

## Regulation 8

# Regulation on External Examiners for Award-bearing Taught Programmes

**2023-24**

### Updates for 2023-24:

- a. Removal of reference to External Examiner and External Experts Sub-committee throughout
- b. Update reference to QAA to Office for Students where relevant throughout
- c. University structure (names of posts) and formatting updates

### Table of Contents

1. Appointment of External Examiners .....	2
2. Duties of External Examiners for modules.....	5
3. Duties of External Examiners for programmes of study.....	8
4. Confidential reports and Office for Students Notification Scheme .....	9

## 1. Appointment of External Examiners

- 1.1. There shall be at least one External Examiner for each taught module on an award-bearing programme at all Levels (3-8).
- 1.2. There shall be at least one External Examiner for each named award of the University, irrespective of the academic level of the award, including Partnership Provision.
- 1.3. An External Examiner for a programme of study shall also be an External Examiner for a reasonable proportion of the modules which comprise that programme of study.
- 1.4. An External Examiner for a module may not necessarily be a member of every Board of Examiners for a programme of study in which that module may be taken.
- 1.5. External Examiners are nominated in the first instance by the Faculty concerned. Successful appointments are reported to the appropriate Faculty Board.
- 1.6. The University will appoint external examiners who can demonstrate evidence of the following:
  - 1.6.1. Knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality
  - 1.6.2. Competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study or parts thereof
  - 1.6.3. Relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate
  - 1.6.4. Competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures
  - 1.6.5. 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
  - 1.6.6. Familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is being assessed
  - 1.6.7. Meeting applicable criteria set out by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies
  - 1.6.8. Awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula
  - 1.6.9. Competence and experience in the enhancement of the student learning experience.

- 1.7. Where a nominee has not previously served as an External Examiner the appointment should be made, wherever practical, to a team of External Examiners with agreement that a more experienced External Examiner will act as a mentor.
- 1.8. In those cases where an application does not demonstrate evidence of the candidate meeting all the criteria, the Faculty/Department may make an exceptional case to the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience) for the appointment to be approved.
- 1.9. The following criteria will ensure that all potential conflicts of interest are identified and resolved prior to appointment or as soon as they arise. The University will not normally appoint as its external examiners anyone in the following categories or circumstances:
  - 1.9.1. Member of a governing body or committee of the University or one of its collaborative partners, or a current employee of the University or one of its collaborative partners
  - 1.9.2. Anyone working for the University as a current External Expert for the validation and review of the programmes to be examined
  - 1.9.3. Anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme of study
  - 1.9.4. Anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study
  - 1.9.5. Anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study
  - 1.9.6. Anyone 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
  - 1.9.7. Former staff or students of the institution unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the external examiner have completed their programme(s)
  - 1.9.8. A reciprocal arrangement involving related programmes at another institution
  - 1.9.9. The succession of an external examiner from an institution by a colleague from the same department in the same institution
  - 1.9.10. The concurrent appointment of more than one external examiner from the same department of the same institution examining within the same Department at the University of Bradford
  - 1.9.11. Deemed to have other conflict of interest in relation to commercial sensitivity.

- 1.10. It is the responsibility of the External Examiner to inform the University of any Change in circumstances since their appointment which might compromise that appointment.
- 1.11. External Examiners should normally hold no more than two external examiner appointments for taught programmes/modules at any point in time, including the University of Bradford appointment.
- 1.12. The period of appointment of an External Examiner for a module and/or a programme of study shall be four years, with the exceptional possibility of an extension for one further year.
- 1.13. A second period of appointment for an External Examiner shall be permissible, in exceptional circumstances, provided that a minimum of five years has elapsed between the two periods of appointment.
- 1.14. An External Examiner shall not undertake more than two periods of office, except where in the view of the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience) there exist exceptional circumstances.
- 1.15. The early termination of an External Examiner's appointment will be based on the following criteria:
  - 1.15.1. Failure to attend Assessment Committee and Board of Examiners meetings without making alternative arrangements
  - 1.15.2. Failure to submit reports, or the provision of incomplete reports
  - 1.15.3. Failure to fulfil the role of External Examiner in contributing to the University's management of academic standards and quality
  - 1.15.4. Failure to declare a conflict of interest
  - 1.15.5. Failure to maintain professional body membership or registration where this is a requirement to examine the programme
  - 1.15.6. on programmes with a professional element, disbarment from being able to practise.
- 1.16. The decision to terminate prematurely an appointment must be made by the appropriate Faculty Board.
- 1.17. If a conflict of interest arises during the External Examiner's appointment period which cannot be satisfactorily resolved by either party it is in the best interest of the University for the External Examiner to resign his/her appointment with immediate effect.

## **2. Duties of External Examiners for modules**

- 2.1. An External Examiner for a module shall be responsible, jointly with the Dean of the Faculty which provides the module, for assuring the standard of the assessment and the quality assurance and enhancement of that module, including Partnership Provision.
- 2.2. An External Examiner for a module shall be a member of the Assessment Committee which considers the assessments relating to that module.
- 2.3. An External Examiner for a module shall, moderate and approve examination papers and all other assessment exercises, procedures and practices in relation to that module, including supplementary tasks.
- 2.4. Faculties will send to External Examiners the following information:
  - 2.4.1. module/programme handbooks, information and reading lists
  - 2.4.2. marking schemes and grading criteria
  - 2.4.3. indicative answers, where used
  - 2.4.4. assessment guidelines provided to students
  - 2.4.5. a separate mark sheet for each programme module (not a draft of the collated sheet that will be presented to the Board of Examiners)
  - 2.4.6. the comments of internal examiners on the individual scripts and on the overall performance of students in the assessment component
  - 2.4.7. module evaluation form
  - 2.4.8. information on relevant professional issues and features which relate to specific disciplines, as appropriate
  - 2.4.9. Dates of Board of Examiner and other relevant meetings. These should be negotiated with the External Examiner.
- 2.5. External Examiners are not normally responsible for or involved in the assessment of individual students and should not routinely carry out marking of assessed work.

- 2.6. It is not normal practice for an External Examiner to see all student scripts therefore a sample of student scripts should be sent to the External Examiner for review. A representative sample should be made available to review, at the first attempt for that cohort of students, plus any supplementary samples where the task is different from the original. The sample should be of sufficient size to enable the External Examiner to form a view as to whether the internal marking has properly assessed student performance against the appropriate standards. The sample sent should comprise a minimum 10% (or a minimum of 10 scripts) and would typically include examples from the top, middle and bottom range of marks, also including borderline cases and fails.
- 2.7. All scripts and other pieces of work submitted for formal assessment for a module, however, shall be available to an External Examiner to review, if requested.
- 2.8. If an External Examiner, having reviewed only a sample of scripts, wishes to recommend that the marks assigned to an individual student for a particular assessment be amended, this may be done in one of three ways:
- 2.8.1. By referring the matter for re-consideration by Internal Examiners who have reviewed all the work for the module concerned. It is important that any changes are made with the concurrence of those internal examiners who have seen all the work.
  - 2.8.2. By recommending the scaling by an appropriate factor of all the marks for that assessment, again with the concurrence of those internal examiners who have seen all the work.
  - 2.8.3. By reviewing all the scripts himself/herself and with the concurrence of those internal examiners who have seen all the work.
- 2.9. An External Examiner for a module shall consider the standard of marking of that module and, having consulted with the Internal Examiners concerned, may propose such revisions of the marking as they may consider necessary, in accordance with the provisions of the Assessment Regulations.
- 2.10. If an external examiner is not able to attend a meeting of the Assessment Committee they must be notified of the outcomes “after the fact” and be invited to endorse the decision/results. Subject to 2.10.1 below, all decisions taken by the Assessment Committee remain provisional until confirmed/endorsed by the appropriate External Examiner(s).
- 2.10.1. If it is not possible to secure endorsement from an External Examiner in time to pass the results to the relevant Board(s) of Examiners, the Chair shall ratify the decisions and notify the External Examiner(s) accordingly.

- 2.10.2. No specific approval needs to be sought if an External Examiner is not able to attend a meeting of an Assessment Committee. However, where no External Examiner is in attendance, the Head of Academic Quality and Portfolio Management must be notified in advance of the commencement of the meeting.
- 2.10.3. External Examiners are not required to attend an Assessment Committee where solely Supplementary Assessment is being considered.
- 2.11. Should there be a fundamental difference of opinion between the Internal Examiners and the External Examiner(s) for a particular module, this shall be considered as set out under the provisions of Appendix 1 Section 5 of the Assessment Regulations.
- 2.12. If an external examiner is not able to attend a meeting of the Board of Examiners either in person or virtually (through, for example MS Teams, or other telephone or video conferencing platforms), the Chair must obtain the approval of the Vice-Chancellor (or nominated delegate) in advance of the Board of Examiners to take place. This should be recorded in the minutes.
- 2.12.1. If the External Examiner(s) is not able to attend the meeting of the Board of Examiners, they must be notified of the outcomes “after the fact” and be invited to endorse the decision/results. All decisions taken by a Board of Examiners remain provisional until confirmed/endorsed by the appropriate External Examiner(s), subject to 2.12.2:
- 2.12.2. If it is not possible to secure endorsement from an External Examiner before the stated date by which students shall be notified of results, the Chair shall ratify the decisions and notify the External Examiner(s) accordingly. This must be recorded in the minutes as a secretary note and the Vice-Chancellor notified.
- 2.13. An External Examiner shall submit to the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Quality Enhancement) for consideration by the relevant Faculty Board(s) and the Senate, an annual report on the module(s) for which the External Examiner has responsibility.

### **3. Duties of External Examiners for programmes of study**

- 3.1. An External Examiner for a programme of study shall be responsible, in conjunction with the Dean of the Faculty responsible for the administration of that programme of study, for the standards for progression and for the awards of the University on that programme of study, including Partnership Provision. The External Examiner plays a key role in the assurance and maintenance of academic standards and enhancement of quality.
- 3.2. An External Examiner for a programme of study shall, jointly with the Chairperson of the Board of Examiners, moderate and approve all assessment procedures and practices relating to the programme of study overall.
- 3.3. An External Examiner would be expected to be conversant with the institutional regulations and to comment on the extent of their correct application but would not normally be expected to comment on the institutional regulations themselves.
- 3.4. An External Examiner for a programme of study is a member of each Board of Examiners for that programme of study which considers assessment results relating to the awards of the University.
- 3.5. For Undergraduate Boards of Examiners, an External Examiner for a programme of study is required to attend meetings of the Board of Examiners which are considering for the first time for that cohort of students progression and award, including those held to consider Partnership Provision.
- 3.6. For Taught Postgraduate Boards of Examiners, the attendance of the External Examiner for a programme of study is required for any Board considering awards for the first time for a cohort of students, including those held to consider Partnership Provision.
- 3.7. In order to fulfil the requirements of the role and discharge their responsibilities effectively, it is critical that an External Examiner attends to contribute fully to discussion on student progression and achievement and academic standards.
- 3.8. Should there be a fundamental difference of opinion between the Internal Examiners and the External Examiner(s) this shall be considered as set out under the provisions of Appendix 1 Section 5 of the Assessment Regulations.
- 3.9. An External Examiner shall submit to the Vice-Chancellor (or nominated delegate), for consideration by the relevant Faculty Board(s) and the Senate, an annual report on the programme of study concerned.



## **4. Confidential reports and Office for Students Notification Scheme**

- 4.1. In addition to the arrangements for reporting and feedback, an External Examiner may also submit a separate, confidential, report to the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience) matters of particular sensitivity. This may be, for example, if the external examiner finds it necessary to name a member of staff and/or has serious concerns about academic standards.
- 4.2. The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience) should arrange to inform the Faculty/Department concerned of any confidential report that has been submitted by an External Examiner so that they are aware of the situation.
- 4.3. Should it be deemed necessary for the External Examiner to submit a confidential report to the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience) the staff and/or student representatives must be informed of any implications arising from the confidential report and/or any actions where these have implications for them.
- 4.4. The University will provide a considered response to the External Examiner about the serious concerns raised in the confidential report and outlining the proposed action to be taken to address the issues as appropriate.
- 4.5. The University will make it clear to its External Examiners that any recourse to the Office for Students Notification Scheme they may wish to invoke should only take place in cases where all our University internal mechanisms for following up concerns, including a confidential report to the Pro-Vice Chancellor have been exhausted.