

EXTERNAL EXAMINING OF TAUGHT PROGRAMMES HANDBOOK

6. Reporting on Academic and/or Professional Standards and the Credibility of Assessment and Awarding

6.1 Completion and Submission of the Annual Report by the External Examiner

- 6.1.1 The External Examiners **must** submit an Annual Report in the prescribed format, via the designated system, by the date specified by Education Policy, Quality and Standards (EPQS). This is usually within four weeks of the main meeting of the Programme/Departmental Assessment, Progression and Awarding Committee (P/DAPAC) covering the programme(s) for which they provide external academic and/or professional assurance. A standard template for the annual report will be provided in a digital format together with associated guidance on its completion and submission.
- 6.1.2 Within their Annual Report, the External Examiner **must** provide specific feedback on the academic and/or professional standards of the module(s) and programme(s) to which they have been allocated, together with assurance of the credibility of assessment and awarding practices and alignment of student outcomes with recognised sector standards.
- 6.1.3 Within their Annual Report, the External Examiner **should** identify best practice in teaching, learning and assessment practices. They should also make recommendations for enhancement of policy, processes and practices utilised on the specific module(s) and programme(s) to which they have been allocated and, where appropriate, those used by the University as a whole.
- 6.1.4 Where an External Examiner is appointed to more than one very closely related programme, such as a parent programme and its variants, with significant overlap of modules, or to more than one very closely related programme with smaller, individual cohorts, they **may** be asked to produce one Annual Report covering all programmes, rather than separate reports for each programme.
- 6.1.5 In the case of integrated Degree Apprenticeship programmes, the External Examiner **may** be required to comment on the aspects of the apprenticeship assessment via a separate report depending on the specific apprenticeship standard and assessment plan. Where an additional report is required, a standard template for this will be

provided in a digital format together with associated guidance on its completion and submission. Otherwise, the External Examiner will comment on these as part of the Annual Report.

- 6.1.6 If the External Examiner identifies concerns of a serious nature in relation to academic and/or professional standards, they **may** send a separate, additional written report or communication to the President and Vice-Chancellor of the University, in their role as Chair and Senior Representative of Senate, marked 'strictly confidential' (see [Contact the Office of the Vice Chancellor](#))
- 6.1.7 The External Examiner's annual fee **will not** be paid by the University until confirmation has been provided by EPQS that they have submitted their Annual Report in the prescribed format, via the designated system. Where the External Examiner is required to complete an additional report for an integrated Degree Apprenticeship programme, additional remuneration will be payable. Expenses incurred in the discharge of their roles and responsibilities, such as when visiting campus or attending in person P/DAPACs will be paid by the University on receipt of their claim, including submission of the associated receipts and other evidence.

6.2 Response to External Examiner Report by Departments

- 6.2.1 Following receipt of the External Examiner's Annual Report, EPQS will notify directly, or via the designated system, the relevant Director of Education and Student Experience (DESE), Programme Director or other nominated member of academic staff closely associated with the taught programme, that the report is available for review. Their response **must be** submitted in the prescribed format, via the designated system within four weeks of receipt of the notification.
- 6.2.1 Following completion of the Departmental response, EPQS will notify directly, or via the designated system, the relevant Faculty Associate Pro Vice Chancellor for Education and Student Experience (APVCE) that the Annual Report and Departmental response is available for their review and approval. The reporting process and/or workflow **will not** be deemed complete until such approval has been received. The following delegations for final approval may also be applied as required:
- Business School – The Associate Dean for Education
 - Medical School – The Dean for Medical Education
 - Degree Apprenticeships – The Dean for Professional Education and Partnerships

- Online Programmes – The Dean of Online and Postgraduate Education

6.2.2 EPQS will notify the External Examiner who submitted the report, either directly or via the designated system, when the reporting process is complete and the responses to their feedback and recommendations are available to review. The External Examiner may access their report directly via the designated system or be provided with a digital copy if required.

6.2.3 External Examiner Annual Reports **should** be shared, by the DESE, Programme Director or other nominated member of academic staff closely associated with the taught programme, with other members of the Programme Team so that the External Examiner's feedback and recommendations may inform programme and module amendments and the enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment practices.

6.2.4 External Examiner Annual Reports **should** be shared, by the DESE, Programme Director or other nominated member of academic staff closely associated with the taught programme, with programme and/or Department-level Student Representatives. This may be through appropriate [Student Voice Partnership](#) activities or other communication channels, or equivalent for students on programmes delivered and assessed by Academic Partners under Validation Agreements. Student Representatives should be provided with an opportunity to discuss and/or comment on the External Examiner Annual Reports.

6.3 Contribution of External Examiner Reports to Quality and Standards Review and Enhancement of Taught Programmes

6.3.2 External Examiner Annual Reports for taught programmes **must** be considered during the University's internal quality review and enhancement processes, as outlined in the [Quality Review and Enhancement Framework](#). These form part of the evidence base considered, ensuring that External Examiner feedback and recommendations are systematically used to support the review and enhancement of the quality and standards of taught provision and associated student experience.

6.3.3 External Examiner Annual Reports **may** also contribute to external quality and standards review and enhancement activities. This may include regulatory, statutory, professional and other independent review processes conducted by external bodies, such as the Office for Students (OfS), Office for Standards in Education, Children's

Services and Skills ((Ofsted) the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), and Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).

6.4 Monitoring of External Examiner Reports by P/DAPACs and EPQS

6.4.2 At the relevant subsequent P/DAPAC, the Chair and members **should** assure themselves that all External Examiner(s) Annual Report(s) have been received for the preceding academic year and responded to. They should also provide an update on progress made in implementing the External Examiner(s) recommendations as necessary.

6.4.3 EPQS **should** monitor directly, or via system management reporting, the progress and outcomes of External Examiner reporting and follow up directly, or via management system notifications, any failures to submit or provide a response. EPQS will provide an annual, thematic report on best practice identified and recommendations made by External Examiners to the University Assessment, Progression and Awarding Committee (UAPAC) and where required to other governance bodies for the purpose of providing assurance of the academic and/or professional standards of the University's taught programmes and awards.

6.4.4 External Examiner Annual Reports **may** be released in response to requests under the [Freedom of Information Act 2000](#). In responding to any such requests, it will be advised that External Examiners are appointed and their Annual Reports made at Programme level rather than Module-level. Unless an External Examiner has referenced a specific module or modules within their Annual Report, only programme-level information will be available and released.