
Quality Enhancement
Support Team (QuEST)
External Examining
Session 2019/20

CHAPTER 6 EXTERNAL EXAMINING

Table of Contents

1	EXTERNAL EXAMINING AT UWS	3
2	APPOINTMENT.....	3
	2.1 Term of Office	3
	2.2 Nomination Scheduling.....	4
	2.3 Identifying Appropriate Candidates.....	4
	2.4 Nomination Form.....	4
	2.5 Governance	4
	2.6 Approval.....	5
	2.7 Eligibility to Work in the UK (for domestic arrangements only)	5
	2.8 Criteria for Appointment.....	5
	2.9 Reciprocity of Examining.....	7
	2.10 External Examiner Nominations with No Previous Experience	7
	2.11 SAB / DAB External Examiner Nominations.....	7
	2.12 SBE External Examiner Nominations.....	8
	2.13 Extensions to Tenure.....	8
	2.14 Re-Appointment.....	8
	2.15 Change in Circumstances	8
	2.16 Reallocation of Duties.....	9
	2.17 Resignation of an External Examiner/Termination of Appointment	9
	2.18 Powers of UWS External Examiners.....	10
	2.19 Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies	10
3	SUBJECT EXTERNAL EXAMINERS.....	11
	3.1 Role and Responsibility	11
	3.2 School Assessment Boards.....	11
	3.3 SAB External Examiner Induction.....	12
	3.4 Initial Teacher Education Programmes.....	13
	3.5 Standards in Social Work Education	13
	3.6 Reviewing Assessment Instruments.....	13
	3.7 Reviewing Student Work.....	13
	3.8 Recognition of Prior Learning	14
	3.9 Work-based Learning / Work –Related Learning/Placement Learning Arrangements.....	15
	3.10 Module Amendments	15
	3.11 Approval of Marks by SAB External Examiner	15

3.12 SAB Paperwork.....	15
3.13 Reporting	16
4 PROGRESSION & AWARDS BOARD EXTERNAL EXAMINERS.....	16
4.1 School Boards of Examiners.....	16
4.2 Combined Studies Award.....	16
4.3 SBE External Examiners.....	16
4.4 SBE External Examiner Induction	17
5 DEGREE ASSESSMENT BOARD EXTERNAL EXAMINERS (FOR VALIDATED MODEL COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS)	18
5.1 Role and Responsibility	18
5.2 Degree Assessment Board External Examiner Appointments	18
5.3 Degree Assessment Board External Examiner Induction	19
5.4 Reviewing Assessment Instruments.....	20
5.5 Reviewing Student Work.....	20
6 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT.....	21
6.1 UK Quality Code for Higher Education.....	21
7 ANNUAL MONITORING & ANNUAL REPORTING.....	21
7.1 Reporting	21
7.2 Raising Concerns.....	22
7.3 Programme Amendments.....	22
8 ATTENDANCE FEES, HONORARIUM & EXPENSES	23
8.1 Payment of Fees.....	23
8.2 Placement Visit Fees	23
8.3 Expenses.....	23
8.4 Postal Charges	23

FOLLOWING A REVIEW, IN 2018/19, OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS PROCESSING, A NUMBER OF ENHANCEMENTS ARE BEING INTRODUCED FOR 2019/20. PARAGRAPHS MARKED WITH A STAR ★ DENOTE NEW OR SIGNIFICANTLY AMENDED INFORMATION AS A RESULT OF THIS PROCESS.

ANY QUERIES CONCERNING THIS BOOKLET SHOULD BE RAISED IN THE FIRST INSTANCE WITH QUEST. THIS BOOKLET CAN BE PROVIDED IN OTHER FORMATS ON REQUEST.

THE PROCEDURES DESCRIBED WITHIN THIS BOOKLET HAVE BEEN ASSESSED FOR EQUALITY IMPACT AND CONFIRMED AS BEING AT LOW RISK OF HAVING ANY NEGATIVE IMPACT ON DIFFERENT GROUPS OF PEOPLE.

CHAPTER 6 EXTERNAL EXAMINING

1 ★ EXTERNAL EXAMINING AT UWS

The University operates a two-tier system of assessment boards: School Assessment Boards (SABs) which confirm the mark, grade and decision for each student on each module and to which School Assessment Board external examiners are appointed; and School Boards of Examiners (SBEs) to which a School Board of Examiners external examiner is appointed and considers the eligibility of students on a group of programmes to progress or gain an award.

In addition to SABs and SBEs, the University also operates Degree Assessment Boards (DABs) to which a Degree Assessment Board external examiner is appointed. It is normally the responsibility of DABs to provide an overall judgement on student performance and the quality and standard of validated programmes delivered by the University's collaborative partners. In some circumstances, however, such as for newer collaborative partners, it may be more appropriate to implement the standard UWS approach and use the two tier system of SAB and SBE, as detailed above. This approach will be regularly reviewed to ensure that both parties are comfortable that the University's academic standards are being upheld and to determine if it may be appropriate to move to the establishment of a Degree Assessment Board (DAB). The system to be implemented for each collaborative partner will be decided on a case by case basis to ensure that the UWS academic standards and assessment requirements are maintained and assured.

2 APPOINTMENT¹

“3.48 External examiners are appointed in accordance with the criteria and procedures outlined in the Quality Handbook.” UWS Regulatory Framework 2019/20

No person may act in any capacity as an external examiner until their appointment has been confirmed by the Academic Quality Committee (AQC) on behalf of the Education Advisory Committee (EAC) and a formal letter provided by the Quality Enhancement Support Team (QuEST).

2.1 Term of Office

The external examiner term of office is normally four years (October - September) to enable the external examiner to consider four successive cohorts of students. Exceptionally, the external examiners may be asked to act as external examiner for one further year for reasons of continuity. If there is a requirement to appoint an external out with the normal Oct-Sep timings, the nomination must not exceed 4 years in the first instance. For example, a

¹ The majority of the information in “Appointment” is appropriate for our collaborative partners, it is expected that they will take the lead (and work closely with the School) when proposing external examiners for validated programmes.

nomination could not run April 2018 – September 2022 as this would be 4 years and 5 months, the most appropriate tenure would be to run from April 2018 to September 2021.

Newly appointed external examiners should take up their appointments on or before the retirement of their predecessors. Retiring external examiners should remain available until after the last assessments with which they are involved to deal with any subsequent reviews of decisions that arise.

2.2 Nomination Scheduling

Nominations for new or replacement external examiners should be made at least six months before the appointment is due to commence. It is recommended that Schools review their allocations at the start of each year to identify those whose tenure is concluding. AQC provide a list of outgoing external examiners to the School representatives at every meeting. Appointments normally commence in October and last for four years. Nomination forms are available on the staff website <https://connect.uws.ac.uk/organisation/sitepages/ExternalExaminers.aspx> and should be completed in consultation with the proposed external examiner. Collaborative partners should request the Degree Assessment Board External Examiner Nomination Form from their UWS School contact.

2.3 Identifying Appropriate Candidates

As the external examiner should be an impartial “critical friend”, it is unwise to approach potential candidates with whom a member of staff has a close professional or personal relationship. Nominations can come from previous approval or ILR panel members if evidence is provided that they meet the criteria.

Should difficulty be experienced in identifying a suitable candidate, a brief advert can be provided to QuEST who will circulate this to other higher education providers subscribed to the JISC mailing list.

2.4 Nomination Form

The nominee should be asked to complete the first part of the nomination form and submit this along with a current CV and evidence of their eligibility to work in the UK to ensure compliance with the requirements of the United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI).

2.5 Governance

The School (and collaborative partner where appropriate) should then complete the remaining sections of the form and obtain approval through the most appropriate governing committee within the School ([normally a Divisional Programme Board](#)). This is then submitted to the Secretary to AQC along with the CV and UKVI evidence for consideration by AQC. Should AQC have any concerns, these will be relayed to the School for further discussion which may require additional rationale or evidence to be provided.

2.6 Approval

If AQC approve the nomination, a letter confirming the appointment is sent to the new external examiner by the Head of QuEST and copied to the appropriate School contacts. External examiners are directed within the letter to the external examiner webpage <https://www.uws.ac.uk/about-uws/academic-life/quality-enhancement-support-team-quest/external-examiner/> for further information, including induction material and access to the External Examiner Handbook. The Handbook provides general information about the history and academic structure of the University, the quality assurance system, the role of external examiners, information about external examiner reports, expenses and fees, and the assessment regulations.

2.7 Eligibility to Work in the UK (for domestic arrangements only)

As part of the appointment, process, external examiners must provide evidence of their eligibility to work in the UK to ensure compliance with the requirements of the United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI). It is important that they bring the original documentation, passport or biometric residency permit with them on their first visit to the University or collaborative partner. In addition to this, our Finance Department now require those employing external examiners to have had sight of official documentation illustrating their National Insurance number. **External Examiners will not be able to continue their appointment or receive any payments without UWS verifying the originals.**

Please see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/acceptable-right-to-work-documents-an-employers-guide> and the External Examiners Handbook <https://www.uws.ac.uk/about-uws/academic-life/quality-enhancement-support-team-quest/external-examiner/> for appropriate forms of evidence.

Staff must not involve proposed external examiners in any element of the assessment process prior to the appointment being confirmed by AQC.

2.8 Criteria for Appointment

Colleagues recommending approval of new external examiner nominations should ensure that the following criteria are evidenced in their form:

- ❑ knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality;
- ❑ competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study, or parts thereof;
- ❑ relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate;
- ❑ competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures;
- ❑ 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;

- ❑ familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed;
- ❑ 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);
- ❑ meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies;
- ❑ awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula;
- ❑ competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

Individuals in the following categories or circumstances will not normally be appointed as external examiners:

- ❑ a member of the University's Court or of the governing body of a partner institution, or a current employee of the University or one of its collaborative partners;
- ❑ anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme of study;
- ❑ anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study;
- ❑ anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study;
- ❑ 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;
- ❑ former staff or students of the institution unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the external examiner have completed their programme(s);
- ❑ a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another institution;
- ❑ the succession of an external examiner by a colleague from the examiner's home department and institution;
- ❑ the appointment of more than one external examiner from the same department of the same institution;
- ❑ anyone who has previously served as an external examiner for the University / collaborative partner, except in exceptional circumstances and only after a period of five years or more has elapsed since the end of their last appointment;
- ❑ anyone who will hold more than two external examiner appointments for taught programmes/modules during the appointment;
- ❑ retired professionals/academics after 12 months has elapsed since their employment in the subject/HE, unless exceptional circumstances exist and continuing practice within the sector can be evidenced.

Should a School / Collaborative Partner wish to submit a nomination that contradicts the criteria above, it must be accompanied by a clear rationale as to why this nomination constitutes an exception. AQC will consider these requests but may on balance choose not to approve.

2.9 Reciprocity of Examining

Please note that reciprocal external examining between cognate subject areas in the University/Collaborative Partner and those in other institutions or organisations is not permitted. If such an arrangement becomes apparent, it should be drawn to the attention of the Head of QuEST as it would not be possible for both appointments to continue. **Schools / Collaborative Partners should ensure that an up to date list of staff and their current external examining appointments is maintained and provided to QuEST (the “Internal Externals” spreadsheet).**

If there are any staff within the School / Collaborative Partner that have external examiner responsibilities at the nominee’s institution, this should be noted on the Nomination Form with a clear rationale for why the nomination is being proposed and how the existing conditions do not preclude their appointment.

2.10 External Examiner Nominations with No Previous Experience

Whilst we would want to encourage academic development, if the nominee has no previous external examining experience, the School / Collaborative Partner must indicate how they will support the nominee to fulfil their duties. e.g. Will the appointment be mentored by a team of existing external examiners? What additional briefing will be provided and by whom?

2.11 SAB / DAB External Examiner Nominations

Assigning modules to the nominee must be done in collaboration with the nominee. When listing the proposed modules staff should consider the following:

- ☐ Are the modules in an appropriate subject area?
- ☐ Does the nominee have experience of examining / teaching at this level?
- ☐ Does the allocation seem appropriate in terms of number of modules and number of times a module will run?
- ☐ If some of these modules are options and may not run every year, this should be highlighted.
- ☐ If the number of modules seems excessive are there other factors that AQC should be apprised of?
- ☐ If the number of modules seems light is this because the modules are in a very specific area that cannot be covered by another existing external examiner?
- ☐ What is the assessment load of the modules? If a module has several pieces of assessment, has this been considered in the allocation?

2.12 ★ SBE External Examiner Nominations

The School Boards of Examiners (SBE) consist of groups of programmes within a School. New appointments should normally be based on the requirement that there is a single SBE external examiner associated with a group of programmes. Once a SAB external examiner has served at least one year at UWS they may be invited to become a SBE external examiner. This approach aims to recognise the contribution which the external examiner has made at the Subject level, acknowledging also that they now have a greater understanding of the University's assessment processes and systems. It is likely, depending on the volume of progression and award decisions to be considered by the SBE that the external examiner would also continue in their role as a SAB external examiner.

If the SBE nominee has not previously been a SAB external examiner at UWS, rationale and reassurance of appropriateness must be provided. E.g. is there no SAB external examiner willing/able to take on the duties?

When nominating an SBE external examiner the School should review the external's workload and consider the allocation of programmes, and modules if the external is also to continue with their SAB duties, to ensure that it remains appropriate. The external examiner should be consulted during this process to ensure they are comfortable with the proposed allocation.

If a SAB external examiner moving to a SBE role is not continuing with their SAB duties, please ensure that the section of the form to withdraw modules is completed.

2.13 Extensions to Tenure

Extensions to tenure are not normally permitted and will not be sanctioned for an external who has already been extended to the maximum 5 year tenure. A rationale for the extension must be provided which explains why exceptional approval is sought.

2.14 Re-Appointment

An External Examiner may be re-appointed provided that five years have elapsed since the end of the previous term of office and that the second appointment will not exceed four consecutive years. Caution is advised in reappointing the same examiner as potentially this may narrow the opportunities for sharing of positive practice which could be provided by alternative external examiners and is not conducive to supporting the nurturing of new external examiners.

2.15 Change in Circumstances

QuEST should be notified of any change in circumstances to the external examiner's appointment, the appointment will be reviewed to ensure the criteria for appointment continue to be met. This includes both changes in personal circumstances, such as a change in the external examiner's institution of employment, and institutional changes, such as the reallocation of modules or programme duties.

2.16 Reallocation of Duties

There is a separate form for reallocation of duties available from the staff website. This form is used to add or remove modules or programme responsibilities from an existing external examiner. It should not be used to nominate an existing SAB external examiner as an SBE external examiner. If adding on modules / programme responsibilities to an existing external examiner, the School must consider the following:

- ☐ The external examiner has been consulted on and agrees with any amendments to their remit/workload
- ☐ Do these additions raise concerns over the workload?
- ☐ Are these additions suitable for the external examiner's area of expertise?
- ☐ Are any modules / programme responsibilities being removed?

Following approval by the Divisional Programme Board the completed form should be submitted to the Secretary of AQC for the Committee's approval.

2.17 Resignation of an External Examiner/Termination of Appointment

Should the external examiner for any reason (e.g. workload, conflict of interest, ill health etc.) need to conclude their role earlier than the confirmed period of the appointment, they are asked to advise the Head of QuEST who will make the necessary arrangements. The University requires that external examiners advise the Head of QuEST, by no later than the end of December of the year in progress, of their intention to resign but recognises that in certain circumstances this may not be possible e.g. sudden ill health. This will allow the School sufficient time to arrange a replacement.

If the External Examiner resignation is over a matter of principle, academic standards or concerns over maladministration, then the Head of QuEST will report the matter to the relevant School Board, Education Advisory Committee and Senate.

The University may, in exceptional circumstances, terminate the contract of an external examiner with agreement from EAC. This action may be taken when the programme or module portfolio has changed significantly since the original arrangement or where there has been demonstrable persistent failure to meet the requirements of the role, for example through non engagement with the processes of the Boards, or repeated lack of response to draft assessment instruments, or the provision of false information in annual reports, or due to a significant change of circumstances of the external examiner.

It will be the responsibility of the Deputy Dean in the first instance to advise the Head of QuEST of any concerns.

If an annual report that is due for submission on 15 September has not been received without due explanation by 20 November, or if the report has not been received after a comparable interval in the case of another due date, the external examiner may be deemed by the Chair of the Education Advisory

Committee to have resigned their appointment and will be advised accordingly. Where illness or other personal reasons have been notified by the external examiner to the Head of QuEST as preventing the external examiner from meeting requirements of the role, the relevant School will in the first instance seek to agree appropriate revised arrangements such as a revised timescale for submission of an outstanding report.

2.18 ★ Powers of UWS External Examiners

No University award shall be granted without the written consent of the SBE external examiner, or DAB external examiner in relation to collaborative partners (Reg 3.47).

All student marks and grades are confirmed by SABs, to which SAB external examiners are appointed, following consideration of the performance of students on the modules assigned to the Board (Reg 3.44).

The University requires that external examiners report annually on:

- whether the academic standards set for its awards, or part thereof, are appropriate;
- the extent to which its assessment processes are rigorous, ensure equity of treatment for students and have been fairly conducted within institutional regulations and guidance;
- opportunities to enhance the quality of learning opportunities provided to students;
- where appropriate, the comparability of the standards and student achievements with those in some other higher education institutions;
- positive practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment.

On any matter which an External Examiner has declared to be a matter of principle, the decision of the External Examiner concerned must either be accepted as final by the SAB or SBE in question or be referred to the Senate.

2.19 Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies

External examiners on programmes with professional accreditation may be required to comment on additional areas. For example, NMC external examiners should provide comment on clinical practice.

3 ★ SCHOOL ASSESSMENT BOARD EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

3.1 Role and Responsibility

The overall responsibility of each School Assessment Board (SAB) external examiner is to ensure that each module is assessed impartially and fairly and that the standards of the University's awards (or parts of awards) are maintained.

Each module will be assigned to **one** SAB external examiner, who will be appointed to consider the results for a group of related modules. For reasons of consistency, a module **cannot** be assigned to more than one external examiner. It is recognised, however, that it may be necessary for some modules to have additional external examiners review an assessment, for which they have specialist knowledge e.g. in a dissertation module where the appointed external examiner could not be expected to have knowledge of all topics covered within the dissertations. This process is intended to provide comfort to the appointed external examiner that the content is appropriate.

3.2 School Assessment Boards

School Assessment Boards (SABs) confirm the mark, grade and decision for each student on each module assigned to the SAB. Results from SABs are released to students as final approved results.

School Boards are responsible for ensuring that Schools have allocated modules to an appropriate SAB and Divisional Programme Boards ensure an External Examiner has been assigned to each module. SABs normally fall at the end of each term, however there are programmes where boards occur at different times in the academic year and schools will communicate the exact timings to external examiners once appointed. The membership and terms of reference of SABs are located in the Committee Handbook.

<https://www.uws.ac.uk/current-students/supporting-your-studies/your-rights-responsibilities/regulatory-framework/>

The University is keen to ensure that external examiners can undertake their responsibilities in the most efficient and sustainable way, using technology where appropriate to reduce the need for physical attendance at the University. The external examiner's approval of marks, grades and decisions for each module (including resubmissions and resits **and not just those at L9 or above**) will therefore normally be sought electronically. It is recognised, however, external examiners may wish to physically attend at least one SAB per academic session in order to meet with staff and students, allowing for wider quality enhancement discussions and activities to take place. If the external wishes to attend the SAB in person the School will make the necessary arrangements. If overnight accommodation is required **this is normally within student residences**.

Each SAB External Examiner will:

- review and approve the form, content and standard of the assessment instruments and, where appropriate, the distribution and balance of coursework and other assessments. These should be in accordance with the published module descriptors
- provide electronic approval of marks, grades and decisions and attend meetings of the SABs as appropriate
- moderate the marks awarded by the internal examiner(s) on each module assigned to them (see details of sampling under *Reviewing Student Work*)
- have the right to inspect the work of all students and to call for such papers as he or she thinks necessary when sampling the work of students
- be entitled to modify the marks proposed by internal examiners provided that such modifications should be applied to all students undertaking the module unless all scripts have been reviewed by the SAB External Examiner.

Please note that standardisation may only be applied by the relevant SAB and with the agreement of the relevant SAB external examiner.

3.3 SAB External Examiner Induction

On appointment all external examiners receive details of the online induction and link to the External Examiners Handbook.

Schools should ensure that the examiner is fully apprised of the following:

- the design and delivery characteristics of the module and associated programme as set out in the module descriptors and programme specifications
- marking protocols (question and assignment setting; model answers; double marking; blind marking; moderation)
- sampling and selection of student work to provide the evidence base for the external examiner
- procedures for oral examination or formal review of student work or performance
- opportunities for meeting students on a more informal basis
- arrangements for participation in SABs
- terms of reference for SABs
- rules and penalties for academic misconduct

- procedures for student appeals and complaints
- access to recent external examiner reports
- contact protocols and details for key staff (especially important for external examiners of collaborative provision).

It is the responsibility of the School to provide the SAB External Examiner(s) with access to appropriate module descriptors and supporting documentation as soon as the appointment is confirmed.

It is recommended that schools facilitate either a visit by all new external examiners on commencement of their appointment, or ensure attendance in person at their first SAB in order for them to meet with staff and familiarise themselves with the provision, as well as the wider institution and its processes. It will also provide an opportunity to validate the external's original documentation, as detailed in paragraph 2.7, which is required for the continuation of their appointment and for payment to be processed

QuEST has produced an online induction programme for new and existing external examiners featuring presentations and talking heads which can be accessed via the UWS website <https://www.uws.ac.uk/about-uws/academic-life/quality-enhancement-support-team-quest/external-examiner/>.

3.4 Initial Teacher Education Programmes

For Initial Teacher Education programmes, the School of Education and Social Sciences contact will make the day-to-day arrangements regarding assignments and school visits which are required by the SAB external examiners.

3.5 Standards in Social Work Education

Schools should ensure that they are cognisant of any impact of the Standards in Social Work Education (SiSWE), which underpin social work degree programmes in Scotland, on the external examiner role and that examiners are informed of any additional requirements.

3.6 Reviewing Assessment Instruments

SAB external examiners will be invited to approve all examination question papers/appropriate coursework at all levels. **Schools should make all forms of assessment available to external examiners for approval prior to their being distributed to students.** Where this involves sending exam questions or unseen tests outside of the University, schools should ensure appropriate encryption is deployed. SAB external examiners must be given at least **four weeks** to review draft examination questions and a sample of course work questions for all levels.

3.7 Reviewing Student Work

Schools should ensure that Subject External Examiners review a sample of student work, including course work and examination scripts during the year. The

sample of student work considered by external examiners should include material from part-time students and all modes of delivery and campuses and include collaborative franchise partners. **External examiners should review samples of student work for all the modules that they have been allocated, this includes the lower SCQF levels.** Schools must ensure that they provide SAB external examiners with appropriate material for all the modules to which they have been appointed. In their External Examiners Handbook published in 2019, Advance HE acknowledges that there are no firmly established norms for sampling and offers recommendations on commonly applied sampling tactics: <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/external-examining>

External examiners are asked to liaise with colleagues in the School to agree what method of sampling is acceptable and to request any other evidence they deem necessary to discharge their responsibilities. The reassurance of due process and procedure having been followed may come from sampling work from some, but not all cohorts who have taken a particular module in a particular year. The external examiner has the right of access to all students' assessments, but there is no expectation that they will sample work from multiple cohorts studying a module in the same year unless they wish to do so. If a SAB external examiner is content that appropriate policies and procedures are in place for the proper operation of the SABs, and that assessments are being marked and moderated consistently, then they may sign off the results for a cohort without necessarily having sampled work from that same cohort.

It is helpful if an external examiner's review of student work can be staggered throughout the year rather than accumulated at the end of the session at the time of the final panel meeting. Schools are encouraged to utilise electronic submission through VLE wherever possible, making externals' access to student work easier. This will enable externals to fulfil more of their role at a distance and make the process more efficient and sustainable. A number of external examiners have commented that they would wish to have more time to look at student work and it is envisaged that utilisation of technology will help to facilitate this. Some externals may, however, still wish to visit the University to meet with staff and students, normally annually, and the benefits of this, for wider quality enhancement purposes, are recognised. SAB Chairs should liaise with the SAB external examiner in good time on the approach he/she wishes to take.

Any queries about dates of meetings and arrangements for moderation should be raised with the School.

3.8 Recognition of Prior Learning

Regulation 2.16 states "APEL assessments shall be open to external examination and confirmation by SABs (see Regulation 3.44) on the same basis as the formal assessment and examination of students."

It is expected that suitably experienced external examiners will review APEL assessments and student submissions as appropriate. As with any other assessment, the external examiner should have the opportunity to approve the

method and marking rubric to confirm that the process of assessment is robust. APEL student submissions must be seen by an external examiner and go through an appropriate SAB. Whilst the External Examiner Handbook does notify examiners that they may be asked to review APEL claims, the submissions can be infrequent and time consuming to review. It is therefore courteous to provide the external examiner with early notification, adequate time and appropriate supporting documentation to assist them in their review.

3.9 Work-based Learning / Work –Related Learning/Placement Learning Arrangements

Where a programme contains elements of work-based learning (WBL)/ placement learning (PL) experience, the instruments of assessment must still be approved by the external examiner. Assignments and assessments connected with WBL/PL should be properly considered by the academic programme team and the appropriate external examiners and there should be consideration of parity of assessment with the University based route where this exists.

The award of credit for WBL/PL will be confirmed by SABs and will involve external examiners who should comment on WBL/PL in their annual reports. When appointing external examiners, it is important that they are fully aware of the extent of WBL/PL within the portfolio of modules that they are being assigned to and what their input to these modules is expected to involve.

3.10 Module Amendments

In addition to confirmation of standards and comparability of awards, external examiners are also invited to comment on areas for enhancement. For example, it is common for schools to seek the opinion of external examiners on proposed changes to assessment structure/format within a module or programme and particularly when there are professional body requirements. You may also occasionally be invited to contribute to postal approvals.

3.11 Approval of Marks by SAB External Examiner

In order to approve the results from a SAB, external examiners are expected to assure themselves that marking and moderation of assessment on all modules to which they are assigned has been carried out appropriately, in line with the University's regulations and procedures and that academic standards have been maintained.

The SAB is responsible for confirming the marks and grades for modules assigned to it. The SAB external examiner confirms their approval of the marks and grades during attendance at the SAB or by other appropriate means as determined by the Chair. In exceptional circumstances, where it has not been possible to get the approval of the external examiner, the Chair must consult with the School's Deputy Dean and QuEST in order to agree a process for confirming the results from the SAB.

3.12 SAB Paperwork

The production of the results paperwork for the SAB is the responsibility of the School, in consultation with staff in Student Administration.

3.13 Reporting

Minutes of the deliberations and outcomes of the SAB will be forwarded to the next meeting of the appropriate Divisional Programme Board. Guidance on the format of the report will be provided to the Chairs of the by Student Administration.

Results are communicated to students after each SAB electronically via Self Service Banner.

4 ★ SCHOOL BOARDS OF EXAMINERS EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

4.1 School Boards of Examiners

School Boards of Examiners (SBEs) consider the performance of students on a programme and determine a student's eligibility to progress to the next stage of their programme or to gain an award. An SBE will recommend the granting of an award for a student who has satisfied the requirements for the award as outlined in the Programme Specification (see Regulations 1.15 & 3.15). The SBEs apply University regulations on progression/awards but do not have the authority to alter marks or grades.

The membership and terms of reference of the SBEs are located in the Committee Handbook <https://www.uws.ac.uk/current-students/supporting-your-studies/your-rights-responsibilities/regulatory-framework/>

4.2 Combined Studies Award

SBEs are empowered grant an exit award of CertHE/DipHE or BA/BSc in Combined Studies where a student has met the credit requirements for an award in line with SCQF credit minima (see Regulation 1.21) but cannot continue on the named award.

4.3 SBE External Examiners

The overall responsibility of each SBE external examiner is to ensure that each candidate for a particular award is considered impartially and fairly in accordance with University regulations and guidance, and that the standards of the University's awards are maintained.

The role of SBE External Examiners also involves the overview of the analysis of trends and the comparison of standards across different cohorts and campuses.

SBE External Examiners do not review student work and cannot change marks – they confirm progression and award decisions based on outcomes of the SBE. No recommendation to grant an award can be made without the written approval of the external examiner appointed to the SBE (see Regulation 3.47). SBE Chairs should ensure that the external examiner signs off the paperwork for all boards. If the external examiner is not present at the board, then the Chair is responsible for ensuring approval through other appropriate communication approaches, students will not be entered onto the graduation roll until this has been obtained. This approval is for all awards of the University.

If the external wishes to attend the SBE in person the School will arrange overnight accommodation if required. **This is normally within student residences.**

Each SBE External Examiner will:

- attend meetings of the SBE as appropriate and, in light of information received from the SBE, approve award and progression decisions
- be consulted about, and have the right to approve or prevent, any proposed changes in the assessment regulations which will directly affect students currently on a particular programme of study
- contribute to such viva voce examination of any candidate (as is deemed necessary in relation to a student appeal) on review of a decision of a SBE
- participate, as necessary, in reviews of progression and award decisions with respect to individual candidates
- comment, as required, on aspects of cohort performance, honours classification distribution and any other matters pertaining to the operation of the University's assessment board processes.

Any queries about dates of meetings and arrangements for moderation should be raised with the School.

From time to time SBE external examiners may also be invited to contribute to postal approvals, comment on amendments to the programme content or changes proposed to the assessment structure/format.

4.4 SBE External Examiner Induction

As SBE external examiners are usually appointed following experience as an SAB external examiner with the University, the induction need only cover the areas that differ from the SAB role.

Schools should ensure that appropriate documentation including the programme specification(s) for the programmes allocated to the SBE is made available to the SBE External Examiner as soon as the appointment is confirmed.

It is positive practice for the SBE chair to contact the newly appointed external examiner to talk through what to expect and their role on the board. Student Administration have supporting documentation available for those attending SBEs. Schools should ensure that their external examiners have access to this documentation.

5 DEGREE ASSESSMENT BOARD EXTERNAL EXAMINERS (FOR VALIDATED MODEL COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS)

5.1 Role and Responsibility

The overall responsibility of each Degree Assessment Board (DAB) External Examiner is to ensure that the standards of the University's awards are maintained and, where applicable, the University Regulations are applied.

Degree Assessment Boards confirm the mark, grade and decision for each student. The Board also considers the performance of students on the validated programme and determines whether the student is eligible to progress to the next stage of their programme or to gain an award.

Degree Assessment Board External Examiners will normally attend all DAB meetings. These usually occur at the end of terms 2 and 3. Additional meetings may be required for programmes where results, progression and award points occur at other times in the academic session.

Each Degree Assessment Board External Examiner will:

- Attend meetings of the Degree Assessment Board as appropriate, and moderate the marks awarded by the internal examiner(s) and make award and progression decisions, in line with Regulations
- Have the right to inspect the work of all students
- Comment as required on aspects of cohort performance, honours classification distribution and any other matters pertaining to the operation of the DAB.

The Collaborative Partner, in consultation with the School, will liaise with external examiner(s) regarding dates of Board and will arrange overnight accommodation if required.

Any queries about dates of meetings and arrangements for moderation should be raised with the Collaborative Partner.

If they are unable to attend a Board, the external should liaise with the Partner, in consultation with the School, to ensure that other means of reviewing work and approving results can be established.

5.2 Degree Assessment Board External Examiner Appointments

The process for appointment of Degree Assessment Board External Examiners is similar to that of SAB and SBE External Examiners (See Section 2 of this chapter) although there is a separate nomination form to be completed.

The key difference with DAB appointments is that in most cases the Partner (having the subject expertise) will lead in identifying possible candidates. As with all appointments, the nominee must meet the criteria for external examiner and the Partner **must not** engage the nominee in any external examiner

activities until such time as the Academic Quality Committee has approved the nomination.

The nomination form should be completed by the nominee, Partner and School together to ensure that there is a common understanding of the role and responsibilities attached.

5.3 Degree Assessment Board External Examiner Induction

On appointment, all external examiners receive details of the online induction and link to the External Examiners Handbook. It is expected that the School and Partner will provide additional information to the DAB external examiner on the specific requirements related to the programmes they will oversee.

As a minimum, Schools and Partners should ensure that the examiner is fully apprised of the following:

- ☐ the design and delivery characteristics of the module and associated programme as set out in the module descriptors and programme specifications
- ☐ marking protocols (question and assignment setting; model answers; double marking; blind marking; moderation)
- ☐ sampling and selection of student work to provide the evidence base for the external examiner
- ☐ procedures for oral examination or formal review of student work or performance
- ☐ opportunities for meeting students on a more informal basis
- ☐ requirements for attending panels
- ☐ terms of reference for attending panels
- ☐ rules and penalties for academic misconduct
- ☐ procedures for student appeals and complaints
- ☐ access to recent external examiner reports
- ☐ contact protocols and details for key staff

It is the responsibility of the School and Partner to provide the DAB External Examiner(s) with access to appropriate programme specifications, module descriptors and supporting documentation as soon as the appointment is confirmed.

QuEST has produced an online induction programme for new and existing

external examiners featuring presentations and talking heads which can be accessed via the UWS website <https://www.uws.ac.uk/about-uws/academic-life/quality-enhancement-support-team-quest/external-examiner/>.

5.4 Reviewing Assessment Instruments

DAB External Examiners will be invited to approve all examination question papers/appropriate coursework at all levels. Partners (with oversight from the relevant School) should make all forms of assessment available to external examiners for approval prior to their being distributed to students. Where this involves sending exam questions or unseen tests outside of the Partner Institution, Partners should ensure appropriate encryption is deployed. DAB External Examiners must be given at least four weeks to review draft examination questions and a sample of course work questions for all levels.

5.5 Reviewing Student Work

Partners should ensure that DAB External Examiners review a sample of student work, including course work and examination scripts during the year. The sample of student work considered by external examiners should include material from part-time students and all modes of delivery and campuses. External examiners should review samples of student work for all the modules that they have been allocated, this includes the lower SCQF levels. Partners must ensure that they provide external examiners with appropriate material for all the modules to which they have been appointed. In their External Examiners Handbook published in 2019, Advance HE acknowledges that there are no firmly established norms for sampling and offers recommendations on commonly applied sampling tactics: <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/external-examining>

External examiners should liaise with the Partner and School to agree what method of sampling is acceptable and to request any other evidence they deem necessary to discharge their responsibilities. The reassurance of due process and procedure having been followed may come from sampling work from some, but not all cohorts who have taken a particular module in a particular year. The external examiner has the right of access to all students' assessments, but there is no expectation that they will sample work from multiple cohorts studying a module in the same year unless they wish to do so. If an External Examiner is content that appropriate policies and procedures are in place for the proper operation of the Degree Assessment Boards, and that assessments are being marked and moderated consistently, then they may sign off the results for a cohort without necessarily having sampled work from that same cohort.

It is helpful if an external examiner's review of student work can be staggered throughout the year rather than accumulated at the end of the session at the time of the final panel meeting. Partners are encouraged to utilise technology wherever possible to provide external examiners with access to student work offsite. This will enable externals to fulfil more of their role at a distance and make the process more efficient and sustainable. A number of external examiners have commented that they would wish to have more time to look at student work and it is hoped that utilisation of technology will help to facilitate

this. Some externals may, however, still wish to visit in order to meet with staff and students, normally annually, and the benefits of this, for wider quality enhancement purposes, are recognised.

Any queries about dates of meetings and arrangements for moderation should be raised with the Partner.

6 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

6.1 UK Quality Code for Higher Education

The revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which was launched in 2018 sets out the expectations all providers of UK Higher Education are required to meet. The University is undertaking an extensive mapping exercise to confirm the requirements of the revised Quality Code are being met. The Code requires that 'degree awarding bodies engage external examiners to provide impartial and independent advice, as well as informative comment on the degree awarding body's standards and on student achievement in relation to those standards. External Examiners confirm that the provider consistently and fairly implements their own policies and procedures to ensure the integrity and rigor of assessment practices. They also comment on the quality and standards of the courses in relation to the national standards and frameworks and comment on the reasonable comparability of standards achieved at other UK providers with whom the examiner has experience...' The specific requirements of the Code underpin the UWS approach and have informed our external examiner appointment process, with reference to the person specification, and the powers, responsibilities and reporting requirements of external examiners, as detailed in the Quality Handbook.

7 ANNUAL MONITORING & ANNUAL REPORTING

7.1 Reporting

Each external examiner is required to report annually to the University on the conduct of the assessments concluded during the year and on issues relating to those assessments, in a form determined by the Senate.

An online survey platform is used for the reporting, which allows the questions to be tailored to the external examiner's role. The survey can be accessed from a variety of platforms including smart phones and tablets. A link is sent to the external examiner at the end of term 2. Feedback on the system, which was implemented in 2017, has been positive, with further enhancements made for 2018/19 in response to feedback. If the external examiner would prefer to use a report form in Microsoft™ Word format, blank report forms are available on request. Reports should be completed by 15 September.

On receipt by QuEST, the external examiner reports, with the response form incorporated for completion by Schools, are posted on the external examiner page of the staff website under the corresponding School <https://connect.uws.ac.uk/organisation/sitepages/ExternalExaminers.aspx>, Schools will be notified when new reports are uploaded.

Schools are responsible for ensuring that external examiners are provided with a written formal response to their annual report. All reports and responses are available to view and download on the external examiner page of the staff website for annual monitoring purposes. All reports, including responses, are also made available for on Moodle.

If external examiner reports are not received by 15 September, QuEST sends a reminder to the external examiner. A further reminder will be sent to external examiners during November and if necessary, thereafter by the Chair of the Education Advisory Committee.

Any queries about receipt of annual reports should be directed to QuEST in the first instance.

External examiner reports should be considered at the appropriate Divisional Programme Board within their annual monitoring activities.

7.2 Raising Concerns

Where there is concern about standards and performance, particularly if there is suggestion that assessments are being conducted in a way which jeopardises either the fair treatment of individual candidates or the standards of the University's awards, an external examiner has the authority to submit a report directly to the Principal. The external examiner may also invoke the QAA's concerns scheme or inform the relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body. This will be communicated to the external examiner at the time of appointment.

If colleagues are advised of any concerns external examiners have about the reporting process, please contact the Head of QuEST.

7.3 Programme Amendments

The primary role of external examiners relates to the standards of awards and the quality of assessment processing. However, the external examiner will be expected to comment on amendments to the programme content or changes proposed to the assessment structure/format.

As a matter of courtesy, the School should advise the appropriate external examiners of **all changes** to the programme(s) associated with their appointment during the year and provide access to an updated programme specification in advance of each Board.

8 ★EXTERNAL EXAMINER FEES & EXPENSES

The following revised fee structure was implemented for 2019/20.

8.1 Payment of Fees

Payment of the fee will be authorised when the annual report is received, which is due by 15 September each year.

Payment is made through the University's payroll system which is normally paid on the 28th of each month. Payment is made direct to bank accounts and we request bank details prior to each payment. The external examiner will be asked to complete the relevant forms each session following receipt of their annual report to enable payment of the honorarium. All external examiners are subject to PAYE. A P60 can be supplied on request. Tax will be deducted at source from the honorarium. National insurance is not deducted from external examiner payments.

For session 2019/20, the fee structure for annual reporting is as follows:

School Assessment Board External Examiner	£500
School Board of Examiners External Examiner	£300
Dual Role (SAB & SBE External Examiner)	£600
Degree Assessment Board External Examiner	£500

8.2 Placement Visit Fees

In addition to the fee for annual reporting, SAB external examiners who undertake placement visits, as required by a professional, statutory or regulatory body, such as the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), will be paid an additional £100 per day. All placement fees must be claimed on the appropriate form and authorised by the Board Chair. Any queries regarding this process should be raised with the School.

8.3 Expenses

Travel and accommodation expenses will be paid in addition to the fees noted above. All claims should be submitted within 3 months of the expense being incurred. More information on claiming expenses can be found in the External Examiners Handbook <https://www.uws.ac.uk/about-uws/academic-life/quality-enhancement-support-team-quest/external-examiner/>

8.4 Postal Charges

When returning scripts to the University or the Collaborative Partner, they should be returned by the same manner in which they were forwarded. For UK partners, this would usually be through services offered by the Royal Mail. Couriers need not be used.

The School will reimburse Royal Mail postal expenses and all claims should be clearly detailed on the expenses claims form. Proof of payment must be submitted with the expense claims form.