

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.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The University operates a two-tier Board of Examiner system; the Module Achievement Board (MAB) and the Progression and Award Board (PAB). To support this system, there are two separate External Examiner roles, the Module External Examiner and the Progression and Award External Examiner.

2.0 Module External Examiners

- 2.1.1 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.
- 2.1.2 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.

3.0 Progression and Award External Examiners

- 3.1.1 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 to:
- Consider the overall profile of marks for each student and recommend students for awards or make recommendations for a course of action in the case of failure.
 - Make recommendations about students, not in their final year, with regard to progression or make recommendations for a course of action in the case of a student not being eligible to progress to the next level.
 - Award credit to students on modules passed by compensation.
 - Ensure that the assessment process at a course level is operated in a fair and reliable manner making use of agreed degree classification criteria and in line with the University's Regulations and assessment procedures.
 - Assure the appropriate standards for the awards.
 - Consider any issues relating to the delivery of modules in the context of the course(s) as reported from Module Boards.
- 3.1.2 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.

- 3.1.3 All PABs are held at an Institutional level to align with the calendars set by Registry in the operational schedule of Board of Examiners.
- 3.1.4 It is expected that PAB External Examiners will also be Module External Examiners.
- 3.1.5 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](#).

4.0 Conditions for Term of Office

- 4.1.1 The duration of an External Examiner's appointment will normally be for four years, with an exceptional extension of one year to ensure continuity.
- 4.1.2 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.
- 4.1.3 External Examiners normally hold no more than two external examiner appointments for taught courses/modules at any point in time.
- 4.1.4 An application for an extension to an External Examiner's term of office will need to be made by Course Director to the External Examiner Appointments Panel and the Education and Student Experience Committee on behalf of Academic Board.

5.0 Right To Work (RTW) Checks and Staff Login Details

- 5.1.1 The University has a responsibility to check that External Examiners have the right to work in the UK before work commences.
- 5.1.2 No External Examiner can be appointed until they have completed a successful right to work check.
- 5.1.3 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.

6.0 Amendment to Duties

- 6.1.1 A course team may ask an External Examiner to take on additional duties in the form of either an extension of term or change to modules examined, or both.
- 6.1.2 Applications to amend the duties of an External Examiner should be made by the relevant Primary Contact and approved by the Head of School, (or nominee) Faculty Director of Quality and Quality Manager (or equivalent) of the University's Quality and Standards Office.

7.0 Discontinuation of Appointment

- 7.1.1 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.

- 7.1.2 Resignations by External Examiners will be reported to the Education and Student Experience Committee.
- 7.1.3 If an External Examiner retires from their home HEI during their term of office, then they will be permitted to remain in office as a CCCU External Examiner 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.
- 7.1.4 In all cases, the Primary Contact must notify the Quality and Standards Office and seek a replacement External Examiner to ensure continuity.

8.0 Change of Job or Place of Work

- 8.1.1 If an External Examiner changes their job or place of work the Primary Contact should decide whether the External Examiner can still fulfil the role and responsibilities to the required standard.
- 8.1.2 Where the change in workplace results in a change of location outside of the UK, the Faculty Quality Office should check with Payroll whether the External Examiner can be paid into a foreign bank account.
- 8.1.3 The Primary Contact and Faculty Quality Office should ensure that the External Examiners contact details are up to date and to notify the University's Quality and Standards Office where necessary.

9.0 Resignation or Retirement

- 9.1.1 If an External Examiner resigns or retires from their role before the end of their appointment, the Primary Contact should notify the Quality and Standards Office as soon as possible.
- 9.1.2 It is the responsibility of the Primary Contract to source an alternative External Examiner as quickly as possible to ensure students are not affected.
- 9.1.3 Resignations by External Examiners will be reported to the Education and Student Experience Committee.
- 9.1.4 If an External Examiner retires from their home HEI during their term of office, then they will be permitted to remain in office as a CCCU External Examiner for a further 2 years within their term of appointment.

10.0 Early Termination of Contract by the University

- 10.1.1 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 in one or more of the following circumstances:

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| Failure to fulfil the terms of the contract by failing to submit annual report(s), attend meetings and/or return students' work following examination. |
| Failure to disclose a relationship, contractual or otherwise, which may impair the integrity of the examination process and the independence of the External Examiner. |
| Withdrawal of right to work in the UK by Home Office |
| Dismissal by the main employer of the External Examiner for improper conduct in relation to the person's employment |

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| Disbarment from being able to practise where there is a clinical or professional element to the Course of Study. |
| Breach of University policies, including its Equal Opportunities Policy or equivalent. |
| The course or modules assigned have been withdrawn or suspended by the University for an indefinite period meaning that the External Examiner post is no longer valid. |
| The University has made changes to its Board of Examiners operations which means that the post is no longer valid. |

- 10.1.2 Where possible, early termination should be considered as a final resort. All requests for early termination should be completed on the appropriate *Early Termination of External Examiner Appointment Request Form* which should be requested by the Head of School from the Quality and Standards Office. In some instances, it may be necessary to provide supporting evidence alongside the form e.g. email correspondence between relevant parties.
- 10.1.3 No External Examiner contract may be terminated without the final approval of the Chair of the Education and Student Committee (ESEC).
- 10.1.4 Upon approval, the Quality and Standards Office will issue a final termination of employment letter to the External Examiner copying in the Head of School.
- 10.1.5 Any External Examiner whose contract is subject to early termination shall have the right of appeal to the Vice-Chancellor within 28 days of the issue of the notice of termination. The Quality and Standards Office shall establish a panel of independent senior members of the University to hear and determine the matter and make recommendations.

11.0 Rights of External Examiners

- 11.1.1 To support External Examiners in undertaking the role, the rights of External Examiners are as follows:
- External Examiners should have adequate access to all student work from the modules of which they are examining.
 - 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.
 - 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;
 - No arrangement for marking made by Course Directors shall limit in any way the role of the External Examiner.

12.0 The Primary Contact

- 12.1.1 All External Examiners must have a Primary Contact assigned to them from the point of approval. The Primary Contact will be a Course Director, Module Leader or Academic Link Tutor from the group of courses the External Examiner's modules reside.

For details on the responsibilities of the Primary Contact, please see the External Examiner handbook.

13.0 Briefing and Induction

Every newly appointed External Examiner should receive a course briefing and University induction at the start of their appointment.

- 13.1.1 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 dates of exam boards where possible.
- 13.1.2 The University's Quality and Standards Office will provide the University-level briefing on the main arrangements for Boards of Examiners and the relevant academic regulations.
- 13.1.3 See the External Examiner handbook for full details on induction and briefing arrangements.

14.0 Reviewing Student Work

- 14.1.1 In line with the University's marking and moderation policy, External Examiners will be required to review a representative sample of work from across the mark bandings.
- 14.1.2 A representative sample is considered to be a sample of work from marks or grades spread across the range, including fails.
- 14.1.3 There is no requirement for all failed pieces of work to be in the moderation sample.

15.0 Attendance at Board of Examiner Meetings

- 15.1.1 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.
- 15.1.2 All External Examiner are full members of the relevant University Board of Examiners.
- 15.1.3 External Examiners have the right to attend any meeting of a Board of Examiners of which they are a member. Where this is the case, they 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.
- 15.1.4 Module External Examiners are expected to attend at least one out of the two exam boards that are held within the academic year, preferably the final Board of Examiner meeting.
- 15.1.5 Progression and Award Board of Examiners are expected to attend the PABs to which they have been invited.
- 15.1.6 Where an External Examiner raises concerns about module profiles, or if there are significant issues identified by the course, discussions should take place in the relevant Module Achievement Board of Examiner meeting with the attendance of the External Examiner so that a final decision can be agreed, in line with the University regulations.
- 15.1.7 The Primary Contact must ensure that the External Examiner has access to the full set of documentation provided to Board of Examiner members. In order to ensure the integrity of the process, all documentation should be provided to the External Examiner by secure means, such as via a restricted-access Blackboard site or in hard copy sent by Special Delivery.
- 15.1.8 Where the External Examiner is unable to attend the Board of Examiners, the Primary Contact will:
 - Convey to the External Examiner a report on the proceedings as soon as practicable after the meeting

- Obtain the written agreement of the External Examiner as to the decisions taken.

15.1.9 The absent External Examiner should provide written agreement for any decisions taken where it was agreed that any External Examiner present would not confirm the decisions of the Board of Examiners on behalf of the absentee.

16.0 Annual Reports

16.1.1 The purpose of a Module External Examiner annual report is to: -

- Enable the relevant Course Director(s), internal examiners, the Faculty, and the Academic Board and its committees to judge whether academic quality and standards are being maintained;
- Make any necessary improvements; and to further develop the relevant course(s), immediately or at the next review as appropriate. It follows that this report is vital in the whole process of course review.

16.1.2 The purpose of a PAB External Examiner annual report is to provide assurance to Faculty Deans and Faculty Quality Committees of the following: -

- the written University procedures for progression, award and classification are being observed; that threshold standards are being maintained;
- the standards set for the award are appropriate for the level of the qualification.

16.1.3 Module External Examiner and PAB External Examiner Reports should be completed on the formal University templates.

17.0 Responses to External Examiner Reports

17.1.1 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 (Response to the External Examiner Report). This should be a single document, which will highlight any good practice identified, discuss issues raised and draw attention to any actions that will be taken.

17.1.2 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 Boards of Study, Course Management Committees, and Student-Staff Liaison Committees.

17.1.3 External Examiner reports can be made available to students upon request.

17.1.4 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 a report should be discussed at such bodies as Boards of Study, Course Management Committees, Course Boards and Student-Staff Liaison Committees.

17.1.5 The Head of School (or their nominee) shall:

- Consider for approval the response written to a Module External Examiner report;
- 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.

- 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 Faculty Director of Quality.

17.1.6 A Faculty's Director of Quality and Director of Learning and Teaching are expected to:

- Read all Module External Examiner Annual Reports for all courses managed by their faculty;
- Inform the Dean of Faculty of any issue of serious concern raised in an External Examiner's report;
- Inform the Director of Quality and Standards of any serious issue of concern to the University arising in Module External Examiners' reports;
- Liaise with the appropriate Faculty Director of Quality of any issue which is related to another faculty where there is joint working;
- Ensure that any issue of significance, is considered by the Faculty Quality Committee, together with the action taken or to be taken in response;

17.1.7 The Director of Quality and Standards shall:

- 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;
- Ensure that any issue of significance is considered by the Quality Monitoring and Review Sub-Committee, together with the action taken or to be taken in response;
- Submit an annual report on issues raised in Module External Examiner reports to the Education and Student Experience Committee, for consideration by the Academic Board normally in the Easter Term.
- It is the responsibility of the University's Quality and Standards Office to authorise payment once the annual report has been received.

18.0 Consideration of Progress and Award Board External Examiner Reports and Feedback to Progress and Award Board External Examiners

18.1.1 On receipt of a PAB External Examiner report, the Academic Registrar 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.

19.0 Payment of Fees and Expenses

19.1.1 External Examiner fees are authorised by the Quality and Standards Office 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.

19.1.2 No External Examiner shall receive payment until the University has received their annual report.

19.1.3 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.

19.1.4 For credits up to 240 a fee of £300 will be paid;

19.1.5 For credits between 245 and 320 the fee will be £400;

19.1.6 For credits more than 320 credits the fee will be £500.

19.1.7 PAB External Examiners receive a fixed fee of £100 per PAB attended.

19.1.8 For short courses the fee will be £50.

19.1.9 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.

19.1.10 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.

19.1.11 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 Extension letters, requires a claim to be submitted to the Quality and Standards Office on an annual basis.

20.0 Claiming Expenses

20.1.1 Expenses incurred relating to the External Examiner role outside of the contract fee will be reimbursed by the relevant school. All expenses claims must be submitted on the University Expenses Claim form which is located on the Quality and Standards Office website.

20.1.2 Claims must be made in line with the University Guidance on Expenses for External Examiners.