

# **MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY**

## **EXTERNAL EXAMINING: THE REPORTING PROCESS**

The University places great importance on External Examiner reports, which not only inform the Continuous Monitoring and Improvement of its taught programmes of study, 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 University procedures will ensure that all Subject External Examiners receive a direct response from the Programme Team, and that all Award External Examiners receive a direct response from the Faculty/University.

Each External 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 External Examiner receives fees and expenses in connection with duties carried out.

### **1. THE REPORT PRO-FORMA**

The report pro-forma is available online via the External Examining web site at <http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/casqe/examiners/reporting.php>

The relevant templates for completion are as follows:

<b>EE4S</b>	This is for completion by Subject External Examiners.  <i>Additionally, and exceptionally, those Examiners who operate in a non-tiered structure (normally those where exemption to align with PSRB requirements has been permitted) should use this template for their annual report.</i>
<b>EE4A</b>	This is for completion by Award External Examiners.

*External Examiners operating on taught research programmes of study (ie MRes or Part A of professional Doctorate) should complete the template **TREE4** which is available within the 'External Examiners for Taught Research Programmes' area of the website.*

External Examiners experiencing any difficulty in accessing the web site should contact the University's Centre for Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement (Tel: 0161-247 1061; or by email to [n.clarke@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:n.clarke@mmu.ac.uk)).

## 2. GUIDANCE FOR EXTERNAL EXAMINERS ON COMPLETION OF 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 with the programme(s) or at Faculty and University level. 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 and Quality Enhancement (Tel: 0161-247 1061) or by email to [n.clarke@mmu.ac.uk](mailto: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 information.

**External Examiner reports are treated by the University as public documents and are routinely made available on request to Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) which accredit our programmes. As a consequence of this, the naming of individual students and staff should be avoided, and reports will be redacted to remove these details where they are shown. The report, when 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. Any comments which an Examiner needs to make concerning an individual should be submitted in confidence to the appropriate programme leader in the first instance.**

### (i) Reporting on a Programme Network

Subject External Examiners with responsibility in whole or part, for a programme network may provide a composite report or single reports as appropriate. If completing a composite report, externals should ensure that the provision covered is identified and that where an issue relates to a specific area, this is clear.

### (ii) Reporting on the University's Combined Honours Programme

In addition to responsibilities relating to single subject degrees, some External Examiners have been appointed to cover individual subject areas on the University's Combined Honours Programme. In such cases, there is no need for External Examiners to complete a separate report, but the relevant Section of the pro-forma should be completed to allow for comments to be made concerning the experience of students on the Combined Honours Programme.

### (iii) Collaborative Provision

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

(iv) Reporting on the operation of the University's Regulations

Any comments on the operation of the University's Regulations for Undergraduate Programmes and Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Programmes should be noted in the appropriate section of the External Examiner report pro-forma. The annual analysis of External Examiner reports considers all such comments as part of the University's regular review of its policies, procedures and regulations.

(v) Reports from External Examiners completing their term of appointment

External Examiners completing their term of appointment should ensure that they complete the relevant Section of the pro-forma to provide a written overview commenting on their experience as Examiner during the period of their tenure.

(vi) Reporting on matters of particular importance and/or sensitivity

An External Examiner may, 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.

(vii) Submission Details

The final section of the pro-forma provides the web addresses of the Heads of Faculty/Campus Student and Academic Services to whom the report should be submitted. 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.

### **3. RESPONSE TO AND USE OF THE REPORT WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY**

Once the report has been received by the Head of Faculty/Campus SAS, it will be acknowledged and circulated to the appropriate programme team(s); the Chair of the Faculty's Academic Development Committee (FADC); the Dean of Faculty; Head(s) of Department (or their equivalent); collaborative partners; Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) (as appropriate); and the Centre for Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement.

(i) Subject External Examiner Reports

Programme teams and student programme representatives will consider the reports from Subject External Examiners, and their committee minutes will reflect the detailed consideration of, and response to, the reports. Comments from, and formal responses to, External Examiners will also be noted in the Programme Log together with actions agreed to be taken in response. Such consideration and notes will be taken into account at each stage of the Continuous Monitoring and Improvement process in accordance with the published guidelines and timetable.

The programme team's formal response to individual External Examiner reports, which should be sent to the Examiner within six weeks of receipt of the report, forms the final section of the report pro-forma. Copies of all the completed External Examiner reports for a programme are sent to each External Examiner on the team, together with the relevant Continuous Improvement Plan.

(ii) Award External Examiner Reports

The reports of Award External Examiners are considered at Faculty level and a response, which forms the final section of the report pro-forma is sent to the Examiner.

(iii) Institutional Response

All External Examiner reports are scrutinised at Institutional level, and a response provided for External Examiners where this has been requested, or is deemed necessary.

**3. INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW**

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

Nicola J Clarke  
Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Manager

February 2012