

CODE OF PRACTICE ON THE EXTERNAL EXAMINING OF TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

Effective date: September 2021

This Code of Practice relates to External Examining of taught programmes leading to awards of the University and of taught modules which contribute to awards of the University.

1. The role of an External Examiner

The primary role of an External Examiner is

- to assist the University in ensuring that the standard of its awards is maintained at the appropriate level in accordance with the framework for higher education qualifications and the relevant national subject benchmarks;
- to assist the University in ensuring that its assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the programme(s) and is conducted in accordance with the University's policies and regulations;
- to assist the University in ensuring that the academic standards and achievement of students are comparable with those in other UK higher education institutions of which the External Examiner has experience;
- to assist the University in enhancing the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by advising on good practice identified within the University and beyond.

In addition, External Examiners are normally asked to comment on or contribute to the design of programmes and programme elements which fall within their domain.

2. Programmes requiring External Examiners

The University requires that an External Examiner is appointed for every programme which leads to an award of the University (including franchised or validated programmes). An External Examiner is not required for any provision which is not credit-bearing. The number of External Examiners appointed to a programme should be determined in the light of the range of expertise required and the workload involved.

For each combined or multi-disciplinary programme, the relevant Schools are required to ensure that one or more of the External Examiners consider the overall coherence of the programme.

Credit-bearing modules, including Foundation Year modules, will be assigned to an External Examiner, as determined by the Head of School/Department. Where appropriate, an External Examiner may be appointed to examine modules only, without responsibility for a programme or an award.

Taught modules which contribute to the award of a Postgraduate Research degree are subject to the normal provisions for external examining of taught modules. Where such a module is not associated with a taught programme, an External Examiner must be appointed for the module.

3. PSRB requirements

Heads of School are responsible for ensuring that specific requirements in relation to external examining which may be stipulated by relevant professional, statutory or regulatory bodies (PSRBs) are satisfied. (For example, PSRBs may variously require that they be consulted on the nomination of External Examiners, be informed of the appointment of External Examiners, or receive copies of External Examiners' Reports).

4. Period of appointment

External Examiners will normally be appointed for a period of four years, which is the normal maximum tenure for the role.

Exceptionally, an External Examiner may be re-appointed for a further year where there is shown to be good reason, for example, to provide continuity where a programme is being withdrawn. The relevant School Management Board, in consultation with the relevant Boards of Studies and Student Experience, should write a case explaining the rationale for an extension of the period of tenure for consideration by the University Board for Teaching, Learning and Student Experience (UBTLSE).

External Examiners are required to give three months' notice of their resignation from the role.

5. Criteria for appointment of External Examiners

The University applies the following criteria for the appointment of External Examiners, which are derived from the national set of criteria. In accordance with the criteria for appointment:

Person specification

- (a) External Examiners should normally be able to show evidence of the following:
- (i) knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality;
 - (ii) competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study or parts thereof;
 - (iii) relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate;
 - (iv) competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures;
 - (v) 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;
 - (vi) familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award which is to be assessed;
 - (vii) fluency in English, and, where programmes 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);
 - (viii) meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies;
 - (ix) awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula;
 - (x) competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

Conflicts of interest

- (b) The University does not appoint as an External Examiner anyone in the following categories or circumstances:

- (i) a member of a governing body or committee of the University, or a current employee of the University;
- (ii) a member of a governing body of a collaborative partner, or a current employee of a collaborative partner who has responsibility in the same (or a closely cognate) disciplinary area as the collaborative arrangement;
- (iii) anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme of study;
- (iv) anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study;
- (v) anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study;
- (vi) 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;
- (vii) 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)
- (viii) a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another institution;
- (ix) the succession of an External Examiner by a colleague from the External Examiner's home department and institution;
- (x) the appointment of more than one External Examiner from the same department of the same institution.

Other

- (c) 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.
- (d) External Examiners should normally hold no more than two external examiner appointments for taught programmes at any one point in time.

In the case of programmes which have a strong professional orientation and/or considerable elements of work-based learning, it is often appropriate and, in some cases may be a PSRB requirement, that one of the External Examiners is a practitioner. In

this case, the criteria (a) (i), (iv), (ix) and (x) will be waived. The nomination should be accompanied by a statement indicating that the nominee is a practitioner and explaining the rationale for the nomination, which will be considered by the School Management Board, in consultation with the Board of Studies and Student Experience. Normally, in such cases, the practitioner will not be the sole External Examiner for the award, and will be part of a team which will include an External Examiner who does fulfil the normal criteria.

In the event that a School wishes to nominate as an External Examiner a person who does not fulfil the criteria, but does not qualify under the provisions for the appointment of a practitioner, the School should consult the Teaching and Learning Dean at the earliest stage. The formal nomination must be accompanied by a clear statement of the grounds for a variation on the normal requirements, which will be considered by the University Board for Teaching, Learning and Student Experience.

It is recognised, particularly in relation to professional programmes, that nominees may not have knowledge and understanding of all the relevant agreed reference points, including PSRB requirements (criterion (a)(i)). It is important that the team of External Examiners collectively has knowledge and understanding of all the relevant agreed reference points.

It is a requirement that the team of External Examiners for a programme collectively has the full range of qualifications, experience and expertise specified in the national criteria.

In cases where an External Examiner does not fulfil all the relevant criteria, he or she will be given particular encouragement to attend the University-wide briefing session for External Examiners or will be provided with an enhanced induction within the relevant School.

The University does not consider that the prior involvement of an External Examiner in the development or validation/approval of a programme necessarily involves a conflict of interest; however, in such instances, consideration should be given to whether there are grounds for believing that their independence has been compromised.

An External Examiner who has no previous experience as an External Examiner for any institution will normally be appointed to serve as a member of a team of External Examiners. Where such an arrangement is not feasible, the first-time External Examiner will be mentored by an experienced External Examiner from the same School.

6. Nomination and appointment of External Examiners

Heads of School are responsible for identifying appropriate External Examiners and for ensuring that prospective External Examiners are advised of the scope and nature of

the responsibilities, including the likely number of candidates to be examined. If the prospective nominee is willing to accept the appointment, the Head of School, or their delegate, should complete Part A of the Nomination Form for New External Examiners for Taught Courses and then ask the nominee to complete and sign Part B and to provide a curriculum vitae which satisfies criteria (ii)-(x) of the person specification in section 5(a) above. Part B of the nomination form requires the nominee *inter alia* to confirm that they have knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality, to declare any potential conflicts of interest and to confirm their willingness to undertake the duties. The Head of School should draw the attention of the prospective nominee to (and, if necessary, provide) the information listed in Section 9 below.

If it is anticipated that, in the course of fulfilling his or her functions, the External Examiner may have access to work which is subject to a requirement for commercial confidentiality or involve other issues relating to intellectual property, the Head of School is responsible for resolving such issues prior to the appointment of the External Examiner. Guidance and a sample commercial confidentiality agreement are available from the Exams Team.

Heads of School are required to confirm on the nomination form that no Internal Examiner or other member of academic staff associated with the programme currently holds an external examinership for a taught programme in the same or a closely cognate discipline in the nominee's institution. Heads of School are required to maintain a register of institutions in which members of the School hold external examinerships. If, in highly exceptional circumstances, such a reciprocal arrangement appears to be unavoidable, the Head of School must consult the Teaching and Learning Dean in order to identify how the risks associated with a potential conflict of interest can be managed effectively.

Where the School wishes to re-appoint an External Examiner for a further Session, a nomination form is not required, although details should be confirmed on the 'Reappointment of Examiners (2U/P)' form. The Head of School should confirm with the External Examiner that no potential conflict of interest has arisen since their previous appointment.

Where more than one External Examiner is appointed to a programme, the appointment of new External Examiners should be phased, if feasible, in order to provide continuity and encourage the mentoring of new External Examiners.

Both the Nomination Form for New External Examiners and the 2U/P Reappointment Forms are submitted to the Exams Team. The relevant School Management Board, in consultation with the Board of Studies and Student Experience,

is responsible for scrutinising nominations of External Examiners, which in the case of new External Examiners will include consideration of their Nomination Form, and for submitting recommendations to the University Board for Teaching, Learning and Student Experience. UBTLSE is responsible for confirming the appointment of External Examiners. The Exams Team maintains a record of appointments and periods of tenure of External Examiners.

7. Termination of contract and non-renewal of appointment

Termination of a contract

The appointment of an External Examiner may be terminated by the University where there is good cause, such as unsatisfactory performance of duties or incapacity or where a conflict of interest arises which cannot be satisfactorily resolved. A termination of appointment (other than resignation by the External Examiner) must be approved by the Chair of UBTLSE.

In cases where an External Examiner is not able to continue in their role, he or she is asked to notify the Exams Team at the earliest possible opportunity, giving at least three months' notice as specified in section 4 above.

Non-renewal of appointment

An External Examiner will not normally be reappointed in cases where:

- he or she has failed to fulfil their required duties, for example, failure to attend an Examiners' Meeting (where attendance is required) without seeking to make an alternative arrangement, failure to submit an External Examiner's Report or submission of a substantially deficient Report;
- a conflict of interest has arisen which cannot be satisfactorily resolved.

8. Information provided to students about External Examiners

The name, position and institution of External Examiners for taught programmes is published on the University Exams Team website. Students are informed in the Programme Handbook that this information is available, and are also advised that they must not, in any circumstances, make direct contact with any External Examiner. In cases where an External Examiner has been appointed to fulfil a role on behalf of a professional body, this is stated.

9. Information provided to the External Examiner following approval

Following approval by UBTLSE, the Exams Team sends the External Examiner a letter of appointment which specifies the programmes to be examined, the fee, and period of appointment. External Examiners are asked to confirm their acceptance of the

appointment on a pro forma provided with the letter of appointment and to confirm that they are not aware of any conflict of interest.

The Exams Team provides links to the following information in the appointment letter:

- (a) the Code of Practice on External Examining of Taught Programmes
- (b) a link to the University's Assessment Handbook
- (c) the University Credit and Qualifications Framework
- (d) a directory to sources of relevant documentation on the web
- (e) the Exceptional Circumstances Policy and procedures
- (f) a copy of the External Examiner's Annual Report Form
- (g) an expenses claim form
- (h) a pro forma to confirm acceptance of appointment

The relevant School is required to provide the External Examiner with the following information:

- (i) subject benchmark statements, as appropriate
- (j) Programme/Course Handbook(s)
- (k) Programme specification(s)/detailed information about the content and assessment of the programme(s)
- (l) examination schedule, dates of meetings and other detailed arrangements
- (m) Guidelines for assessment and classification applicable to the degree being examined
- (n) relevant previous External Examiners' Reports (for new External Examiners)
- (o) where appropriate, information about relevant professional issues, such as fitness to practise

Either at the time of appointment or subsequently, the School is required to inform the External Examiner in writing of the modules which the External Examiner will be primarily responsible for moderating.

10. Preparation of External Examiners

The Centre for Quality Support and Development (CQSD) offers a briefing session for External Examiners appointed by the University. It is strongly recommended that External Examiners who are drawn from outside higher education or who do not fulfil all the relevant national criteria or who have no previous experience in the role attend the CQSD session.

Schools will normally invite their External Examiners to an induction with members of the School before they undertake examining. Schools are required to ensure that their External Examiners are briefed on: the relevant reference points for the programmes for which they are responsible; the assessment procedures and the requirements of the programmes to which they have been appointed; the evidence which he or she requires to exercise oversight; the arrangements for communication with internal examiners and others involved in teaching and learning (including placement providers/assessors); the arrangements for external moderation; and the arrangements for External Examiners' approval of the overall results. CQSD will contribute to a School-based induction, if requested.

Arrangements for support and mentoring of an External Examiner who has no previous experience as an External Examiner are indicated in section 5 (final paragraph), above.

CQSD also offers a session for members of academic staff within the University who are serving as External Examiners at other institutions or are interested in becoming an External Examiner.

11. Functions of an External Examiner

External Examiners for a programme collectively have the following functions in respect of the various stages of the examination process:

Programme design

External Examiners are invited to make evaluative comment on the design of the programme, its objectives and its assessment regime, and to contribute to the review and enhancement of the programme.

Scrutiny of examinations and monitoring of assessment tasks

External Examiners must be consulted on draft examination papers and be given an opportunity to comment sufficiently in advance of the submission deadline for draft examination papers to allow amendments to be made.

External Examiners are required to monitor the questions and tasks set in respect of coursework assessments, projects, dissertations and in-class tests which serve a primarily summative purpose in order to ensure the reliability and validity of the

assessment. Schools and External Examiners should jointly determine whether it is useful for the External Examiners to be consulted on questions and tasks set for coursework assessments, projects, dissertations and in-class tests in advance of the work being set or provide retrospective comment. In making this decision, the School and External Examiner should take a proportionate approach, having regard to the balance of coursework and exams and the contribution of specific assessments to the award. Where it is considered not to be useful for the External Examiner to be consulted on coursework assessments or in-class tests in advance, his or her comments should inform the setting of coursework and in-class test questions and tasks in the future.

External Examiners are asked, in particular, to consider whether examination papers, coursework assignments and in-class tests demand a sufficiently broad range of knowledge and test the stated aims and learning outcomes of modules and courses. They are asked, where appropriate, to scrutinise model/sample answers.

Academic Misconduct

External Examiners may be consulted, where appropriate, by the School Director of Teaching and Learning in relation to cases of suspected cheating, including plagiarism.

Exceptional circumstances

Under the University's Policy on and Procedures relating to exceptional circumstances (from Autumn Term 2021), exceptional circumstances are considered, and appropriate action determined by the School Director of Academic Tutoring and, in cases which may require more substantial action, by the University Standing Committee on Special Cases (USCSC)

(www.reading.ac.uk/web/files/qualitysupport/exceptionalcircumstances.pdf).

External Examiners do not normally have responsibility for considering or determining action in respect of exceptional circumstances.

However, an External Examiner may be consulted by School Director of Academic Tutoring about cases of exceptional circumstances, before their referral to the USCSC, where:

- A proposed variation in the assessment method for a student for coursework/in-class tests, contributing more than 20% of the module, is substantial or complex (Exceptional Circumstances policy, Annex 2 (d))
- A proposed exemption of a student from a piece of coursework/in-class test, contributing more than 10% of the module, is substantial or complex (section Annex 2 (e))

Where an Aegrotat degree is being considered, and External Examiner should be consulted in advance of the USCSC's consideration of the case, and, if proposed, the recommended award must be approved by the External Examiner (Exceptional Circumstances policy, Annex 2(k)).

As part of the External Examiners' broad oversight of the assessment process and its fairness, an External Examiner may, on request and on a confidential basis, have sight of exceptional circumstances forms and/or be provided with a brief synopsis of selected cases, and offer comment on the University's procedures and decision-making in respect of exceptional circumstances cases.

Moderation

External Examiners are required to verify the standard and consistency of the marking of assessments which contribute directly to an award. All such assessments may be moderated. External Examiners will normally determine, in consultation with the relevant Internal Examiners, which assessments they wish to moderate in any year and the method of moderation which they wish to employ. It is important that the assessments moderated include written examinations, coursework, dissertations, in-class tests and reports on placements. For the Part 2 and Part 3/4/Final Examination, External Examiners would normally be expected to consider a sample which allows them to moderate the full range of marks, and specifically in respect of those candidates who are likely to fail and those who are on borderlines.

For the Foundation Year and Part 1 Examination, External Examiners are expected to consider a sample which allows them to moderate the full range of marks, and to attend particularly to the pass/fail borderline and the borderline at the 35% threshold for Foundation Year and the 30% threshold for Part 1. It is expected that the sample may be smaller than the samples for the Part 2 and Part 3/4/Final Examination.

The record of the internal moderation process must be made available to the External Examiners.

External Examiners may request additional marking of assessed work.

External Examiners should not act as a first or second marker since their role as moderator would thereby be compromised. External Examiners should moderate internally agreed marks: they should not routinely be asked to adjudicate between marks proposed by two internal markers.

The outcome of the moderation will normally be that an External Examiner confirms the marks for the module or requires that the work be remarked or recommends that the marks be adjusted for all or a sub-set of students.

In cases where a candidate's performance is highly marginal in relation to a classification boundary, the Internal Examiners may invite the External Examiner to review the individual case and give further consideration to the candidate's work.

The External Examiner is invited to offer comments on the standard of marking and the marking processes in the External Examiners' Report, and such comments will be used to inform future developments in these areas.

Awarding

Programme External Examiners are invited to approve formally the recommendations in respect of the award and classification of degrees and other awards, which have been

agreed collectively by the Programme Examiners, including the External Examiners. The recommendations of Programme Examiners are approved by the University Examiners, subject to ratification of awards by the Senate. The eligibility of candidates at Part 1 and Part 2 for the award of the Certificate of Higher Education and Diploma of Higher Education respectively are determined by the University Awarding Board on the basis of the module marks which have been moderated by the relevant Programme External Examiners.

In considering the results, External Examiners are required to take due account of the relevant national subject benchmarks, relevant national qualifications frameworks, the University's programme specifications, and other relevant information, including the requirements of external accrediting bodies.

External Examiners have the right to see, on request, any work which contributes to the assessment of a programme or part of a programme for which they have been appointed, including placements, and to see other evidence relevant to the performance of their duties. They may also request statistical data on the distribution of marks and recommended classifications.

A *viva voce* examination will not normally be used as an exceptional examination outwith the normal assessment for modules for the purpose of determining a degree classification.

External Examiners are normally required to attend the Programme Examiners' Meeting which considers results of students. In the case of Masters programmes with small numbers of students, the Chair of the relevant Examiners' Meeting may exceptionally agree that External Examiners convey their views to the Examiners' Meeting by correspondence, provided they are available for consultation by telephone or e-mail.

Decisions on marks and awards will be the collective responsibility of the Examiners; however, the views of External Examiners will be particularly influential in determining marks and overall results. The Examiners' Meeting is therefore required to give full consideration to the advice of the External Examiner in determining marks and results. The University expects disagreements between Internal and External Examiners to be resolved through discussion. Where there is an irreconcilable difference between the External Examiners and Internal Examiners, the matter will be referred in the first instance to the Chair of the University Awarding/Progression Board. If the disagreement remains, the External

Examiner and the Chair of the Examiners will each be asked to submit a written report on the point at issue, and the matter will be reported via the University Awarding/Progression Board to the Senate, which has the power to approve the results.

Meeting with students

Schools are encouraged to offer External Examiners an opportunity to meet students on a programme. It is good practice to include students from all Parts of the programme. Wherever feasible, the External Examiner should be offered an opportunity to speak with students who are on other campuses or are studying by distance-learning or through a collaborative partner. Consideration should be given to the timings of a meeting with students in order to maximise engagement, and to the mode of the meeting (e.g. face-to-face or online).

In cases where such a meeting is held, the External Examiners are encouraged to discuss with students matters relating to assessment and feedback *inter alia*. The meeting does not form part of the assessment. Students who have been invited to meet an External Examiner should be briefed on the nature and purpose of the meeting, and be informed that the meeting is not an assessment and will not have any impact on their result.

Appeals

In cases where the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results recommends that a result be amended, the External Examiner is asked to approve the recommendation; should the External Examiner decline to approve the recommendation, the matter will be determined by the Senate.

12. Confirmation of results

External Examiners are required to confirm in writing that they are satisfied that the outcomes of the assessments which they have been appointed to examine are fair, prior to the publication of a results list. The results list must be signed by the External Examiners, although interim confirmation by e-mail is acceptable.

An External Examiner's signature on a results list signifies confirmation that the results recorded are fair. Where an External Examiner cannot be physically present to confirm an award, written confirmation by email will be accepted in lieu of a signature. A final result may not be amended without the External Examiner's approval, except in the case of a decision by the Senate following the review of a result. The procedures of the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results require that any proposal to change a result be referred to the External Examiner; if the External Examiner does not endorse a proposal to amend a result, the matter is referred to the Senate which may decide to amend the result against the wishes of the External Examiner.

13. External Examiners' Reports

External Examiners are required to report annually by a specified deadline (usually 31 July or 15 November) in relation to the programmes or modules which they have been appointed to examine. A copy of the External Examiner's Report form is available at: www.reading.ac.uk/exams/extex

External Examiners are also required to respond to the following question: 'Do you consider that the process of assessment and determination of awards is sound and has been conducted rigorously, fairly, reliably and consistently, in accordance with the University's Assessment Handbook?'

External Examiners who fail to submit a Report will not normally be eligible for re-appointment. The fee is payable only on receipt of the Report and claim form.

External Examiners are asked to complete the appropriate Report Form or to provide comments in respect of the various headings; where a report is seriously deficient in respect of the information provided, the External may be asked for additional comment or the matter may be referred to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning). An External Examiner who submits a seriously deficient report will not be reappointed for a further Session.

14. Consideration of External Examiners' Reports

The Reports are circulated to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), the relevant Teaching and Learning Dean, the Head of School, the School Director of Teaching and Learning, the Head of Department, the Programme Director, the Chair of the Board of Studies and Student Experience (via the School Director of Teaching and Learning), and the Support Centre Manager/Director of Administration.

The Reports are considered by the relevant Student-Staff Partnership Group, and are also available (on application to the University Examinations Office) to students on the relevant programme. Reports are made available to students in order to support the quality management of teaching and learning. The University and the Students' Union will develop a policy on what support and guidance is provided to students to enable them to benefit from reading the reports, and, in particular, linking the reports to the University's consideration of what actions to take in response to the reports.

The School Director of Teaching and Learning of the School responsible for the programme is responsible for ensuring consideration of the Report by the relevant Board of Studies and Student Experience and for ensuring consideration of the Report by the relevant Staff-Student Partnership Group.

The Report, before being made available to students, is checked to exclude any reference which could lead to the identification of individuals or, in the very exceptional case, which is intended to cause harm to the institution or bring it into disrepute. In cases where the text has been amended to preserve anonymity, it may be appropriate, where possible, to provide an appropriately anonymised version of the relevant passage.

In the case of small programmes where any comment on performance is liable to be identifiable with an individual student, the School Director of Teaching and Learning should provide a summary of the report which preserves the principle of anonymity.

The Report is considered by the relevant Board of Studies and Student Experience which is responsible for discussing issues raised in the report and determining action taken in response.

The Report is also considered by the relevant Staff-Student Partnership Group. The Staff-Student Partnership Group should report any concerns or other issues to the Board of Studies and Student Experience.

It is important that the report circulated to the Board of Studies and Student Experience and to the Staff-Student Partnership Group meets the requirement that individuals are not identified.

The Board of Studies and Student Experience considers the Report as part of its programme reflection activities and identifies any elements that need to be considered as part of the School Teaching Enhancement Action Plan (STEAP). These are reported to the SDTL and School Management Board.

The SDTL, supported by their Teaching and Learning Dean, will provide a response, including an evaluative commentary, to the External Examiner Report. The External Examiners' Report(s) and response(s) are submitted to CQSD and an overview of common themes arising from the External Examiner process is considered by the Sub-Committee on the Delivery and Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (DELTA) and UBTLSE.

Teaching and Learning Deans will present any themes or issues arising from the External Examiner Reports and School responses for specific Schools at the annual Teaching and Learning meeting of DELTA in November each year.

The relevant School Director of Teaching and Learning, in liaison with the Programme Director, is required to write to External Examiners within a reasonable time of receipt of the Report explaining how any issues raised in their Reports have been addressed. The School Director of Teaching and Learning and the Programme Director are asked to provide information on the detailed consideration of the External Examiner's Report, and on any actions taken as a result of the Report, and to provide clear reasons for not accepting any recommendations or suggestions. It is important that actions arising from Reports are taken in a timely manner and that progress with implementation is monitored.

The Teaching and Learning Deans are responsible for assisting the School Director of Teaching and Learning in responding to any University-level issues or recommendations made by the External Examiners.

The School Director of Teaching and Learning is also responsible for providing a commentary on the Report, and the actions taken in response to the Report, which will

be made available to the Student-Staff Partnership Group and is available to students on request.

In the case of programmes involving a PSRB, School Director of Teaching and Learning is responsible for providing the PSRB with a copy of the External Examiner's Report, if required, and for informing the PSRB of action taken in response to the External Examiner's Report.

15. Procedures in the case of serious concerns

Confidential report to the Vice-Chancellor

External Examiners are informed in the letter of appointment that, if they wish to raise a serious concern or otherwise make less public comment (for example, if it is necessary to raise issues in relation to a member of staff), they should send a confidential report to the Vice-Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellor will consider any such confidential report and, within a reasonable period of receipt of the report, will inform the External Examiner of actions taken in response to the concern or provide reasons for not taking action. Staff and/or student representatives are informed of the implications of any confidential report, or of the action arising from such a report, where appropriate.

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