

# INSTITUTIONAL CODE OF PRACTICE AND REGULATIONS FOR EXTERNAL EXAMINING

(UNDERGRADUATE AND TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES OF STUDY)

*Click on section below for quick link or scroll down for full text.*

1. Compliance with the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education
2. Aim
3. Institutional Code of Practice and Regulations:
  - *The Roles of External Examiners*
  - *Powers and Responsibilities of External Examiners*
  - *Conferment Lists and Pass Lists*
  - *Criteria for Appointment*
  - *External Examiners for Taught Research Programmes*
  - *Information for New Appointees*
  - *Support for Current External Examiners*
  - *External Examiners' Reports*
  - *Use of Report within the University*
  - *Information for Students concerning External Examiner appointments*
  - *Equal Opportunities*

*The proformas listed below are available on the External Examining Website via the following web link:*  
<http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/casqe/examiners/>

## Proformas for External Examining

- EE1 New External Examiner Nomination Form
- EE1A Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form
- EE2 Request for Re-allocation of Duties Form
- EE3 Request for Extension of Period of Duty Form
- EE4S External Examiner Report Form – Subject External Examiner
- EE4A External Examiner Report Form – Award External Examiner

## Proformas for External Examining on MRes or Part A of Professional Doctorates only

- TREE1 New External Examiner Nomination Form
- TREE1A Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form
- TREE2 Request for Re-allocation of Duties Form
- TREE3 Request for Extension of Period of Duty Form
- TREE4 External Examiner Report Form – Taught Research Programmes

## **EXTERNAL EXAMINING**

### **1. Compliance with the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education**

The University's Institutional Code of Practice and Regulations for External Examining was revised in 2011/2012 in the light of the publication of Chapter B7 (External Examining) of the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education – effective from 2012/2013, and the University will continue to monitor developments relating to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

### **2. Aim**

To align with the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education Expectation that "Higher Education providers make scrupulous use of external examiners", the aims of MMU's procedures for external examining are:

- i. to verify that the University is maintaining the threshold academic standards set for its awards in accordance with the frameworks for higher education qualifications and applicable subject benchmark statements;
- ii. to ensure that the assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended programme outcome(s) and is effectively operated in accordance with institutional regulations;
- iii. to verify that the standards of the University's awards and the achievements of students are appropriate and comparable to other higher education institutions of which the external examiners have experience.

### **3. Institutional Code of Practice and Regulations**

- 3.1 This Code is based on the precepts and guidance contained in Chapter B7 (External Examining) of the Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code for Higher Education (operational from 2012/2013) The Code applies to all undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes, including taught research programmes leading to an award of the University, whether delivered by MMU or by a collaborating establishment in formal partnership with the University.

Information on External Examiners appointed for non-taught research programmes may be found on the Research, Enterprise and Development web site at <http://www.red.mmu.ac.uk/>

The effectiveness of the Code is reviewed annually and a report on its operation is reported to Academic Development Committee by the Head of the Centre for Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement.

## ***The Roles of External Examiners***

*Please note: for ease of reference, the term Assessment Board within this document refers to either Unit Results Board and/or Progression and Awards Board as appropriate.*

- 3.2 The role of External Examiners appointed by the Academic Board shall be to ensure that justice is done to the individual student, that the standard of the University's awards is maintained, and that the assessments with which the examiner is concerned are carried out in accordance with the University Assessment Regulations for Undergraduate and for Taught Postgraduate Programmes of Study, and with programme-specific regulations where exemption has been permitted to align with PSRB requirements. The views of the examiner shall also contribute to the quality assurance of the University's programmes.

At least one External Examiner must be appointed to any programme or part of a programme that leads to a University award (whether delivered at MMU or by a collaborating establishment). For all new programmes at least one external examiner must be in place no later than one term into the new programme.

- 3.3 The University operates a two-tier assessment board structure, and examiners are appointed to either of the following types of assessment board:
- Unit Results Boards - as Subject External Examiners
  - Progression and Award Boards – as Award External Examiners

At the resit stage, faculties will make decisions on whether to hold separate Unit Results Boards and Progression and Award Boards, or whether to have a single Board to consider unit results and progression and award. This will be decided on the basis of the workload involved.

- 3.4 Subject External Examiners act as moderators of assessments at each stage (except for level 4 students) of a programme which contributes to an award outcome. Award External Examiners will consider student performance at unit level where students are exiting with a stage award at level 4.

**Subject External Examiners** will be appointed for an approved set of units (whether delivered by MMU or by a collaborating establishment), for which they will have sole responsibility. They will have the right and responsibility to exercise membership of the appropriate Assessment Board(s).

At least one **Award External Examiner** will be appointed to each Progression and Award Board.

- 3.5 The University requires its External Examiners, in their expert judgement, to consider the following as appropriate to their role:
- i report on whether the standards set are appropriate for its awards, or award elements, by reference to the QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education (including: subject benchmark statements and frameworks for HE Qualifications); institutional programme specifications;; and other benchmark information such as the requirements of PSRBs;
  - ii report on the standards of student performance in those programmes or units which they have been appointed to examine, and on the comparability of the standards with those of similar programmes or parts of programmes in other UK higher education institutions;
  - iii report on the extent to which its processes for assessment, examination, and the determination of awards are sound and have been fairly conducted;
  - iv report directly to the Chair of the Academic Board of the University if they are concerned about standards of assessment and performance, particularly where they consider that assessments are being conducted in a way that jeopardises either the fair treatment of individual students or the standard of the University's awards.

Where examiners are reporting on programmes or units offered through collaborative arrangements they are required to make this clear, specifying explicitly the areas to which their comments apply.

The University's Subject External Examiner report pro-forma contains a section for reporting on matters required to be addressed by Professional, Regulatory or Statutory Bodies (PSRBs) and examiners of programmes which have an affiliation with such bodies are required to complete this section.

- 3.6 Examiners will expect to maintain a dialogue with the appropriate programme team(s) and unit leaders, for example to receive confirmation of acceptance of proposed amendments to draft assessments.
- 3.7 Existing External Examiners will be expected to support the induction of new External Examiners to examining teams as appropriate.
- 3.8 New External Examiners will be prepared for their role by a range of online guidance and, where appropriate, meetings with Faculty and Programme Teams.

## ***The Powers and Responsibilities of External Examiners***

- 3.9 The **Subject External Examiner** for all undergraduate, Edexcel and taught postgraduate programmes is required to:
- i. Attend the Unit Results Board for undergraduate programmes, and taught postgraduate and professional programmes as required unless prevented by unanticipated personal or professional reasons. In the event of an External Examiner not being able to attend the Unit Results Board, the programme leader and the Faculty/Campus SAS contact for the Board should be informed as soon as possible in order to agree when the External Examiner will receive the necessary paperwork. Normally Subject External Examiners will not be required to attend resit boards.
  - ii. Attend, as required, to undertake external moderation of assessments, (eg presentations; performance; display);
  - iii. In the case of PSRB accreditation, an External Examiner may, additionally, be required to be approved by and undertake particular duties for the appropriate PSRB;
  - iv. Sign the approval documentation issued at the Unit Results Board meeting. By signing the approval documentation, External Examiners indicate that:
    - they are able to confirm that the academic standards achieved by students are comparable with student performance on similar provision with which they are familiar;
    - the standards are consistent with QAA or other relevant benchmarks;
    - due process has been followed by the Unit Results Board in arriving at its decisions;
    - in the event that an External Examiner is not able to endorse the recommendations of the Unit Results Board, the matter, together with all relevant documentation, should be referred to the Academic Board for resolution.
  - v. to present, within six weeks of the main Unit Results Board meeting of each academic year, an electronic written Annual Report, which includes commentary and judgements on the validity, reliability and integrity of the assessment process, the standards of student attainment, the requirements of the QAA's Subject Benchmark Statements and, if appropriate, professional body standards together with any aspects of good practice which they wish to commend;

- vi. Confirm that there is fair and consistent treatment of all students;
- vii. Corroborate that assessment is carried out in accordance with the University Regulations;
- viii. Comment on the continuing currency of and any proposed changes to the range of units offered in the subject, the appropriateness of the content and coherence of the units and their suitability for the programme;
- ix. Be consulted about the approval of modifications;
- x. Approve alternative forms of assessment for exceptional circumstances;
- xi. Advise at the time of review/revalidation and on the introduction of new units, and the coherence of the stage and award. An identified member of the examining team will comment specifically on matters relating to programme health.

In respect of collaborative provision, external examining procedures for programmes offered by a partner organisation should be the same as, or demonstrably equivalent to, those used by the University for its own programme. The procedures should be clearly specified and documented in the collaborative memorandum of agreement, and rigorously applied.

### 3.10 Subject External Examiners would NOT be expected to:

- i. Second/third mark assignments and examination scripts;
- ii. Arbitrate for marking disagreements between University staff;
- iii. Change grades of individual students;
- iv. Viva students except when a requirement of a professional body;
- v. Be involved in the consideration of cases of academic misconduct.

### 3.11 *Subject Documentation*

External Examiners will be given access to definitive programme documentation and marking criteria;

With samples of assessed work for moderation Subject External Examiners can expect to receive:

- A completed mark sheet for all students studying on the unit;
- Marking criteria for the unit;
- Evidence of how marks were awarded by the internal examiner and internal moderator;
- Statistics of student performance on the unit.

### 3.12 *Meetings with Students*

Subject External Examiners are encouraged to meet students:

- i. To fulfil the requirements of a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB);
- ii. To confirm that standards are appropriate and comparable in subjects that require a performance, demonstration of skills or techniques, exhibition or similar activity as an integral part of the assessment regime;
- iii. Where a course is delivered through collaborative provision or overseas, the External Examiner may be asked to undertake visits from time to time to meet students in order to confirm that standards are appropriate and comparable to similar University-based courses, and that the assessment process is fair and consistent for all students.
- iv. Students who are asked to meet with an External Examiner must be provided with clear guidance by the University about the purpose of the meeting and its limitations (particularly with regard to individual assessment outcomes).

### 3.13 *Meetings with Internal Examiners*

Programme/course leaders/Heads of Division (or nominee) will arrange to meet with their External Examiner(s) at appropriate times during the year. External moderation will take place throughout the year at MMU to extend the opportunity for programme teams to meet with External Examiners in order to discuss the validity of proposed assessment tasks and assessment submitted during the assessment period. Provision will be made for External Examiners to meet with programme teams and other External Examiners appointed to subjects belonging to the Unit Results Board before the Unit Results Board meets.

3.14 The **Award External Examiner** for all undergraduate, Edexcel and taught postgraduate programmes is required to:

- i. Attend the main Progression and Award Assessment Boards for undergraduate programmes, taught postgraduate and professional programmes. Award External Examiners will be invited to attend resit Boards;
- ii. Sign the award approval documentation issued at the meeting of the Board. By signing the documentation, External Examiners are indicating that due process has been followed by the Progression and Award Board in arriving at its decisions;
- iii. In the event that an External Examiner is not able to endorse the recommendations of the Board, the matter, together with all relevant documentation, should be referred to the Chair of Academic Board for resolution;
- iv. Submit an Annual Report within six weeks of the main scheduled Assessment Board meeting of each academic year;
- v. Make a statement in the Annual Report that processes adopted by the University assure consistent and fair treatment of all students;
- vi. Confirm the integrity and equity of the process of conferring awards on the basis of:
  - The consistency of the application of the award regulations for classification;
  - The range of classifications awarded;
  - Completion rates;
  - The variations between grade distributions awarded by Unit Results Boards contributing to the award where appropriate.

3.15 Award External Examiners would NOT be expected to:

- i. Change grades;
- ii. Be involved in the consideration of cases of academic misconduct.

3.16 *Award Documentation*

Award External Examiners should have access to:

- the programme definitive documentation;
- the University's regulations.

### 3.17 *Meetings with Students*

Where appropriate, Award External Examiners will meet students to fulfil the requirements of a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body.

Students who are asked to meet with an External Examiner must be provided with clear guidance by the University about the purpose of the meeting and its limitations (particularly with regard to individual assessment outcomes).

#### ***Conferment Lists***

- 3.18 External Examiners are required to endorse the outcomes of the assessment(s) they have been appointed to scrutinise. The Chair of the Assessment Board, the Head of Faculty/Campus SAS or nominee, and the External Examiners attending the Board should sign the conferment list.
- 3.19 Except where a material error of process is identified to the satisfaction of the Chair of the Assessment Board, unless a request has been made for a review of the decision of an Assessment Board the External Examiners' endorsement of a Board's decision shall preclude any further consideration of the marks or awards at any subsequent stage of the examination process and shall be taken to indicate that processes have been carried out in accordance with the conventions of the University.

#### ***Criteria for Appointment***

- 3.20 External Examiners should normally be appointed for a period of four academic years and one term, with an exceptional extension of one year to ensure continuity, for example where a programme is phasing out.
- 3.21 External Examiners are nominated by faculties and must be approved by the Faculty Academic Development Committee before institutional ratification. Before formal nomination, initial discussions should be held by the programme committee and, where relevant, any collaborative partner concerned.

The following criteria are intended to ensure that only those with appropriate experience and expertise are nominated and appointed to act as External Examiners:

- i. External Examiners should be drawn from a wide variety of institutional/professional contexts and traditions and examining teams should demonstrate, wherever possible, diversity in relation to issues of age, gender, cultural background, ethnicity and disability in line with the University's Equal Opportunities Policies in order that the University benefits from wide-ranging external scrutiny. In any event within a single examining team, there should *not* be:

- (a) more than one examiner from the same institution in the team of External Examiners, except in a complex programme involving a large number of discrete subject areas;
  - (b) reciprocal external examining between cognate programmes or departments in two institutions;
  - (c) replacement of an External Examiner by an individual from the same home department and institution;
  - (d) an External Examiner from an institution which has been the source of examiners in the recent past (normally five years).
- ii. Examiners should not have too heavy a workload in respect of external examining duties. As a norm, an examiner should not currently hold more than two substantial undergraduate or postgraduate appointments.
  - iii. There should be appropriate balance and expertise in the team of External Examiners, including *inter alia*:
    - (a) examining experience;
    - (b) academic and professional practitioners;
    - (c) the range of academic perspectives;
    - (d) members from different types of HE institution, if appropriate.
  - iv. Bearing in mind that External Examiners should be impartial in making judgements and that they should not have previous close involvement with the institution (or, where relevant, any collaborative partner organisations) which might compromise their objectivity, normally in the previous 10 years and never in the previous 5 years a proposed External Examiner will not have been a member of staff ; a governor, a student, or anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student with an involvement in the programme;
  - v. An External Examiner should not be significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme(s) or modules in question.
  - vi. For similar reasons, an individual proposed as an External Examiner should not be:

- (a) personally associated with the sponsorship of students;
- (b) required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme;
- (c) in a position to influence significantly the future employment of students;
- (d) likely to be involved with student placements or training in the examiner's organisation;

and for collaborative provision:

- (e) associated in any of the above ways (a – d) with the partner, or partners delivering the programme(s) concerned.

All External Examiners for programmes leading to MMU awards (including those delivered under collaborative arrangements) must be approved by the University. In the case of PSRB accreditation, an External Examiner may, additionally, be required to be approved by, and undertake particular duties for, the appropriate PSRB.

3.22 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 Assessment Board, fails to produce a 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 and policies. The termination of appointment under these circumstances is considered and determined by the Head of the Centre for Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement and is reported to the University's Academic Development Committee.

3.23 Nominations for the appointment of External Examiners are recorded on a standard nomination form (EE1) which must be signed by the Head of the Department (or equivalent) making the proposal and the Chair(s) of the appropriate FADC(s). This underlines the responsibility at departmental and faculty level to exercise an oversight of the nominations prior to their approval on behalf of the Academic Board.

In considering nominations at programme/faculty level, care must be taken to meet the following criteria:

- 3.24 External Examiners appointed for programmes at the University are regarded as employees of the University and as such, and in accordance with the requirements of the Asylum and Immigration Act, nominees are required to confirm on the nomination form (EE1) that they have the right to work in the UK. On appointment, documentary evidence confirming the right to work will need to be obtained by the University.
- 3.25 Where more than one examiner is appointed to a programme, programme teams are required to phase appointments so as to ensure continuity of experienced examiners (unless satisfactory alternative arrangements are approved by the relevant FADC and by officers from the Centre for Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement (CASQE) on behalf of the ADC's Academic Standards sub-Committee).
- 3.26 Where a programme has a sole examiner, the retiring examiner's period of appointment must overlap that of his or her successor (unless satisfactory alternative arrangements are approved by the relevant FADC and by officers from CASQE on behalf of the ADC's Academic Standards sub-Committee).
- 3.27 An external examiner may be re-appointed in exceptional circumstances but only after a period of five years or more has elapsed since their last appointment. Officers from CASQE on behalf of the ADC's Academic Standards sub-Committee will exercise discretion in considering a case for re-appointment made by a Faculty.
- Extensions to periods of appointment will only be approved in exceptional circumstances, and normally only for a period of one year.
- 3.28 Faculties will be required to report, any direct interest or ties to the University which a nominee for appointment may have. This will normally include current or recent ie within the past three years, collaborative research activities with a member of University staff; and previous involvement in programme approval processes as a member of the validation panel.
- 3.29 FADCs are required to ensure that the number and expertise of their External Examiners is appropriate to the duties to be discharged, the number of students and complexity of the programme.

### 3.30 *Appointment of Subject External Examiners*

- i. Faculties should ensure that the allocation of Subject External Examiners to units and potential students is not too onerous. Factors to consider would be, for example, overall number of units; student registrations to units; academic levels of units; student assessment workload; the extent of the collaborative provision. They should ensure an appropriate match between the numbers of Subject External Examiners and the quantity of material being examined and should also ensure that a sufficient number of Subject External Examiners are appointed to ensure adequate expertise is available to cover all the major areas of the programme(s) being examined including the requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies.
  
- ii. More than one Subject External Examiner may be needed where there are large numbers of students or where a wide range of areas within the subject are covered.
  
- iii. Subject External Examiners should be able to demonstrate:
  - knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality;
  - competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study, or parts thereof;
  - relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined. When within a team of examiners, and where appropriate, examiners may be practitioners with extensive experience;
  - competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment procedures;
  - 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;
  - familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed;
  - fluency in English;

- that they can meet applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies;
- awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula;
- competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience;

### 3.31 *Appointment of Award External Examiners*

- i. An Award External Examiner must be a senior academic with a deep understanding of assessment and experience in managing the assessment process and in applying Academic Regulations.

This may be indicated by:-

- the present post and place of work;
  - the range and scope of experience in managing the assessment process across Higher Education;
  - current or recent involvement in chairing Assessment Boards;
  - authorship of an institution's Academic Regulations/Procedures.
- ii. The Award External Examiner must have recent external examining experience to indicate competence in decision making regarding decisions on individual student cases.

#### ***External Examiners for Taught Research Programmes***

Nominations for and 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. 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 nominations forms, available on the External Examiners web site.

## **Information for New Appointees**

3.32 New examiners will be provided with the following information:

### **From the University:**

- a letter of appointment from the University Registrar indicating contractual arrangements, including rates of payment and expenses, and period of tenure. The letter will inform the examiner that he or she may submit a confidential report to, initially, the appropriate Programme Leader, Head of Department, Heads of Faculty/Campus SAS or, if felt necessary, the Vice-Chancellor where, in the judgement of the examiner, matters of particular importance and/or sensitivity arise;

NB: Two copies of the appointment letter are sent to the new External Examiner, who is required to sign and return one copy to signify acceptance of the appointment and its conditions, together with other documentation required by the Human Resources and payroll Divisions.

- instructions on how to access the Institutional Code of Practice and Regulations on External Examining;
- instructions on how to access the Institutional Code of Practice on Assessment;
- instructions on how to access the Regulations for Undergraduate and for Taught Postgraduate Programmes of Study;
- instructions on how to access information on University policies procedures and regulations;
- information indicating how the examiner may access the report pro-forma;
- information on how to access the QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education (including appropriate benchmark statement(s));
- the names and contact details of central staff supporting External Examiners.

### **From the appropriate Faculty:**

- information on the programmes and units, and their summative assessment, for which the External Examiner will have responsibility, including information on how to access a copy of the appropriate definitive programme documentation, together with programme, stage and all relevant unit learning outcomes and how they are assessed (*Subject External Examiners*);
- dates of Assessment Board meetings (*Subject and Award External Examiners*);
- an individual examiner's role in relation to the examining team as a whole (*Subject External Examiners*);
- the names and contact details of other members of the External Examining team, where appropriate (*Subject External Examiners*);

- quality monitoring 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 (*Subject External Examiners*);
- the names and contact details of faculty staff supporting External Examiners (*Subject and Award External Examiners*).

3.33 Prior to an examiner's first assessment visit, an opportunity will be provided to become familiar with the Institution and to discuss responsibilities and other matters.

3.34 The University will pay particular attention to the support needs of non-academic examiners, particularly those appointed with professional, practitioner or vocational expertise, those from outside higher education, appointees new to external examining, and those with responsibility for collaborative provision.

### ***Support for Current External Examiners***

3.35 University and faculty staff, programme teams and External Examiners are expected to maintain regular contact to ensure close liaison.

3.36 The Centre for Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement will provide updates on University regulatory matters and a summary of generic issues raised in External Examiner reports.

Faculties will provide updates on programme definitive documentation (including all modifications).

3.37 The Subject External Examiner will receive a set of the programme monitoring documentation, including the reports of all other External Examiners appointed to the programme, relevant programme committee minutes or other appropriate documentation which indicates how the examiners' comments have been addressed, the formal response to all reports and an update on the subsequent action taken.

3.38 Subject External Examiners must receive confirmation that their amendments to draft examination papers have been considered. All Examiners must also be provided with clear reasons when any of the recommendations made in their report are not to be implemented.

### ***External Examiners' Reports***

3.39 The University requires each examiner to complete a pro-forma report normally on an annual basis, or more frequently as appropriate to their role, before s/he receives fees and expenses in connection with duties carried out.

NB: External Examiners on taught research programmes (ie MRES or Part A of Professional Doctorates) will use a separate, bespoke pro-forma to submit their report.

3.40 External Examiners will be expected to submit the completed pro-forma to the appropriate Head of Faculty/Campus SAS within six weeks following the final Assessment Board which dealt with the cohort of students to which the document refers to report on:

- i whether the standards of the awards are appropriate for the qualification in the subject and address relevant benchmark statements;
- ii whether the student performance is comparable with similar programmes or subjects offered in other UK higher education institutions with which the examiner is familiar;
- iii. evidence as to whether the learning outcomes are aligned appropriately to the Frameworks for HE Qualifications and whether students are achieving these outcomes;
- iv whether the programme is coherent and whether awards at the same level within the programme are set at a comparable standard;
- v what may be inferred about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment methods as indicated by student performance and whether outcomes have implications for the curriculum, subject syllabuses or teaching methods;
- vi whether the marking scheme and arrangements for classification are appropriate, whether the examination process was carried out properly and whether the internal marking was of an appropriate standard;
- vii whether sufficient information concerning the programmes being examined was conveyed to the examiner in advance;
- viii whether responses by programme teams to issues raised in previous reports had been satisfactory;

- ix what the examiner would identify as the strengths and weaknesses of the programme and whether s/he has suggestions for enhancements to the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students;
- x good practice and innovation observed relating to learning, teaching and assessment.

3.41 Any comments on the operation of the University's Regulations for Undergraduate and for Taught Postgraduate Programmes of Study should be noted in the appropriate section of the External Examiner report template. The Head of the Centre for Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement's annual analysis of External Examiner reports considers all such comments as part of the University's regular review of its policies, procedures and regulations.

3.42 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>. Alternatively, the examiner may choose to notify the relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body if this is more appropriate.

3.43 External Examiner reports once submitted will become the property of the University and will be subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act as applicable.

Reports will be treated by the University as public documents and will be available in the public domain. They are also routinely made available on request to the Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) which accredit our programmes. Consequently, details such as the naming of individual students and staff must be avoided, and will be redacted where included prior to publication. Any comments which an examiner needs to make on an individual student or member of staff should be submitted in confidence to the appropriate programme leader.

Reports from External Examiners will be made available to programme teams, who will make arrangements for discussion of the issues raised with the student body.

3.44 All examiners are required to submit a written overview at the end of their term of office which comments on their experience as External Examiner at the University.

### ***Use of Report within the University***

- 3.45 External Examiners should email a copy of their report to the relevant address indicated in the online report.
- 3.46 The Head of Faculty/Campus SAS is responsible for ensuring that reports are received and circulated to the appropriate programme team(s) (which will consider reports at programme committee meetings), the Chair of FADC, the Dean of Faculty, Head(s) of Department (or equivalent), the Centre for Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement and the Research, Enterprise and Development Office in the case of MRES and Part A of the Professional Doctorates.

Programme committee minutes must reflect the detailed consideration of and response to External Examiners' reports. Comments from and formal responses to examiners will also be noted in the programme monitoring documentation together with actions agreed to be taken in response. Such consideration and notes will be taken into account at each stage of programme monitoring in accordance with the published guidelines and timetable.

### ***Information for Students concerning External Examiner appointments***

- 3.47 Students should be provided with details of the name, position and institution of the external examiner for their programme and each of their units of study. Students are advised that it is inappropriate to make direct contact with external examiners, and are provided with detail of how they can engage formally with the quality management process through which the University considers and responds to external examiners.
- 3.48 It is appropriate for External Examiners who receive direct contact from students to refer these to the University.

### ***Equal Opportunities***

- 3.49 The University monitors the appointment of its External Examiners to ensure compliance with its equal opportunities and anti-discrimination policies.

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