



University College
of Osteopathy

Academic Quality Framework 2017-2018

Section 11: External Examining

ACADEMIC QUALITY FRAMEWORK

SECTION 11: EXTERNAL EXAMINING

This Section should be of particular interest to Course Leaders and External Examiners, and all those involved in the assessment and examination of undergraduate and postgraduate taught students.

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Equality Impact

Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)

Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)

X

Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)

If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this document, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk

ACADEMIC QUALITY FRAMEWORK

SECTION 11: EXTERNAL EXAMINING

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11.1 INTRODUCTION

- 11.1.1 External examining and moderation plays a fundamental role in assuring academic standards by providing an external perspective on student performance and on the conduct of the assessment process at the University College of Osteopathy (UCO).
- 11.1.2 The UCO appoints External Examiners for all taught courses through which credit is achieved and qualifications that lead to an award of the UCO.
- 11.1.3 External Examiners provide one of the principal means by which the UCO ensures it maintains nationally comparable standards regarding assessment processes and practices within autonomous higher education institutions.
- 11.1.4 External Examiners may be appointed to report on assessment processes, standards and quality at course or unit level, or both.
- 11.1.5 The main purposes of external examining are:
- To verify that academic standards are appropriate for the award and its component parts by reference to published national subject benchmarks, the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications in England Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)¹, institutional programme specifications (CIFs) and other relevant information;
 - To help the UCO to assure and maintain academic standards;
 - To help institutions to ensure that the assessment process measures student achievement appropriately against the intended learning outcomes of the course;
 - To verify that institutions' assessment processes are sound, fairly operated and in line with their policies and regulations.
- 11.1.6 The following procedures are in line with the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education - Chapter B7: External Examining².

11.2 PRINCIPLES OF EXTERNAL EXAMINING

- 11.2.1 The principles of External Examining of the UCO's awards include that:
- No taught degree or other academic distinction of the UCO shall be awarded without the participation in the examining process of at least one External Examiner who shall be a full member of the relevant Board of Examiners;
 - External Examiners are responsible to the UCO's Principal;
 - The correspondent between the UCO and an External Examiner on contractual matters will be the UCO's Academic Registrar;
 - The number of External Examiners for any particular course shall be appropriate to cover the full range of studies / units.
 - A maximum of 12 units of thirty credits each or equivalent may be examined throughout the External Examiners' term of office.

11.3 THE ROLE OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

- 11.3.1 External Examiners are members of, and attend, Boards of Examiners and are expected to:
- Ensure that the standards of the UCO's awards are consistent with those elsewhere in the sector, and that the UCO is examining the qualities typically found in students across the sector at any specific stage of their course;

- b) Moderate the standard of work carried out by students to consistent standards to ensure that grades awarded are similar to those that would apply in other comparable higher education institutions and are in line with current best practice in the discipline concerned;
- c) Witness (by attendance at Boards of Examiners) the fair and consistent application of the UCO's regulations for dealing with students' assessments, progression from one stage to another and the determination of students' awards;
- d) Endorse the outcomes of the assessments they have been appointed to scrutinise;
- e) Comment and give advice on course design, pedagogy and assessment processes;
- f) Produce a written report which will include a commentary and judgements on the validity, reliability and integrity of the assessment process and the standards of student attainment.

11.3.2 Depending on the requirements of a particular subject or course, External Examiners may be called upon to undertake the observation of clinical practice, practical examinations or viva voce examinations.

11.3.3 External Examiners have the right to comment on any matter at the Board of Examiners, although the ultimate responsibility for making recommendations as to the award of degrees rests with the relevant Board of Examiners as a whole.

11.3.4 The Board of Examiners is not ultimately required to defer to the judgement of External Examiners in taking decisions but, where the Board of Examiners chooses to disregard the views of an External Examiner, the reasons for the Board's decision shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and reported to the Vice-Principal (Education).

11.4 SELECTION & APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

a) CRITERIA FOR EXTERNAL EXAMINER APPOINTMENT – PERSON SPECIFICATION

11.4.1 External Examiners from outside the higher education system, for example from industry or other professions, may be appointed where appropriate; however, each course should normally have at least one External Examiner with experience in a higher education institution that is familiar with the standards required for comparable courses.

11.4.2 External Examiners shall be appointed according to the following criteria (see also Appendix 1):

- a) Their knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality, including their range and scope of experience and understanding of quality and standards in other higher education institutions.
- b) Their competence and experience in the fields covered by the course of study, or parts thereof, including their experience of teaching and examining students following courses which lead to the level of award for which they are being considered as External Examiners.
- c) Their relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience as appropriate; experience and qualifications which should be at least at the same level as the course they are examining, and preferably above that level.
- d) Their competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures.
- e) Their 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, i.e. their recognition within the relevant discipline and / or profession as appropriate.

- f) Their familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed.
- g) Their fluency in English, and where courses are delivered and assessed in languages other than English, fluency in the relevant language(s) (unless other secure arrangements are in place to ensure that External Examiners are provided with the information to make their judgements).
- h) Their meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies.
- i) Their awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula.
- j) Their competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.
- k) Their present post and their expertise in the relevant subject area, including current evidence of scholarship / research / consultancy related to the awards to be externally examined;
- l) Their independence from the UCO and relevant Course Teams.

b) CRITERIA FOR EXTERNAL EXAMINER APPOINTMENT – CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

11.4.3 External Examiners **shall not** be appointed as an External Examiner if they:

- a) Are or have been within the last five years a member of staff, a governor, an External Examiner or a student of the UCO or one of its partners, delivery organisations or support providers.
- b) Are or have been within the last five years been closely associated with any member of the Course Team.
- c) Have a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the course of study.
- d) Are required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the course of study.
- e) Are, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the course of study, i.e. knows of a conflict of interest.
- f) Are 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 course(s) or units in question.
- g) Are a former staff member or a student of the UCO unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the proposed External Examiner have completed their course(s).
- h) Are involved in a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate courses at another higher education provider.
- i) Are from the same department and institution as the retiring External Examiner.
- j) Are from the same department or higher education provider as an existing External Examiner.
- k) Are from a department in an institution where a member of the UCO is serving as an External Examiner.
- l) Are from an institution which has been the source of External Examiners for the same or a closely related programme in the recent past (normally five years);
- m) Are from the same place of employment as an existing External Examiner who is already on the relevant Board of Examiners.

11.4.4 In addition an External Examiner **should not** normally be appointed if they:

- a) Already hold two other external examiner appointments for taught courses / units at any point in time.
- b) Concurrently act as a consultant to the relevant Course Team on course design, or act as members of a panel established to review the course they examine.
- c) Are personally associated with the sponsorship of students on the course.
- d) Are in a position to influence significantly the future employment of students on the course.
- e) Are likely to be involved with placements of students on the course or with their training in the External Examiner's organisation.

c) PROCESS FOR EXTERNAL EXAMINER APPOINTMENT

11.4.5 External Examiner appointments are approved under arrangements determined by the Academic Council.

11.4.6 The Academic Council is responsible for ensuring that:

- a) Criteria for the identification, nomination and appointment of candidates are understood and accessible to all staff initiating appointments.
- b) Nominations are assessed effectively and rigorously.
- c) Any potential intellectual property difficulties, such as might arise from the need for commercial confidentiality, are resolved prior to appointment.

11.4.7 The Course Leader in consultation with Heads of Area / Unit Leaders identifies and contacts a suitable candidate to be appointed as an External Examiner who, after agreeing to the nomination, provides the Course Leader with their curriculum vitae (CV).

11.4.8 The Course Leader in consultation with Heads of Area and Unit Leaders as appropriate completes an External Examiner Nomination Form³ and External Examiner Contact Details & Duties Form⁴ supplying the prospective External Examiner's details of teaching, research and examination experience, present and former appointments and associations (if any) with the UCO or its staff and details of the course and / or units for which the nominated External Examiner will be responsible.

11.4.9 In cases where it is proposed that the appointment of an existing External Examiner be extended or their duties reallocated, the Course Leader in consultation with Heads of Area / Unit Leaders as appropriate completes the appropriate an External Examiner Extension of Duties Form⁵.

11.4.10 External Examiner Nomination Forms and CVs are considered by the Education Enhancement Strategy Committee in line with the criteria for External Examiner Appointment listed above which then recommends the nominations to the Academic Council for final approval.

11.4.11 It is the responsibility of the Education Enhancement Strategy Committee and Academic Council to ensure that in cases where proposed External Examiners do not fully meet the Criteria for External Examiner Appointment outlined above:

- a) That these cases are carefully considered and approved and that arrangements for providing oversight of the provision are robust.
- b) That where there is a legitimate case for making an appointment that does not fulfil all the criteria, appropriate training is provided and / or that they are not the sole examiner for the award and are part of an External Examiner Team where their expertise is complemented by that of others who do satisfy the criteria.

11.4.12 Exceptions to appointing an External Examiner who does not fulfil all the appointment criteria may include:

- a) Nominations drawn from business, industry or the professions who may possess considerable professional experience but not the formal qualifications anticipated, the academic background, or sufficient experience of assessment.
- b) Nominations required for disciplines which are very small and specialist where the pool of potential external examiners is therefore restricted.

11.4.13 Once approved by the Academic Council the External Examiner candidate shall be contacted by the Head of Quality to confirm the appointment and, in liaison with the HR Department, arrange for a formal contract of services to be signed stating the agreed fee which will be paid on completion of the necessary duties, including timely submission to the UCO's Principal of a detailed annual report⁶. A response to each will be provided to the External Examiner acknowledging their recommendations and comments⁷. The UCO will also pay reasonable claims for expenses in line with the published guidance in the External Examiners' Handbook⁸.

11.4.14 A record of all External Examiner appointments is held by the UCO's Head of Quality.

11.4.15 The UCO's Human Resources Department also retains a record of all UCO academic staff that hold External Examiner appointments at other institutions.

11.4.16 Newly appointed External Examiners will receive relevant briefing material and be invited to participate in the annual External Examiner's Training Day to support them in their role by the Academic Registrar.

11.5 TERM OF OFFICE / TENURE OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

11.5.1 External Examiner appointments are normally of four years' duration but may exceptionally be extended subject to formal approval for a further period of one year to ensure continuity if there is a strong rationale for extension.

11.5.2 Normally, External Examiner appointments will run from the beginning of an academic session of the course to which they are contracted to examine and the normal term of office will be one which allows the External Examiner to be involved in the assessment of four successive cohorts of students (i.e. 4 years).

11.5.3 New External Examiners should take up their appointments on or before the retirement of their predecessors.

11.5.4 External Examiners should remain available after the last assessments with which they are to be associated in case of any subsequent reviews of decisions.

11.5.5 An external examiner may be reappointed in exceptional circumstances but only after a period of five years or more has elapsed since their last appointment.

11.5.6 External examiners normally hold no more than two external examiner appointments for taught courses / units at any point in time.

11.5.7 External Examiner contracts will normally be renewed on an annual basis.

11.6 TERMINATION OF CONTRACT

11.6.1 An External Examiner's appointment may be terminated by either party (the External Examiner or the UCO), normally subject to 3 months' notice, at any time.

11.6.2 An External Examiner whose performance or conduct is not satisfactory may be warned or advised (in the first instance) of remedial action that should be taken, or have their contract terminated prematurely.

- 11.6.3 The decision to terminate the contract may be based on one or more of a number of factors, including:
- Changes to the curriculum/deletion of courses;
 - Failure to carry out duties in accordance with the contract and annual agreement, including failure to attend Boards of Examiner meetings where attendance is required, failure to submit reports, provision of incomplete reports, and failure to communicate effectively with the UCO.
 - Conflict of interest through changed circumstances;
 - Evidence that the information contained in the External Examiner's nomination form was inaccurate;
 - Evidence that the External Examiners' judgement / reporting is insufficiently thorough, critical or objective.
- 11.6.4 Should a conflict of interest arise during an External Examiner's term of office, External Examiners should notify the UCO immediately and resign from the role by writing to the Principal.
- 11.6.5 Should the grounds for premature termination of the contract be due to the alleged non-fulfilment of duties on the part of the External Examiner, the UCO's Head of Quality (or other appropriate senior manager) shall carry out an investigation to ensure that any decision to terminate the contract is based on sound evidence.
- 11.6.6 The outcome of the investigation shall be considered by the Principal who will make the final decision regarding the termination of the contract.
- 11.6.7 Should either party wish to terminate an External Examiners contract, they shall do so in writing, normally giving three months' notice. External Examiners should address their letter informing the UCO of their intent to terminate their contract to the Principal of the UCO, outlining the reason/s why.

11.7 BRIEFING & TRAINING OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

- 11.7.1 The UCO's Academic Registrar will ensure that once appointed, each External Examiner is sent the following relevant to the course and / or units for which the External Examiner is contracted to examine;
- A copy of the UCO's Academic Quality Framework (which includes the UCO's Academic Regulations);
 - Previous External Examiner reports (normally for the last 3 years) including a copy of the report made by the retiring External Examiner at the end of their term of office;
 - General information and standard forms such as expenses claim forms and map etc.;
 - Website information;
 - The External Examiner's Handbook⁹;
 - Course and Unit Information Forms;
 - Course and Unit Handbooks;
 - Documentation relating to specific professional issues (such as fitness to practise) or subject disciplines, including reference to any guidance or advice produced by sector bodies or subject communities;
 - Minutes of the most recent meeting of the Board of Examiners;

- j) The assessment schedule for the course (including dates when scripts will be available for moderation), related grading schemes, model answers etc. as appropriate;
 - k) Dates of meetings of the Board(s) of Examiners;
 - l) The last Course Annual Monitoring Report and Course Periodic Review Report as appropriate;
 - m) Professional body requirements as appropriate;
 - n) Assessment tasks.
- 11.7.2 The UCO holds an annual External Examiners' Induction and Training Day (detailed in the External Examiners' Handbook) to which all External Examiners are invited. If an External Examiner is unable to attend the annual training day, alternative arrangements will be made, i.e. training through Skype or another appropriate medium.
- 11.7.3 The UCO's Academic Registrar will make arrangements for new External Examiners to be briefed as soon as possible after appointment and to meet with students as appropriate.
- 11.7.4 Where a new External Examiner has no previous experience of the role, they will, where practicable, be assigned to an External Examiner Team and allocated a mentor. The mentor will typically be an experienced External Examiner from the same team to provide support and guidance. Where it is not practicable to assign the new External Examiner to an External Examiner Team, for example due to the size or nature of the provision, they will normally be allocated a mentor from another field of study.
- 11.7.5 The Academic Registrar shall act as a point of contact for all External Examiners during their term of office to answer questions and provide appropriate documentation.

11.8 PARTICIPATION OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS IN ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

- 11.8.1 External Examiners are normally expected to undertake the following duties:
- a) To attend, at their discretion, the annual External Examiner's Induction and Training Day;
 - b) To confirm the academic standards of a final award, i.e. at final award level (normally Level 6 and Level 7), and in so doing endorse the level and standards of its component parts as appropriate to the structure of that award;
 - c) To be given the opportunity to comment on the approved assessment methods, procedures and regulations which directly affect students on the course / unit;
 - d) To consider a sample of graded scripts from each unit for which the External Examiner is contracted to examine in order to confirm that the scripts have been graded in accordance with the criteria stated, to the proper standard, fairly and accurately. The sample will not normally include work at Level 4 and Level 5 but may be included for the purposes of good practice. Samples will normally comprise scripts based on borderlines, fails and a selection of grades comprising an A, B, C and D;
 - e) To moderate the grades awarded by internal examiners and to adjust the overall range of grades, if warranted, but not to alter individual grades;
 - f) Exceptionally, to conduct a viva voce examination of any student, where this is judged necessary;
 - g) To ensure that the assessments are conducted in accordance with UCO and course regulations;
 - h) To attend all final meeting(s) of the Board of Examiners at which decisions on progression and awards are made and to ensure that the decisions accord with the UCO's regulations and normal practice in higher education;

- i) To ensure that decisions regarding the award of grades / marks / awards are collectively made by relevant Boards of Examiners only.
- j) To participate in reviews of decisions about individual students' awards taken during their period of office;
- k) To report to the UCO on the effectiveness of the assessments and any lessons to be drawn from them;
- l) To report in writing immediately to the Principal of the UCO on any matters of serious concern arising from the assessments which put at risk the standard of the award;
- m) To submit an annual report, normally by the 31st July each year for undergraduate courses and by the 30th November for postgraduate courses (for courses that do not operate on an annual basis or on a normal academic year these dates may be modified to accommodate the nature of the provision);
- n) To submit a written confidential report to the Principal, separate from the annual report, where it is necessary, for example to name a member of staff;
- o) Where an external examiner has a serious concern relating to systemic failings with the academic standards of a programme or programmes and has exhausted all published applicable internal procedures, including the submission of a confidential report to the Principal, he/she may invoke the QAA's concerns scheme¹ and/or inform the relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body.

11.9 RESOLVING DISAGREEMENTS REGARDING MARKS AWARDED

- 11.9.1 If an External Examiner disagrees with the marks awarded by internal markers within a mark sample they may request that the UCO undertakes an additional level of moderation or re-marking. However, this must apply to all students who have completed the assessment in question, not just those within the work sample.
- 11.9.2 The UCO does not allow External Examiners to change the mark of an individual student's work from the sample.
- 11.9.3 Disagreements between internal markers are expected to have been resolved before the marked work is provided to and scrutinised by an External Examiner (e.g. through the use of additional internal markers). However, in exceptional circumstances where a mark has not been agreed internally the views of the external examiner can be taken into account when agreeing the final mark.
- 11.9.4 Should the UCO decide not to take any action recommended by the External Examiner, the UCO shall inform the External Examiner accordingly.

11.10 EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORTING PROCESS

a) EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORTS

- 11.10.1 External Examiners are required to provide an annual report to the UCO using the UCO's External Examiner Annual Report Form¹⁰ which specifies the areas on which the UCO welcomes comments and includes a checklist that External Examiners are required to

¹ For information about how the concerns scheme applies to external examining, reference should be made to the QAA's *Concerns Scheme: Guidance for External Examiners*. Recourse to the scheme will only take place in cases where internal mechanisms for following up concerns have been exhausted. The scheme's focus is explicitly on systemic failings in an institution's management of standards or quality. Therefore, the scheme cannot be used for one-off cases of ineffective practice, or to raise a personal grievance or issues relating to an External Examiner's appointment.

- complete to enable the UCO to determine that they have based their report on sufficient evidence.
- 11.10.2 External Examiners' annual reports provide important evidence about the standards prevailing in the UCO and are used by Course Teams as part of the basis for their annual monitoring.
- 11.10.3 At the end of their appointment External Examiners will be required to provide a summative report of the period of the appointment¹¹.
- 11.10.4 External Examiners' reports should be sent to the Principal after which payment of the fee will be made.
- 11.10.5 All reports of External Examiners should be submitted to the Principal electronically from the preferred email identified in External Examiners' contracts. The Principal will then forward the reports on to the Academic Registrar.
- 11.10.6 External Examiner Annual Reports will then normally be disseminated by the UCO's Academic Registrar to the Vice-Principal (Education), Head of Quality, Heads of Areas and Course Leaders for onward dissemination to students and relevant staff as appropriate.
- 11.10.7 Course Leaders are required to provide a written response to External Examiners' reports¹² accompanied by a formal letter sent to the External Examiner thanking them for their work that year.
- 11.10.8 The deadline for providing External Examiners a written response to their report is 30th September for undergraduate courses and the 17th December for postgraduate courses.
- 11.10.9 The Vice-Principal (Education) should review and approve External Examiner responses and formal letters before they are sent to External Examiners.
- 11.10.10 The Head of Quality is responsible for sending approved External Examiner responses and formal letters to External Examiners.
- 11.10.11 External Examiners' reports and responses are considered at relevant Course Team meetings in the presence of Student Representatives. They are also considered at relevant Portfolio Boards and at UCO committees where Student Representatives are present, including the Education Enhancement & Strategy Committee and the Academic Council.
- 11.10.12 External Examiners' reports are also read centrally at the UCO by the Vice-Principal (Education) who prepares a summary report for the UCO's Academic Council. Any issues requiring attention are identified and appropriate action proposed. Good practice identified by External Examiners is highlighted and disseminated for wider consideration and adoption as appropriate.
- 11.10.13 External Examiner reports and responses to those reports are made available in full to students through the UCO's Virtual Learning Environment (BONE).
- 11.10.14 External Examiner reports may be amended in consultation with the External Examiner where individuals are identified or in very exceptional cases where the content may cause harm to the UCO or bring it into disrepute.
- 11.10.15 Should External Examiner's need to report any confidential matter / concern to the UCO, they should do so by providing a separate report / writing directly to the Principal.

b) RESPONDING TO EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORTS

- 11.10.16 The role of External Examiners is fundamental in assuring academic standards by providing an external perspective on student performance and on the conduct of the assessment process at the UCO in addition to providing comments on and recommendations for developing and enhancing assessment processes.

- 11.10.17 It is the responsibility of the Course Leader in consultation with Heads of Area and Unit Leaders to carefully consider reports of External Examiners, to review their comments and recommendations and to formulate appropriate action plans in response.
- 11.10.18 Responses to External Examiner reports are written using the External Examiner Response Form¹³. These forms record actions to be taken as recommended by the External Examiner and the action planned / taken in response to the recommendations in addition to recording the External Examiners' comments identifying areas of good practice.
- 11.10.19 It is the responsibility of the Course Leader, Heads of Area and Unit Leaders to complete the External Examiner Report Response Form, to ensure that responsibility is allocated to each action and to disseminate the areas of good practice for wider consideration and adoption as appropriate.
- 11.10.20 The completed External Examiner Annual Response Form template and formal letter are considered by relevant UCO committees for comment and agreement. These include Course Teams, Portfolio Boards and the Education Enhancement & Strategy Committee.
- 11.10.21 The UCO's Academic Council considers a summary report of External Examiners' annual reports and UCO responses.
- 11.10.22 It is the responsibility of Course and Unit Leaders to consider and review relevant External Examiner reports and responses and to incorporate these into Course and Unit Annual Monitoring reports (see AQF Section 5: Annual Monitoring & Reporting) as appropriate, recording areas of good practice and producing an action plan for the next academic year specific to their unit in response to recommendations identified by the External Examiner.
- 11.10.23 Course and Unit Annual Monitoring reports are reviewed by Course Teams in the presence of Student Representatives as part of the UCO's Annual Monitoring and Reporting requirements and processes (see AQF Section 5: Annual Monitoring & Reporting).

c) MONITORING ACTION PLANS GENERATED IN RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL EXAMINERS REPORTS

- 11.10.24 It is important to regularly monitor action plans generated by Course Teams in response to External Examiner reports to verify that appropriate action is being taken in a timely manner to assure the enhancement of quality and academic standards relating to assessment processes at the UCO.
- 11.10.25 Course Teams hold mid-point review meetings part way through the academic year to review each unit's and course's Annual Monitoring Report action plan and to ensure that the resources required and deadlines for actions are on track to be reasonably achieved.

d) PUBLICATION OF EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORTS & RESPONSES TO STUDENTS

- 11.10.26 External Examiner annual reports and Course Teams' responses to these are normally published in full to students through the Virtual Learning Environment for their information in addition to a brief overview of External Examining and reference to this section of the Academic Quality Framework.
- 11.10.27 See also Appendix 2.

11.11 THE EXTERNAL EXAMINER TEAM

- 11.11.1 The External Examiner team should complement each other in terms of expertise and experience appropriate to the course assessed.
- 11.11.2 There should also be an appropriate balance between academic and professional practitioners within the External Examining team, which should reflect the range of academic / vocational perspectives required for the course.
- 11.11.3 The phasing of appointments to the team should be structured to ensure continuity.

11.12 SUPPORT FOR NEW EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

- 11.12.1 In circumstances where an appointee is new to the role of external examining they must be supported in their role by an experienced External Examiner within the team covering the same broad curriculum or, where this is not practicable, by an experienced External Examiner in another field of study.
- 11.12.2 A training day for all External Examiners is arranged annually by the UCO providing an opportunity to brief new examiners about their role and to keep existing External Examiners briefed about developments at the UCO.
- 11.12.3 All External Examiners have access to the UCO's intranet where they can find general UCO information, specific briefings, updates and forms to assist with their role¹⁴.
- 11.12.4 External Examiners receive information and any support required from the UCO's Academic Registrar through the induction process and thereafter for the duration of their tenure.

11.13 PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS BY EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

- 11.13.1 If an External Examiner has cause to complain about any matter relating to the contract, payment, or the conduct of UCO employees, the complaint should be addressed to the UCO's Principal in a letter separate from the External Examiner's report.
- 11.13.2 As a general principle, an attempt should be made to resolve the complaint through dialogue before entering a formal phase.
- 11.13.3 The UCO's Head of Quality will normally investigate any formal complaint raised by an External Examiner and report the outcome of the investigation to the Principal.
- 11.13.4 If the Head of Quality cannot resolve the complaint to the External Examiner's satisfaction, then case notes will be sent to the Vice-Principal (Education) who will act to resolve the complaint.
- 11.13.5 If the complaint involves the Head of Quality it will be investigated by the Academic Registrar and the resolution will be reported to the Principal.

11.14 EXTERNAL EXAMINING RESPONSIBILITIES

a) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXTERNAL EXAMINER

- 11.14.1 To exercise the right to see all examination scripts and samples of coursework, theses, projects etc.
- 11.14.2 To attend all final Boards of Examiner meetings except in exceptional circumstances.
- 11.14.3 To endorse the outcome of the assessment process by signing the final results lists.

- 11.14.4 To offer comments and advice as appropriate.
- 11.14.5 To submit a written report annually to the Principal using the External Examiner Annual Report Form.
- 11.14.6 To exercise the right to submit a written confidential report to the Principal, separate from the annual report, where it is necessary, for example to name a member of staff.
- 11.14.7 To refer any direct contact from students to the UCO immediately by contacting Academic Registrar.

b) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UCO'S VICE-PRINCIPAL (EDUCATION)

- 11.14.8 To ensure that External Examiner nominations are considered by the Education Enhancement & Strategy Committee and approved by the Academic Council.
- 11.14.9 To ensure that the annual External Examiners' training day is provided.
- 11.14.10 To ensure that the decisions of the Academic Council are executed and the External Examiners are provided with the detail of their duties.
- 11.14.11 To ensure appropriate action is taken in response to comments of the External Examiner(s).
- 11.14.12 To prepare synoptic summaries of External Examiners' comments for consideration by the Academic Council (in the presence of student representatives).

c) RESPONSIBILITIES OF COURSE LEADERS

- 11.14.13 To complete and provide the required nomination form for the appointment of a prospective External Examiner for the UCO's Education Enhancement & Strategy Committee and Academic Council to consider and approve.
- 11.14.14 To contribute to the organisation of the UCO's External Examiner training day together with the Academic Registrar and Vice-Principal (Education);
- 11.14.15 To provide a written response to the External Examiner's Annual Report using the External Examiner Report Response Form in consultation with Heads of Area and Unit Leaders;
- 11.14.16 To ensure that External Examiners' Annual Reports are considered by Course Teams (in the presence of Student Representatives).
- 11.14.17 To respond to the External Examiner's Annual Report via a formal letter;
- 11.14.18 To forward the response to the External Examiner's Annual Report to the Academic Registrar;
- 11.14.19 To review and consider External Examiner Annual Reports with Heads of Areas when completing Unit and Course Annual Monitoring Reports and to ensure that these are considered by all stakeholders prior to their submission;
- 11.14.20 To ensure that Unit and Course Annual Monitoring Reports are considered as part of a mid-point review by Course Teams to monitor and update progress on action plans resulting from External Examiner recommendations.

d) RESPONSIBILITIES OF HEADS OF AREAS

- 11.14.21 To complete nomination forms for the appointment of prospective External Examiners in consultation with the Course Leader as appropriate.

- 11.14.22 To review and consider External Examiner Annual Reports with the Course Leader when completing Unit and Course Annual Monitoring Report Forms and to ensure that these are considered by all stakeholders prior to its submission.
- 11.14.23 To assist the Course Leader with drafting the response to the External Examiner's Annual Report.

e) RESPONSIBILITIES OF UNIT LEADERS

- 11.14.24 To contribute to the response to External Examiner's Annual Reports.
- 11.14.25 To review and consider the External Examiner Annual Reports and responses when completing Unit Annual Monitoring Reports as part of the UCO's Annual Reporting and Monitoring processes and to formulate action plans in response to External Examiner recommendations as appropriate.
- 11.14.26 To provide an update on Unit Annual Monitoring Report action plans at mid-point review Course Team meetings to monitor their progress.

f) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UCO'S ACADEMIC REGISTRAR

- 11.14.27 To be the primary contact for External Examiners.
- 11.14.28 To be the correspondent between the UCO and an External Examiner on contractual matters.
- 11.14.29 To send out the generic induction pack.
- 11.14.30 To send a new External Examiner a copy of the report of the retiring External Examiner.
- 11.14.31 To make travel arrangements as requested by visiting External Examiners.
- 11.14.32 To arrange for payment of External Examiner expenses and examining fees.
- 11.14.33 To send out copies of External Examiners' reports to Heads of Areas, Course Leaders, the Vice-Principal (Education), Head of Quality and the Course Leaders.
- 11.14.34 To provide the External Examiner with up-to-date information about the course and associated course regulations, together with a schedule of assessments and of the main dates when examiners are expected to consider students' work; draft assessment tasks and copies of all examination papers together with details of assessment criteria.
- 11.14.35 To organise the UCO's annual External Examiner training day with the Course Leaders and Vice Principal (Education).
- 11.14.36 To send to the External Examiner samples of students' work, graded and annotated by internal examiners as appropriate, together with full results sheets which demonstrate how the sample of scripts relates to the population from which they have been selected.
- 11.14.37 To provide for the Board of Examiners statistical material on the performance of the students under consideration in consultation with Unit Leaders.
- 11.14.38 To provide the External Examiner the internal examiners' agreed results for each student in every unit and the profile of results for each student under consideration.
- 11.14.39 To support the Vice Principal (Education) in discharging their responsibilities.
- 11.14.40 To ensure that a meeting between students and External Examiners takes place as appropriate.

g) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UCO'S HEAD OF QUALITY

- 11.14.41 To produce and maintain External Examiner contracts of appointment.

- 11.14.42 To maintain a register of External Examiners and regularly review this to ensure that External Examiner details and tenures are kept up to date.
- 11.14.43 To investigate any formal complaint raised by an External Examiner and report the outcome of the investigation to the Principal.

h) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UCO'S PRINCIPAL

- 11.14.44 To receive External Examiners' Annual Reports and to forward these to the Academic Registrar for dissemination as appropriate.

APPENDIX 1: EXTERNAL EXAMINER APPROVAL OF APPOINTMENT CHECKLIST

In order to ensure that proposed External Examiners fulfil the stated appointment criteria, the following checklist may be used by individuals and committees involved in their nomination and appointment:

| Appointment Criteria | Criteria Met | | How |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----|
| a) Person Specification “Yes” indicates that the appointment criteria have been met. | | | |
| Sufficient knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality, including their range and scope of experience and understanding of quality and standards in other higher education institutions. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Sufficient competence and experience in the fields covered by the course of study, or parts thereof, including their experience of teaching and examining students following courses which lead to the level of award for which they are being considered as External Examiners. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience as appropriate; experience and qualifications which should be at least at the same level as the course they are examining, and preferably above that level. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Sufficient competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| 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, i.e. their recognition within the relevant discipline and / or profession as appropriate. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |

| | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Sufficient familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Sufficient fluency in English, and where courses are delivered and assessed in languages other than English, fluency in the relevant language(s) (unless other secure arrangements are in place to ensure that External Examiners are provided with the information to make their judgements). | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Sufficiently meets applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Sufficient awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Sufficient competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Their present post and their expertise in the relevant subject area, including current evidence of scholarship / research / consultancy is related to the awards to be externally examined. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| They are independent from the UCO and the relevant Course Team/s. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| b) Conflicts of Interest “No” indicates that the appointment criteria have been met. | | | |
| Has the proposed examiner been within the last five years a member of staff, a governor, an External Examiner or a student of the UCO or one of its partners, delivery organisations or support providers? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Has the proposed examiner been within the last five years closely associated with any member of the Course Team? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Does the proposed examiner have a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |

| | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| staff or student involved with the course of study? | | | |
| Is the proposed examiner required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the course of study? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Will the proposed examiner, or do they know that they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the course of study? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Has the proposed examiner been 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 course(s) or units in question? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Is the proposed examiner involved in a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate courses at another higher education provider? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Is the proposed examiner from the same department and institution as the retiring External Examiner? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Is the proposed examiner from the same department or higher education provider as an existing External Examiner? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Is the proposed examiner from a department in an institution where a member of the UCO is serving as an External Examiner? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Is the proposed examiner from an institution which has been the source of External Examiners for the same or a closely related programme in the recent past (normally five years)? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Is the proposed examiner from the same place of employment as an existing External Examiner who is already on the relevant Board of Examiners? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Does the proposed examiner already hold two other external examiner appointments for taught courses / units? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |

| | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| <p>Does the proposed examiner expect to concurrently act as a consultant to the relevant Course Team on course design, or be members of a panel established to review the course they examine?</p> | <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> | <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> | |
| <p>Is the proposed examiner personally associated with the sponsorship of students on the course?</p> | <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> | <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> | |
| <p>Is the proposed examiner in a position to influence significantly the future employment of students on the course?</p> | <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> | <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> | |
| <p>Is the proposed examiner likely to be involved with placements of students on the course or with their training at the UCO?</p> | <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> | <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> | |

APPENDIX 2: EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORTING PROCESS CHECKLIST

The following checklist may be used to ensure that the External Examiner annual reporting process is undertaken by the appropriate staff and within the timelines outlined in this section of the AQF:

| Item | Responsibility | Deadline | Completed | |
|---|---|---------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | | | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Organisation of External Examiner Induction Day | Academic Registrar | January | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Circulation of External Examiner Annual Report Forms to External Examiners with submission deadlines. | Head of Quality | September | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Submission of External Examiner Annual Reports to the Head of Quality by the submission deadline. | External Examiners | July (Undergraduate) | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | November (Postgraduate) | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Circulation of completed External Examiner Reports to Course Leaders with External Examiner Response Forms with submission deadlines. | Head of Quality | July (Undergraduate) | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | November (Undergraduate) | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Completion of External Examiner Response Forms and Formal Letters. | Course Leaders in consultation with Heads of Areas and Unit Leaders | September (Undergraduate) | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | January (Postgraduate) | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Agreement of External Examiner Responses and Formal Letters. | Education Enhancement & Strategy Committee | November (Undergraduate) | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | February (Postgraduate) | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Posting of Formal Letters and External Examiner Responses to External Examiners. | Head of Quality | November (Undergraduate) | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | February (Postgraduate) | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

AQF11 FORMS & TEMPLATES

| Form / Template Reference Number | Form / Template Title |
|----------------------------------|---|
| AQF11_01 | External Examiner Nomination Form |
| AQF11_02 | External Examiner Contact Details & Duties Form |
| AQF11_03 | External Examiner Reallocation / Extension of Duties Form |
| AQF11_04 | External Examiner Annual Report Form |
| AQF11_05 | External Examiner Annual Report Response Form |
| AQF11_06 | External Examiner Handbook |

AQF11: ENDNOTES

¹ <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-a>

² <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-b>

³ AQF11_01_External_Examiner_Nomination_Form

⁴ AQF11_02_External_Examiner_Contact_Details_Duties_Form

⁵ AQF11_03_External_Examiner_Reallocation_Extension_Duties_Form

⁶ AQF11_04_External_Examiner_Annual_Report_Form

⁷ AQF11_05_External_Examiner_Annual_Report_Response_Form

⁸ AQF11_06_External_Examiners_Handbook

⁹ AQF11_06_External_Examiners_Handbook

¹⁰ AQF11_04_External_Examiner_Annual_Report_Form

¹¹ AQF11_04_External_Examiner_Annual_Report_Form (Section 5)

¹² AQF11_05_External_Examiner_Annual_Report_Response_Form

¹³ AQF11_05_External_Examiner_Annual_Report_Response_Form

¹⁴ <http://intranet.uco.ac.uk/>