

# **GUIDANCE FOR EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

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## Guidance for External Examiners

### 1. Context

The University expects their external examiners to provide informative comment and recommendations upon whether or not:

- The University is maintaining the threshold academic standards set for its awards in accordance with the frameworks for higher education qualifications and applicable subject benchmark statements;
- The assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the programme(s) and is conducted in line with the University's policies and regulations;
- The academic standards and the achievements of students are comparable with those in other UK higher education institutions of which the external examiner has experience;
- There are areas of good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment observed by the external examiner; and
- There are opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students.

The reports produced by the University's external examiners play a vital role both in the University's quality assurance mechanisms and in the continuous enhancement of programmes.

### 2. Documentation

All external examiners will be provided with access to the following:

- a. The Assessment Regulations, including details of the institutional policy in relation to compensation, resits, concessions and other mechanisms used to support student progression;
- b. Course materials;
- c. The programme specification, the student handbook and the marking, moderating and classification criteria;
- d. A list of the names and contact details of other external examiners in the team so they can discuss issues where appropriate;
- e. The University's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy;
- f. University contact details;
- g. The contact name in the institution of the overall leader of the programme for which the external examiner has responsibility;
- h. The University's *Guidance for External Examiners*;

- i. Schedule of assessment creation and scrutiny/approval;
- j. Schedule of marking and exam boards, including sampling and selection of student work for the external examining process;
- k. Examination procedures and requirements for attending exam boards;
- l. For new external examiners access to recent external examiner's report for the programme;
- m. Details of the induction and training opportunities for external examiners, where relevant;
- n. Details of opportunities to meet staff and/or students on the programme.

### **3. Examining Duties**

- a. The external examiner will be consulted on the production of assessments in order to ensure appropriate depth and rigour.
- b. The University will inform the external examiner of the required samples of assessed examination scripts, or other assessment materials they are to review. The sample will generally include representative samples of failed assessments and all grade categories and boundaries in relation to undergraduate and postgraduate awards. .
- c. For the avoidance of doubt, in viewing samples of students' assessed work, external examiners are not normally in a position to expect or encourage an examination board to raise or lower marks for individual students, on the basis that such a practice would be unfair to those candidates whose work is not part of the sample.
- d. The University will agree deadline dates for the return of moderated assessments and the procedures for disclosure of marks to students.
- e. The external examiner must normally attend an Examination Board that considers assessments that count towards the final award in the programmes for which they are responsible. . The external examiner will be notified in good time of the date/s of such Boards.
- f. The purpose of an Examination Board is to confirm the marks and awards for the cohort, including decisions on concession applications.
- g. The external examiner should ensure that the results of all the candidates are dealt with fairly and in accordance with the assessment regulations, University-wide Examination Board protocols and programme specific Examination Board protocols.

### **4. Reports**

- a. External Examiners must submit an annual report. The University expects to receive the annual report usually within one month of the Exam Board meeting or as detailed in the external examiner's contract. The main report should comment on:

- (i) The standards & appropriateness of the assessments;
  - (ii) The design of the assessments;
  - (iii) The overall standards achieved by the students;
  - (v) The process of setting assessments;
  - (vi) The administration of assessments;
  - (vii) The marking and moderation process;
  - (viii) The conduct of the Examination Board;
  - (ix) Procedures relating to candidates with reasonable adjustments or concessions;
  - (x) Any quality assurance issues;
  - (xi) Any areas of good practice in relation to standards and assessment processes;
  - (xii) Any areas of concern relating to working with others arrangements;
  - (xiii) Whether issues raised in previous reports (as appropriate) have been, or are being addressed to their satisfaction; and
  - (xiii) Any other matter which the external examiner wishes to bring to the attention of the University.
- b. Annual reports should be submitted to Carl Anderson, Head of Awards Integrity and Standards Assurance at [carl.anderson@law.ac.uk](mailto:carl.anderson@law.ac.uk). Payment of the annual fee will not normally be authorised until a report is received.
  - c. The reports will be considered by the programme team and the University's quality assurance mechanisms.
  - d. External examiners will receive a response to issues raised from the programme team.

### **5. Programme Review Or Amendment**

- a. The programme team may seek the views of the external examiner on any major review of the course or any proposed changes to the subject, or delivery or assessment methods.

### **6. Terms of Appointment**

- a. External examiners will be provided with appropriate induction by the programme team, normally in the form of a meeting.
- b. All administration associated with the initial appointment, annual reports and payment

of fees and expenses is dealt with by Carl Anderson in the University's Academic Registry, email: [carl.anderson@law.ac.uk](mailto:carl.anderson@law.ac.uk)

Fees and expenses will be paid directly into a bank account on submission of an invoice and relevant receipts.

When making a claim for expenses receipts must be provided. When making a claim in relation to travel, external examiners should ensure that it relates to standard class rail fare plus incidental taxi fares. Car mileage can only be claimed in lieu up to the level of second class rail fare unless the rail fare plus associated costs (e.g. taxis, having to stay overnight in a hotel) exceeds the cost of car mileage.

### 7. Conditions of Appointment

- a. External examiners appointed by the University shall normally be appointed for a term of four years. An examiner may be re-appointed, in exceptional circumstances, for a further year to ensure continuity.
- b. The University will pay the travel and subsistence expenses of external examiners incurred during visits to teaching institutions upon production of receipts. These shall include:
  - (i) Standard class rail fare.
  - (ii) Car mileage at the rate of 45p per mile up to the cost of standard class rail fare where rail travel is not reasonably practicable.
  - (iii) Certified postage expenses
  - (iv) Reasonable telephone expenses.
  - (v) Agreed overnight stay rate, in the event that it is necessary to undertake the role.
- c. An external examiner who wishes to resign the appointment prior to the end of the contract is required to give the University three months' notice in writing. If the appointment is subject to a probation period, the notice period shall be one month during this probation.
- d. The criteria for appointment are set out in the External Examiners Policy.

## Version history

Version	Amended by	Revision summary	Date
V1.0			May 2016
V1.1	Registry Officer	Change to document coding convention	March 2020
V1.2	Head of Awards Integrity and Standards Assurance	Amendments made to reflect changes to External Examiner Policy	October 2023
V1.3	Head of Awards Integrity and Standards Assurance	Minor amendment to Context	March 2024