

# External Examiners of Taught Programmes – Policy and Procedures

Registry and Academic Quality  
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UNIVERSITY OF  
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<b>Description</b>	
This document details the criteria and procedures to be followed for the appointment of External Examiners and their responsibilities and duties.	

## SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This list summarises the changes since 1 September 2017. The date confirms when the changes were implemented.

September 2023	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Section 4.2: Removal of External Examiner mentoring</li> <li>2. Amend 4.1 to include local level induction opportunity</li> <li>3. Removal of Appendix 2: Guidelines for the mentoring of external examiners</li> <li>4. Appendix 1. Removal of senior management sampling of external examiner reports and responses</li> </ol>
June 2023	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To include role of the EPA External Assessor for integrated higher and degree apprenticeship programme:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Section 2.1: a new responsibility has been added</li> <li>b. Section 2: reference to the External Assessor role in Section 9</li> <li>c. Section 3: reference to additional criteria for apprenticeship programmes in Section 9</li> <li>d. Section 9:                 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Additional explanation of the role for of the EQA External Assessor for EPA</li> <li>ii. List of the main responsibilities of the EQA External Assessor</li> <li>iii. The extra criteria requirements of the EQA External Assessor</li> <li>iv. The list of expected activities that the EQA External Assessor will be expected to undertake</li> <li>v. Details about the report that has to be completed separately to the External Examiner report and a list of what could be covered in the report.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> </ol>
21 September 2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Delegation of external examiner appointment to Faculty Quality Committees (FQC).</li> <li>3. Change of Department of Academic Quality to Department of Registry and Academic Quality.</li> <li>4. Changes to reflect introduction of Pro-Vice-Chancellors.</li> <li>5. Inclusion of details regarding managing parental leave of external examiners.</li> <li>6. Addition that External Examiners must meet any criteria set out by any relevant professional and accrediting bodies.</li> <li>7. Added detail to the Institutional Responsibilities in relation to External Examiners.</li> <li>8. A change of solely contact details does not require a Change of Circumstances form.</li> <li>9. Updated the requirements of sampling of student work to reflect the fact that most student work is now made available via Canvas.</li> <li>10. Changes to reflect change from Annual Programme Evaluation to Programme Improvement Plan process.</li> </ol>

22 June 2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To include changes to the policy to incorporate additional requirements for Apprenticeship programmes. Details are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Additional responsibility to ensure professional and/or regulatory requirements are being met (see Section 2);</li> <li>b) Apprenticeship programmes may appoint an additional examiner where it is not possible to appoint an examiner with the required balance of subject and practice expertise (see Section 3);</li> <li>c) External Examiners appointed to apprenticeship provision should have practice-based experience appropriate to the level. Wherever possible, a single external examiner should be appointed (see Section 3.2).</li> <li>d) Apprenticeship programme External Examiners will be required to monitor the completion of integrated apprenticeship end point assessments (EPA) (see Section 5);</li> <li>e) Added a section for Apprenticeship Programmes to outline additional requirements for the External Examiner support, their reporting duties and meeting with apprentices (see Section 9);</li> <li>f) Added the Dean of Apprenticeships to the list of circulation of reports (see Appendix A Section 3)</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Clarification that proof of eligibility to work in the UK corresponds with government guidance (see Section 3.2.1 f)</li> <li>3. Clarification that non-submission of report three months after the initial deadline may result in a termination of contract (see Section 3.5)</li> <li>4. Updated reference Collaborative Provision to Collaborative Provision (Partner Delivered Awards) to bring policy in line with the Quality Assurance of Collaborative Provision (Partner Delivered Awards) policy.</li> </ol>
22/06/21	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Terminology updated to reflect change from Exam Boards to Progression and Award Boards</li> <li>2. Appointment criteria updated to reflect changes to the status of HE institutions (3.2.1 d)</li> <li>3. Information provided on appointment via links rather than a dedicated Canvas site (3.3)</li> <li>4. Induction to be delivered online (4.1)</li> <li>5. Progression and Award Board arrangements updated to reflect change to single tier board operation (6)</li> <li>6. Late report submission details amended to reflect current process (2)</li> <li>7. Matters of concern – external QAA process no longer in operation (Appendix 1 section 4)</li> </ol>
1/09/18	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Each External Examiner to receive a personal Canvas account (3.3)</li> <li>2. Details of the samples to be reviewed via Canvas or in hard copy must be released to the External Examiner within 10 days of the marks being released to the student. External Examiner would raise any issues within 20 days (4.3)</li> </ol>

01/10/2017	1. Following advice given by UKVI to HR, External Examiners must provide eligibility to work in the UK and are ineligible if they have a Tier 2 visa (3.2.1 (e))
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## **1. Introduction**

The University is responsible for the quality and standards of all academic awards made in its name. The function of External Examiners is to assist the University in discharging its responsibility for the quality and standards of the education it provides and the awards it offers.

The University regards external examining as an integral and essential part of quality assurance by:

- a) requiring External Examiners to provide informed, independent and impartial judgements and advice to the University;
- b) drawing upon their professional advice and expertise and giving serious and active consideration to their reports.

This Policy applies to undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision (including the taught elements of professional doctorates), wherever and however it is delivered.

## **2. Responsibilities and Role of External Examiners**

2.1 The principal responsibilities of External Examiners are to ensure that:

- a) threshold standards are being maintained;
- b) assessment and examination procedures have been fairly and properly implemented and decisions have been made after due deliberation;
- c) standards of awards and student performance are at least comparable with those in equivalent higher education institutions.
- d) For integrated degree apprenticeships, act as the External Assessor for the End Point Assessment (EPA), where possible (see Section 9).

The formal responsibility of all External Examiners is to the University's Vice-Chancellor. External Examiners' annual reports are addressed to the Vice-Chancellor (although submitted electronically to the University) and External Examiners have the right to make a confidential report to the Vice-Chancellor at any time.

The University requires its External Examiners:

- a) to report to the University on the appropriateness of the standards of its awards, by reference to published national subject benchmarks, the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, programme specifications and other relevant information;
- b) to assist the University in the comparison of academic standards across higher education awards and institutions;
- c) to verify that standards are appropriate for the particular award for which the External Examiner takes responsibility;
- d) to ensure professional and/or regulatory requirements are being met (where appropriate);
- e) to ensure that the assessment process, including the conduct of Progression and Award Boards, is fair, equitable, rigorous and fairly operated in the marking, grading and classification of student performance;
- f) to provide externality of opinion and objective advice on the processes involved in teaching and assessment;
- g) to identify good practice worthy of commendation/wider dissemination.

A detailed list of duties is outlined in Section 5.

For degree apprenticeships, please see details regarding the External Assessor role in Section 9

2.2 External Examiners are not permitted, and shall not be asked, to undertake any of the following:

- a) setting or approving assessment tasks, whether coursework, examination scripts or other with the exception of external examiners for Collaborative Provision (Partner Delivered Awards), for which see Section 8;
- b) first or second marking of student output or adjudicating between markers;
- c) revising the marks awarded for the output of individual students

### **3. Nomination and Appointment**

The appointment of an External Examiner (including extensions to existing appointments) must be approved and confirmed by the relevant Faculty Quality Committee (FQC) or Research Degrees Quality Committee (RDQC).

A Programme External Examiner is appointed to each degree programme (or group of cognate programmes) and has specific responsibilities for that programme. Additionally, an External Examiner may be appointed to a subject area within an individual programme which is appropriate to their area of expertise. Where it is not possible to appoint a single examiner to an apprenticeship programme with the required balance of subject and practice expertise, an additional examiner may be appointed.

A Faculty External Examiner is appointed to each Faculty and has ultimate oversight of awards and progression within a Faculty. Faculty External Examiners will also be programme-level externals and will engage with matters of standards and quality within the individual programme(s).

Faculties may also wish to appoint a Deputy Faculty External Examiner to share the responsibilities of the Faculty External Examiner, especially if the Faculty has a large number of Progression and Award Boards each year.

#### **3.1 Nomination**

The Dean of Faculty, as Chair of the Progression and Award Board, is responsible for ensuring that all programmes delivered by the Faculty or, in the case of Collaborative Provision (partner delivered awards), overseen by the Faculty, are subject to oversight by appropriately qualified External Examiners. It is their responsibility to ensure that a proposed External Examiner meets the criteria for nomination listed below (3.2). Where the criteria are not fully met, a written case for an exception must be submitted with the nomination form.

New and replacement External Examiners should be nominated by the relevant (University) Programme Leader and Head of Academic Department (for Collaborative Provision (partner delivered awards), in consultation with the relevant partner institution department) using the External Examiner Nomination Form and be subject to the endorsement of the relevant Dean of Faculty and the Faculty Quality Committee (FQC).

In support of the nomination, proposed External Examiners should submit a summary CV, which provides details about their learning and teaching experience, such as module/programme leadership, and also their experience of quality assurance processes, such as annual monitoring, programme (re)validation and external examining.

In deciding whether to approve the appointment of an External Examiner, FQC must have regard to the criteria stated below. Where an appointment does not adhere to the criteria, FQC must record this fact and the reason for the decision.



External Examiners should be appointed for a period of four years. Externals must not be permitted to serve for more than four years other than where the provision in question is running out and it would be inappropriate and ineffective to involve a new External Examiner.

### **3.2 Appointment Criteria**

#### **3.2.1 Personal Specification**

- a) External Examiners are experienced Higher Education teachers, professionally committed to the student experience; conversant with assessment procedures and aware of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula. They will also have experience of assessing at the level they will be external examining.
- b) External Examiners have 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.
- c) External Examiners have relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate;
- d) External Examiners have knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality. They are normally members of other UK higher education institutions:- English institutions registered with the Office for Students, Scottish institutions funded by the Scottish Funding Council, Welsh institutions funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), or publicly funded institutions in Northern Ireland. Exceptionally, External Examiners from outside higher education may be appropriate where particular professional expertise is required, however the expectation is that they also have extensive knowledge of the HE Sector and be able to demonstrate the ability to meet the responsibilities set out in section 2.1 above. A rationale must be submitted by the Faculty with the nomination in such cases. It may also be the case that a second examiner with a current role in the HE Sector will be required.
- e) External Examiners appointed to apprenticeship provision should have appropriate level of practise-based experience. Wherever possible, a single external examiner should be appointed with subject and practice-based expertise.
- f) External Examiners should normally reside in the UK, to meet UKVI obligations and will be required to provide eligibility to be employed by the University as an External Examiner without restriction. Proof of eligibility to work in the UK must correspond with Government guidance (Details here) Academics who are employed by another HEI on a Tier 2 visa will normally be ineligible as the rules under which these are issued usually exclude secondary employment as an External Examiner. Where appropriate, External Examiners must meet the criteria set out by professional and accrediting bodies.
- g) External Examiners must be content to receive assessed work in an electronic format.
- h) Where appropriate, External Examiners must meet the criteria set out by professional and accrediting bodies.

#### **3.2.2 Conflicts of Interest**

- a) Former students or members of staff of the University must not serve as External Examiners before a lapse of at least five years (or sufficient time for all the students taught by that member of staff to have left the University, whichever is longer). For Collaborative Provision (Partner Delivered



- Awards), this same principle applies to former students and staff of the collaborating partner/s.
- b) The University will not normally appoint a candidate who is a member of staff or a student at one of the institutions against which the University is benchmarking in the year the nomination is presented.
  - c) The University will not normally appoint a candidate who has acted in a scrutineer role with regard to the programme's (or linked programme's) validation or revalidation within a period of three years of the proposed date of appointment.
  - d) A Faculty (or Partner Institution) may not nominate an External Examiner from an institution where a member of staff of that Faculty (or Partner Institution) is currently serving as an External Examiner within the same subject area.
  - e) External Examiners should have no conflict of interest with the University (or Partner Institution), arising from close professional or personal relationships, or from other direct ties to members of staff or students which might compromise their objectivity. For example, being a member of a supervisory team for a PhD student within the department would normally disbar approval.
  - f) A team of External Examiners should not normally contain more than one person from any single institution.
  - g) An External Examiner should not normally be appointed from the same institution as their predecessor.
  - h) External Examiners should not normally hold more than two other substantial external examinerships at first degree level, except where an additional external examinership has an overlapping period of only one academic year. External Examining of individual students for research degrees is not counted for the purposes of this requirement.
  - i) A nominee who has previously completed a term of office at the University should not be re-appointed unless a period of five years has elapsed.

Additional criteria are applied to External Examiner nominees for Collaborative programmes, see section 8 and Apprenticeship programmes, see section 9.

The nomination form is available to download from the Quality Office Canvas pages.

### **3.3 Appointment**

Following confirmation of appointment, the Department of Registry and Academic Quality (RAQ) will send a letter setting out the terms and conditions of appointment and providing links to the key documents and sources of information and details of the plan for their induction.

Each newly appointed External Examiner will receive a Canvas account linked to their own email address.

### **3.4 Change in circumstances of an External Examiner**

External Examiners should notify the Programme Leader promptly of any change to contact email address. The Programme Leader must then inform the Department of Registry and Academic Quality.

External Examiners should notify [payroll&pensions@winchester.ac.uk](mailto:payroll&pensions@winchester.ac.uk) directly of any change to their bank details for payment.

If the circumstances of an External Examiner change after they have been appointed (e.g. a change of job or institution, or the appointment to additional responsibilities, paid or otherwise, including that of another external examinership), they should notify the Programme Leader. A Change of Circumstances form should then be completed and signed off by the Programme Leader, and forwarded to FQC. If FQC deems

that the change of circumstances results in a conflict of interest or means that the External Examiner can no longer meet the required criteria the decision may be taken to terminate the External Examiner's contract before the end of the term of office.

### **3.5 Parental leave**

If an External Examiner plans to take maternity or parental leave where they do not wish to engage in their External Examining work during a specified time period, they should notify the Programme Leader as soon as possible. A Change of Circumstances form should then be completed and signed off by the Programme Leader, and forwarded to FQC who will decide the appropriate course of action.

Where possible, the University will look to continue the tenure of the external examiner despite a leave of absence for maternity or parental leave. This will be possible for leaves of absence no longer than one year and:

- a) if there are other External Examiners within the External Examining team available, and with appropriate expertise, to take on the additional duties.

And/or

- b) If the maternity or parental leave occurs outside of the key months when student work must be sampled and the annual report written.

Maternity or parental leave will not be a reason to extend an external examiner's tenure.

### **3.5 Termination of appointments**

If, for any reason, the University has cause to terminate an Examiner's contract before the end of the term of appointment, the Department of Registry and Academic Quality will write to the External Examiner with an explanation of the reason(s).

Non-submission of the report three months after the initial deadline. continual late submission of reports, non-engagement with review of student work and/or repeated non-attendance at Progression and Award Boards (for Faculty External Examiners) may give cause for the termination of an External Examiner's appointment. In addition, if a conflict of interest arises midway through the term of office as a result of University of Winchester (or Collaborative Partner) staff taking up a reciprocal appointment, the decision may be taken to terminate the External Examiner's contract before the end of the term of office.

In the event that an External Examiner needs to terminate their contract before the end of the term of appointment, they should write to [quality@winchester.ac.uk](mailto:quality@winchester.ac.uk).

### **3.6 Institutional Responsibilities in relation to External Examiners**

The Department of Registry and Academic Quality maintains a central register of appointment and periods of tenure and is responsible for areas relating to the application of policy and procedures. The Department of Registry and Academic Quality is also responsible for organising inductions for new External Examiners; arranging payments for mentors; making annual reports available for completion and publishing received annual reports to Programme Leaders.

The Dean of Faculty, as Chair of the Progression and Award Board, is responsible for ensuring that all programmes delivered by the Faculty or, in the case of Collaborative Provision (partner delivered awards), overseen by the Faculty, are subject to oversight by appropriately qualified External Examiners. It is their responsibility to ensure that a proposed External Examiner meets the criteria for nomination.

Heads of Academic Departments are responsible for obtaining from the staff they line manage details of staff who are currently External Examiners. These details will be forwarded to FQCs who will maintain a log for cross referencing when nominations are first considered, to avoid conflicts of interest.



Programme Leaders are responsible for the day to day management of the relationship with the External Examiner and ensuring that the External Examiner is appropriately involved in the quality assurance of the programme, including sampling of student work (see section 4.3 Samples of Work for more detail). More details about specific tasks Programme Leaders must undertake will be provided by the Quality Office.

The Director of Faculty Operations (or nominee) are responsible for the arrangement of the payment of fees which is conditional upon receipt of written annual reports.

#### **4. Induction and Support for External Examiners**

##### **4.1 Induction and support from Registry and Academic Quality**

All newly appointed External Examiners will be expected to engage with an induction session provided by the Department of Registry and Academic Quality. As part of their induction, External Examiners will be provided with an opportunity to meet with members of the department.. The aims of the induction materials are:

- a) To understand the duties of the External Examiner at the University of Winchester;
- b) To provide an opportunity for discussion on aspects of the External's role;
- c) To meet the Programme Leader, learn about the programme and understand what the External Examiner can expect from the Programme Team;
- d) To introduce External Examiners to the University's Virtual Learning Environment (Canvas).
- e) To raise awareness of the University's External Examiner policy and procedures;
- f) To introduce External Examiners to the distinctive aspects of the University's Learning and Teaching culture.

##### **4.2 Support from the programme**

External Examiners can expect to receive access to the following annually from the Programme Leader (usually in the form of access to the relevant areas on Canvas):

- a) details of any duties required of the External Examiner which are additional to the list of core duties specified in Section 5;
- b) a current Programme Specification for the relevant programme(s);
- c) Programme and/or Module Handbooks including module descriptions, learning outcomes and assessment methods;
- d) where appropriate, a description of the assessment criteria adopted for each type of assessment;
- e) a selection of assessed student work (see 4.3 below)
- f) a full break-down of marks within the modules for which they are given a sample;
- g) instructions explaining the use of the Programme's platform for submission of assessed work, where appropriate;
- h) the arrangements, where appropriate, for the External Examiner to meet with students on the programme they are appointed to examine;
- i) information concerning the dates and times of Progression and Award Board meetings;

For Apprenticeship programmes, there are additional supportive documents that Programme Leaders must provide access to, see Section 9.



### 4.3 Samples of Work

A key part of an External Examiner's role is to review a sample of student work in advance of Progression and Award Boards, to allow them to confirm they are content that quality standards have been met and they endorse the marks given, and/or to allow them to note any concerns or areas for further discussion.

Programme Leaders are responsible for ensuring External Examiners are provided access to the appropriate sample of student work for review alongside evidence of moderation for each module as well as access to a full break down of marks within the module. The Programme Leader may choose to curate a sample for the External Examiner (in which case the sample must include both moderated and non-moderated work), or to provide the External Examiner access to all student work and allow the External Examiner to choose their own sample (in which case the Programme Leader must advise the External Examiner of the sampling requirements outlined below).

The sample, as chosen by the Programme Leader or External Examiner, must include:

- a) For Levels 3, 5, 6 and 7: All summative assessments across all modules must be sampled. Within each assessment a selection should be chosen across all grade categories, from failures to firsts/distinctions. The size of the sample will not be less than 10% of the students who have taken the module for undergraduate programmes and 20% for postgraduate programmes. Where the number of students attempting an assessment is seven or fewer, all the assessments should be reviewed by the External Examiner. The scripts of all students who have been severely penalised because they have failed to obey instructions relating to the assessment should also be drawn separately to the attention of the External Examiner.
- b) For Level 4: Student work must only be sampled at this level for new programmes, Foundation Degrees, Certificates of Higher Education and Diplomas of Higher Education. For these programmes, all summative assessments across all modules must be sampled. Within each assessment a selection should be chosen across all grade categories, from failures to firsts/distinctions. The size of the sample will not be less than 10% of the students who have taken the module. Where the number of students attempting an assessment is seven or fewer, all the assessments should be reviewed by the External Examiner. The scripts of all students who have been severely penalised because they have failed to obey instructions relating to the assessment should also be drawn separately to the attention of the External Examiner.
- c) For Level 8 Taught modules, all student work will be sent to the External Examiner to review. The scripts of all students who have been severely penalised because they have failed to obey instructions relating to the assessment should also be drawn separately to the attention of the External Examiner.
- d) Additional sample requirements are applied to Collaborative programmes, see section 8.

External Examiners must be provided with access to the student work for review at the end of each teaching block for the programme (i.e. usually at the end of each Semester for programmes operating on the standard academic year) and in advance of the Progression and Award Board. External Examiners are asked to raise any issues within 10 working days of receiving the sample.

When a Programme operates forms of assessment which are not immediately susceptible to external moderation (presentations, performances) then mechanisms must be put in place for capturing or recording such assessments (on a sampled basis similar to that operating across the programme as a whole). Alternatively, the External Examiner may be invited to attend performance elements in addition to their standard range of duties within the programme(s).

## 5. Duties

In order to report to the University on the soundness and fairness of the assessment process and on the standards of student achievement, the duties of External Examiners of taught programmes are as follows:



**Core:**

- a) comment upon the standard of University awards in relation to external references, including the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, subject benchmarks and in relation to other UK Higher Education Institutions;
- b) review and evaluate examinations and all other forms of assessment which contribute to students' degree results;
- c) review and evaluate the assessment process;
- d) ensure consistency in the assessment process;
- e) comment on the structure, content, academic standards and teaching of the relevant programmes;
- f) Review the extent to which the assessment for a programme enables students to demonstrate that the Intended Learning Outcomes have been met.
- g) Request further detail on any assessment type and see any assessment type, including examination papers and coursework, as detailed in the Roles and Responsibilities form, sent upon appointment.

In addition, External Examiners may be asked to:

- h) fulfil the core duties for External Examiners (as listed above) in relation to any stand-alone modules taken for credit where the module is either part of, or in a discipline cognate with, a named programme for which the individual has been appointed as External Examiner.
- i) provide an independent external view on programme amendments (This only applies to Collaborative Provision (Partner Delivered Awards) or when Education Committee has determined that the Programme is to undergo Institutional Monitoring);
- j) to monitor the completion of integrated apprenticeship end point assessments (EPA), confirming that the EPA measures student achievement fairly and rigorously against the requirements of the apprenticeship standard;
- k) provide, if appropriate, an independent external view on interim validation. In these circumstances a small additional fee will be paid.

Finally, External Examiners may be consulted by Programme Leaders about any aspect of the programme including the learning, teaching and assessment to inform practice as it occurs and develops.

Additional duties for Collaborative Provision (Partner Delivered Awards) external examiners are specified in Section 8.

## **6. Progression and Award Board Procedures and the Role of External Examiner**

The University operates a single-tier Progression and Award Board process at the end of each academic year, at which the marks and grades are considered for all taught undergraduate programmes and some taught postgraduate programmes and decisions are made regarding student progression and award. This is followed by a further Board for resits and deferred results.

The role of the Progression and Award Boards is to confirm the marks and grades for the year and make recommendations regarding progression or award for each student.

**Faculty External Examiners** are required to attend all Progression and Award Boards where students' outcomes are considered for the relevant Faculty. Where Faculties hold a number of Progression and Award Boards over the course of the year they may either appoint a Deputy Faculty External Examiner, or ensure that one of their programme External Examiners attends in place of the Faculty External Examiner.

**Programme External Examiners** are not required to attend Progression and Award Boards. However, an



invite will still be extended if they wish to observe.

Within the Board, External Examiners shall have the right to speak on any matter regardless of whether their opinion has been specifically invited. However, the Board is not obliged to defer to their judgement in taking decisions.

No member of the Progression and Award Board, including the External Examiner, may alter the individual marks of students. In exceptional circumstances, and on the basis that it is a decision of the Board, cohort marks may be adjusted or recommended for remarking.

Prior to the Board Programme External Examiners are asked to confirm that they are content that quality standards have been met and/or note any concerns or areas for further discussion. Marks should not be considered at the Board until concerns have been discussed with the External Examiner.

In normal circumstances, a decision on the award of a qualification to a student shall only be made by a Progression and Award Board if an External Examiner is present.

Faculty-External Examiners are asked to confirm at the end of the Board that they are content with the decision making processes of the Progression and Award Board. In the event that the Faculty External Examiner is unwilling to endorse the decision making processes of the Progression and Award Board, the Chair of the Board should report the matter to the Academic Registrar for resolution. The relevant results will be withheld by Registry until the matter is resolved.

Full guidance on the operation of Progression and Award Boards can be found in the Conduct of Progression and Award Boards for Taught Programmes including Collaborative Partners – Guidelines.

## **7. Reporting**

The University requires its External Examiners to submit annual written reports on a standard form and, at the end of their period of appointment, an additional section on the report, giving an overview of their experience as External Examiner. These reports are given serious and timely consideration.

The University requires the Programme External Examiner in their annual report:

- a) To report on the appropriateness of the standards of its awards, by reference to published national subject benchmarks, the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, programme specifications and other relevant information;
- b) To report on the comparability of standards with those of similar programmes in other UK higher education institutions;
- c) To comment upon the appropriateness of the intended learning outcomes for the programme(s) and the extent to which the assessment diet enables students to attain these outcomes;
- d) To report on the extent to which its processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards are sound and have been fairly conducted;
- e) To report on the standards of student achievement;
- f) To comment upon examination and administrative procedural matters such as the provision of timely and sufficient information in order to fulfil their roles; the operation of the Progression and Award Board;
- g) To comment upon specific areas where programme(s) are collaborative in nature;
- h) To identify, where appropriate, examples of good practice in teaching and learning.

For Apprenticeship programmes, see Section 9 for additional areas that External Examiners will be required to report on.

An electronic report form is made available to all Programme External Examiners on an annual basis.

Further detailed information on the consideration of reports can be found in Section 5 of Appendix 1.

Additionally, the University requires Faculty External Examiners to report on the conduct of the Progression and Award Board, the response to the previous report and examples of good practice evidenced at the Board.

## 8. Collaborative Provision

This policy applies to all programmes and modules delivered in whole or in part by partner institutions leading to University of Winchester awards. Such programmes and modules are designated as 'collaborative provision' by the University.

The University remains responsible for the approval and appointment of External Examiners. In this it uses the same criteria for selection and appointment of Externals of programmes delivered on campus as set out in this policy. Additionally, it requires that:

- a) prospective External Examiners must not have been a member of staff within the partner organisation for a period of five years before appointment;
- b) prospective External Examiners must not have had any other close relationship with the partner organisation nor its staff which might compromise their objectivity;
- c) Prospective External Examiners should normally have recent (within the last five years) and relevant experience of external examining taught programmes, normally at the appropriate level.
- d) Prospective External Examiners who are responsible for examining overseas collaborations must be fluent in the language of delivery and assessment.

An External Examiner appointed to a Collaborative Provision (Partner Delivered Awards) programme will, upon appointment, be sent a copy of the Memorandum of Agreement which will detail the arrangements for external examining at the partner institution.

External Examiners of Collaborative programmes will wherever possible be sent a sample of work from similar or cognate programmes (especially where the same award title is shared with on-campus provision) at the appropriate level from the linked Academic Department. This enables External Examiners to report on the comparability of standards in relation to in-house provision and similarly titled awards.

External examiners for Collaborative Provision (Partner Delivered Awards) programmes shall be asked to review and comment on assessment tasks **before** delivery.

## 9. Apprenticeship Programmes

Integrated degree apprenticeships are required to appoint an EQA External Assessor for the End Point Assessment (EPA) to comply with the External Quality Assurance of EPAs (EQAP) for Integrated Higher and Degree Apprenticeships. The External Examiner for the associated degree apprenticeship programme may also be the External Assessor. Where this is the case, that individual will need to comply with the duties and responsibilities of that role (as set out in the Section 5 above) in addition to the requirements set out below.

Where the External Examiner is unable to fulfil the EQA External Assessor role, then a nomination for a separate External Assessor will be required which would only be required to oversee the EPA aspect of the integrated apprenticeship programme: not the whole degree qualification, nor the training aspect of the apprenticeship.

The main responsibilities of EQA External Assessor are to ensure that:

External Examiners of Taught Programmes – Policy and Procedures



- a) The assessment practice and procedures for the EPA meet the requirements of the specific Standard and is delivered and conducted in line with the EPA assessment plan and to relevant policies and regulations.
- b) The EPA measures the apprentices' achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the EPA plan and that the EPA assessment meets both the employers and apprentices' occupational needs.
- c) The assessed evidence is: Valid, Authentic, Current, Sufficient and Reliable
- d) The assessment is comparable with previous cohorts, and across different EPAOs that the EA is familiar with.
- e) Independent Assessors demonstrate relevant knowledge, occupational competence and understanding of the occupation and assessment criteria.
- f) Standardisation processes work effectively and facilitate Independent Assessors engagement.

There are extra criteria requirements for the EQA External Assessor:

- a) Nominees will ideally have experience and expertise of the following:
  - i) Practice-based/vocational settings in relation to apprenticeships programmes
  - ii) Experience and understanding of apprenticeship standards and assessment plans
- b) Be independent of the apprentice, End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) (the University of Winchester) and employing organisation who are involved in delivering the apprenticeship.
- c) Able to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and experience required of an EA, as outlined in the EPA plan and meets all the external regulatory requirements

To ensure the EQA External Assessor is able to comment on assessment practice and procedures for the EPA and fulfil the required EQA monitoring of EPAs, the following activities are expected to be undertaken annually:

- a) Review documentation relating to the EPA, including the EPA assessment instruments/materials and internal quality assurance documentation
- b) Review a sample of EPA assessed work
- c) Observe live assessments – in person or online
- d) Observe Independent Assessor standardisation/moderation meetings
- e) Meet with Independent Assessors and other EPAO staff
- f) Meet with apprentices and where possible, employers
- g) Observe the meeting at which the final decision on the EPA is confirmed (Apprenticeship Assessment Board)

They will be expected to conduct at least one visit to the University for each cohort completing the EPA. The purpose of the visit is to assess the performance of the Programmes delivery of the EPA but can also be used to monitor progress against previous actions identified to improve delivery via the EQAP monitoring process.

Apprenticeship programme External Examiners will require to have additional support and duties to ensure they are able to fulfil their responsibilities.

Programme Leaders must include the following details to the External Examiner as part of their induction:

- a) A list of employers that are involved with the Apprenticeship;



- b) Details about whether the End Point Assessment (EPA) is integrated or non-integrated and this affects their role<sup>1</sup>;
- c) The assessment format or specific requirements for delivery of the EPA as specified in the apprenticeship standard;
- d) The cohort numbers and delivery patterns;
- e) Whether the External Examiner will be working with another External Examiner for the programme (e.g where you have an External Examiner that has particular responsibilities for the work-place practice aspects of the Apprenticeship).

The annual External Examiner report for Apprenticeship programme will require feedback on the delivery of the Apprenticeship. They will be expected to comment on the following areas:

- a) That the Apprenticeship meets the relevant standard, and that it meets the QAA Characteristic Statement for Apprenticeships;
- b) That there is evidence of development of Maths and English;
- c) There is evidence that the curriculum includes coverage of Safeguarding, Prevent and British Values;
- d) There are links to the EPA within modules and it is clearly explained to the apprentices;
- e) Apprentices are supported in both their workplace and at University.

Where possible opportunities should be made for Apprenticeship programme External Examiners to meet apprentices (e.g as part of their induction, placement/work visits or prior to Progression and Award Boards) This will help the External Examiner report on the support the apprentices are receiving support at both the workplace and at the University.

As part of the External Quality Assurance of EPA (EQAP) a separate report must also be produced for each year that the EPA delivery occurs at the University. The report will be submitted to the Department of the Registry and Academic Quality and the Centre for Degree Apprenticeships. The report will be sent to the Designated Quality Body (DQB) Officer as part of its ongoing monitoring engagements and as part of the evidence for a scheduled Monitoring Check.

The report should comment on activities and findings of the EQA External Assessor and should:

- a) detail the work conducted, including observations meetings and sampling;
- b) provide commentary and feedback on the EPA delivery;
- c) identify areas of good practice and provide developmental advice;
- d) identify any issues or activities within the context of the delivery of EPA that do not meet with the requirements of the Standard or pose a risk to the effective EPA delivery and/or the achievement of occupational competence;
- e) Comment on progress with any items for improvement previously raised and/or DQB Officer;

## **10. Appendix 1: Procedures for the Consideration of External Examiners' Reports for Taught Programmes**

### **Introduction**

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<sup>1</sup> For non-integrated Apprenticeships, the EPA is separate to the academic award and is overseen and assessment by an independent End Point Assessor. The External Examiner of a non-integrated programme will not be involved in the assessment of the EPA.

These procedures have been developed to:

- a) ensure that reports from External Examiners are received as soon as possible after the Progression and Award Boards have met;
- b) ensure that matters of concern are identified and responded to promptly;
- c) identify any University-wide issues and examples of good practice.

### **Submission of Reports**

Programme External examiners are requested to submit their reports electronically within four weeks of the meeting of the Progression and Award Board. Detailed instructions for accessing the electronic report and its submission, once complete, will be provided at induction.

Following receipt of a report, the relevant Director of Faculty Operations will arrange for the External Examiner's fee to be paid.

If a report has not arrived by the appropriate deadline, the Department of Registry and Academic Quality will regularly contact the External Examiner to remind them of the need to submit their report as soon as possible.

If the report is not received two months after the initial deadline, the Department of Registry and Academic Quality will inform the Pro Vice-Chancellor. Non-submission of the report three months after the initial deadline may give cause for the termination of an External Examiner's appointment.

### **Circulation of Reports**

On receipt of an External Examiner's report, the Department of Registry and Academic Quality will inform the following that the report has been published on the University's Intranet:

- the relevant Pro Vice Chancellor
- the relevant Dean of the Faculty
- the relevant Director of Faculty Operations
- the Chair of the relevant Faculty Quality Committee
- the relevant Head of Department
- the relevant Programme Leader
- Dean of Apprenticeships (Apprenticeship Programmes Only)

### **Serious Matters of Concern Raised by External Examiners**

If an External Examiner's report raises any serious matters for concern, the Department of Registry and Academic Quality will bring the report to the attention of the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and, where appropriate, the Vice-Chancellor.

Serious matters of concern are those which put academic standards at risk, for example:

- a) significant deficiencies in academic provision;
- b) substantial differences in the application of assessment criteria within the same programme;
- c) major irregularities or deficiencies in the examinations and assessment processes;
- d) serious concerns with regards to threshold standards

In addition to submitting their report, External Examiners may also send a confidential letter to the Vice-Chancellor, c/o the Department of Registry and Academic Quality. When such a letter is received, the Vice-



Chancellor will conduct such investigations as they deem appropriate, and reply to the External Examiner's confidential letter. The Vice-Chancellor's Office will notify the Department of Registry and Academic Quality that a response has been sent to the confidential letter.

### **Consideration of Reports**

All External Examiners' reports should be considered by the relevant Programme Leader. The Programme Leader shall write to the External Examiner indicating the Programme's response to issues raised. The Programme Leader must add relevant actions arising from the External Examiner's Report to the Programme Improvement Plan (PIP). The Head of Department is responsible for ensuring the actions added to the PIP cover all necessary areas as raised in the External Examiner's Report.

FQCs scrutinise and approve all PIPs. When approved by FQCs, PIPs are sent by the Programme to the External Examiner and are published on the programme Canvas pages.

A summary report on the issues raised by External Examiners is provided annually to Education Committee and actions are taken in regard to any significant issues or institutional matters. The summary report also enables dissemination of good practice within the Institution.

