Examiner by the end of the notice period, QAE will request authorisation of termination from the Chair of the Education Committee.
- 6.10. Upon final authorisation from the Chair of the Education Committee, QAE will issue the External Examiner whose contract is subject to early termination with a Confirmation of Termination of Appointment letter.
- 6.11. Upon receipt of the Confirmation of Termination of Appointment letter, the External Examiner shall have 14 days to appeal the termination. The request to appeal should be submitted by email to QAE
- 6.12. Upon receipt of the External Examiner appeal, QAE shall convene an appeal panel (normally via MS Teams) within 14 days and invite the External Examiner to present evidence to the panel. The appeal panel members shall be:
  - 6.12.1. The Chair of Education Committee;
  - 6.12.2. The Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement;
  - 6.12.3. Associate Dean, Education from an unrelated School;
  - 6.12.4. A panel secretary.
- 6.13. The Associate Dean, Education and Quality Manager for the relevant School may be invited to attend the panel meeting to provide evidence if required.
- 6.14. If the External Examiner does not attend the panel meeting and has not given any notice of being unable to attend, the panel will consider the appeal in their absence.

## External Examiner Procedure

- 6.15. The outcome of the appeal panel shall be communicated within seven days of the meeting to all parties, whereby the outcome will be either: a) reinstatement or b) contract terminated.

### 7. Rights and Responsibilities of External Examiners

- 7.1. As part of their induction, all External Examiners shall receive a course specific briefing with their Primary Contact, other staff and if necessary, students.
- 7.2. The Primary Contact will make sure that existing External Examiners are briefed annually on any changes.
- 7.3. QAE will hold a University briefing annually to which all External Examiners shall be invited.
- 7.4. To support External Examiners in undertaking the role, the rights of External Examiners are as follows:
- 7.4.1. External Examiners should have adequate access to all student work from the modules of which they are examining;
  - 7.4.2. 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;
  - 7.4.3. 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;
  - 7.4.4. No arrangement for marking made by Course Directors shall limit in any way the role of the External Examiner.
- 7.5. The responsibilities of the Module External Examiner are as follows:
- 7.5.1. Review assessment briefs and provide comments on suitability for meeting module learning outcomes each academic year;
  - 7.5.2. Review a sample of scripts for all components of assessment for all examinable modules to which they are appointed;
  - 7.5.3. Review the marking to determine if it is of an appropriate standard;
  - 7.5.4. Judge the overall standards of student performance on the modules to which they are appointed;
  - 7.5.5. Ensure that University Marking Procedures have been observed for the samples and modules provided;

## External Examiner Procedure

- 7.5.6. Comment on proposed minor changes to both the examinable and non-examinable modules to which they are appointed and new modules in related subject areas;
  - 7.5.7. Review the Module Profiles of modules they are appointed to as part of the Module Ratification Process and raise any concerns in a timely way (and/or provide additional confirmation where required for PSRB courses);
  - 7.5.8. Bring to the attention of the Assessment Management Team any issues relating to the marking, moderation or any potential misapplication of University Regulations or Procedures via the Module External Examiner Exception form;
  - 7.5.9. Meet with the Primary Contact annually as part of a critical friend discussion;
  - 7.5.10. Provide an annual written report.
- 7.6. The responsibilities of the Progression and Award External Examiner are
- 7.6.1. To contribute to the decision of the Progression and Award Board by providing External assurance that the Board is operating with the expected parameters of the University regulation and procedures and sector practice;
  - 7.6.2. To attend meetings of the Progression and Award Boards;
  - 7.6.3. To provide an annual report at the end of their final Board of each academic year.

## 8. Fees and Expenses

- 8.1. External Examiner fees are authorised by QAE 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.
- 8.2. No External Examiner shall receive payment until the University has received their annual report.
- 8.3. 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.
  - 8.3.1. For credits up to 240 modules a fee of £300 will be paid;
  - 8.3.2. For credits between 245 and 320 the fee will be £400;
  - 8.3.3. For credits more than 320 the fee will be £500;
  - 8.3.4. For essential site visits a fee of £50 per half day;
  - 8.3.5. PAB External Examiners receive a fixed fee of £100 per PAB attended;

## External Examiner Procedure

- 8.3.6. For short courses the fee will be £50.
- 8.3.7. 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. The fee structure is as follows
  - 8.3.7.1. £4 per Reflective Account;
  - 8.3.7.2. £8 per Assessment of Clinical Skills part 1;
  - 8.3.7.3. £10 per Critical Review, PPR, QIP, Team Report or ECC Form;
  - 8.3.7.4. £15 per Assessment of Clinical Skills part 2;
  - 8.3.7.5. £70 per Major Research Project;
  - 8.3.7.6. £60 for Virtual Board attendance or £120 for in-person Board attendance.
- 8.4. 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.
- 8.5. Expenses incurred relating to the External Examiner role outside of the contract fee, such as travel and accommodation while on essential site visits, will be reimbursed by the relevant School.
- 8.6. All expenses claims must be submitted on the University Outside Parties Claim form in line with the University Guidance on outside party payment (expenses).

## External Examiner Procedure

Document information	Description of document information
<b>Document title</b>	External Examiner Procedure
<b>Department owner</b>	Quality Assurance and Enhancement
<b>Document category</b>	<b>Academic</b> - Documents directly affecting research, assessment or teaching within the University  <b>Administrative practice</b> - Documents of an administrative or operational nature
<b>Document owner</b>	Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement
<b>Document manager</b>	Quality Manager
<b>Related University policies</b>	n/a
<b>Related University procedures</b>	Boards of Examiners for Taught Awards Marking Procedures
<b>Approved by</b>	Education Committee
<b>Date approved</b>	01 April 2026
<b>Date of commencement</b>	01 April 2026
<b>Review date</b>	March 2029
<b>Version</b>	V1 – Approved by Education committee on April 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2026,
<b>History of revisions of the document</b>	n/a
<b>Web address</b>	tbc