



Manchester
Metropolitan
University

**A HANDBOOK FOR
EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**
of Undergraduate & Taught Postgraduate
Programmes of Study

2011/2012 ACADEMIC YEAR

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Introduction

This handbook is intended for the use of external examiners for taught programmes offered by the University at undergraduate and postgraduate levels (including those external examiners for taught research programmes ie MRes and Part A of the Professional Doctorate) and also for other University staff who work in liaison with external examiners. Information is provided on the role and responsibilities of external examiners; rules and regulations of the University; details concerning the appointment and reporting processes; and other general details about the structure of the University. The handbook is updated on an annual basis and your comments and suggestions relating to its content and usefulness are welcomed.

The aims of the University's procedures for external examining are:

- i. to verify that the standards of the University's awards are appropriate and comparable to other higher education institutions;**
- ii. to ensure that the University's assessment processes are fair and effectively operated in accordance with institutional regulations.**

The University values the professional commitment and contribution of its external examiners in ensuring the quality and standards of its programmes, and appreciates your involvement in its work. Please use this handbook in conjunction with the following to ensure that you have access to the most up-to-date information and documentation you will require to carry out your role:

- The University's External Examiners' web site at <http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/examiner.php>
- The University's Academic Regulations and Procedures Handbook http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/quality_assurance.php
- The University Regulations for Undergraduate Programmes of Study http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/grad_regulations.php
- The University Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Programmes of Study http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/grad_regulations.php
- Any subject or programme-specific information sent by the faculty or programme team

Please note that the Centre for Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement is currently re-structuring its website, and this may affect some of the web addresses provided in this document. Any addresses which are subsequently changed will be re-directed to the correct page, and all examiners will be notified by email of any changes of web address.

Details of contacts at the University, should you require any additional information concerning your role as External Examiner, are given on page 4. If your query is programme or subject-specific, you should contact the faculty or the programme team for the programme for which you have been appointed.

Contact information

If you have any general queries relating to your appointment or role as External Examiner, please contact one of the following:

Miss Nicola Clarke

Academic Standards & Quality Assurance Manager
Centre for Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement
Manchester Metropolitan University
All Saints Campus
Oxford Road
Manchester M15 6BH

n.clarke@mmu.ac.uk

Tel: 0161-247 1061

Mrs Anne Thompson

PA to Head of the Centre for Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement
Manchester Metropolitan University
All Saints Campus
Oxford Road
Manchester M15 6BH

a.thompson@mmu.ac.uk

Tel: 0161-247 1053

Your contact details

In order that our central records are kept up to date, enabling us to communicate with you effectively, would you please ensure that any changes to your contact details (including your email address) which you notify to your programme team are also notified to your Faculty Quality Administrator at the address given on the following page?

Thank you.

Faculty contact details for queries relating to your annual fee and expenses payments and for information relating to Assessment Board dates are as follows:

FACULTY/CAMPUS QUALITY ADMINISTRATORS

Art and Design

Diane Sutcliffe
Manchester Metropolitan University
Geoffrey Manton Building
Rosamond Street West
Manchester M15 6LL
d.sutcliffe@mmu.ac.uk Tel: 0161-247 2807

Humanities, Law and Social Science

Katie Bond
Manchester Metropolitan University
Geoffrey Manton Building
Rosamond Street West
Manchester M15 6LL
k.bond@mmu.ac.uk Tel: 0161-247 2804

Hollings

Georgina Chappell
Manchester Metropolitan University
Hollings Faculty
Fallowfield M14 6HR
g.chappell@mmu.ac.uk Tel: 0161-247 2611

Science and Engineering

Carmen Corral
Manchester Metropolitan University
John Dalton Extension
Oxford Road
Manchester M1 5GD
c.corral@mmu.ac.uk Tel: 0161-247 1629

Health, Psychology and Social Care

Emma Wingate
Manchester Metropolitan University
Didsbury Campus
799 Wilmslow Road
Manchester M20 2RR
e.wingate@mmu.ac.uk Tel: 0161-247 2004

Institute of Education

Veronica Horne
Manchester Metropolitan University
Didsbury Campus
799 Wilmslow Road
Manchester M20 2RR
v.horne@mmu.ac.uk Tel: 0161-247 6429

MMU Business School

Stephen Howard
Manchester Metropolitan University
Business School (MMUBS)
Aytoun Building
Aytoun Street
Manchester M1 3GH
s.howard@mmu.ac.uk Tel: 0161-247 3811

MMU Cheshire

Barbara Cooper
Manchester Metropolitan University
MMU Cheshire
Crewe Green Road
Crewe
Cheshire CW1 5DU
b.cooper@mmu.ac.uk Tel: 0161-247 5607

Student and Academic Services – University-wide Programmes

Please refer any queries to *Nicola Clarke* (contact details on page 4 in the first instance)

If your query is programme, unit or subject-specific, please contact the faculty or the programme team for the programme for which you have been appointed.

The contact for external examiners for **postgraduate research degrees** is:

Ms Clare Holdcroft

Manchester Metropolitan University
Research and Enterprise Development
Ormond Building
Lower Ormond Street
Manchester M15 6BX
c.holdcroft@mmu.ac.uk Tel: 0161-247 1062

External links

You may also find the following external links useful:

1. [Higher Education Academy](#)

- Higher Education Academy's External Examining Web page
<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/universitiesandcolleges/externalexamining>
2. [Quality Assurance Agency](#)

- Academic infrastructure
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/Pages/AcademicInfrastructure.aspx>

The Nomination and Appointment Processes

The University operates a two-tier assessment board structure, with examiners being appointed to either of the following types of Assessment Board:

- Unit Results Boards - as subject specialists
- Progression and Award Boards

Details of the roles and responsibilities of both categories of examiners are provided on page 12.

The procedures for the nomination and appointment of examiners are the same in both categories.

Period of approval

Examiners for taught programmes are normally appointed for a period of four academic years and one term ie from 01 September – 31 December four years later. This is to allow for an overlap and handover period with the outgoing examiner.

Each January, the Centre for Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement contacts faculty representatives to advise them which of their external examiners are due to end their period of approval the following December, and to request nominations for replacements. Faculties are also requested to submit nominations for external examiners for new subject areas and programmes.

Criteria for appointment

The criteria for appointment are specified in the Institutional Code of Practice and Regulations for External Examining, which is available via the external examiners' web site at <http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/examiner.php>.

Employment status and right to work in the UK

All examiners appointed by the University are treated as employees of the University and as such will be required to demonstrate the right to work in the UK. Details concerning this process will be issued with the appointments documentation once an examiner nomination has been approved.

The nomination process

The nomination pro-forma referred to in this section are all available via the external examiners' web site at <http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/examiner.php>

NB: details of the separate process to be followed for external examiners for taught research programmes are given on page 9

Potential new external examiners are normally identified by members of the programme team, and once they have indicated their willingness to be nominated they are requested to complete the relevant section of the nomination form EE1 to provide information required by the University for the scrutiny and approvals process. Potential examiners are also requested to complete the Equal Opportunities monitoring form EE1A, which enables the University to undertake equal opportunities monitoring in its nomination and appointment procedures.

The nominations process is also used for applications to amend the duties of existing external examiners in particular:

- Requests for re-allocation of duties of existing examiners – considered following completion of form EE2.
- Requests for extension of period of approval. These are not generally encouraged, but in extenuating circumstances are considered based on a written rationale from the programme team on form EE3.

Collaborative provision

The arrangements for nomination of external examiners for collaborative programmes follow the same procedures, supplemented by consultation with the partner concerned, where appropriate. Any nominee for a post including partner provision must be entirely independent of all institutions and staff concerned.

Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs)

Where the nominated post is for a programme accredited, approved or recognised by a PSRB, any additional PSRB criteria or requirements must be satisfied and reported as part of the University's procedures, including, if necessary, confirmation of nomination by the body concerned.

Equal Opportunities

As part of the appointment process, and to comply with the University's equal opportunities policy, nominees are requested to complete a short questionnaire (Form EE1A), which will be used anonymously for monitoring purposes only.

Consideration of nominations

Nominations undergo an approval process at programme, faculty and University stages, based on the criteria for appointment specified in the Institutional Code of Practice and Regulations for External Examining. At any stage the nomination may be rejected, in which case a new nomination will be required. Alternatively, further clarification of certain details may be requested from the programme team or faculty to allow re-consideration of the original nomination.

Nominations for Subject External Examiners must be sponsored by programme committees in the first instance. Progression/Award Examiners are identified for nomination at Faculty level. Once agreed, nominations must be considered and formally approved by Faculty Academic Development Committees. Following faculty approval, nominations are submitted to the Centre for Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement for institutional scrutiny and final ratification by the Head of the Centre for Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement on behalf of the Academic Board.

Notification of decisions

Notification of final decisions is sent to the faculty concerned. Approved external examiners then receive a contractual letter of appointment, and welcome pack sent by the Centre for Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement. Programme and unit-specific information is sent to the external examiner by the faculty and the programme team.

The Head of the Centre for Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement submits an annual report to the Academic Board analysing the appointments made on its behalf.

Appointment of external examiners to Taught Research Programmes

Appointment of external examiners for taught research programmes (MRES and Part A of Professional Doctorates only) are administered via the Research, Enterprise and Development Office (for contact details please see page 6). The criteria for appointment given above apply. Appointments are made following consideration and approval by the University's Research Degrees Committee using specially tailored versions of the nomination forms, available on the external examiners' web site.

External examiners not having previous experience

Faculties and programme teams nominating examiners without previous experience will be required to provide details of appropriate support particularly for those from a non-UK higher education background, or from a professional or industry background eg mentoring for their first year of appointment. This will generally be a condition of the appointment. External examiners appointed in this category will be required to undergo a University Induction.

Termination of the appointment

Appointments may be terminated early, at the request of either party, or by mutual consent.

NB: An external examiner's appointment may be terminated by the University if, without reasonable cause, an examiner fails to contribute appropriately to the work of the Board of Examiners, fails to produce an examiner's report within a reasonable period of time, breaks the confidentiality with regard to personal information on students or otherwise acts counter to the University's Regulations.

(Ref 3.22: Institutional Code of Practice and Regulations for External Examining)

The Induction Process

Contractual letter of appointment and welcome pack

Once a nomination has been approved, the University's Centre for Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement sends a contractual letter of appointment and welcome pack to the external examiner. (NB Letters for external examiners appointed to taught research programmes will be sent via the Research, Enterprise and Development Office.) Contractual letters of appointment and welcome packs will include the following:

- Two copies of an appointment letter signed by the University Registrar stating contractual arrangements, rates of payment and expenses, and period of approval. One copy of the letter should be signed and returned by the external examiner to signify acceptance of the appointment and agreement to abide by the Institutional Code of Practice and Regulations. The second copy should be retained by the external examiner for reference purposes;

The letter will detail instructions on how to access via the web site information on University policies, procedures and regulations concerning: external examining; academic quality assurance and standards; teaching and learning; and equal opportunities. It will also advise on the reporting process, provide details of key Central University staff and provide information on how to access the QAA Academic Infrastructure (including appropriate benchmark statement(s) and the Higher Education Academy External Examining Project).

- Documentation which is required to be completed for Human Resources and payroll purposes, and which should be returned together with the signed copy of the contractual letter of appointment referred to above;
- A copy of the current External Examiners' Handbook.

Faculty induction material

New external examiners will also receive a letter of welcome from the relevant faculty. The programme team will ensure that examiners are provided with information on the following:

- information on the programmes and units, for which the external examiner will have responsibility, including information on how to access the definitive programme documentation, together with programme, stage and all relevant unit learning outcomes and how they are assessed;
- dates of assessment board meetings;
- an individual examiner's role in relation to the examining team as a whole;

- quality action plans, programme committee minutes covering the previous two years, external examiner reports and formal responses to them, together with, where relevant, information on partner institutions;
- the names and contact details of faculty staff supporting external examiners.

External examiner induction

In addition to any events organised by the programme team and faculty, the University also provides written guidance on procedures for all new examiners via the external examiners' web site.

Particular attention is paid to the support needs of those new to external examining; non-academic examiners, particularly those appointed with professional, practitioner or vocational expertise; those from outside UK higher education; and those with responsibility for collaborative provision.

Roles and Responsibilities of External Examiners

The role of the external examiner

External examiners are appointed by the Academic Board of the University to ensure that:

- justice is done to the individual student;
- the standard of the University's awards is maintained;
- the assessments with which the examiner is concerned are carried out in accordance with the University's Regulations and any approved additional programme-specific regulations.

External Examiners are appointed as either Subject External Examiners or as Award External Examiners and the roles of each differ. Details of the roles and responsibilities of each category are set out in the Institutional Code of Practice and Regulations on External Examining, which can be accessed via the external examiners' web site at <http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/examiner.php>. Hard copies of this document are available on request.

Subject External Examiners are appointed for an approved set of units and in addition to involvement in the moderation work of the relevant Unit Results Board, will also be consulted about the approval of modifications, and be consulted for advice at the point of programme review and revalidation, and the introduction of new units.

Award External Examiners attend the Progression and Award Boards to verify that due process has been followed by the Board in arriving at its decisions and that there has been consistent and fair treatment of students.

Dialogue

It is expected that University, faculty staff, programme teams and external examiners will maintain regular contact to ensure close liaison and that this will encourage constructive and professional liaison.

University Moderation Practice

The internal and external moderation practices followed by the University are set out in full in its Moderation of Summative Assessments policy, approved by the Academic Board in November 2004. This may be accessed via the external examiners' web site at <http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/examiner.php>

External examiners are involved in the moderation of assessments which contribute to a final award. These summative assessments make a direct contribution to the unit, level and final award marks of the student as specified in the programme definitive documentation. Summative assessments can take many forms (including examinations, essays, coursework, projects, oral presentations, practical work, studio or laboratory-based activities) appropriate to the achievement of intended learning outcomes. External examiners are not normally involved in formative assessments (ie those which do not contribute towards the final award, but are undertaken as a learning experience), and are not normally involved in the assessment of students at foundation level (UG level 3) or level 4.

University approved taught programmes require students to engage with at least one, and in some cases two or three, summative assessments for each unit. Assessment Boards have overall responsibility for all assessments that contribute to the granting of academic awards and this includes considering, moderating and approving examination papers and marking schemes and considering and approving any assignments and projects. Subject External Examiners will be directly involved in this work.

There are two aspects to moderation:

Assessment moderation in which the appropriateness of the proposed assessment mechanism and regime is confirmed;

Marks moderation, where the performance of students in that assessment is verified and the integrity and consistency of the marking process confirmed.

NB: Subject External examiners are involved in both the moderation of assessments and the external moderation of marks, but are not involved in the marking of students' work. This is carried out internally. The role of the examiner is to verify and moderate, not to act as first, second or third marker.

Assessment moderation

Assessment moderation is the process of determining whether an assessment fulfils set criteria as detailed below. This process is carried out independently of the member or group of staff who has/have devised the assessment, and it is used to confirm whether:

- the resulting assessment load is broadly consistent between different subject areas and is consistent with its weighting in the overall assessment scheme;
- the assessment activity is appropriate for assessing performance against the intended learning outcomes of the unit or part of the unit and is appropriate for its level;
- students taking the assessment element are being assessed according to the Scheme approved in the programme's definitive documentation.

In many of the assessments that contribute towards the final award, external examiners are provided with the opportunity to verify that proposed assessments comply with these requirements. There may, however, be other summative assessments which are not moderated by the external examiners prior to presentation to the students. In these cases Assessment Boards, or delegated committees, are required to ensure that an appropriate internal assessment moderation process is established.

External examiners are a critical element in quality assuring the University's assessment procedures. Comments made by an external examiner on proposed examination question papers or other assessments will be considered and addressed by the relevant Assessment Boards, or delegated committee, and the outcome of those deliberations communicated back to the external examiner as required by the Institutional Code of Practice and Regulations on External Examining, usually based on a selected sample.

External moderation of marks

Following the internal moderation of marks, assessments that contribute towards an award must be moderated by external examiners according to the requirements of the Institutional Code of Practice and Regulations on External Examining.

The sample selected for external moderation normally comprises a complete set of all summative work for each of an agreed selection of students from a given cohort. The sample is normally selected on the basis of the internally agreed aggregate unit mark of the students concerned. The sampling process is carried out with the involvement of the external examiner, who retains the right to see all work for the unit(s) for which s/he has responsibility if s/he so wishes.

Accurate and clear recording of the method and result of internal moderation (including reconciliation of the marks of each marker) must accompany the assessments to provide evidence that procedures have been conducted in a fair and consistent way.

If collaborative provision is included, clear guidance should be provided for the external examiner indicating which parts of the sample cover University and partner provision or, if a number of partners, which individual partner, to provide sufficient information for the tracking of performance by cohort and by location of delivery.

Any amendment to the marks of the sample as a result of the external moderation process, with the exception of dissertation projects, must be applied to the rest of the cohort to ensure equity and consistency of academic standards. For further details see the University's policy on the moderation of summative assessments, approved by its Academic Board in November 2004, available via the External Examiners' web site at <http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/examiner.php>

Assessment Boards

Assessment Boards

Assessment Boards are constituted under the authority of the Academic Board of the University and are responsible to the Academic Board for all the programme assessments that contribute to the granting of academic awards and for recommending the granting of awards to candidates who it is satisfied have fulfilled the objectives of programmes of study, demonstrated fulfilment of the associated learning outcomes and achieved the required standard.

The role of the external examiner

External examiners have the right and responsibility to attend meetings of Assessment Boards to which they have been appointed and at which recommendations relating to units (for Subject External Examiners) and awards and progression/resit rights (for Award External Examiners) are made.

Conduct of Assessment Board meetings

Assessment Board meetings are usually convened twice a year, normally as main Boards at the end of the academic year in May/June and then again to consider the results of resit/deferred students in September. Board meetings for some postgraduate provision and for professional programmes may take place at other times during the year. Arrangements for meetings are generally made at faculty level and external examiners will be notified of the calendar dates well in advance of the meetings. Accommodation and hospitality will be arranged by the faculty.

Verification of accuracy and completeness of Assessment Board data is the responsibility of academic Heads of Department, who ensure that their staff carry out this function prior to the meetings. The University does not operate Pre-Boards.

(i) **Exceptional Factors Panels**

Consideration of exceptional factors is the remit of the Exceptional Factors Panels convened at faculty and departmental level, and details of the operation of these Panels may be found within Appendix 2 of the University Assessment Regulations for Undergraduate and for Taught Postgraduate Programmes of Study accessed via the following link:
http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/grad_regulations.php

(ii) **Unit Results Boards**

Chairs of Unit Results Boards are senior academic members of staff nominated by the Dean who have no association with the teaching of the subjects owned by the Board. For each subject to be considered at the Unit Results Board meeting there will be a Subject Leader present, and a Unit Leader (or nominee) for each unit owned by the Board. The meeting will be serviced by a secretary (nominated by the Head of Faculty/Campus SAS) who will be present to ensure compliance with the University Regulations.

The Board members will consider the Unit assessment results before them, and will also receive and apply decisions contained in the reports of the Exceptional Factors Panel(s).

Outcomes from the Unit Results Boards are collated and presented for consideration by the Progression and Award Boards in the form of reports.

(iii) Progression and Award Boards

Chairs of Progression and Award Boards are senior academic members of staff nominated by the Dean. Programme/course leaders (or nominee) are members of these Boards and all programmes to be considered must be represented. The meeting will be serviced by a secretary (nominated by the Head of Faculty/Campus SAS) who will be present to ensure compliance with the University Regulations.

The Board members will consider the reports from the Unit Results Boards and will confirm decisions relating to progression and award.

The University's Regulations specify marks classifications. Programme and level results are calculated via the central computerised assessment engine. At the Board, members will consider profiles for individual students presented in the University's standard format and will determine whether the result calculated by the engine should stand, or whether exceptional circumstances should merit an alternative decision.

Following the deliberation of the marks profiles, the external examiner(s) will be invited by the Chair to give a verbal report on the examining process. This will generally not be minuted in detail, as an opportunity for a formal overview is provided by the completion of the report pro-forma, which all external examiners are required to submit (see the following main section "The Reporting Process").

At the conclusion of the meeting, the conferment and progression listings from the computerised assessment engine, which have been annotated during the meeting by the Head of Faculty/Campus SAS or their representative to record any exceptional variation recommended by the Board are signed by the Chair of the Progression and Award Board, the Head of Faculty/Campus SAS or their representative and by each of the external examiner(s).

If an examiner is not able to endorse the recommendations of the Board, the matter, together with all relevant documentation is referred to Academic Board for resolution.

All results are subject to ratification by Academic Board.

Non-attendance at Assessment Board meetings

All external examiners are required to attend main Assessment Board meetings. If, for good reason, an external examiner is unable to attend the meeting, but has been involved in the examining process throughout, a written statement signifying this should be submitted to the Chair for recording purposes.

Non-attendance by an external examiner without good cause may result in the termination of the appointment.

Prizes

Assessment Boards are empowered to award prizes to deserving students. The prizes to be awarded are generally determined at Unit Results Board level and confirmed by the Progression and Award Boards.

Resit Assessment Board meetings

In general, Resit Assessment Board meetings take place in September, just prior to the start of the new academic year. All examiners are invited to attend these meetings, although it is not usual for all examiners to attend. Examiners who are unable to attend will be required to formally approve the decisions taken by the Resit Assessment Board.

Collaborative provision

Assessment Boards for collaborative provision may be held either at the University or, if specified in the Collaborative Programme Agreement, at the partner institution. Where Assessment Boards for collaborative provision are held at the partner's premises external examiners will be invited to attend. The Board will be Chaired either by the appropriate Manchester Metropolitan University Dean, Head of Department (or equivalent) or by a senior member of the partner institution, as specified in the Collaborative Programme Agreement, and in accordance with the University's Regulations. If held at the partner institution, a representative of the Head of Faculty/Campus SAS must be in attendance to ensure compliance with the University's Regulations.

Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs)

For programmes approved, accredited or recognised by a PSRB, any additional requirements concerning the practice of the Assessment Board, conferment of awards and/or any associated licence to practice must be specified in the programme definitive documentation. Any addition to, or specific exemption from, the University's Regulations must be approved by the Academic Development Committee.

Chair's Action

Where it is not possible to reach a decision on an individual case at a meeting due to incomplete information, or where information is subsequently made available following the Board meeting, Chair's Action will be taken to determine a result. In all cases, Chair's Action will be reported to the next meeting of the relevant Assessment Board.

The Reporting Process

Reporting requirements

The University places great importance on external examiner reports, which not only inform Continuous Monitoring and Improvement but are also used in external review as indicators of general programme health and quality. All comments and observations made within the report are taken extremely seriously and our procedures will ensure that you receive a direct response from the programme team or faculty or from the University with respect to matters of Institutional significance.

Each examiner is required by the University to complete, normally on an annual basis and within six weeks following the final Assessment Board which dealt with the cohort of students to which the document refers, a University pro-forma report.

A completed pro-forma must be received by the University before an examiner receives fees and expenses in connection with duties carried out.

The report pro-forma

The report pro-forma is available online via the External Examiners' web site at <http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/examiner.php>.

External examiners experiencing any difficulty in accessing the web site should contact the University's Centre for Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement (Tel: 0161-247 1061/1053) in the first instance.

Guidance on completing the pro-forma

The University pays particular importance to the annual reports provided by its external examiners and so it is most important that individual examiners report clearly, providing not only confirmation of standards, but also recommendations on areas for enhancement, commenting on good practice and innovation operating within the programmes. The online pro-forma provides explanatory notes on its completion within the body of the form. Any queries or requests for advice in relation to completion of the form should be directed to the University's Centre for Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement (Tel: 0161-247 1061/1053) or by email to n.clarke@mmu.ac.uk.

The University will contact external examiners for clarification in the event of a report not being completed correctly or not providing clear or enlightening information.

NB: External examiner reports, once submitted, become the property of the University and are subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act as applicable. Reports are treated by the University as public documents. As a consequence of this, the naming of individual students and staff should be avoided. Any comments which an examiner needs to make on an individual or individuals should be submitted in confidence to the appropriate programme leader.

Collaborative provision

If an external examiner has responsibility for University and partner provision, or a number of partners, their report should identify which location or cohort the comments concern, to allow appropriate tracking of students and quality.

Submission details

The final section of the pro-forma provides the web addresses to which the report should be submitted. This will vary dependent on the home faculty/division for the subjects/programme(s) to which you have been appointed. External examiners are expected to submit their report within six weeks following the final Assessment Board which dealt with the cohort of students to which the document refers.

Use of the report within the University

Once the report has been received, it is acknowledged and circulated to the appropriate subject and programme teams; the Chair of the Faculty's Academic Development Committee (FADC); the Dean of Faculty; Heads of Department (or their equivalent); collaborative partners; Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies – PSRBs (as appropriate); and the Centre for Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement.

In response to HEFCE recommendations to HE Institutions on the publication of qualitative data arising from the findings of the Burslem Group's Phase Two Report, external examiner reports are made available for public scrutiny on request. Prior to release the reports are scrutinised by the University to ensure that staff, students and external examiners are not identifiable by name.

Programme teams consider the reports and their committee minutes must reflect the detailed consideration of, and response to, examiners' reports. Comments from and formal responses to examiners are retained alongside programme Continuous Improvement Plans together with actions agreed to be taken in response. Such consideration and notes are taken into account at each stage of the Continuous Monitoring and Improvement process, and external examiners should be provided with an updated copy of Continuous Improvement Plan on at least one occasion per year.

External examiners will also receive copies of the reports of the other external examiners within their programme and will have detail on the programme team response within the Continuous Improvement Plan.

An overview of the process, identifying the main themes and issues as well as positive comments concerning good practice emerging from the reports, forms part of the Chair of Academic Development Committee's overview report to the University's Academic Board.

The Head of the Centre for Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement also carries out an annual analysis of all undergraduate and taught postgraduate external examiner reports for the previous academic year.

Reporting on the operation of the University's Regulations

External examiners should record any comments on the operation of the University's Regulations in the appropriate section of the external examiner report pro-forma. The annual analysis of external examiner reports referred to above considers all such comments as part of the University's regular review of its policies, procedures and regulations.

Reports from external examiners completing their term of appointment

If an examiner is completing their term of appointment they should complete the relevant section of the pro-forma to provide a written overview which comments on their experience as external examiner for taught programmes offered by the University.

Reporting on matters of particular importance and/or sensitivity

An external examiner may report to the Programme Leader, the Head of Department, the Chair of the Assessment Board or, if necessary, send a separate report in confidence to the University's Vice-Chancellor on any matter which s/he deems to merit special consideration or on any matter which is of a sensitive nature.

If an examiner has serious concerns about issues relating to standards within the institution and has exhausted all internal procedures including a confidential report to the Vice-Chancellor, the QAA operates arrangements for addressing concerns about standards and quality in higher education. Further details of this are available at <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Complaints/concerns/Pages/default.aspx>

Payment of Fees and Expenses

Employment status

With effect from 01 October 2010, and following instruction from HM Revenue and Customs, external examiners appointed for taught programmes of study at Manchester Metropolitan University are regarded as employees of the University, and as such are paid through payroll on submission of approved claim forms with respect to the duties carried out.

Prior to payment, and in line with the Asylum and Immigration Act requirements, examiners are required to provide evidence of right to work in the UK. This will normally be in the form of a passport check carried out on the first visit to the University. Payment can not be made until this check has been carried out.

Criteria for payment

The University requires each examiner to complete, usually on an annual basis, a pro-forma report. This report must be submitted before any claims for fees or expenses are processed.

Annual fees are determined following criteria detailed within the University's *External Examiners: Administrative and Financial Precepts*, a copy of which is available from the University's Centre for Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement on request.

Details of annual fees paid to individual external examiners are notified to the individual in the contractual letter of appointment, together with information on the current rates payable as expenses.

Submitting a claim

Claims, which are processed at faculty level, should be submitted by completing form Fin 1A. This form is available from faculty and programme administrators and can also be downloaded from the External Examiners' web site at <http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/examiner.php>. Receipts for expenses should be affixed to the claim form, which should then be sent for the attention of the relevant Faculty Quality Administrator. Details of the address to which the form should be sent are found on pages 5 and 6 of this handbook.

Claims will be processed on receipt of the completed annual report.

PLEASE NOTE:

Fees are paid directly into individual's bank accounts – details of which are required on appointment.

Frequently Asked Questions

What will be the duration of my appointment?

Normally four academic years plus one term, but this will be confirmed in your letter of appointment. In exceptional cases, you may be invited to serve an additional year.

How will I be briefed about the programme, units, assessment methods, teaching methods, regulations etc?

The University's Centre for Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement will send you information about the Code of Practice and Regulations for External Examining together with your appointment letter. The programme team will send you programme-specific information as detailed in the Code of Practice and Regulations.

Will I be able to see examination question papers and coursework requirements prior to their use?

Yes, Subject External Examiners will be involved in the moderation of both depending on the programme's assessment strategy and following consultation with the programme team.

Will I be required to view ALL the examination scripts and assignments for the units for which I have been appointed?

No. This will not be a requirement, although you will have the right to see everything if you wish. Normally, you will be sent a representative sample across the range of performance.

May I request a revision of internal marks?

Yes, internal marking is provisional and you are entitled to be satisfied that marking is of an appropriate standard. If you disagree with the unit marks of the internal markers you may recommend the adjustment of marks. If this is the case, appropriate adjustment must be made to the marks of all students taking that assessment to ensure equity. If, after viewing a sample, you wish to recommend the amendment of the marks of an individual student, without general realignment of the cohort marks, you will be required to view and moderate the marks of the whole cohort to ensure equity.

How often will I be required to attend?

You will be required to attend the main Assessment Board to which you have been assigned. This will normally be at the conclusion of the academic session in June, although it may be at an alternative time for some postgraduate or professional programmes. Some examiners may be required to attend for the external moderation of some assessments eg orals; presentations; performance; display etc. All examiners are also invited to attend the Resit Assessment Boards, which normally meet in September.

To whom do I make my report?

You are required to submit reports, normally annually, to the Head of Faculty/Campus SAS. Reports should be submitted by email to an address identified for each faculty on the report template. On receipt reports will be circulated to the programme team, for their response, and to the University's Centre for Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement for consideration.

You may access the report template via the University's web site at <http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/examiner.php>

To whom do I report in matters of particular importance and/or sensitivity?

If you judge your concern to be a matter of particular importance and/or sensitivity you may report your concern to the Programme Leader, the Head of Department, the Chair of the Assessment Board or, if necessary, address your concern to the University's Vice-Chancellor.

If you have serious concerns about issues relating to standards within the institution and have exhausted all internal procedures including a confidential report to the Vice-Chancellor, the Quality Assurance Agency operates arrangements for addressing concerns about standards and quality in higher education. Further details of this are available at <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Complaints/concerns/Pages/default.aspx>

Will I be involved in student appeals?

Not formally, but if a student requests a review of a decision taken by the Assessment Board of which you are part, you may be asked to be involved in this process.

What will be my involvement in programme review and modification?

Subject External Examiners will be consulted at the point of review and modification and their comments will be considered as part of the panel or committee which meets to approve the proposed modification, including the introduction of new units.

How do I get paid?

Following the Assessment Board meeting, you should submit your claim form on form (Fin 1A). This form is available from Faculty Quality Administrators and can also be downloaded from the External Examiners' web site at <http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/examiner.php>. Receipts for expenses should be affixed to the claim form, which should then be sent for the attention of the relevant Faculty Quality Administrator (see page 5 and 6 for details)

Claims will only be processed on receipt of the completed annual report.

PLEASE NOTE, your fees will be paid directly into your bank account and your bank details will be required as part of the documentation for completion on appointment.

Information relating to Plagiarism

MMU AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

The University takes very seriously the issue of academic dishonesty in general and plagiarism in particular. Evidence both within and without the institution suggests that using material which may have been produced by others for inclusion in student coursework is becoming increasingly common. We believe that the best solution is prevention and support rather than detection and punishment, but we do have clear penalties for infringement of our regulations.

We have developed a guide for staff, including a set of up-dated FAQs at <http://www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/plagiarism/index.php> intended to answer questions about plagiarism and suggest ways of discouraging and detecting it. This also includes a description of and links to the JISC Plagiarism Detection Service (PDS). In the region of 300 individual academic staff have now signed up to use the JISC PDS and increasingly this is being used to deter and detect instances of plagiarism. With the institution-wide implementation of WebCT Vista now complete, all staff have easy access to the JISC PDS directly from the University Virtual Learning Environment. This easy access will be embedded as part of the implementation of Moodle as the MMU VLE over the coming academic year.

For several years we have also had an online plagiarism tutorial for use by students which is extensively used by colleagues on a range of programmes throughout the University. Since September 2009, all MMU students have access to an updated version of this tutorial.

A range of workshops and tutorials for staff are regularly arranged across the University by members of the Centre for Learning and Teaching and others. These include sessions on the new PGCHE (Academic Practice) workshop programme (part of the MMU CPD Framework for Academic Staff). The University Students' Union has also run a seminar for staff on the topic and is closely involved in the production of guidance and advice.

The University guidance on cheating and other forms of academic misconduct are found at in the appendices of the University Regulations for Undergraduate and for Taught Postgraduate Programmes of Study at http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/grad_regulations.php and the definition of plagiarism has recently been tightened and brought into line with best practice elsewhere.

We have also developed an Institutional Scheme and Tariff for dealing with cases of plagiarism to ensure consistency across the institution. These can also be found in the appendices of the University's Regulations for Undergraduate and for Taught Postgraduate Programmes of Study referred to in the previous paragraph.

Anonymous Marking

Written examinations

The University operates a policy of anonymous marking for formal examinations. Special examination stationery has been prepared which enables work to be marked anonymously. A tear-off strip on the examination booklet allows the script to be identified at a later stage.

Summative assessed coursework

The Academic Board has approved the following recommendations with regard to anonymous coursework marking (subject to future review). The recommendations are as follows:

- To recommend, as a matter of principle, the anonymous marking of all summative assessment;
- To recommend that, in practice, each programme should be required to implement a policy of anonymous marking of summative assessment at its next periodic review unless a valid case can be made for exception;
- That where exception from this principle applies, programmes concerned will be required to demonstrate a commitment to the principle of anonymity through other appropriate measures, including anonymous second marking and moderation.

Identification of the work of disabled students

Except where circumstances arising from a student's disability make it impossible to do so, the University's procedures for the anonymous marking of formal assessments shall be complied with. It will be for the Chair of the Board of Examiners concerned to approve any departure from or variation to the procedures and to inform the student of this accordingly.

The University's policy is that after a process of diagnosis, support should be provided for disabled students by the negotiation of a Personal Learning Plan (PLP), in consultation with the Learner Development Service. The plan recommends appropriate support mechanisms and, in certain cases, the amendment of the formal assessment strategy for the individual concerned. In the latter case any such amendment must be approved by the Board of Examiners. All students must be able to demonstrate successful achievement of programme learning outcomes to receive an award. Individual markers shall not take the personal circumstances of students into account in the marking of work.

Further detail on anonymous marking and other aspects of assessment practice and policy may be found on the Centre for Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement website at <http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/asu.php>.

University Structure and Campus Location

Manchester Metropolitan University is currently based at six campuses, five in the Manchester area and one at Crewe (MMU Cheshire). The central Manchester campuses form part of the largest higher education campus in the UK and one of the most extensive education centres in Europe. An ambitious buildings project is currently underway to rationalise the number of Campuses and strengthen the student experience with emphasis on high quality, cutting edge teaching facilities.

The University has a varied population, attracting students from a broad range of backgrounds and countries, which contributes to its lively and dynamic atmosphere.

University Structure

Manchester Metropolitan University is led by the **Board of Governors**, the **Executive** and **Directorate**. MMU has 8 faculties, 8 research institutes and a range of departments and divisions that support the work of the University.

Central Services

- Finance & Legal Services
- Human Resources
- Services Group
- Student & Academic Services

Faculties

- Faculty of Art & Design
- Faculty of Health, Psychology and Social Care
- Hollings Faculty
- Faculty of Humanities, Law and Social Science
- Institute of Education
- MMU Business School
- MMU Cheshire
- Faculty of Science & Engineering

Details of the Academic Departments, Research Institutes, Research Centres and Research Groups are available via the University's web site at <http://www.mmu.ac.uk/about/structure>

MANCHESTER and MMU CHESHIRE LOCATIONS

Detailed information on how to find and travel to the various campuses at MMU, together with maps, are available at the following web address: <http://mmu.ac.uk/travel>.

Collaborative Provision/Partner Institutions Locations

For information on the location of our partner institutions, please contact your Faculty Quality Administrator at the address given on pages 5 and 6 of this Handbook.