

HE External Expertise Policy

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Revision History

Version	Purpose/Change	Date
5.2	2.1 clarification that assignment briefs should be shared with EEs before issuing to students (OU only) Dean of University Centre updated to Assistant Dean of University Centre in text.	December 2023
5.1	1.4 number of support days for Academic Reviewer amended. 2.1 clarification that samples of work should also be sent to EEs for the resit board (OU only) 6.1 correct information given as to where OU EE Reports are sent. 8.2/8.3 removal of HoS in attendance an action planning meetings. Process for reporting outcomes updated.	September 2022
5.0	Includes length of time in post for EEs / appointment procedure for OU EEs. Reference to secure sharing of student work included. Strategy Board noted as appointers of Assessment Board. Academic Reviewers added as compulsory at OU Assessment Boards. Head of Faculty replaces Assistant Principal as Chair in the absence of the Dean of University Centre. Quality Assurance includes reference to progress meetings. Details of Pearson reports changed to an appendix. OU F58 form added as an appendix.	January 2022

Please contact HEoffice@liv-coll.ac.uk or the Reception if you would like this document in an alternative form.

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This policy is written in line with the Expectations and Core practices of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code), which are a key reference point for higher education providers in all parts of the UK.

This policy ensures the College seeks the involvement of external, impartial and independent academic and/or professional expertise ensuring that the standards and quality of our courses cohere with the relevant national qualifications framework, Subject Benchmark Statements, Characteristics Statements and any relevant PSRB requirements.

1. Function

1.1 External examination is how awarding bodies check that the College is operating appropriate quality assurance and maintaining national standards for our higher education programmes.

1.2 The duration of an External Examiner's appointment will normally be for four years, with an exceptional extension of one year to ensure continuity (Open University programmes).

1.3 External examination usually takes place through an annual visit, although additional visits may be put in place to take into account varying programme start and end dates, certification requirements and where additional actions are required. The External Examiner will agree a date for the visit with the Programme Leader. In exceptional circumstances, visits may be conducted remotely via correspondence¹.

1.4 In addition to an External Examiner, Open University programmes are also allocated an Academic Reviewer. The role of the Academic Reviewer (AR) is to provide an academic link between the OU and the University Centre. ARs normally hold the following qualities:

- Member of academic staff at the OU
- Subject expertise and broader interests
- Help support the curriculum – learning resources, pedagogy, assessment design, schemes of work
- Help to support the outcomes of validations such as monitoring recommendations from validation events
- Support normally is 3 days per annum unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- An enhancement and monitoring role, to assure & enhance the student experience.
- Critical friend

¹ Programme Leaders should refer to current College guidelines and liaise with their External Examiner in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic.

- Attendance at Assessment Boards (Covid-19) and/or other committees such as Board of Studies
- Appraising External Examiner appointments
- Helping to support staff development activity

1.5 The following guidance relates to Pearson Higher National programmes and programmes validated by The Open University. For procedures relating to our validating partners, Liverpool John Moores University and The University of Huddersfield, please refer directly to their policies and procedures; [LJMU](#) / [HUDD](#).

2. Responsibilities of The City of Liverpool College University Centre

2.1 It is the responsibility of the University Centre to ensure the following:

- To participate in the selection of new External Examiners using form F5B (**Appendix 1**) and to seek approval of selection from the validating body (Open University Programmes only).
- To provide External Examiners with briefing and induction to the programme, these may include assessment regulations, both generic and specific where applicable, programme specifications for the programme they are assigned to, student handbook(s), dates when their input is required, including board dates.
- To ensure that all programme Assignment Briefs are shared with External Examiners for approval before issuing to students – usually over the summer period (OU programmes only).
- To ensure that External Examiners are sent samples of student work in a timely manner in advance of Assessment Boards, and Resit Assessment Boards (OU programmes only). Work will be sent securely by the Programme Leader using the College SharePoint system.
- To ensure that students are available at the time of visits / sampling to discuss assessment processes.
- To manage Assessment Boards.
- To ensure that reports of External Examiners are formally considered and, where necessary, that appropriate action is taken.
- To send External Examiners a response setting out the action taken following receipt of reports (Open University programmes)
- To provide an account of the responses made to the issues raised by External Examiners in the Annual Monitoring Report
- To make External Examiners' reports available in full to students, with the exception of any confidential reports made directly to the head of institution/reports detailing individual student feedback.
- To ensure that student registration information is accurate and up to date. Students who are no longer active on a programme must have their registration withdrawn.

- To include the name, position and institution of their External Examiners in module or programme information provided to students. External Examiners must refer any direct correspondence from students back to the institution, and institutions should include this in their guidance to External Examiners.

3. Responsibilities of the External Examiner

3.1 It is the responsibility of the External Examiner to ensure the following:

- To approve the form and content of all assessments contributing to an award, to make sure that the aims and learning outcomes of the programme are being tested fairly and to the standards required.
- To monitor any amendments to assessment tasks to accommodate special considerations so that they are fair and there is parity in the level of assessment.
- To sample students' work (usually anonymously) to make sure the assessment criteria have been interpreted correctly and that there is uniformity of assessment across the cohort. It is expected that External Examiners will be sent samples of work across all modules. Where cohorts are very small, they may ask to see all the work, including all fails and all borderline cases.
- To be familiar with the General Dental Council (GDC) learning outcomes and their context (Open University FD Dental Technology programme).
- To attend all Assessment Board meetings, including Resit Boards, and to discuss their report on the programme² (Open University programmes). For Pearson Higher Nationals, External Examiners have the right to attend Assessment Boards, although the College cannot insist on their attendance. If an External Examiner attends an Assessment Board, it is in the capacity of an adviser and they have no power of veto. If an External Examiner feels that a wrong decision is being made, they can only register their disagreement with the decision in their report.
- To inform the OU if the standards of its awards are judged to be at risk (Open University programmes).
- To sign pass lists and to write a timely report on programme delivery and student outcomes in the required format. Final External Examiners' reports should be received no later than two months after the final meeting of the Assessment Board at which awards are decided (Open University programmes). Pearson reports should usually be received within 10 working days of a visit and prior to the date of the Assessment Board.

² Where unforeseen circumstances prevent attendance the College and the OU should be informed so that a decision can be made regarding the postponement of the Board. In the event of non-attendance, External Examiners must indicate this in their written report at paragraph 9, 'The administration of the assessments, operation of examination boards...' and confirm that they were fully involved in the moderation of assessment and the external examining process. The written report should be submitted in advance of the meeting of the board of examiners so that the External Examiner's comments can be formally considered and recorded. Non-attendance by an External Examiner without good cause would usually constitute grounds for the termination of appointment.

- To advise on any proposed changes to the validated programme, particularly where these affect the assessment requirements. Proposed changes are subject to a formal approval process by OUVF. Once approved, the External Examiner should receive the amended module specifications and/or programme specification. External Examiners may also be consulted by the programme team on content or proposed changes to the programme structure (Open University programmes).

4. Unreasonable Expectations

4.1 External Examiners should NOT be expected to do any of the following:

- Have any direct involvement in Assessment or Internal Moderation; External Examiners are NOT second markers.
- Arbitrate where the assessment process has failed to come to a decision; academic assessment should be made well in advance of External Examiner involvement.
- Change marks for individual students, unless this is a one-off mistake in adding up points that was not spotted during the internal moderation. In such exceptional cases, questions should be asked as to why this mistake was not spotted before and whether the whole cohort's work needs to be re-checked.
- External Examiners can suggest that the marking is consistently too high or too low and that therefore some adjustment of marks across the cohort is appropriate, but it is up to the Board to decide whether that should happen, i.e. if the Board has assured itself that the right processes have been followed, then the External Examiner cannot override the marks.

5. Assessment Boards

5.1 For every programme of studies there must be an Assessment Board whose constitution (including a note of those members constituting a quorum) and terms of reference accord with the approved regulations for the programme.

5.2 The Assessment Board is appointed by the HE Strategy Group to which it is responsible for the fulfilment of its terms of reference. The following essential characteristics are common to all Assessment Boards:

- All programmes must have an Assessment Board.
- No other body has the authority to recommend the conferment of an award.
- External Examiners, Academic Reviewers, and a representative from the OU must attend (Open University programmes).
- The composition should remain the same for each meeting, although membership may change.
- All tutors responsible for teaching or assessment would normally be expected to attend.
- The Assistant Dean of the University Centre, or in their absence, the Head of Faculty will chair the Assessment Board.
- The Chair should be independent and not involved in the delivery of the programme or the assessment of the students in that programme or curriculum area.

5.3 It is a requirement that institutions have a system in place to accurately record and verify marks. The University Centre is responsible for providing all the Board documentation. Typically, this will include:

- An agenda that is circulated to all Board members in advance of the meeting and includes a reminder to members of the need to maintain appropriate confidentiality.
- Minutes of previous meeting(s) – these are confidential, and members should be reminded to take appropriate care in their use and storage of them.
- Transcripts that contain all assessment components completed by students, together with information about pass marks for each component.
- Reports from any subsidiary boards, including any reports on extenuating circumstances or student misconduct.
- Award Recommendation Lists (Open University programmes)

6. External Examiner Reports

6.1 For HE programmes validated by The Open University, External Examiners will be asked to submit their reports, within 2 months of the Assessment Board, directly to ouvp-external-examiners@open.ac.uk, and to the HE Quality and Registrar Officer. When they arrive, reports will be shared with the Assistant Dean of University Centre, Head of School, and Programme Leader.

6.2 Where an External Examiner's report raises serious issues that call into question the quality of the programme or the standard of the award, the validating body will investigate the matter on receipt of the report.

6.3 Where such concerns affect the FD Dental Technology programme, the GDC will be notified accordingly.

6.4 For Pearson Higher Nationals, External Examiners will provide two reports, Report A and Report B, which will be made available on Edexcel Online (EOL) within 10 working days of the visit/sampling. At this point, the Pearson Quality Nominee will be notified that the reports are available, and the Programme Leaders will be contacted so that they may access them.

6.5 Report A will provide feedback on the management and delivery of programmes and may include essential actions or recommendations. Essential actions are mandatory but do not prevent your current students from being certificated.

6.6 Report B will provide feedback on sampled student work. Essential actions will be identified where assessment does not meet national standards for any of the students sampled. **Essential actions in Report B will prevent certification for current students on the programme.** A more detailed breakdown of report outcomes is in **Appendix 2**.

6.7 Programme Leaders should ensure that students are given the opportunity to be fully involved in the reviewing of feedback from External Examiner reports (for Pearson programmes this relates to Report A - **ONLY**, as this report will not compromise the confidentiality of the students sampled).

7. Responses to External Examiner Reports

7.1 For HE programmes validated by The Open University all letters of response to the External Examiner will be drafted by the Programme Leader. Programme Leaders should aim to draft their letter of response and complete any feedback / action plan within two weeks of receiving the report. This will then be shared with the Head of School and HE Quality and Registrar Officer before being sent out.

7.2 In summary, the response will ensure that the following has taken place:

- Thanks are given to the External Examiner for their report
- Specific issues/comments/concerns are addressed
- An outline is given of how, by whom and when these will be considered and/or addressed
- Details are given of where the report and response will be considered (Programme Team Meeting/BoS) and how action will be monitored and the EE kept informed of progress
- A comment of how the report will inform the annual monitoring and review processes

7.3 For HE programmes validated by Pearson Edexcel there is no expectation to respond to the report unless there are actions in the report to be carried out and responded to. In this instance, there would normally be a follow up visit from the External Examiner, the outcome of which would be dependent on progress made by the programme team (**see 6.4 and Appendix 2**).

8. Quality Assurance

8.1 Actions from the External Examiner report, including the programme team's response, and any comments relating to good practise, should be included in the programme Annual Monitoring. The Programme Monitoring Report (Pearson) / Annual Programme Evaluation (OU) is reviewed by the Head of School and signed off by the HE Quality and Registrar Officer, and the Senior Quality Partnership Manager (SQPM) (Open University programmes).

8.2 Actions from the reports are shared with the HE Strategy Group, HE Operations Group and programme Board of Study. Their completion is monitored through progress meetings with the following:

- Programme Leader
- HE Quality and Registrar Officer
- Academic Reviewer (Open University programmes)

8.3 Where actions are not met, they must be rationalised within programme monitoring which will be monitored by the Head of School, and HE Quality and Registrar Officer. Outcomes of progress meetings/action plans are shared with the Head of School and reviewed by the Pedagogy and Insight team.

Appendix 1.



OPEN UNIVERSITY VALIDATION PARTNERSHIPS (OUVP) F5B

Application for the appointment of an external examiner for a taught programme

This form should be used to propose new external examiner appointments (form F5D should be used to propose extensions of appointment and the reallocation of duties between approved external examiners). The completed form should be returned to the relevant Senior Quality & Partnerships Manager, c/o OUVP, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, UK **along with an up-to-date copy of the proposed external examiner's CV**, not less than six months before the intended start of the period of tenure. Please complete all sections, including all sections of Part II. If a section is not applicable, please write N/A.

APPLICATION IN RESPECT OF CANDIDATE:

Title	Initials	Forenames	Surname
Contact Address:			
Postcode:			
Phone/Fax:			
Email:			

Part 1 Details of programme and institution

1 **Name of institution**

2 **Details of programme**

Award(s)/ approved title (if any)/ mode of attendance/ length of programme (years and terms)

3 Subject(s) to be examined

Assessments for which examiner will have particular responsibility with average student numbers where known

4 Proposed period of tenure

External examiners should normally be associated with four outputs from the programme, starting one term before the first output and finishing one term after the last output with which they are associated (normally Jan-Dec).

From (month) (year) to
(month) (year)

5 Examiner to be replaced

Complete if a new examiner is taking up appointment on the retirement of a predecessor

Name Position

Place of Work

Appointed from (month) (year) to
(month) (year)

6 External examiner team

Give details of other proposed/approved external examiners (name, place of work, area of responsibility and dates of appointment) using a supplementary sheet if necessary. Examiners not yet approved by OUVF should be clearly marked*

7 Tiered schemes

If a tiered examination scheme has been approved, indicate proposed examiner's place in the structure and which meetings examiner will be required to attend

Part II Details of proposed examiner

8 **Name**
Surname Title

Forename(s)

9 **Higher education**
College(s)/university/ies attended Qualifications gained, with
dates

Part II Details of proposed examiner continued

10 **Present Post**
If retired please indicate, and give last post with dates and home address

Present/last position

Present/last place of work

Address for correspondence

Email

Telephone number

11 **Employment**
Employer Post(s) with dates

12 Professional qualifications

Professional body
dates

Qualifications/status of membership, with

-
- 13 Current external examiner appointments** for OUVP, a university or other body, with dates. If the proposal will lead to a total of more than two external examiner appointments for taught programmes/modules concurrently, please give reasons in support of the proposal in a covering letter. Details should include names of institutions, programme titles, level and dates of appointment

Part II Details of proposed examiner continued

-
- 14 Experience as external examiner** over last five years, with names of institutions(s), programme titles and level, and dates of appointment
-

- 15 Other relevant experience** as internal examiner or in other capacity over last five years, with names of institutions where appropriate, programme titles and level, and dates
-

- 16 Research and related scholarly/professional activity/consultancy**
Give brief account of main activities with particular reference to last five years and list major publications (books, articles in refereed academic or professional journals), with dates
-

Part II Details of proposed examiner continued

- 17 Teaching experience**
Give brief account of main areas of teaching responsibilities (if any) over last five years

18 Any current/ previous association with institution/programme/individual staff/students;
with dates

Part III Authorisation

19 Signed: on behalf of Academic Board or other
relevant Academic Authority

Name:

Position:

Address:

Date:

Appendix 2.

Possible Outcomes of the Report (Pearson)

RELEASE - Certification is released, programme by programme, and a further sample is not required.

- The University Centre has provided a full sample and the External Examiner has confirmed there are adequate quality assurance procedures in place, and assessment is documented correctly.
- The External Examiner has agreed that student evidence is valid, authentic and sufficient, and the University Centre is assessing students to the national standard. However, they may identify essential actions or recommendations on how to improve on current practice.

NOT YET FULLY SAMPLED (NYFS) - Certification is not released, and a second sample will be requested.

- The External Examiner has not seen sufficient evidence in order to release certification for the programme.

CERTIFICATION PENDING – CENTRE ACTION REQUIRED - Certification is not released, and a second sample will be requested.

- The University Centre has provided a full sample, but the External Examiner has identified one or more essential actions that need to be addressed before releasing certification. These may include:
 - Students have not been assessed to the national standard
 - Assessment and/or internal verification has not been documented correctly on one or more of the programmes
 - Plagiarised work was found in the sample.

The external examination report is able to release certification separately for each programme within a sector. Therefore, if the External Examiner does not release one or more programmes within the report, this does not automatically affect certification of the other programmes.

Submitting a Second Sample

The University Centre will need to submit a second sample if the first sample did not result in a release of certification or if further sampling is required in order for certification to be released (NYFS). The External Examiner will get in touch to agree a timescale and to confirm the format for the second sample once there is access to the original report. The second sample will usually be conducted remotely.

The second sample will include:

- The elements of the first sample that prevented the release of certification, including all additional work completed by students to address any gaps identified during the visit
- Evidence that amendments have been made to address the issues highlighted in the external examination report, such as revised grades for the whole cohort for the unit(s) affected
- Work for additional students so that the External Examiner can check that standards are being reapplied consistently across a programme.

Once the second sample has been reviewed, the External Examiner will submit a second report within 10 working days.

RELEASE (2) - Certification is released and no further sampling is required for the academic year.

- The External Examiner has agreed that the University Centre is now assessing students to the national standard for all programmes but may offer recommendations on how to improve on current practice. Quality assurance procedures will also have been confirmed as adequate.

CERTIFICATION PENDING – PRINCIPAL STANDARDS SUPPORT

- The External Examiner still does not agree that the University Centre is assessing to national standards for one or more programmes.

At this point the Principal Standards Manager (PSM) for the relevant sector will meet with the programme team to agree a remedial action plan. The Programme Leader will need to complete the action plan before the Principal Standards Manager can release certification.