

**MANUAL OF ACADEMIC REGULATIONS  
AND PROCEDURES 2023-24**

**EXTERNAL EXAMINER PROCEDURES (TAUGHT PROGRAMMES)**

**(APPLICABLE FROM OCTOBER 2023)**

Academic Quality, Standards and Conduct

Student and Education Services

MARP 2023-24

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**MARP 2023-24**  
**EXTERNAL EXAMINER PROCEDURES (TAUGHT PROGRAMMES)**

**EE 1 OVERVIEW**

**EE 1.1 KEY PRINCIPLES**

EE 1.1.1 The University is responsible for the standards of its awards, irrespective of whether all or part of the programme is delivered by a collaborative partner (or partners).

EE 1.1.2 Lancaster University views the work of its external examiners as central to its quality assurance and enhancement processes, both in the maintenance of the academic standards and quality of its programmes and in the enhancement of provision. In its use of external examiners the University is guided by the Quality Assurance Agency's UK [Quality Code for Higher Education](#).

**EE 1.2 STANDARDS AND ENHANCEMENT**

EE 1.2.1 External examiners are appointed to provide the University and its partner institutions with impartial and independent advice incorporating informative comment on the institution's standards and on student achievement in relation to those standards. External examiners help to ensure that the standard of awards (with reference to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, applicable subject benchmark statements, and relevant professional, statutory and regulatory body requirements) is maintained at the appropriate level; and that the standards of student performance are properly judged against these reference points and are comparable with standards in other UK Higher Education Institutions of which the external examiners have experience.

EE 1.2.2 External examiners also provide comment and recommendations on good practice and innovation in relation to learning, teaching and assessment in order to highlight potential to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students. Consultation with external examiners on draft coursework assignments and examination questions allows the external examiner to inform practice as it occurs.

EE 1.2.3 Externality is an important component within the delivery of apprenticeships, with additional monitoring through External Quality Assurance (EQA) in place where appropriate. This is informed by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education's [EQA Framework](#).

**EE 1.3 EXTERNAL EXAMINER ROLE**

EE 1.3.1 External examiners are asked to consider and comment upon:

- (a) the content, balance and structure of programmes;
- (b) the scope and appropriateness of learning opportunities available to students;
- (c) the quality and fairness of assessment strategies and procedures;

- (d) the organisation and arrangements for student assessment;
- (e) academic achievements by individual students;
- (f) academic standards within a cohort of students;
- (g) the comparability of standards of programmes within the national context.

EE 1.3.2 External examiners are given guidance on their duties and provided with information and material to enable them to carry out their role.

#### **EE 1.4 EXTERNAL EXAMINER APPOINTMENTS**

EE 1.4.1 All programmes have external examiners who are appointed and remunerated by the University as the degree awarding body, irrespective of the delivering institution. External examiner appointments follow a standard University procedure using defined criteria. Approval of appointments is given at institutional level by the body or officer with delegated authority from Senate (see section below on Selection, appointment and employment of external examiners).

#### **EE 1.5 EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORTS**

EE 1.5.1 External examiner reports form an essential component of the University's annual and periodic monitoring and review processes and procedures (Annual Programme Review and Strategic Teaching and Learning Review respectively). This enables the University to systematically take into account external comment and judgement on its provision. External examiners' comments on assessment policies and processes and the regulatory framework also inform the University's continuous review of these areas. External examiners are asked to submit their reports by specified deadlines in order to ensure that any changes arising from the reports can be considered and implemented within the following academic year.

#### **EE 1.6 STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

EE 1.6.1 External examiner reports relate to quality management within the institution. Reports, and departmental responses to the reports, are shared with staff and students via the Academic Quality, Standards and Conduct (AQSC) team's website. Wherever possible, full reports will be made available however there may be circumstances which necessitate some redaction of content (e.g. personal information about individuals, commercially sensitive information, information held under agreed confidentiality). This forms part of the University's arrangements for students to participate, alongside staff, in evidence-based discussions on quality assurance and enhancement.

### **EE 2 SELECTION, APPOINTMENT AND EMPLOYMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

#### **EE 2.1 PERSON SPECIFICATION**

EE 2.1.1 The following criteria will apply for the appointment of external examiners for undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes validated by Lancaster University and leading to Lancaster University awards.

EE 2.1.2 External examiners will hold an academic or professional post of an appropriate level of seniority and/or have extensive practitioner experience where appropriate **and** be able to show appropriate evidence of the following:

- (a) knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality;
- (b) competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study, or parts thereof;
- (c) relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate;
- (d) competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures;
- (e) 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;
- (f) familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed;
- (g) fluency in English, 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);
- (h) meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies;
- (i) awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula;
- (j) competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

EE 2.1.3 External examiners must inform the University if their circumstances change (e.g. academic position, institution, visa status, contact details), using the External Examiner Change of Details form.

## **EE 2.2 RESTRICTIONS ON APPOINTMENT**

EE 2.2.1 The University will not appoint as external examiners anyone in the following categories or circumstances:

- (a) a member of a governing body or committee of the University or one of its collaborative partners, or a current employee of the University or one of its collaborative partners;
- (b) anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a

member of staff or student involved with the programme of study;

- (c) anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study;
- (d) anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study;
- (e) anyone significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme(s) or modules in question;
- (f) former staff or students of the University or one of its collaborative partners unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the external examiner have completed their programme(s);
- (g) a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another institution ('cognate programmes' means across both undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes);
- (h) the succession of an external examiner by a colleague from the examiner's home department and institution;
- (i) the appointment of more than one external examiner from the same department of the same institution.
- (j) anyone who does not have the right to work in the UK, or who cannot (or will not) provide evidence of that right.

EE 2.2.2 External examiners normally hold no more than two external examiner appointments for taught programmes/modules at any point in time.

EE 2.2.3 The appointment of retired academics is permissible within a maximum of three years after the date of retirement. Sufficient evidence should be provided of continuing involvement in the academic area in question.

### **EE 2.3 TERMS OF OFFICE**

EE 2.3.1 The duration of an external examiner's appointment will normally be for four years, with an extension of one year in exceptional cases (e.g. programme teach-out) to ensure continuity.

EE 2.3.2 An external examiner may be reappointed in exceptional circumstances but only after a period of five years or more has elapsed since their last appointment.\*

\* *Note: This also applies where previously separate departments have been combined.*

### **EE 2.4 APPROVAL PROCESS AND ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

EE 2.4.1 The University will appoint external examiners who meet the above criteria on the nomination of heads of departments (or of the equivalent academic unit in partner institutions), on the recommendation of the relevant faculty committee(s) and subject to the approval, on behalf of the Committee of Senate, by the body or officer with delegated

authority from Senate. When an external examiner is nominated who lacks sufficient prior external examining experience, wherever possible there should be at least one experienced external examiner also appointed for the same programme. A more experienced external examiner will be nominated to act as a mentor to offer support and guidance during the first year of appointment. The mentor will normally be an existing or recent external examiner for the University and should have been in an external examiner post for at least one full academic year. Where possible a mentor will be from the same or a cognate discipline and should have current or recent experience of working in Higher Education. The mentor should also be examining at the same level as the proposed external examiner. The University has approved guidance on mentoring arrangements for new external examiners.

EE 2.4.2 There shall be at least one external examiner for each degree programme but the number of external examiners appointed for each programme should be appropriate for the workload in order that the work each is asked to undertake is manageable, within the required timescales, for the various examining activities.

## **EE 2.5 ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS FOR INTERNATIONAL TEACHING PARTNERSHIPS (ITPS)**

EE 2.5.1 Wherever possible and practicable, external examiners for Lancaster University programmes offered at different sites with different partners should be involved with more than one site; either:

(a) an external examiner appointed to examine the corresponding programme at Lancaster shall be appointed as the external examiner for programmes delivered at the ITP; or:

(b) an external examiner previously appointed to examine programmes delivered at Lancaster, may, at the end of the contract, be reappointed to act as external examiner at one or more partner institutions for a minimum of two years/maximum three years.

EE 2.5.2 If neither (a) nor (b) above is possible and, as a result, any ITP programmes have a dedicated external examiner appointed only for these programmes, then one of the external examiners for the corresponding programmes at Lancaster shall be appointed to take an overview and review outcomes from across the programmes delivered at the ITPs to ensure consistency of practice and comparability of standards. For each cohort the external examiner will review assessment outputs (average marks, the distribution of marks and other summary statistics) and, if considered necessary, scrutinise sample student work.

EE 2.5.3 Instructions and guidance for external examiners shall be given by Lancaster University and the appropriate Lancaster department and not by the partner institution.

## **EE 2.6 APPROVAL PROCEDURES FOR APPOINTMENTS**

EE 2.6.1 Proposals for the appointment of external examiners shall be submitted by the department for consideration by the appropriate faculty committee. The faculty Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager is responsible for ensuring that proposals are submitted on the External Examiner Nomination Form, and that they are accompanied by a current, up-to-date, curriculum vitae which details prior professional/academic and external examining experience. Recommendations from the faculty committee must be forwarded promptly to

the Academic Quality, Standards and Conduct (AQSC) unit for approval by the body or officer with delegated authority from Senate.

- EE 2.6.2 The University is obliged by law to verify that nominees for external examiner positions have the legal right to work in the UK, and external examiners must not begin their duties before right to work checks have been completed. In order to comply with this obligation, the University requires all nominees to complete an External Examiner New Starter form and complete the right to work checks requested by the University.
- EE 2.6.3 Where an appointed external examiner's visa expires during their approved term, the initial appointment will only be made up to the point at which the visa expires. Should the individual be successful in obtaining an extension or renewal to their visa then the University may extend the appointment up to the normal full term of office, subject to additional checks on continuing eligibility to work in the UK.
- EE 2.6.4 For **Regional Teaching Partner (RTP) appointments**, the college's internal procedures for consideration of external examiner proposals will be followed prior to submission to the University. Proposals shall be endorsed by the relevant college senior manager and submitted to AQSC via the college's central quality unit.
- EE 2.6.5 For **ITP appointments**, designated Lancaster University staff (Directors of International Partnerships) are responsible for ensuring that there is a sufficient number of appropriately qualified external examiners appointed for each degree programme. They should also ensure that appointments are made at least six months in advance of the commencement of the term of appointment. Lancaster staff will, in discussion with relevant colleagues in partner institutions, identify eligible individuals and submit the names, together with required supporting information, to the relevant faculty committee(s). External examiners must be given explicit guidance as to what material will be made available to enable them to fulfil their role. Faculty Directors of International Partnerships will decide how this guidance will be communicated to external examiners and by whom.
- EE 2.6.6 AQSC will liaise with the body or officer with delegated authority from Senate over the proposal and, following approval, will provide an appointment letter to the external examiner. The appointment letter will include information on:
- (a) the period of appointment;
  - (b) the programme(s)/modules which are the responsibility of the external examiner;
  - (c) assessment regulations;
  - (d) reporting and fees;
  - (e) links to relevant University web pages.
- EE 2.6.7 Following the appointment of an external examiner, departments are responsible for liaising with the appointee and providing them with the information necessary to carry out their duties. This information is detailed below (see section on Information and evidence base for external examiners).
- EE 2.6.8 External examiners must be appointed in advance of the commencement of the term of



office.

- EE 2.6.9 External examiners must not begin work until verification of their eligibility to work in the UK has been completed via a right to work check.
- EE 2.6.10 External examiners are responsible to Lancaster University through the Committee of Senate. The University will be responsible for contracts and payment.
- EE 2.6.11 A summary report of all external examiner appointments will be made available to Senate and/or its appropriate sub-committee(s).

## **EE 2.7 STUDENT INFORMATION ON EXTERNAL EXAMINER APPOINTMENTS**

- EE 2.7.1 Students shall be made aware of the identity and current position of the external examiners appointed to their modules/programmes and awards. Departments are required to publish these details as part of their departmental information for students, together with a contextual statement on the role which external examiners play in the maintenance of the academic standards and quality of Lancaster University programmes and in the enhancement of provision. It is made clear to students that it is inappropriate for students to make direct contact with external examiners, in particular regarding their individual performance in assessment, and that if they do so the external examiners will have been told by the University not to enter into communication with them and to refer the matter to the University.

## **EE 2.8 EARLY TERMINATION OF APPOINTMENT**

- EE 2.8.1 The importance of the role of the external examiner in contributing to the management of standards and quality means that any failure to fulfil the role is viewed seriously. The University reserves the right to terminate an appointment if an external examiner fails to fulfil their obligation at the end of any single year of appointment.
- EE 2.8.2 Early termination may occur in the following instances:
- (a) serious illness;
  - (b) resignation of the external examiner concerned (it is expected that, other than in cases of serious illness, the external examiner will fulfil all remaining commitments relating to the current academic assessment cycle, in order to allow adequate time to find a suitable replacement);
  - (c) changes in programme structure which render the appointment no longer applicable;
  - (d) non-fulfilment of external examiner duties (in particular, the failure to attend examination boards where attendance is required without making alternative arrangements, the failure to submit reports, or the provision of incomplete reports);
  - (e) unprofessional conduct;
  - (f) irretrievable breakdown of the relationship with the departmental teaching team such as to disadvantage students on the course;

- (g) a change in an external examiner's eligibility to work in the UK.
- EE 2.8.3 Where a conflict of interest arises during a term of office and cannot be resolved, normal practice would be for the external examiner to resign.
- EE 2.8.4 Except in cases of serious illness or resignation, the following procedures for the early termination of an appointment shall be followed:
- (a) the head of department shall make a recommendation to the relevant faculty committee. In the case of RTP appointments the recommendation shall be endorsed by the relevant college senior manager and made, via the college's quality unit, to the Regional Teaching Partnerships Committee (RTPC);
  - (b) following review by the faculty committee (or RTPC) the recommendation shall be forwarded to the body or officer with delegated authority from Senate for approval;
  - (c) the Head of Academic Quality, Standards and Conduct will notify the external examiner of the termination, specifying the reasons;
  - (d) any resignation or termination of appointment will be included in the summary reports of appointments made to Senate by AQSC.
- EE 2.8.5 Where necessary the University reserves the right to terminate the appointment immediately, but where appropriate, for example where changes in programme structure apply, it will give the external examiner reasonable notice.
- EE 2.8.6 A resignation by an external examiner before completion of their period of office shall be reported by the head of department or senior college manager to the relevant faculty committee or RTPC, as appropriate, and to AQSC in order to include in the summary report to Senate and/or its appropriate sub-committee(s).

### **EE 3 EXTERNAL EXAMINER DUTIES**

#### **EE 3.1 DUTIES**

- EE 3.1.1 Departments will explicitly define the programmes and modules for which a specific external examiner is responsible. External examiners will be informed of these programmes and modules on appointment, and also whenever a department wishes to change these details, for example when a new module is introduced or an existing one discontinued.
- EE 3.1.2 Every programme will have at least one external examiner. The precise number is at the department's discretion, but should depend upon both the breadth of subject material and the overall volume of work required.
- EE 3.1.3 Each module at Level 5 or above should normally be the responsibility of one and only one external examiner, though other examiners may take a legitimate interest in its progress, for example where a module is shared between programmes. However, in some cases it will be appropriate for more than one external examiner to scrutinise work from the same module, for example if the module involves dissertations across a wide range of topics. In such cases the department should make it clear to all examiners concerned which pieces of work are

the responsibility of which examiner.

- EE 3.1.4 External examiners for the Regional Teaching Partners will be required to scrutinise Level 4 modules for the Foundation Degree as Level 4 will contribute to the classification of the Foundation Degree award.
- EE 3.1.5 The University may require external examiners for some International Teaching Partnership programmes to scrutinise Level 4 modules where appropriate, for example in the early life of the partnership.
- EE 3.1.6 The department will provide the external examiner with the necessary material (see section below on Departmental Induction and Information) and identify what specific activities they will be asked to undertake, which should always include the following:
- (a) commenting on draft examination papers and other assessment tasks that count towards the award;
  - (b) reviewing an agreed sample of work;
  - (c) attending the examination board(s) for the programme(s);
  - (d) providing an annual report on the modules/programme(s);
  - (e) when necessary, commenting on any proposed new programmes in the subject area and any proposed changes to existing modules/programmes.
- EE 3.1.7 Where possible, it is good practice for external examiners to be given the opportunity to meet with current students to gather feedback. Departments should facilitate this as appropriate, with students able to speak privately with the examiner whilst other University staff are not present.
- EE 3.1.8 The University's [external examiner report form](#) provides details of the specific questions which external examiners are asked to address in their report.

### **EE 3.2 MEMBERSHIP OF EXAMINATION BOARDS**

- EE 3.2.1 The University's arrangements for its examination boards, and the external examiner's role as a member of these boards are detailed in the [Undergraduate Assessment Regulations](#) and the [Postgraduate Taught Assessment Regulations](#).
- EE 3.2.2 External examiners will be expected to attend meetings of boards of examiners for the degree programmes for which they are acting. If, in exceptional circumstances, an external examiner is unable to attend the scheduled examination board then this should be reported to Student and Programme Administration for approval. In such circumstances external examiners will still be expected to participate in all other duties prior to the examination board and to the decision making process by making themselves available for consultation in the period immediately before and during the scheduled meeting of the board of examiners.
- EE 3.2.3 External examiners for International Teaching Partnerships are expected to participate in scheduled meetings of examination boards for the degree programmes for which they are acting, either by physical attendance or via video conference. If, in exceptional

circumstances, an external examiner is unable to participate in the scheduled examination board, then this must be notified in advance to the meeting and alternative arrangements made for the external examiner to participate in the process.

EE 3.2.4 For combined degree programmes, the examination board will include at least one external examiner from the administering department for the combined programme. The external examiner(s) from the contributing department(s) will not be required to attend the examination board but should be available for consultation by telephone; however, if they wish to attend they may do so. The attending external examiner will take overall responsibility for commenting on the overall standards and coherence of the degree programme.

EE 3.2.5 External examiners are expected to comment informally at the end of the meeting on matters listed on the external examiners' report form once the detailed discussion of cases has been completed.

EE 3.2.6 Prior to the confirmation of pass lists external examiners are required to endorse the outcomes of the assessment processes they have been appointed to scrutinise.

### EE 3.3 EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES COMMITTEE

EE 3.3.1 External examiners are entitled to attend the departmental Exceptional Circumstances Committee.

EE 3.3.2 If they do not attend they will be briefed on the decisions prior to the examination board. Details of the operation of the Exceptional Circumstances Committee can be found in the [General Regulations for Assessment & Award](#), the [Undergraduate Assessment Regulations](#) and the [Postgraduate Taught Assessment Regulations](#).

### EE 3.4 INTERNATIONAL TEACHING PARTNERSHIPS (ITPS): ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS IN RESPECT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS' DUTIES

EE 3.4.1 For students registered on an ITP programme at least one external examiner should:

- (a) for each cohort, approve all the assessment tasks that would be approved for students studying at Lancaster on the equivalent programme and Lancaster University staff should also approve assessment tasks before they are sent to the external examiner for final approval;
- (b) for each cohort, scrutinise assessment outputs (mark averages, distribution and summary statistics) and, if it is considered necessary, scrutinise samples of student work;
- (c) for at least one cohort in any single academic year, see samples of marked examinations scripts and coursework;
- (d) provide a judgement on the comparability of the quality and standards of provision and performance across all relevant locations.

EE 3.4.2 Where there are several external examiners for a programme and the Lancaster University department decides that more than one cohort should be sampled, then each individual external examiner should be asked to look at a different cohort.

## **EE 4 INDUCTION, INFORMATION AND SCRUTINY OF ASSESSMENTS**

### **EE 4.1 INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION**

EE 4.1.1 External examiners are provided with the University's assessment regulations as follows, via the web:

[General Regulations for Assessment and Award](#)  
[Undergraduate Assessment Regulations](#)  
[Postgraduate Taught Assessment Regulations](#)  
[Assessment Regulations for the MBChB degree](#)  
[Collaborative Teaching Partnership Assessment Regulations](#)

EE 4.1.2 In addition, information is provided, via the web on related regulations:

[Plagiarism and Malpractice Regulations and Procedures](#)  
[Regulations and Procedures for Academic Appeals](#)

### **EE 4.2 DEPARTMENTAL INDUCTION, INFORMATION AND SCRUTINY OF ASSESSMENTS**

EE 4.2.1 Departments will ensure that a programme of briefing is put in place to support both new and inexperienced external examiners. New external examiners are encouraged to pay a preliminary visit to the institution in order to meet departmental staff, see the work in progress and familiarize themselves with the programme(s). However, irrespective of when their first visit takes place, new external examiners are required at this point to present the original documentation evidencing their right to work in the UK. Mid-year visits may be required for programmes with a performance element or with cohorts completing at various times throughout the academic year.

EE 4.2.2 Departments are required to provide external examiners with the necessary information and evidence base to enable them to carry out their duties effectively. This includes information on programmes and modules, marking and moderation procedures, assessment criteria, and student performance. The Assessment Officer for the department has responsibility for ensuring that external examiners are provided with this information and material.

EE 4.2.3 People and Organisational Effectiveness (POE) are responsible for managing right to work checks for each new external examiner. External examiners will present the original documentation evidencing their eligibility to work in the UK, which POE-designated staff will check for authenticity and currency, and use to complete any relevant paperwork and update HR records. Once right to work checks have been completed, POE shall inform the AQSC team and relevant department(s) via an agreed route that the External examiner can commence their duties.

#### **INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED TO THE EXTERNAL EXAMINER ON OR SOON AFTER APPOINTMENT**

EE 4.2.4 As well as briefing on the programme and its assessment regulations, departments shall provide the following information to the external examiner on, or soon after, their appointment.

(a) Details of departmental contacts, channels of communication, and timings for

receipt of assessment material.

- (b) All relevant programme specification(s), together with full details of the modules and syllabi for the programme(s) for which the external examiner is responsible.
- (c) Details of the overall programme assessment scheme, the scheme of assessment for each module (including the balance between examined coursework, dissertations, practicals, formal examinations, etc.), and the grading and marking criteria for different types of assessment.
- (d) Copies of the most recent external examiner's reports for the programme and the head of department's responses.

INFORMATION AND DRAFT ASSESSMENT TASKS TO BE PROVIDED ANNUALLY

- EE 4.2.5 Departments shall provide the following information and material to the external examiner on an annual basis.
- (a) Information on **changes to programmes and modules** which have taken place since the external examiner last reviewed assessment for the programme(s).
  - (b) Timely and accurate information about the **arrangements for the examination board(s)** which the external examiner is expected to attend, together with the due date for submission of the external examiner's annual report (normally four weeks after the meeting of the examination board).
  - (c) **Draft examination scripts and other assessment tasks** for the external examiner to comment on, and information on departmental guidance provided to students undertaking revision classes and other preparatory work for examinations as to the areas of a subject which may be examined.
  - (d) Following the internal marking and moderation of assessed work, departments should make as much as possible of the assessed work for every module available to the appropriate external examiner. Ideally this would consist of material from all assessed assignments (exams and coursework), but it is recognised that in some cases this may be impractical; in such cases the material made available must cover enough assessed assignments such that between them they represent at least 50% of the assessment by weight for the module.

WORK PROVIDED FOR SCRUTINY

- EE 4.2.6 It is at the examiner's discretion which pieces of work are scrutinised, subject to the following minimum requirements:
- (a) the examiner should scrutinise samples of work from assignments making up at least 50% of the module assessment by weight;
  - (b) a sample from a collection of  $n$  scripts should involve a minimum of five scripts or the square root of  $n$  scripts, whichever is the greater, covering a range of performances including at least one fail (if there are any).
- EE 4.2.7 Normally it would not be expected that an examiner would go significantly beyond these minimum requirements, as long as they are satisfied that the material scrutinised enables them to judge whether:
- (a) the types of assessment are appropriate for the subject;
  - (b) the marking scheme/grading criteria have been properly and consistently applied;
  - (c) the assessment processes are carried out in accordance with the University's regulations and procedures, and;
  - (d) the standard of assessed work is comparable with other programmes of which the examiner has experience.

- EE 4.2.8 Departments should make their own arrangements with external examiners as to whether samples are selected by the Department or by the Examiner, and as to the way in which the scripts are made available to the examiner.
- EE 4.2.9 The work made available to the examiner for a module should be accompanied by a commentary which informs the external examiner of the marks awarded for all items of assessment and the basis on which they are awarded, together with internal examiners' feedback and comments.
- EE 4.2.10 Immediately prior to the examination board, the department should send all examiners a **report of the mean and standard deviation marks** for all modules for which the board is responsible.
- EE 4.2.11 Following receipt of the external examiner's report to the University, the department should send to the examiner a **formal response to this report from the Head of Department**, a copy of which should be made available to all co-external examiners.

## **EE 5 EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORTS**

### **EE 5.1 SUBMISSION AND CIRCULATION OF REPORTS**

EE 5.1.1 Reports are submitted annually by external examiners direct to Academic Quality, Standards and Conduct. Examiners are asked to submit these within four weeks of the final examination board meeting. If a report is not submitted within the relevant time period, external examiners will be reminded by Academic Quality, Standards and Conduct to submit a report. Subsequent failure to do so will lead to the University considering terminating an external examiner appointment prematurely.

EE 5.1.2 For **Lancaster-delivered provision**, copies of external examiner reports are circulated by AQSC as follows:

Heads of department

Faculty Quality Assurance and Enhancement Officer/Manager

The officers with delegated authority from Senate for the review of such reports.

EE 5.1.3 For **collaborative provision (Regional Teaching Partners and International Teaching Partners)**, copies of external examiner reports are circulated by AQSC to the equivalent academic heads and quality officers within the partner institution. In addition, the reports are circulated to the body or officer with delegated authority from Senate and to the head of the associated department at Lancaster.

### **EE 5.2 CONTENT OF REPORTS**

#### AREAS FOR COMMENT

EE 5.2.1 External examiners are expected to comment on the following areas in their report:

- (a) comparability of programme standards;
- (b) curriculum design and delivery;



- (c) assessment methods and procedures;
- (d) student achievement;
- (e) organisation and arrangements for external examiner involvement;
- (f) good practice and enhancement opportunities;
- (g) specific issues which require action.

EE 5.2.2 The external examiner report form provides the specific questions which external examiners are expected to address. Of particular importance is the external examiner's judgement on the comparability of standards of the provision with UK national standards; this includes provision delivered through an International Teaching Partnership (ITP) (see the guidance below on Collaborative Provision). Where an external examiner is in the **final year of their appointment**, they are asked to review their experience of the programmes(s)/module(s) over the period of appointment and provide additional comment on:

- (a) evidence of the students' progression from year to year;
- (b) the progressive development and enhancement of the learning and teaching provision;
- (c) the standards achieved;
- (d) marking and assessment;
- (e) the appropriateness of the assessment procedure;
- (f) student feedback.

#### CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS

EE 5.2.3 If an external examiner feels there are particular issues of a sensitive nature on which they wish to comment in confidence they have the right to submit a confidential report to the Vice-Chancellor.

EE 5.2.4 Such a report should be made in addition to the normal annual report. Reports submitted to the Vice-Chancellor in confidence will be dealt with as appropriate.

#### EE 5.3 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS BY THE INSTITUTION

EE 5.3.1 External examiner reports are an important source of external comment on the quality and standards of the University's provision and on the potential for quality enhancement. The University gives consideration to the reports at a number of different levels within the institution.

EE 5.3.2 Reports are reviewed in detail at departmental level and the Head of Department is required to make a formal response to the report to the external examiner. The report and the department's response are considered as part of the departmental Annual Programme Review (APR).

#### ANNUAL PROGRAMME REVIEW (APR)

- EE 5.3.3 As part of the APR, programme teams are asked to reflect on feedback received from external examiner(s) and report on whether any issues raised by them have been addressed. Specific actions should be included in the **departmental action plan**.
- EE 5.3.4 Faculties give consideration to APR reports in their **faculty committees**, following which the **Faculty Associate Dean** is required to make a summative faculty APR report, which both confirms that APR procedures have been followed correctly in the faculty and identifies any issues arising from the process. Issues which the faculty considers should be addressed are summarised in the **faculty action plan** included in the Associate Dean's report.
- EE 5.3.5 Faculty reports of APRs are considered at institutional level by the Academic Standards and Quality Committee, and the University Academic Dean and the Academic Quality, Standards and Conduct Team will ensure that actions arising from the APR process and the institutional summary of external examiner reports (see below) are addressed at the relevant level of the University through the most appropriate means and that follow-up actions are monitored.
- EE 5.3.6 External examiner reports are separately analysed annually by **Academic Quality, Standards and Conduct** and summary reports for undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision on the cross-institutional issues and themes arising from these analyses are provided for institutional consideration.

#### COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

- EE 5.3.7 External examiner reports for collaborative provision are submitted in the same way as for Lancaster-based provision. A copy of the report is sent as soon as possible to the head of the institution concerned.
- EE 5.3.8 Reports for **International Teaching Partnership (ITP)** provision follow the same procedures as for Lancaster-based provision via the link department for that provision. In all cases Lancaster departments are required to apply the same criteria and judgements to the consideration of these reports and to act upon them in the same way as they do for their Lancaster-based provision. An ITP external examiner must report on the comparability of the partnership provision with UK national standards, and where the examiner has responsibility for both ITP and Lancaster-based provision the comparison must also be made with the related Lancaster-based provision.
- EE 5.3.9 Reports for **Regional Teaching Partnership (RTP)** provision are reviewed by the Associate Colleges as part of their Annual Programme Review (APR). The colleges are required to incorporate the reports, together with their response, into the APR report. In addition, a review of external examiner reports is undertaken by a senior member of the central quality unit at the colleges, and a summary of the resulting issues and actions incorporated into the college Annual Programme Review Overview report presented to the Regional Teaching Partnerships Committee (RTPC). An action plan is included in this report, and the plan is monitored throughout the year through the RTPC. Separate analyses (one for each partner) of RTP external examiner reports are undertaken by AQSC and a briefing on the general issues and themes arising from these reports is submitted to RTPC.