



UNIVERSAL CONVENTIONS AND PROCEDURES

Academic Year 2023/24

Procedural Guidelines Governing the University's External Examiners

1 Status of the Conventions

The Conventions are reviewed annually and apply for the academic year 2023/24.

2 Induction and Briefing

All External Examiners will be invited to participate in on-line induction, via a series of presentations available from the External Examiners webpages.

After viewing the presentations, the Externals will be expected to return a short form to the University Executive Manager, confirming that they understand key points, and taking the opportunity to raise any queries.

Assessment Co-ordinators are encouraged to view the presentations, and to arrange Induction.

3 Involvement of External Examiners in the Setting of Assessments

3.1 General

When submitting draft assignments and examination papers, it is important to ensure that the External Examiners are also provided with copies of the relevant assessment criteria for the Programme, the Level of study, and, wherever possible, the mode of assessment and the subject/module. External Examiners should also be provided with the relevant marking schemes, and it is good practice in many subjects to provide model answers.

3.2 Examinations

Assessment Co-ordinators are expected to oversee submission of draft examination papers by Administrators to their External Examiners so that they may review them, comment on them and, if necessary, propose modification(s) before they are submitted, in photo-ready copy, to the Student Enrolment and Administration office. It is expected that such drafts will have undergone an internal scrutiny process before despatch to the External Examiners.

A schedule of dates for the submission of photo-ready copies to the Student Enrolment and Administration Office is issued early in each academic year after consultation with the Registrar's Operational Group. Assessment Co-ordinators should oversee drafting of examination papers is early enough for External Examiners to review and comment on the drafts and for colleagues within Hope to have enough time to make such adjustments as are felt to be necessary before the due date for the submission of photo-ready copies to the Student Administration office.

3.3 Formally Assessed Assignments

Schools/Departments are expected to submit to the External Examiners draft formal assignment tasks [e.g. essay/project titles and details] for review and comment.

4 Procedures for Selecting Samples of Students' Work to be Considered by the External Examiner, and for making those Samples Available

- 4.1** Schools/Departments are expected to oversee contact with their External Examiners well before each assessment period, to agree the samples that they will moderate, and the arrangements, including dates, for making the work available. [Remember to give your External adequate time to scrutinise the work, so that they can comment on standards.]
- 4.2** The School/Department is responsible for putting together the required sample of assessed work and the Administrator is responsible for sending it to the External Examiners according to their agreed schedule.
- 4.3** When providing a sample of students' work, it essential to send with it a full list of all candidates and their proposed grades, so that the external examiner may see where the sample received fits within the cohort as a whole. It is good practice also to include summary data, such as the number and percentage of candidates allocated to each grade. Ideally, the lists and summary data should be drawn from SITS.
- 4.4** It is essential that External Examiners should have the opportunity to examine a range of assessed assignments and examination papers for each module/subject. The sample is expected to include:
 - work within the first class band [for undergraduates] or the distinction band [for postgraduates];
 - proposed fails;
 - a representative sample of other work [including, for undergraduates, a sample of work within each of the mark ranges corresponding to particular degree classifications.
- 4.5** Where a 30-credit Research Block at Level H comprises a single Dissertation spanning both Majors:
 - the Dissertation shall normally be internally marked by TWO markers, one for each Major;
 - a sample of such Dissertations must be externally moderated, as detailed in the University's Conventions;
 - the two Majors shall agree responsibility for entering and confirming moderated marks on the University's database.

- 4.6** On the basis of an examination of the sample of work, the external examiner will decide on the appropriateness of the standards that have been applied for that assessment/module and the comparability of the standards that have been applied across modules/assessments. However, if their review of the sample suggests that the marks are overall too high or too low, they may wish to widen the sample. Similarly, if, at any time, an examiner believes that the sample has been inadequate to enable them to make relevant judgements, they may request access to a wider range of material, both assessed assignments and examination papers. It is for this reason that all such materials must be accessible. Courses should consider the means by which they ensure that not only all examination papers but also all assessed assignments are available to the external examiner should s/he wish to review them.
- 4.7** An External Examiner may reach the conclusion that the standards applied to the sample reviewed have been over-generous or too harsh and, as a consequence, may propose a change to the grades awarded. In such circumstances, you should normally reconsider the marks awarded by internal examiners to the whole cohort, not just to those students whose work was included in the sample.
- 4.8** It is not the role of the external examiner to act as a second marker, or even as a third marker, where there is a disagreement between two internal markers. It is the responsibility of the internal markers to seek to come to an agreed grading and for the external examiner to confirm, or otherwise, the validity of that decision. To this end, it is essential that cover sheets, both for assessed assignments and for examination papers, should reflect and record not only the marks proposed by each marker and the agreed mark arrived at but also the reasons proposed for each of them.

5 The involvement of External Examiners in the Assessment of Modules for Study Abroad / Exchange students

- 5.1** External Examiners are **not** required to be involved in the confirmation of Advent Term marks for those students who are to be considered by the Continuation Board for “X1” Study Abroad / Exchange students.
- 5.2** Results for Study Abroad / Exchange students who are at the university for the second part of the academic session should undergo external moderation in the normal way, and should be considered at the standard end-of session examiners’ meetings.

6 The involvement of External Examiners in the assessment of Level C Students

- 6.1** Due to the introduction of a small weighting from Level C into the overall aggregate mark used when calculating degree classifications, External Examiners are expected to be involved in the assessment of Level C students.
- 6.2** The extent of the involvement of External Examiners may be determined by the School/Department; their involvement may be less extensive than at other Levels, except in the case of new provision for which higher levels have not yet been examined.

7 The Role of External Examiners in Boards of Examiners

- 7.1** During your Boards, remember to ask your External to [a] comment on the issues specified in the guidance notes supplied annually, [b] sign the SITS mark sheets to confirm that they accept the results, and [c] email any general comments to the School External Examiner (where appropriate).
- 7.2** It is not necessary for External Examiners to attend all meetings that are held in addition to the main end of session meeting. For other meetings, it is acceptable for the External Examiner to provide evidence by email or in writing.
- 7.3** It is not necessary for External Examiners to be involved with reassessments. Therefore, at the main end of session meeting, the External Examiner should be asked to confirm the extent to which they wish to be consulted about reassessments.

8 Considering External Examiners' General Comments

- 8.1** The External Examiner will make oral comments at the Board meetings, which should normally be considered at the Annual Reflective Meeting, in June/July.
- 8.2** Schools/Departments are expected to produce a prompt written response to each external examiner's report, indicating the action to be taken where appropriate. A copy of this response must be sent to the external examiner as early as possible after its agreement and, together with the external examiner's report itself, it must also be included in your Annual Monitoring Portfolio so that more generally significant issues may be identified, discussed, acted upon and enhancement of provision achieved.
- 8.3** Where an external examiner's report relates to provision in the Network of Hope, the relevant Colleges must be shown a copy of the report, and the draft response, before the response is issued, and must be given an opportunity to suggest amendments to the draft.