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University  
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Academic Services  
Code of Practice:

## External Examiners



A Guide for Staff and Students

2018-19





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## DISCLAIMER

Swansea University has made all reasonable efforts to ensure that the information contained within this publication is accurate upon publication, and reserves the right to make updates and enhancements during the lifespan of the publication. Every effort will be made to notify interested parties of changes as they occur.



**Please Note:** the contents of this document are designed to be accessed via an interactive website and are reproduced in this booklet format for accessibility. Some features and functions may not be available in this format (e.g. search facility). Please use this document in conjunction with the [website](#).

## Appointment of External Examiners

### What is the Appointment Process?

- Approach a possible external examiner to seek their agreement in principle.
- Swansea University staff should fill out the relevant nomination form (depending on whether overseeing an undergraduate, taught postgraduate programme or research student).
  - Staff must then submit the completed form with a current CV and copy of passport (and visa, if appropriate) to Academic Quality Services for initial scrutiny (your College/School may ask you to route all nominations through a central College/School Office first).
    - The Chair of the Progression and Awards Board/PVC Academic will review the proposed nomination.
    - If approved the External Examiner is sent a contract, a welcome pack, and a copy of previous External Examiner's annual reports by Academic Quality Services.
    - All new External Examiners are invited to an annual Induction Event where they have the opportunity to spend time at the relevant College/School meeting key contacts and obtaining relevant information and support.
    - The College/School sends the External Examiner the relevant information on the programme, such as the programme specifications, assessment marking criteria, handbook and assessment policy.

## Appointment of External Examiners

### What are the Criteria for Appointment?

External Examiners must meet the criteria specified in the [Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes](#). When completing the nomination form, these criteria are appended as a useful checklist, but must also be completed.

There are restrictions on who can be an external examiner of taught programmes. A case can be made for accommodating special cases.

External Examiners must also be eligible to work in the UK and must provide the relevant evidence to the University.

### What if the Nomination is Rejected?

If the nomination is rejected, reasons will be given and you may submit further information and justification in support of the nomination. The Pro-Vice Chancellor Academic has the final decision.

### How do I Know When the External Examiner's Period of Office is Due to End?

Academic Quality Services staff contact the Head of College/School, usually in the January prior to the end of an External Examiner's contract. Please contact us at any time for details about your current External Examiners and their periods of office.

## Appointment of External Examiners

### When do I Need to Appoint an External Examiner?

Every programme of study that leads to a Swansea University award must have an External Examiner. The External Examiner oversees those modules and components that contribute to the award. At undergraduate level, an external examiner is often not required until the second year of the programme (foundation degrees are however appointed to oversee the first year). For taught postgraduate programmes, external examiners oversee all elements of the programme.

When new programmes are validated, programme proposers are reminded that they must allocate the programme to an existing/new Board of Studies and initiate the external examiner nomination process.

### Extensions to the Period of Appointment or Accommodating Special Cases

If you wish to appoint or continue to appoint an External Examiner, who, in exceptional circumstances, contravenes the general criteria for appointment, the College/School must submit justification why the continued appointment is necessary.

Submit your justification to Academic Quality Services, where staff will first scrutinise the request to examine the basis of the exceptional circumstance or whether the extension of time is permitted. Incomplete or ineligible requests for extension will be returned to the College/School for further information/re-nomination of an alternate.

In appointing special cases, the term of office is typically only one year.

## Appointment of External Examiners

Decisions on rejecting any nominations are retained by Academic Quality Services. College/School staff may appeal any rejected nomination through provision of enhanced information or evidence to justify the validity of the nomination.

Completed and valid requests for extension/special circumstances will be examined by the Chair of the Progression and Awards Board (for extensions of office up to a fifth year) or the Chair of the Academic Regulations and Cases Board (for all other special cases) who have authority to approve or decline the continued period of appointment or exception to regulations. The decision of the Chair of the Academic Regulations and Cases Board will be documented against this case. Where nominations are not approved, the College/School may re-submit the nomination providing further details to justify the nomination.

### What if the Programme Structure Changes and/or Student Numbers Increase?

External Examiners' contracts and fees for undergraduate programmes are made on the programme structure and enrolment numbers at the time of appointment. Should these arrangements change significantly, contact [Academic Quality Services](#) with the relevant information and the contract may be amended.

Taught postgraduate examiners' fees are calculated each year on numbers of students assessed.

£750 is the maximum fee payable per External Examiner for both undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes; if fees reach this, we will contact the College/School and strongly recommend nominating additional examiners to share the load.

## Appointment of External Examiners

### How to Add an Additional Module/Programme or Extend the Contract Period

We can add additional modules/programmes, provided the numbers of students are not excessive and the number of concurrent examinerships is not above the "normally only two" rule as only two External Examiner appointments should be held at any one time. Contact the External Examiner to ask if they wish to take on further duties, then contact Academic Quality Services to request an extension form/additional modules form/additional programme form.

### Appointment of External Examiners - Research Programmes

Gweler y rheoliadau canlynol:

[Guide to the Examination of Research Students](#)

[PGR External Examiner Claim Form](#)



## Appointment Criteria

### Person Specification

The criteria for appointment match QAA Quality Code. They are attached to the nomination form for your reference.

1. Knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality.
2. Competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study, or parts thereof.
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.
4. Competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures.
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.
6. Familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed.
7. Fluency in English and Welsh where possible, 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).
8. Meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies.
9. Awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula.
10. Competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

## Appointment Criteria

11. Nominations for External Examiner appointments should normally be from within the higher education system and possess appropriate levels of academic and, where appropriate, other professional expertise and experience in relation to the relevant subject area and assessment approaches.
12. Retired staff can be considered if they provide sufficient evidence of continuing involvement in the academic area in question, and with current developments in higher education teaching, learning and assessment.
13. Examiners from outside the higher education system may exceptionally be appointed as External Examiners provided that such persons possess the relevant expertise and experience to fulfil the requirements for appointment as External Examiners. Such External Examiners shall not have sole responsibility for a programme of study.
14. New External Examiners who have not held the position before at another institution, or are from outside the higher education system, should normally shadow the outgoing External Examiner during the final year of their tenure.

### Terms of Office

External Examiners shall normally be appointed for a period of four academic years, with a possibility of re-appointment for a fifth year subject to the approval of the Chair of the Progression and Awards Board.

1. Other than in exceptional circumstances, an External Examiner shall not be reappointed before a lapse of at least five years since their last period of appointment.
2. The number of External Examinerships held by persons being considered for nomination as External Examiners should not normally exceed two during the External Examiner's period of appointment.

## Appointment Criteria

### Conflicts of Interest

To avoid potential conflicts of interest, External Examiners should not be appointed if they are any of the following:

1. A current employee or member of the Court of Swansea University or current employee or member of the governing body of any of Swansea University's collaborative partners.
2. Have a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme of study.
3. Anyone closely associated with the sponsorship of students on the programme.
4. Anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study.
5. Anyone in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study.
6. Anyone involved in current or recent substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme(s) of modules in question.
7. Former members of staff or students shall not be invited to be nominated for appointment as an External Examiner before a lapse of at least five years from the date of departure, or sufficient time for students taught by that member of staff or associated with that student to have completed that programme of study, whichever is the longer.
8. The making of reciprocal arrangements for external examining with staff teaching similar programmes of study at other institutions is not permissible.
9. An External Examiner shall not normally be succeeded by another from the same home department and institution.
10. Only one External Examiner may be appointed from the same department of the same institution.

## Appointment Criteria

11. New External Examiners cannot be appointed from the same institute where staff from Swansea University have External Examiner roles.

### Right to Work in the UK

In order to comply with UK Immigration Law, all External Examiners must be eligible to work in the UK and must provide the relevant evidence to do so.

The University will conduct a Right to Work check to verify that every individual working for the University is eligible to work in the UK, prior to them commencing any work with the University. This requirement includes External Examiners and is in accordance with [UK Visa and Immigration \(UKVI\)](#), a department of the UK Government Home Office. The External Examiner will be asked to present or email a copy of their identification to Academic Quality Services, usually a passport (and visa, if relevant), before they commence work with the University. The original documentation will need to be presented on the External Examiner's first visit to the University premises.

### How Long are External Examiners Appointed for?

Four academic years is the normal appointment period, with a fifth extension year being possible. In some special cases, the term would be for one year only.

For undergraduate programmes, the period of office is usually the academic year, **October 1st to September 30th**. For taught postgraduate programmes, the ending period would be to **December 31st** of the relevant calendar year.

## Appointment Criteria

See also How to appoint an additional module/programme or extend contract period (see above) for further details.

There must normally be at least five years since their last period of appointment before an External Examiner can be reappointed.

### How Many External Examinerships can be Held?

An External Examiner is only permitted to hold two external examinerships concurrently.

Research External Examiners are appointed to examine specific students. There are no restrictions on the number of research students that an External Examiner can oversee for the taught element. For the thesis element there is a restriction on the number of theses.

### Types of External Examiner

The University has two types of External Examiners:

1. **Subject External Examiner:** who oversees the standards of the discipline and in almost all cases oversees a specific named programme. In some cases, examiners are appointed to oversee stand-alone modules which typically do not contribute to a specific named award. The subject External Examiners represent the majority of External Examiners.
2. **Chief External Examiner:** who is appointed in situations where a team of External Examiners has been appointed to consider a collection of related programmes/subject areas for multidisciplinary programmes and/or stand-alone modules.

## Appointment Criteria

A Chief External Examiner may also be appointed if the team of External Examiners is made up of a significant number of non-academic examiners and/or those with limited experience as External Examiners.

The Chief External Examiner is appointed in specific areas of the University's provision, namely in the Swansea University Medical School and in some areas of the College of Human and Health Sciences.

Chief External Examiners for the MB BCh programme in the Swansea University Medical School will be appointed to cover Phase 1 (Year 1 and Year 2) and Phase 2 (Year 3 and Year 4).

### How Many Examiners do I Need to Appoint?

There is no set number, but you need to be aware of the total student FTEs enrolled on the programme, the subject diversity of the programme and any professional body requirements as these will influence how many examiners you may need to appoint.

### How Many Examiners do I Need for a Joint/Multidisciplinary Programme?

You will need both subject-based External Examiners, along with a Chief External Examiner who will oversee the standards across each of the disciplines. The Chief may be one of the subject examiners or someone else appointed to oversee the programme.

## Appointment Criteria

### Terminating Contracts by the University

Contracts with External Examiners can be terminated before their term of office has expired. Reasons for termination might include:

- the External Examiner failing to fulfill their duties and responsibilities (including specifically non-submission of an annual report per academic year, non attendance at an Examining/Awards Board without valid reasons, lack of involvement with the assessment process); or
- following the discontinuation or non recruitment to the relevant programme of study.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) is authorised to issue letters of premature termination upon the recommendation of the Chair of the Progression and Awards Board.

### Terminating Contracts by the External Examiner

If the circumstances of an External Examiner change and/or a conflict of interest arises during their term of office and he/she wishes to resign, a formal letter of resignation should be directed to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic). A three month period of notice will be required.

### When the Contract Ends Mid-way Through an Academic Year

Should the termination of contract arise during the academic year, or an examiner wishes to temporarily suspend their involvement due to personal reasons, a temporary appointment will be made to cover the rest of the duties during that academic year until a permanent nomination is obtained, where necessary.

## The Role of the External Examiner

The role of the External Examiner includes, amongst other duties, consideration of examination papers and assessment questions and review and moderation of items of assessment, including examination scripts, course assignments, projects or dissertations. External Examiners are expected to submit a full and frank report to the University, summarising the standard of questions, the standard of the examination process, the conduct of the examination process and the quality of the students.

### Role, Duties and Responsibilities of External Examiners

All External Examiners shall be expected to:

- Comment upon the standards of modules/awards and that modules/awards are comparable to all appropriate nationally recognised standards [Examiners are primarily directed to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and applicable subject benchmark statements (see [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)). Oversight may include modules which do not directly contribute to a student's classification results, but is nevertheless important in defining the academic standard];
- Ensure that assessment methods are fair, that assessment is operated fairly and in accordance with University regulations [Examiners are directed to the Code of Practice for Assessment];
- Review the assessment performance of students as a cohort;
- Consider and approve all draft examination papers, all in-programme, practical and other assessments that contribute 50% or more of the assessment for a module;
- Receive examination scripts/access to GradeMark, in-programme assessments, practical assignments, evidence related to oral examinations/presentations and project reports/dissertations upon which marks have been awarded (where the cohort size exceeds 10 students a sample of examination/assessment shall be

## The Role of the External Examiner

submitted from all levels of performance). The purpose of this is to oversee that robust moderation of assessments has taken place;

- External Examiners must not be involved in marking student work;
  - Verify that the University's policy on moderation of marks has been applied and provide comment on the evidence provided;
  - Comment on the way in which feedback on assessments is being provided to students to promote learning;
  - Comment on any other opportunities provided to enhance the quality of the student's learning opportunities;
  - Comment on examples of good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment;
  - Attend and make recommendations to Examining Boards relating to the awards of degrees, diplomas and certificates or the confirmation of results for stand-alone modules [Where there is a Reconvened Examination Board to reconsider for example the result of an appeal, then attendance is not required. The examiner should however be consulted about and make their views known on any proposed amendment to the classification];
  - Confirm, by signing pass lists of candidates that they have been satisfied with the assessment process and the standards achieved by the students;
  - Be consulted on curriculum development, including the introduction of new programmes of study and revisions to the existing programmes of study;
- Make a full report on the assessment process to the University on an annual basis.

Immediately report any circumstances relating to allegations of unfair practice in writing to the Chair of the Examining Board concerned; External Examiners are not required to give approval to degree classifications or overall module marks where the decision has been deferred due to issues relating to unfair practice or an administrative error has occurred with respect to the recording of marks or calculation of result.

## The Role of the External Examiner

External Examiners shall have enough evidence to determine that internal marking and classifications are of an appropriate standing and are consistent. They shall inspect a sufficient amount of work of the candidates to enable them to arrive at a judgement that can be applied to the assessment as a whole.

### The Role of the Chief External Examiner

A Chief External Examiner may be appointed in situations where a large team of External Examiners has been appointed to consider a collection of related programmes and/or standalone modules. A Chief External Examiner may also be appointed if the team of External Examiners is made up of a significant number of non-academic examiners and/or those with limited experience as External Examiners.

The Chief External Examiner shall be expected to:

- Review a cross section of assessed work in order to ensure equity across modules and quality assure the programme as a whole;
- Identify areas of good practice or concern across the programme;
- Assess practice and provide comment on the quality assurance of all assessment practices;
- Liaise with other Chief External Examiners to gain an overview of the standards across the whole programme;
- Chief External Examiners for the MB BCh programme will be appointed to cover Phase 1 (Year 1 and Year 2) and Phase 2 (Year 3 and Year 4);
- Attend practical examinations (for MB BCh).

## The Role of the External Examiner

### Oversight of the Moderation Process

The role of the External Examiner is to ensure that the University's policy on moderation of marks has been robustly applied and **NOT** to second mark assessments.

Consequently the External Examiner may not expect or encourage an Examining Board to raise or lower marks for individual students if only a sample of work has been submitted to the External Examiner. The External Examiner may wish to see a larger sample from the assessment or a wider range of assessed work if there are any concerns about the marking and moderation process.

On the advice and suggestion of the External Examiner to suggestions concerning the alteration of marks for the entire cohort, the Examining Board will consider the relevant approach to be undertaken (through arithmetic re-checking of marks, re-marking or rescaling or amendment of assessment/teaching approaches for future cohorts). Any adjustments should be reported to, endorsed and minuted fully by the College/School Examining Board.

### Volume of Assessed Work to be Scrutinised

All or a sample of assessments are made available to the External Examiner in order to check that assessment and moderation procedures have been adhered to. The volume of assessments sent to the External Examiner will depend on the following factors:

- The number of students in the cohort;
- Ensuring representative distribution of marks for the cohort, i.e. samples in each classification band, including fails and exceptional performance;
- Whether this is the first cohort of a newly validated programme.

## The Role of the External Examiner

Sampling arrangements will therefore normally provide for External Examiners to see a representative sample of scripts or assessed work from each class (including FAIL, where appropriate). A representative sample of approximately 10% of the total number of scripts or assessments for the module should be selected, but subject to a minimum of five scripts and a maximum of twenty scripts. If the cohort is less than 10 students all work should be made available to the External Examiner. However, a norm of 10 pieces of assessment per module is suggested.

In addition to actual assessments, the feedback provided on the work should also be available for scrutiny, along with evidence of the moderation process.

The role of the External Examiner is to verify that the University's policy on moderation of marks has been robustly applied and **NOT** to second mark assessments.

### Oversight of the Assessment Process

The External Examiner shall review and approve all draft examination papers and topics for continuous assessment where these contribute at least 50% towards the module's overall mark. The External Examiner can recommend the modification of questions if it is felt that these do not adequately assess the intended learning outcomes and/or reflect the relevant standard for the level of study.

### Meeting with Students, Including Viva Voce Examinations

External Examiners may, but are not required to, meet with students on subjects or programmes that they are examining, e.g. to obtain general feedback on the quality of teaching, clarity of information, academic/personal support, etc.

## The Role of the External Examiner

Viva voce examinations shall not be permitted for the purpose of determining degree classifications for candidates pursuing initial degrees.

### Involvement in Practical or Oral Assessments

Where the approved method of assessment for a particular module includes an oral or practical examination, External Examiners may be invited to observe such examinations.

### Academic Misconduct

If following review of assessed work/examinations the External Examiner considers that a student has engaged in an academic misconduct assessment practice they must immediately report the circumstances in writing to the Chair of the Examining Board concerned.

The Chair of the Examining Board shall then invoke the University's [Academic Misconduct Procedures](#).

### Participation and Attendance at Examining Boards

External Examiner(s) must be present at the subject-level College/School Examining Board at which the examination results in the subject(s) in which they have been involved are determined.

If an External Examiner, exceptionally, cannot attend a, Examining Board, they must be available for consultation by telephone, video network or other suitable means with the Chair of the Examining Board. The External Examiner must have all relevant documents necessary for the due performance of the business of the meeting.

## The Role of the External Examiner

If unable to attend, the External Examiner shall submit, in advance, a written report on their findings to the Chair of the Examining Board which should be distributed to all members of the Board and considered in finalising module marks.

The External Examiner(s) shall not be required to attend Interim Examining Board meetings but may do so if they wish. Consultation shall take place by correspondence or other appropriate means.

External Examiner(s) shall be available for consultation for the Progression and Awards Board, at which credit is awarded, progression issues are determined and degrees are awarded.

### Signing Pass Lists

External Examiners must sign the pass list/results sheet to signify endorsement of the marks for the modules and that decisions have been made in accordance with award regulations.

Where unable to attend, the External Examiner must submit a statement to the Chair of the Examining Board which states that they agree with the final marks awarded and standards achieved.

If the External Examiner is unwilling to sign then they shall submit, in writing, their rationale, with justification to the Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic). The Pro Vice Chancellor will investigate any issues which might mean that students' marks would not otherwise be considered at the Awards Board. The Pro Vice Chancellor shall have authority to sign the pass list in lieu of the External Examiner. The signed pass list shall be forwarded to Academic Services for record keeping as part of the Progression and Awards Board minutes.

## The Role of the External Examiner



### Confidentiality and Security

Examiners are reminded that all draft assessment questions and student work submitted is confidential and that appropriate arrangements should be made to ensure its security.

## Information and Support

External Examiners play a crucial role in assuring standards and the University is committed to supporting them to do this in accordance with [QAA's Quality Code](#).

### University Documents

The following resources are relevant for you:

Our policies on:

[Accuracy of Published Marks Procedure](#)

[Academic Misconduct Procedure](#)

[Regulations for Academic Appeals](#)

[Policy on Moderation](#)

[Feedback and Assessment Policy](#)

Assessment Regulations for Taught Programmes:

[Undergraduate Assessment Regulations](#)

[Regulations for Initial Degrees & Undergraduate Awards](#)

[Taught Postgraduate Assessment Regulations](#)

[Postgraduate Taught Awards Regulations and Procedures](#)

[Foundation Degree Regulations](#)

[Assessment Regulations for the MB BCh Degree](#)

[Academic Regulations for the Degree of Master of Research \(MRes\)](#)

[Academic Regulations for the Degree of Professional Doctorate](#)

[Programme/Assessment Regulations for Research Programmes](#)

## Information and Support

Please also see our [Policies page](#) for additional information.

The [Code of Practice for Quality Assurance](#) contains policies and procedures relating to approving, monitoring and reviewing programmes. The Code of Practice also includes information on:

- Moderation and markers disputes;
- Penalties for exceeding word limits;
- Marking of final year projects.

Additionally, you should have received (if appropriate) a copy of the report and College/School Response of the previous External Examiner for the programme with your appointment letter. Please contact us if you haven't.

### College/School Documents

Colleges/Schools are expected to provide each External Examiner with various documents. As an External Examiner you should receive:

- Programme overview;
- Relevant subject benchmark statements (though you can also access these from the QAA's website);
- Programme specifications for the relevant programme(s);
- Minutes of the relevant examination board meeting(s);
- Comparative statistics on student performance;
- A summary of degree classification results (these are available to Colleges/Schools on the University's Sharepoint site);

## Information and Support

- The mean mark for modules over the past few sessions and the mean mark across all modules. Centrally, such modular statistics are produced using the ARQUE software and made available to Colleges/Schools.

### Learning, Teaching and Assessment Matters

- Assessment marking criteria;
- College/School and/or Subject Handbook and Assessment Policy (including marking criteria, late penalties, extenuating circumstances, moderation practices and details of the modules etc.);
- Copy of the syllabus for the modules and also the assessment schedule (if not included in the Student Handbook).

### Procedures for Allegations of Breaches of Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct

- Procedures for the consideration of extenuating circumstances.

### Logistical matters Timetable of key activities/duties during the year

- Timetable of key activities/duties during the year.
- Information on the likely number of scripts/pieces of assessed work to oversee and comment on the moderation process.

Colleges/Schools should tell you who to contact within the College/School and discuss with you communication channels and how you prefer to receive material. In addition to the above documents, you should also be told about the following:

## Information and Support

- The date of the Examining Board meeting(s), preferably at the start of each academic year;
- Procedures for the submission of draft examination papers and other assessments for approval;
- Arrangements for the approval of supplementary assessments. (It is considered good practice to submit main and supplementary examination papers for approval at the same time.);
- Anticipated dates of the receipt of the assessed work (if hard copies are used), and with the required date of return to the College/School and the format of submission (paper or electronic);
- For work that is submitted electronically, the date when access to BlackBoard will be granted.

External Examiners should be familiar with any electronic systems used as part of the marking process.

For taught postgraduate programmes in particular, Colleges/Schools should notify the External Examiner of the anticipated dates when the pieces of work submitted following their directed independent learning would be submitted for their oversight of the moderation process.

The broad timetable of University level Progression and Awards Board dates may be found by clicking the link to the right. Subject level Boards are usually held a few days prior to these University Boards.

## Information and Support

### New to External Examining?

New External Examiners must shadow the outgoing External Examiner during the final year of their period of office. At a minimum, you should attend the College/School Examining Board(s) but will not have any other duties as an External Examiner that session. You will not receive a fee, but will be reimbursed any expenses incurred for your attendance at the Examination Board.

External Examiners with no prior experience of Higher Education may not have sole oversight of a programme.

### Induction

We expect new External Examiners to attend the annual induction event.

External Examiners now in their second year who were unable to attend the previous year's induction event are welcome to attend this beneficial event. Staff within the University are also encouraged to attend the event.

Here is a [video](#) of this year's induction event held on 22 March 2019.

### Information about External Examiners

In line with the QAA's Quality Code, the name, position and institution of External Examiners will be included in College/School handbooks. Students must not contact you directly and, if they do, please inform us.

## Information and Support

### Disputes Involving the External Examiner

External Examiners shall be bound by the academic and assessment regulations of the University. These are published in the University's [Academic Regulations](#).

External Examiners shall offer advice and comments regarding the standards of the cohort and the assessment process. The External Examiner shall have equal power with internal members of the Examining Board and may not override the collective view of the Board. Where the External Examiner is dissatisfied with decisions taken by the Board or is in disagreement regarding issues of standards on taught modules, the views of the External Examiner shall be noted in the minutes of the College/School Examining Board and in the External Examiners' report. These comments can be conveyed to the institution by means of their annual report and/or by separate correspondence to the Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic).

The External Examiner may appeal, in exceptional circumstances, to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) or another Pro-Vice-Chancellor (where the PVC Student Experience is unavailable or is in conflict of interest). The decision of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor shall be final.

When the decision of an External Examiner considering a dissertation submitted for a Master's degree by Examination and Dissertation gives rise to a case of dispute between the External Examiner(s) and internal examiners it is within the power of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) to decide on the matter, at their discretion, or to appoint another External Examiner to provide an independent opinion. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) may take into account any written reports submitted by members of the Examining Board.

## External Examiners' Reports

In choosing a second External Examiner the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) may also take into account, but need not be bound by, the nomination (if any) of an Examining Board for a second External Examiner. A decision on whether or not to reconvene the Examining Board shall be at the discretion of this second External Examiner whose decision on this matter shall be final.

### EXTERNAL EXAMINERS' REPORTS

External Examining is a cornerstone of the UK Higher Education system for the assurance of standards and quality. External Examiners' reports are therefore vital information to the University to confirm that this function has been fulfilled, to identify any areas for improvement along with features of innovative practice that may be worthy of sharing and adoption elsewhere.

### How to Complete the Online Report

You must fill out an annual report using our electronic submission system. The current report template can be found at:

<https://intranet.swan.ac.uk/ExternalExaminers/>

Reports should be sufficiently detailed, addressing each of the items raised in the report form template. Where a report is deemed to be lacking in detail, it may be referred back to the External Examiner for revision.

## External Examiners' Reports

### What Aspects does the Report Cover?

The report draws extensively on the relevant indicators of the QAA's Quality Code. External Examiners' comments on the examining process shall be required, including observations on the structure and content of the programme of study and its delivery and also areas of good practice and opportunities to enhance the quality of student learning opportunities.

Topics include:

#### Assessment Practice

- Appropriateness and comprehensiveness of assessment methods to the curriculum and whether or not these are clearly demonstrated in the evidence reviewed;
- Quality and appropriateness of the examination papers and coursework materials and usefulness of feedback to students;
- Sufficiency of number and range of papers from the whole cohort to enable you to determine that the internal marking was appropriate and consistent;
- The adequacy of moderation arrangements.

#### Standards

- The appropriateness of the aims and intended learning outcomes for the programme and its structure and content;
- Student achievement/performance (e.g. pass rates, quality of work etc); and
- Comparison with national standards (subject benchmarks, Qualifications Framework and the requirements of Professional Bodies).

## External Examiners' Reports

### Administrative Arrangements

- Was adequate information provided on the programme/course aims;
- The syllabus and marking schemes used to assess it;
- Did you receive the questions for approval (and in good time);
- Were model answers provided;
- If appropriate, were arrangements for Examination Boards satisfactory;
- Arrangements for inspecting examination material or other forms of assessment,
- Opportunity to meet students (if appropriate);
- Adherence to Assessment Regulations.

### Other Aspects

- Examples of good, interesting or innovative practice.

### Collaborative Arrangements and Reports

If your duties have been extended to include consideration of students under an associated collaborative agreement, please comment on any specific issue relating to collaborative arrangements not covered in the above sections.

External Examiners' reports for collaborative programmes are reviewed in exactly the same manner as for programmes taught directly by the University. A copy is sent to the appropriate member of staff at the Collaborative Partner and it is expected that there will be a joint development of a response to the Examiner's report.

## External Examiners' Reports

### What not to Include in a Report

External Examiners are requested not to identify individual students or staff in the report, except in exceptional circumstances where the recognition of noteworthy practice or exemplary performance is felt to be important.

### Reports on Postgraduate Taught Programmes

You are encouraged to wait until you have moderated the dissertations to submit one complete report that covers both Part One and Part Two.

### When are Reports Due?

For College/School Examination Boards held in June, the report is due within six weeks of the date of the Board (usually **July 31**).

If the Examination Boards are held at times other than June, the reports are expected within a period of one month following the meeting.

Taught Postgraduate Programmes – reports are due by **6 December**.

For taught postgraduate programmes, we ask that External Examiners communicate any urgent matters relating to the taught modules following the June examination board so that changes can be made prior to the next teaching of those modules. However, a specific report form is not required for this activity. Such issues, and the response to them, should be summarised in your Annual Report which covers Part One and Part Two to the University due by 6 December.

## External Examiners' Reports

### What Happens if a Report isn't Submitted?

If an External Examiner does not submit a report, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will take such steps as appropriate to the circumstances to obtain it, and/or may choose to issue a letter of premature termination as a result.

Failure to submit reports or situations of unsatisfactory performance can lead to an informal warning or the premature termination of an External Examiner's contract. Fees are not paid until a satisfactory report is submitted.

### Overview Reports at End of Office

At the end of the period of appointment, an External Examiner is expected to provide in their annual report, an overview of issues that have arisen which will be conveyed to their successor.

### Sensitive Issues

If the External Examiner wishes to raise a sensitive or confidential issue they may write directly to the Vice Chancellor of Swansea University.

Where an External Examiner has a serious concern that cannot be dealt with through the appropriate internal channels there is a further option which may be invoked namely the QAA's Concerns Scheme.

## External Examiners' Reports

### Action to be Taken Urgently

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and the Director of Academic Services receive copies of External Examiners' reports. If their attention is drawn to any issue of concern which requires urgent action the issue can be dealt with outside the quality assurance committee structure, but must involve the College/School and other relevant staff. Reports on the action taken, if any, shall be provided to the Academic Standards and Quality Committee as appropriate.

### External Examiners' Responsibilities with Regard to Reports

External Examiners are responsible for:

- Preparing, on an annual basis, a report on the College/School provision for which they are responsible for overseeing;
- Submitting the report in a timely manner (within six weeks of the Examining Board – for those held in June, i.e. by 31 st July), or one month after the Examining Board;
- For taught postgraduate programmes, submitting specific concerns about the taught modules directly to the Programme Director/Examinations Officer shortly after the Examination Board in June and completing an annual report which includes moderation of dissertations (i.e. Part One and Part Two) by 6 December;
- Ensuring that the subject team respond adequately/with justification with respect to recommendations made to assure the standards and/or enhance quality.

## External Examiners' Reports

### Who Gets a Copy of your Report?

When you submit your report using our web-based application, it is immediately available to:

- The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) – Chair of Academic Standards and Quality Committee;
- The Director of Academic Services;
- The relevant Head of College/School or nominee;
- The Director of the College/School Learning and Teaching Committee;
- The appropriate Programme Director.

And forwarded to the Principal of the relevant collaborative partner institution (where appropriate).

Academic Quality Services staff will also provide a copy of the report to the Chair of the Progression and Awards Board for consideration as part of the University's Quality Assurance procedures.

### Student Access to External Examiners' Reports

External Examiners' reports are made widely available to University and College Committees responsible for quality assurance. The membership of these Committees will include student representatives and consequently student representatives will also have access to the External Examiner's report and College/School response to the report through the relevant committee structures and are expected to inform/contribute to the response.

## External Examiners' Reports

Copies of reports may also be obtained upon request under the Freedom of Information legislation.

External Examiners may submit separate confidential reports on a programme directly to the Vice Chancellor. These confidential reports are however **NOT** made available to students or to the relevant University Committees.

### Drafting a Response – the Programme Director and Board of Study

The Programme Director drafts a response to the External Examiner's report using an on-line template and consults with members of the Board of Study. Where individual students are mentioned in the report, the programme director will act in accordance with the [Policy on Redaction of Personal Identifiers from External Examiners' Reports](#).

If the programme is delivered collaboratively, then input from the collaborative partner is required.

Board of Studies aren't obliged to adopt/implement all recommendations made by an External Examiner. However, a strong justification for not adopting the recommendation must be made and outlined in the response template.

The response template has a section asking the programme director to reflect on the progress attained regarding the previous year's action plan. It is important for Boards of Studies and College Learning and Teaching Committees to monitor their action plans during the academic year.

## External Examiners' Reports

### Reviewing College/School-wide Issues from External Examiner's Reports

The College/School Learning and Teaching Committee must approve the proposed subject level response from the Board of Study and consider any College/School-wide issues. Where possible, there should be sufficient discussion to assure the students on the rationale of any proposed actions (or inactions).

The Chair of the College/School Learning and Teaching Committee can return and request revisions to the intended actions if they are dissatisfied with the robustness of the proposed response. There may then be an iterative process in which further revised response templates are reviewed and considered.

Once approved at College/School level, the response template along with the report are submitted to the Academic Registry in order for further scrutiny by the institutional-level Academic Boards and for a copy of the report and response to be returned to the External Examiner for their information.

While institutionally a response is returned, it is expected that normally the College/School would also keep their External Examiners informed of developments.

### Deadline for Responding to the External Examiner's Reports

Ideally, approved subject-level response templates should be submitted within one month of receipt of the External Examiner's report being submitted. For the majority of undergraduate programmes, the expected submission date is September 30th (see [When are Reports due?](#)).

## External Examiners' Reports

The responses should be submitted in a timely manner to ensure that the experience of students in the next cohort is assured and wherever possible, enhanced.

### Ongoing Monitoring of Actions

Programme Directors and Boards of Studies are expected to undertake ongoing implementation and monitoring of their actions in response to the recommendations of the External Examiner and to report upon such progress in subsequent response templates. See the Boards of Studies standard agendas. Similarly, College L&T Committees should keep College/School-wide issues under scrutiny.

### Colleges/Schools – the Responsibilities of Academic Staff in Responding to External Examiners' Reports

The Head of College/School has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the College addresses any issues of concern promptly and that a relevant course of action is agreed. Where the issue relates to a particular module, then the Head of College/School must ensure that this is communicated to the module coordinator and that necessary changes are acted upon. They may delegate the operational responsibility to e.g. the Chair of the College's/School's Learning and Teaching Committee.

College staff are required to:

- Ensure that an appropriate response (using the set template) is drafted in response to the report in a timely manner and that reasons for **NOT** adopting the recommendations of an External Examiner have robust justification.

## External Examiners' Reports

- Consider and respond to College/School-wide issues and involve student representatives in meetings of the College/School Learning and Teaching Committee where reports and responses must be formally discussed.
- Periodically monitor that intended actions are being progressed, including college wide matters.
- Programme Directors should ensure that progress towards the intended actions outlined in their response template is monitored through Boards of Studies meetings as part of the annual programme review process.
- Where collaborative programmes are involved, the Head of College is responsible for ensuring that the collaborative partner has also responded appropriately to issues raised and including this information in the College/School Response Form.

### How the University Scrutinises External Reports and College/School Responses The Role of Academic Boards

To receive:

- A copy of the reports of External Examiners;
- All response templates from each College Learning and Teaching Chair.

The role of the Academic Boards is to:

- Ensure that Colleges/Schools have considered the reports and have produced an acceptable and sufficiently detailed response and proposed actions to the External Examiner's recommendations;
- Follow up with any inadequate responses;
- Identify examples of good practice;

## External Examiners' Reports

- Highlight any issues that need to be addressed by the College/School or to be referred to the Regulations, Quality and Standards, Committee i.e. issues that lie outside the immediate control of the Academic Board;
- Monitor submission of External Examiner reports and college responses;
- Produce a detailed minute outlining the Academic Board's scrutiny of External Examiners reports to the LTQC;
- Administrative support staff to the Academic Board will ensure that the College's/School's response and any specific comments are returned to the External Examiner.

If the response template is deemed to be incomplete or inadequate, the Dean may refer the response back to the College/School for revision.

Following this, if the response is still considered unsatisfactory, the Dean will inform the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) who might undertake further investigation of the matter with the Head of College/School.

### The Role of the University's Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee

The LTQC is responsible for:

- Undertaking the relevant quality control functions to ensure that the procedures for considering reports have been applied;
- Responding to institutional level issues that arise from the reports.

Issues of good practice are drawn together into an institutional Digest and shared through the University's Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee and [SALT](#).

## External Examiners' Reports

### Policy on Redaction of Personal Identifiers from External Examiners' Reports

Any information which identifies individual students stated on an External Examiner's report will be redacted. Due to the volume of reports received and the instantaneous electronic availability of reports to Colleges/Schools, it is the responsibility of the programme director to review the External Examiner's report and to advise the relevant staff in the Academic Quality Office, Academic Registry of any report in which a student is identified and where redaction is necessary. Reports requiring redaction must be identified as soon as possible, preferably within two weeks of their receipt by the University.

Only student names/numbers will be blanked out in the redaction process. Only specified staff of the Academic Registry will be enabled to perform this redaction to retain security of the system and the confidence of the External Examiners in providing a full report.

Once redacted, a version of the report, suitable for circulation to student representatives, will be made available to the College/School for internal scrutiny and response. This redacted version of the report will also be made available to the University's quality committees for consideration.

## External Examiners' Reports

### What are Examples of Institutional Issues?

Institutional issues would encompass comments made by the External Examiner that:

- There were serious concerns about the academic standards, content and structure of the programme;
- Standards of marking or moderation were poor;
- There were serious concerns about the integrity of the assessment process;
- Assessment regulations had been incorrectly and/or inconsistently applied.

### Reporting Back to the External Examiner

Once reports and responses have been scrutinised through the University's quality assurance committee structures, the Academic Registry provides to the External Examiner:

- A copy of their report;
  - A copy of the college response;
- any additional specific comments made by the Academic Board,
- A copy of the Institutional Digest.

## External Examiners' Reports

### Deadlines for External Examiners' Reports

The table below outlined the normal timescale of full consideration of External Examiner reports (assuming submission of the report by 31st July).

Receipt of External Examiners' reports. Reports circulated	by 31st July
College Committees to consider reports and to address issues of concern, etc.	by start of term
Heads of Colleges/nominee to ensure response template completed	by November meeting of Academic Board
Academic Boards to consider reports	during November and December meetings
Response Form copied to External Examiners	November/December
Academic Boards report to RQSC	by end of Michaelmas term
Institutional Digest produced summarising good practice. Copies to External Examiners and internal staff	Spring term

## External Examiners' Reports



### Programmes with Irregular Start/End Dates

For those programmes with irregular start/end dates in which the cohort does not 'complete' in June, External Examiners' reports are received during the academic year. As a result the specific deadlines outlined above are not relevant, however the full process should normally be completed within five calendar months.

### The Process, in Outline

See the [flow chart](#) summarising the process for dealing with External Examiners' Reports, giving deadlines as appropriate.

## Paying Fees and Expenses

### When do I Get my Fee?

For External Examiners of taught programmes, you will receive a fee once you have submitted an acceptable end of year report using the University's on-line system and have sent in a signed [claim form](#). If you oversee two cohorts, we will only process one fee at the submission of your report on the second cohort. You must submit a claim form as the fee is not automatically generated.

The University's Finance Department processes claims around the 14th of each month, so please be patient during busy times or if your claim is sent to us around this time.

If you've already provided us with a copy of your eligibility to work in the UK (normally a copy of your passport), then you won't need to fill these details in each time you submit a claim form.

### How to Claim Expenses

For all external examiner claim forms please submit your signed form, along with original receipts to the address shown below. For Research Degrees submit your claim form to the Research Office at the address below.

Don't forget to make a copy of your receipts first, just in case they get lost in the post. You don't have to wait until you've written your report to claim expenses.

## Paying Fees and Expenses

### Where to Send your Signed Forms

Please forward your signed fee/expenses form either electronically (if you have no expenses) or together with expense receipts to:

**External Examiners**  
**Academic Quality Services**  
**Academic Services**  
**Swansea University**  
**Singleton Park**  
**Swansea**  
**SA2 8PP**  
[externalexaminers@swansea.ac.uk](mailto:externalexaminers@swansea.ac.uk)

### How are the Fees Calculated?

The fees for overseeing taught programmes are worked out by using the formulae in the regulations, depending upon the type of programme that you oversee.

A revised fee banding structure is being introduced for External Examiners commencing their period of office in Session 2018-19, as per the tables below:

## Paying Fees and Expenses

### Undergraduate Taught External Examiners

BAND	Total Modules	Flat Fee
A	1	£200
B	2-6	£350
C	7-14	£450
D	15-22	£550
E	23-29	£650
F	30+	£750 (Maximum fee)

### Postgraduate Taught External Examiners

BAND	Total Modules*	Flat Fee
A	1	£250
B	2-10	£450
C	11-19	£650
D	20+	£750 (Maximum fee)

\* Please note all dissertation modules will be worth five modules when fee is calculated.

In all cases fees are only paid following submission of your report.

## Paying Fees and Expenses

### Fees for Undergraduate Programmes

On submission of the report, the minimum fee is £250, added to this is an amount representing the students FTE load for the modules comprising the programme.

To calculate the fee the following information is required:

Module Credit Rating ÷ Student Numbers x £3 = total fee for module

Credit Value	Credit Weighting
10 credits	1/12
15 credits	1/8
20 credits	1/6
30 credits	1/4
40 credits	1/3
50 credits	1/2.4
60 credits	1/2

#### Example:

11 modules @ 20cr with 170/6 students enrolled =	28
Plus: 1 module @ 60cr with 4/2 students enrolled =	2
Total =	30
Total fees for modules: 30 x £3 =	£90
Fee =	£250
TOTAL FEE =	£340

## Paying Fees and Expenses

This fee is set for the duration of appointment, unless additional work is undertaken. Subsequent years may have an annual incremental percentage rise (this is subject to an annual review).

Maximum fee £750. If the fee exceeds this amount, the College/School would be contacted to request that an additional external examiner be appointed to share the burden.

### Fees for Nursing and Related Programmes

The fee is paid retrospectively. The College keeps a record of work sent to the External Examiner, which is used to calculate the fee.

The minimum fee is £250 plus the total number of assignments/scripts/examination papers eg 1 - 15 = £10; 16 - 30 = £20; 31 - 45 = £30 increasing, is added to the minimum fee of £250. This fee is calculated every year.

### Fees for Stand-alone modules in Nursing

The fee is paid retrospectively. The College keeps a record of work sent to the external examiner, which is used to calculate the fee.

The minimum fee is £150 plus the total number of assignments/scripts/examination papers. The fee is then calculated as above.

## Paying Fees and Expenses

### Fees for Taught Postgraduate Programmes

(including Postgraduate Diplomas and Postgraduate Certificates, excluding MA in Translation with Language Technology)

The minimum fee is £175, added to this is an amount representing the students FTE load for the modules comprising the programme.

The Taught Masters fee is:

Part One

£15 per full-time student or £7.50 per part-time student plus retainer

The fee is calculated every year (the maximum fee is £750).

Per dissertation moderated £25.

### Fees for additional visit to the University

There is an additional payment of £45 per day for attendances for examining in addition to the Part 1 Examination Board.

### Fees for MA in Translation with Language Technology (MALT) Programme

This programme has a different method of payment to all the other Taught Masters programmes. All of the MALT External Examiners share the programme, therefore the fee has to be split, with the overall External Examiner having the main share. The College advises us on the proportionate amount of work.

## Paying Fees and Expenses



### Fees for Acting as a Chief External Examiner

The total fee for the Chief External Examiner (MB BCh excepted) is £250. For Chief External Examiners in the School of Medicine, any additional work is calculated as above in the section on fees for nursing and related programmes.