

Quality Code for Higher Education

External Examiners

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Date:	August 2016
Date of Implementation:	August 2016
Originator:	Higher Education & Skills Department
Approval by:	Higher Education Learning & Teaching Committee
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Description:	<p>The purpose of this Code of Practice (CoP) is to clarify External Examining processes. It is not intended as a substitute for the regulations and Codes of Practice of the awarding bodies or partner HEIs, where the College recognises these organisations as the responsible governing bodies in relation to the appointment, approval and oversight of matters concerning external examining processes. It is intended to enhance established regulations and make explicit responsibilities of all those involved in external examining processes within the College</p> <p>NOTE: Where the awarding body has different requirements this will take precedence over the College's Code of Practice</p>
Responsibilities:	Academic Heads / Curriculum Managers Higher Education & Skills Department
Applications for exemptions to:	Higher Education Learning & Teaching Committee
Report Exemptions to:	Higher Education Learning & Teaching Committee
Links to UK Quality Code for HE:	Chapter B7 Chapter B10

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Code of Practice (CoP) is built upon the regulations and Codes of Practice set by the awarding institutions that govern matters relating to external examiners at the College. These awarding bodies / partner HEIs include:
- The University of Hull
 - Sheffield Hallam University
 - Pearson / Edexcel
- 1.2 This CoP must be read in conjunction with relevant CoP's and regulations of awarding institutions.
- 1.3 This CoP embeds and builds upon established principles of fairness, equity and justice and recognises the External Examining process is integral to the College's rigorous control of standards.

2 Purpose and Function

- 2.1 The College recognises the functions of external examining processes as defined by the QAA in ensuring that:
- The academic standard of each award and its component parts is maintained at the appropriate level
 - Standards of student performance are properly judged against the appropriate level
 - The assessment process measures student achievement appropriately against the intended outcomes for the programme and is rigorous, fairly operated and in line with the awarding institution's policies and regulations
 - The College is able to compare the standards of programmes it delivers with those of other Higher Education or similar institutions, though their content may vary

3 Appointment of External Examiners, Rights and Responsibilities

- 3.1 The appointment period and External Examiners role is defined and regulated by the relevant awarding institution. Programme teams within the College should in every instance refer to the awarding institution Codes of Practice appertaining to external examiners for further information.
- 3.2 Whilst External Examiners will receive information regarding their role and remit from the awarding institution, the Higher Education & Skills Department must also ensure all External Examiners receive a welcome and orientation to the College. This will include:
- An introduction to the College's Higher Education & Skills Department
 - A copy of the College's boards and committees structures
 - A copy of the College's Department structures and its portfolio of programmes
 - Access to the College handbook for quality and standards
 - An invitation to the College for a general orientation and introduction to the programme and programme team
- 3.3 Curriculum Leaders must also ensure that External Examiners, on appointment, are:
- Sent copies of programme and module handbooks
 - Provided with marking schemes / criteria

- Provided with dates for forthcoming examination and assessment deadlines and dates for boards of examiners meetings
- Clearly communicated with to establish and ensure agreement over how arrangements will occur for matters relating to the External Examining process such as receipt and return of student assessment, attendance at exam boards

3.4 The Higher Education & Skills Department is responsible for maintaining a live register of External Examiner appointments. This must include:

- The External Examiners name and home institution (if applicable)
- Programme(s) and / or modules of responsibility and awarding institution
- Date of appointment
- Length of period of appointment
- The date of receipt of the External Examiners Report
- Date of Department / Curriculum Leader's response to the External Examiners Report
- The date of receipt of the annual monitoring report with analysis of External Examiners comments and recommendations

4 External Examiners and Assessment Procedures

4.1 The External Examiners role in relation to assessment is defined by the awarding institution, however the College in every instance must recognise it is the right of the External Examiner to see and approve all summative assessment items before any assessment material is published to the student or relevant others.

4.2 Draft examination papers must in every instance be seen and approved by an External Examiner before release to any student.

4.3 External Examiners must be invited to and are expected to attend where practicable – all relevant Module and Examination Boards being given sufficient notice of the dates of meetings.

5 Receipt of External Examiner Reports

5.1 All External Examiner reports must be initially received from the awarding institution to the Higher Education & Skills Department. If in any instance the External Examiners report is sent directly to the programme team or Department, this must be forwarded to the Higher Education & Skills Department immediately.

5.2 All External Examiners reports will be scrutinised and evaluated by the Director of Higher Education & Skills. A report or action plan will be produced by the Curriculum team and copied to the Higher Education & Skills Department. Emerging themes and trends will be reported and considered at the Higher Education Teaching & Learning Committee.

5.3 Full and serious consideration in all instances will be given by the College to the comments and recommendations contained within External Examiners' reports, and the outcomes. Actions and outcomes will be recorded in every instance; institutional level actions and outcomes will be recorded by the Higher Education Teaching & Learning Committee. Actions and outcomes at programme level will be recorded by the programme team.

5.4 The External Examiners report will be used as a primary source through which the College will determine the schedule of Curriculum Area Review activity that will occur throughout the following year.

6 External Examiner Reports and Quality Enhancement

6.1 External Examiners reports must be circulated to the Head of Department together with the Curriculum Leader for the programme team.

6.2 External Examiner's reports must be discussed at the relevant Department HE Operational meetings. This will usually be before the start of the next academic year to allow appropriate planning and to ensure enhancement led activities inform the agenda. Student representatives must also have access to the External Examiners reports at this point and their feedback on its content reported on within the minutes.

6.3 In instances where student representatives fail to attend the Department HE Operational meeting and where the External Examiner report is presented, the Academic Head must have in place other planned mechanisms through which students are informed of the External Examiners comments and actions planned; this process must be evident within quality audit trails.

6.4 External Examiner's reports must be analysed and action planning made clear within the programme Self Evaluation Document (SED).

6.5 The Department / Curriculum Leader must respond to all External Examiners reports (within a reasonable timescale) in written format as defined by the awarding institution. This activity will be directed by the Higher Education & Skills Department and should normally include a letter of acknowledgement and details of how External Examiner comments are to be acted upon. Comments may include details of the programme teams' response to the External Examiners comments and any planned actions for enhancement of quality and standards.

6.6 External Examiners reports must in every instance be used to share good practice with other programme teams or departments. This may occur through several routes but is likely to occur through the dissemination of good practice via the Higher Education Learning & Teaching Committee and the College central External Examiner reporting process.