

Recommended Amendments to Code of Practice for the External Examining System of Awards – October 2014 LTC

1 In order to clarify the role of FLTQCs in the approval of External Examiners appointments:

Replace:

2.2 Boards of Schools of Studies recommend to Senate (via the Learning and Teaching Committee) the appointment of Boards of Examiners, including external examiners.

With:

2.2 Boards of Schools of Studies recommend to Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee the appointment of Boards of Examiners, including external examiners. The Learning and Teaching Service, on behalf of Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committees, recommend to Senate, via the Learning and Teaching Committee the appointment and membership of the Boards of Examiners.

2 To comply with the 2014-17 BIM Regulations 7.3.4 (b):

Replace:

4.4.5 (i) Where the mark has not yet been confirmed by a Module Assessment Board the comments of the external examiner shall be drawn to the attention of the internal markers. Where there is a significant difference between the mark given by the internal marker(s) and the view of the external examiner, it may be appropriate to review the marks of all students for the module or item in question and to make appropriate amendments. The individual mark cannot be changed unless the external examiner has reviewed the work and marks of all students taking the module or item in question. Alternatively, the views of the external examiner will be noted and taken into consideration where the mark concerns a borderline candidate.

With:

4.4.5(i) Where the mark has not yet been confirmed by a Module Assessment Board the comments of the external examiner shall be drawn to the attention of the internal markers. Where there is a significant difference between the mark given by the internal marker(s) and the view of the external examiner, it may be appropriate to review the marks of all students for the module or item in question and to make appropriate amendments. Individual marks cannot be changed but the views of the external examiner will be noted and taken into consideration where the mark concerns a borderline candidate.

3 In order to comply with Chapter B7:

Replace:

- (a) only persons of seniority and experience who are able to command authority in their subject and/or professional area(s) will be appointed;

- (b) in order to have sufficient time for the proper performance of their functions, individuals will normally be expected not to act as an external examiner at more than two institutions at any one time (excluding research degrees);
- (c) an external examiner will not be appointed from a department in a university where a member of the inviting UEA department is serving as an examiner.
- (d) A Board of Examiners may not include two external examiners from the same institution, nor will an external examiner be appointed from the same institution as the previous external examiner for the same course(s). Exceptions may, however, occasionally be unavoidable in the case of subjects or specialisms taught in only a very small number of institutions;
- (e) former members of UEA staff or former UEA students will not be invited to become external examiners before a lapse of at least three years or sufficient time for students taught by that member of staff or for students who were registered at the same time as the former student to have left the University, whichever is the longer;
- (f) An external examiner may hold a simultaneous appointment in respect of undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes.
- (g) An external examiner shall not be appointed sequentially in respect of undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes where the total period of appointment would exceed four years. Therefore, it is not permissible for an external examiner to be appointed for four years in respect of an undergraduate programme and then be reappointed to a taught postgraduate Board for a further period.
- (h) external examiners will not normally be invited to examine again at either undergraduate or taught postgraduate level immediately following a period of appointment as an external examiner in the same or similar subject area at undergraduate or taught postgraduate level. Former external examiners may not be reappointed before a lapse of at least three years;
- (i) retired academics will not normally be appointed, particularly if the retirement took place more than three years previously. If it is proposed to nominate a retired academic, evidence must be submitted that the nominee has kept up not only with the subject of study but also with University standards, for example by examining elsewhere, regular undergraduate/postgraduate teaching etc.
- (j) Suitably qualified external examiners from outside the university system, for example from industry or the professions, may be appropriate in certain circumstances.

With (wording taken largely from B7):

2.9 On behalf of Senate, and the Learning and Teaching Committee, the designated officer shall scrutinise the recommendations for appointment in order to ensure that the following criteria are met:

- (a) only persons with sufficient standing, creditability and experience within the discipline to command the respect of academic and professional peers, and who can show appropriate competence in the fields covered by the programme of study or parts thereof will be appointed;
- (b) only external examiners who can evidence knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality will be appointed;
- (c) only external examiners who can show evidence that they are familiar with the standard expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed will be appointed;
- (d) only external examiners who can evidence relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined will be appointed;
- (e) External examiners must be able to evidence awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula, including competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks and procedures appropriate to the subject;
- (f) External examiners must be able to show competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience;
- (g) external examiners must have fluency in English;
- (h) External examiners must be able to demonstrate that they are able to meet any criteria applicable by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies;
- (i) in order to have sufficient time for the proper performance of their duties, External Examiners will normally be expected to hold no more than two external examiner appointments for taught programmes/modules at any one time;
- (j) retired academics will not normally be appointed, particularly if the retirement took place more than three years previously. If it is proposed to nominate a retired academic, evidence must be submitted that the nominee has kept up not only with the subject of study but also with University standards, for example by examining elsewhere, regular undergraduate/postgraduate teaching etc.
- (k) External examiners who can evidence extensive practitioner experience from outside the university system, for example from industry or the professions, may be appointed in certain circumstances

2.10 On behalf of Senate, and the Learning and Teaching Committee, the designated officer shall scrutinise the recommendations for appointment in order to ensure that there is no conflict of interest arising from the following:

- (a) An external examiner must not be a member of a governing body or committee or be a current employee of the appointment institution or one of its collaborative partners;
- (b) an external examiner will not be appointed from a department in a university where a member of the inviting UEA department is serving as an examiner, or where this would result in a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another institution;
- (c) A Board of Examiners may not include more than one external examiner from the same department of the same institution, nor will an external examiner be appointed from the same institution as the previous external examiner for the same course(s).

- Exceptions may, however, occasionally be unavoidable in the case of subjects or specialisms taught in only a very small number of institutions;
- (d) External examiners must not share a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme of study they are required to examine, nor must they be required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study
 - (e) External examiners must not be in a position to influence the future of students on the programme of study, or who is or has been involved in recent or current collaborative research activities with any member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme of modules;
 - (f) Former staff or students of the institution will not be appointed as external examiners unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the external examiner have completed their programme;
 - (g) An external examiner may hold a simultaneous appointment in respect of undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes;
 - (h) An external examiner shall not be appointed sequentially in respect of undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes where the total period of appointment would exceed four years. Therefore, it is not permissible for an external examiner to be appointed for four years in respect of an undergraduate programme and then be reappointed to a taught postgraduate Board for a further period;
 - (i) An external examiner may be reappointed only in exceptional circumstances and only after a period of five years or more has elapsed since their last appointment;

Replace:

2.3 External examiners are appointed on an annual basis. An external examiner will normally be appointed in four successive years.

With:

2.3 External examiners are appointed on an annual basis. An external examiner will normally be appointed in four successive years, with an extension of one year to ensure continuity in exceptional circumstances, approved by LTC on behalf of Senate

Add:

5.15 External examiners are invited to raise any matters of a serious or confidential nature that they believe should be addressed to the Vice-Chancellor, by submitting a separate report to the Vice-Chancellor's Office. Such reports will be treated confidentially and an individual response will be provided, outlining any resulting actions.

5.16 Where an external examiner has serious concerns relating to systemic failings with the academic standards of a programme that have not been resolved through the University's published internal procedures or by submission of a confidential report to the Vice-Chancellor, the external examiner may invoke the Quality Assurance Agency's concerns scheme or, where relevant, report concerns to the professional, statutory or regulatory body.

Replace:

- 5.4 In 2006 the Learning and Teaching Committee of Senate agreed that full reports would be considered by **all** members of relevant committees. This means that instead of being confidential and reserved items of business considered only by academic staff, the reports will be seen by all members, including student representatives. The Learning and Teaching Committee took this decision in response to requests from relevant Faculty Committees and students and in the interests of transparency. This approach is also consistent with the recommendations arising from Phase Two of the Review of the Quality Assurance Framework, which asked HEIs to consider sharing external examiners' reports with student representatives. The University therefore requests that in their formal report external examiners **should not refer to any individual students by name or by registration number.**
- 5.5 It is expected that reports will be received within six weeks of the meeting of the Board of Examiners. In any case, in order to allow internal consideration of the reports it is asked that all reports for standard Undergraduate and Integrated Masters degrees (where the Final Board is held in June) are received by 23 August and those for Master's level awards are received by 13 December. Other Schools running non-standard academic years will set different deadlines in line with their academic structure.

With:

- 5.4 External examiner reports are considered by **all** members of relevant committees, including student representatives. External examiners should not refer to individual members of staff or students by name or student number.
- 5.5 External examiners should submit reports within six weeks of the meeting of the Board of Examiners or by the annual deadlines outlined in the report form.

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30.9.14