

External Examiner Guidance

Appointments

1. How to appoint an External Examiner is covered in Appendix H of the Code of Practice on Assessment:

https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/media/livacuk/tqsd/code-of-practice-on-assessment/appendix_H_cop_assess.pdf

2. The criteria for appointing an External Examiner are based on the external expectations identified in the QAA Quality Code, External Expertise Advice and Guidance section.
3. Within the QAA Guidance, the summary of the role of the External Examiner is stated as: Degree-awarding bodies engage external examiners to provide impartial and independent advice, as well as informative comment on the degree-awarding body's standards and on student achievement in relation to those standards. External Examiners confirm that the provider consistently and fairly implements their own policies and procedures to ensure the integrity and rigour of assessment practices. They also comment on the quality and standards of the courses in relation to the national standards and frameworks and comment on the reasonable comparability of standards achieved at other UK providers with whom the examiner has experience. External examiners also comment on good practice, and make recommendations for enhancement.

External examiners will have 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. External examiners do not contribute to delivery through teaching or any other direct capacity.

4. Support from Student Administration and Support Division (SAS) is available on appointing External Examiners and using the HERMES system.
5. SAS supports the administration of the External Examiner system for taught provision by:
 - Establishing, maintaining and disestablishing all posts for the appointment of External Examiners;
 - Confirming the appointment of External Examiners whose nominations for appointment have been approved by Faculty;
 - Receiving and disseminating written reports and checklists which contain feedback from External Examiners, to the relevant Departments or Schools, as appropriate;
 - Arranging the payment of a fee, which is contingent upon receiving a completed annual report, and reimbursement of reasonable expenses to External Examiners in line with expense claim guidance;

- Responding to enquiries and providing support regarding the day-to-day administration of the External Examiner system for taught provision, including referring enquiries to the appropriate individual where necessary.
6. All approved External Examiners will be appointed for 4 years, though must be re-nominated annually. Appointment letters are sent via HERMES and copied to named nominees in the Faculty.

Information and Induction

7. Any induction activity is managed locally. On appointment, External Examiners are expected to be provided with the information listed in Annex 1 of Appendix H of the CoPA, and copied below.

The following list of documentation is indicative of the information which should be provided to External Examiners, where appropriate and relevant, to ensure that each External Examiner is able to perform according to function.

Of relevance to all external examiners:

- Introduction to the University (online) <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/about/>
- Student Programme Handbook (Department or School, as appropriate)
- Programme Specifications (Department or School, as appropriate)
- Module Specifications (Department or School, as appropriate)
- Degree Apprenticeship Standard, if relevant (Department or School, as appropriate)
- Most recent Annual Subject Action Plan (Department or School, as appropriate)
- Previous year's External Examiner report(s) (Department or School, as appropriate)
- Schedule of activity (School level) (Department or School, as appropriate)
- Marking Descriptors (Department or School, as appropriate)

Regulatory and Policy Guidance:

- Appendix D (Regulations for the Conduct of Examinations)
[appendix D cop assess.pdf \(liverpool.ac.uk\)](#)
- Appendix H (External Examiner System for Taught Provision)
[appendix H cop assess.pdf \(liverpool.ac.uk\)](#)
- University Framework for Quality and Standards
[University-Framework-for-Quality-and-Standards.pdf \(liverpool.ac.uk\)](#)
- University's Equal Opportunities Policy
[Policies Policies- Human Resources - University of Liverpool](#)

Of particular relevance to Programme and Award Level external examiners:

- Code of Practice on Assessment
[code_of_practice_on_assessment.pdf \(liverpool.ac.uk\)](#)
 - Appendix I (System for the Classification of Three-year Non-Clinical Undergraduate Degrees)
[appendix_H_cop_assess.pdf \(liverpool.ac.uk\)](#)
 - Appendix J (Classification of Four-Year Non-Clinical Undergraduate Degrees)
[Regulations \(liverpool.ac.uk\)](#)
 - Appendix M (Policy on Extenuating Circumstances in Relation to Performance in Assessments and Examinations)
[Mitigating Circumstances \(liverpool.ac.uk\)](#)
8. External Examiners should be provided with a formal induction in order to enable them to carry out their role and responsibilities. This induction will be led by the Department or School, as appropriate.
 9. Departments or Schools, as appropriate, will provide an opportunity for External Examiners to interact with the School/Department as appropriate ideally before undertaking their external examining duties, to familiarise themselves with their role and responsibilities. This can be in person or virtual.
 10. Details of the specific duties, not covered by the documents already provided by the Department or School, which External Examiners are expected to undertake will be provided in a briefing by the Department or School, as appropriate.
 11. The documentation and information shown above in paragraph 5 will be made available to External Examiners by the Department or School, as appropriate, during induction.
 12. SAS will provide External Examiners with written guidance and support relating to the administrative processes associated with their appointment. These are available at:

<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/student-administration-and-support-division/external-examiners/faq-external-examiners/>

Feedback and Reports

13. Departments or Schools, as appropriate, should use the opportunity afforded by any visits of External Examiners to receive and take account of any comments and suggestions about all aspects associated with the delivery of the programme and its components and assessments. In addition, External Examiners are required to submit annual written reports accompanied by completed checklists to provide essential feedback.
14. It is not a requirement for the External Examiner to physically attend any activity on campus and all interaction can be maintained virtually. This will help support diversity

in the recruitment of External Examiners, who not be able to regularly physically attend activity on campus.

15. The period within which responses to External Examiner reports should be completed shall be 8 weeks. This includes the response and the Faculty level approval of the response. Subject areas should ensure their responses are available for Faculty approval in advance of the 8-week deadline (5 working days is applicable.)
16. It should be noted by staff and External Examiners that reports may also be requested in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (2000). Consequently, reports should not refer to any person, particularly students, by name or in any other way which provides a means of identifying individuals.
17. Undergraduate reports are due by 31 July and postgraduate reports by 31 December. Reminders will be sent automatically via HERMES.
18. The reports of External Examiners and the approved response will be routinely shared with students on the University's e-learning platform.
19. External Examiners will be paid on receipt of their report.

Consideration of Reports

20. Reports are submitted on a standard template via HERMES. The template covers the expectations detailed in the QAA Quality Code Advice and Guidance on External Expertise.
21. Reports should be considered by programme teams and appropriate responses drafted. These should also then be discussed at a Board of Studies meeting with appropriate student representation. It is important that these meetings are not scheduled with vacation periods, so as to ensure adequate student representation.
22. Any high-level action points arising from the reports should be detailed in the appropriate Annual Subject Action Plan and will be monitored via that process. Other actions will be monitored via the Board of Studies.

Response to Reports

23. Programme team agreed responses to the External Examiner's report should be entered via the HERMES system. A Faculty level approval of this response will be undertaken before it is sent to the External Examiner.
24. APVC or delegated nominees to approve External Examiner response to reports should be noted annually at the appropriate FAQSC/FEEAC meeting.
25. If a negative report is received, programme teams should seek advice immediately from their Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education), who will be able to discuss options for a response. Interaction with the External Examiner is recommended to

discuss any issues identified in the report. This should be done as soon as possible on receipt of the report.

Faculty and Institutional Oversight

26. A Faculty summary of External Examiner best practice and actions needed is detailed in the Faculty summaries of Annual Subject Action plans, received at FAQSCs/FEEAC and Academic Quality and Standards Committee. Any institutional action needed will be identified as part of these reports.