



Quality Enhancement & Standards Team (QuEST) External Examiner Handbook Session 2025/26	
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Version 3

Updated October 2025 to reflect introduction of the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework, UWS Strategy 2030, 2025/26 Regulatory Framework, UWS Academic Quality Framework and to ensure alignment with the UWS Style Guide.

FOREWORD

The University is pleased to welcome you to the academic community at University of the West of Scotland. The role of the external examiner is central to our own internal arrangements for monitoring academic standards and enhancing quality. Your annual report is an essential document in our internal monitoring and review of University academic standards.

We are mindful of the commitment of time and effort made by our external examiners. I would like to thank you for sharing your expertise with the University of the West of Scotland. I hope you will enjoy your association with the University.

This handbook has been produced by the Quality Enhancement and Standards Team (QuEST) at the University of the West of Scotland to provide guidance on your role as external examiner. It should be read in conjunction with the University's Academic Quality Framework, the University's Regulatory Framework and the University's Assessment Handbook. These documents and other useful information can be accessed via the [External Examiner Induction webpage](#). Our online induction will also provide you with guidance about the approaches to quality enhancement and the assurance of academic standards at UWS.

The procedures for external examining at the University of the West of Scotland ensure the requirements of both the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) and [Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework](#) are being met.

The University also regularly reviews external examining processes to ensure they align with the External Examining Principles, developed by the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment (UKSCQA) and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). There are 12 principles identified as being critical to external examiner effectiveness; these are directed at both the individuals performing the role and the appointing institution.

To be effective, external examiners should:

- Protect standards and ensure comparability and consistency
- Act as an expert in providing independent critical review, performing the role with integrity and supporting enhancement
- Ensure fairness and transparency in assessment
- Maintain the currency of their knowledge
- Support inclusivity and equity in teaching, learning and assessment

To promote an effective external examining system, institutions should:

- Appoint the right examiners, ensuring that conflicts of interest are avoided
- Provide adequate training to enable external examiners to fulfil the role
- Ensure the role is fully understood
- Enable students to understand the value and purpose of external examining
- Engage with and support the external examiners they appoint

- Engage with and support their own staff acting in the role elsewhere
- Review their policies and practices against these principles on a regular basis

This handbook is primarily for appointed external examiners but will also be useful for those considering taking on the role and for University staff working with external examiners.

Any suggestions for the improvement of this handbook or the general induction process for external examiners is welcome. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance.

Helen Butcher

Head of Quality Enhancement and Standards Team

Helen.Butcher@uws.ac.uk

SECTION A - INFORMATION FOR EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

1 EXTERNAL EXAMINING OVERVIEW

Externality is a key underlying principle of the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF) and maintaining an effective external examining system is one way that institutions ensure externality. The UK Quality Code for Higher Education states that 'External examiners provide assurance to the provider and other stakeholders that the academic standards and quality achieved are in accordance with national qualification frameworks and requirements. External examiners can also provide impartial and independent confirmation that the processes of the provider have been followed and that the assessment and classification processes are fair, reliable and transparent.'

The Role and Responsibilities of External Examiners at UWS

The University has three types of assessment boards to which external examiners are appointed.

School Assessment Boards (SABs)	Confirm the mark, grade and decision for students on modules.
School Boards of Examiners (SBEs)	Consider the eligibility of students to progress or gain an award.
Degree Assessment Boards (DABs)	Operate for some collaborative awards to provide an overall judgement on student performance and the quality and standard of programmes delivered with collaborative partners.

The remit and membership of the SAB, SBE and DAB can be found within the [UWS Committee Framework](#).

The [SAB](#), [SBE](#) and [DAB](#) sections provide information on the specific roles and responsibilities.

Appointment

External examiners are appointed in accordance with the following criteria, evidenced within the nomination form and supporting CV. This ensures alignment with the QAA's Principles of External Examining.

- 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.

To assure effectiveness and independence in the external examiner process, and avoid potential conflicts of interest, 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.

Right to Work

As part of the appointment, process, you must provide evidence of your eligibility to work in the UK to ensure compliance with the requirements of the UKVI. You will be informed of the process to be undertaken at the time of your appointment. For further information on right to work checks and acceptable forms of evidence please see the [UKVI website](#). In addition, the University requires sight of official documentation which confirms your National Insurance number, such as a National Insurance card or payslip.

You cannot commence your appointment or receive any payments without the necessary checks being completed.

Induction

Before taking up your formal external examining duties, we recommend that you familiarise yourself with this Handbook, as well as the Regulatory Framework, Academic Quality Framework and Assessment Handbook, which can be accessed via the [External Examiner Induction webpage](#):

In addition to Institutional guidance, you are also asked to refer to the UKSCQA and QAA [External Examining Principles](#) and other relevant national reference points, including [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#) and QAA [Subject Benchmark Statements](#).

On appointment you will receive details of the online induction, which provides an introduction to the University, an overview of the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework in Scotland, the operation of exam boards and roles and responsibilities of external examiners, including completion of the annual report.

The School or collaborative Partner will also make arrangements to meet with you, either in person or online to introduce you to the staff and learning environment associated with the programmes.

The School / Partner will also provide the following information as part of your subject specific induction:

- the approval history of the programme / module areas for which you've been appointed;
- the design and delivery characteristics of the module / programme as set out in the module descriptors / programme specification and associated student handbooks;
- your role in the approval process for examination question papers and coursework assignments;

- marking protocols (question and assignment setting; model answers; double marking; blind marking; moderation; marking rubrics);
- discussion of sampling and selection of student work to provide the evidence base for your review and report;
- requirements, particularly in practice – and studio-based subject areas, to attend demonstrations of practice (eg exhibitions, performances, presentations) or to review this work through virtual or electronic media;
- opportunities for meeting students on a more informal basis;
- access to predecessors' reports;
- contact protocols and details for key staff.

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 to be undertaken by the SAB external examiners.

Change in Circumstances

You should notify your School and QuEST contact of any change in circumstances, such as changes in employment or new professional connections with UWS staff. Your appointment will be reviewed to ensure the criteria of appointment, as detailed above, continues to be met.

Reciprocity of Examining

In line with the QAA's External Examining Principles, reciprocal external examining between the same or closely related subject areas in the University and those in other institutions or organisations is prohibited. If a member of University of the West of Scotland staff from the area in which you externally examine was to be considered for appointment as external examiner in your University department it would not be possible for both appointments to continue. If you become aware of such an arrangement, the University would be grateful if you would draw this to the attention of the Head of QuEST, helen.butcher@uws.ac.uk.

Number of Appointments

As the arrival of student work for scrutiny and the timing of boards often overlaps with very busy periods of examination in your own institution, you should not hold more than two external examiner appointments at any one time, unless the prior approval of the Academic Quality Committee has been sought. This ensures alignment with the expectations of the QAA's Principles of External Examining.

Period of Office/Extension of Appointment

Your term of office will normally be four years (October - September) to enable you to consider four successive cohorts of students. Exceptionally, you may be asked to act as external examiner for one further year for reasons of continuity.

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 reviews of decisions that arise.

Resignation /Termination of Appointment

Should you for any reason (e.g. workload, conflict of interest, ill health etc.) need to conclude your role earlier than the confirmed period of the appointment, you are asked to advise the Head of QuEST, helen.butcher@uws.ac.uk, who will make the necessary arrangements. Where possible, you should notify of your intention to resign no later than the end of December of the year in progress.

The University may, in exceptional circumstances, terminate your contract with agreement from the Learning and Teaching Committee. 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, e.g. 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.

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, you may be deemed by the Chair of the Learning and Teaching Committee to have resigned your appointment and will be advised accordingly. If you notify the University that illness or other personal reasons are preventing you from meeting the requirements of the role we will seek to agree appropriate revised arrangements in the first instance, such as a revised timescale for submission of an outstanding report.

Resolving Disagreements

Any disagreement which cannot be resolved locally by the SAB, SBE or DAB will be referred by the School to the Head of Quest. If a resolution cannot be agreed a final decision will be sought from Senate.

Raising a Concern

The Head of QuEST is your first point of contact out with the School. Should you wish to raise an issue of concern, please email helen.butcher@uws.ac.uk.

If there is any matter that you feel should be brought immediately to the attention of Senate, you may address your report directly and confidentially to the Vice-Chancellor of the University as Chair of Senate.

In line with QAA guidance, where you have a serious concern relating to the academic standards of a programme or programmes and have exhausted all applicable internal procedures, including the submission of a confidential report to the Vice-Chancellor of the University, you may invoke QAA's [Scottish Quality](#)

[Concerns Scheme](#) or inform the relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body.

2 SAB EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

As a SAB external examiner, you will help the University to confirm the academic standards for the modules, which make up our awards. You will ensure that the modules assigned to you are assessed impartially and fairly and that the standards of the University's awards (or parts of award) are maintained in line with University Regulations and procedures. You will also assess the comparability of student performance against appropriate national reference points, including relevant [QAA Subject Benchmark Statements](#) and the [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#), which in Scotland is the Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland (FQHEIS), a constituent part of the overarching [Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework \(SCQF\)](#).

A 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 published module descriptors;
- provide confirmation of marks, grades and decisions and attend meetings of the SABs as appropriate
- moderate the marks awarded by the internal examiner(s);
- 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.

Engagement with SABs

You will be expected to engage with the SABs for the modules to which you are appointed. These are normally held in January, May and August each session, however, this may vary depending on the delivery of programmes. The School will advise you of the SAB dates for your modules.

The SAB is responsible for confirming the marks and grades for modules assigned to it. The allocation of the modules to the SAB is the responsibility of the School Board. As the SAB external examiner, you will provide your confirmation of the marks and grades during attendance at the SAB or by other appropriate means as determined by the SAB Chair.

SABs will take account of any Extenuating Circumstances Submissions (ECS) when recording the student's module decision. See the ECS section for further information.

Results are communicated to students after each SAB electronically via Self Service Banner as final approved results.

Module Allocation

Each module is assigned to one SAB external examiner, who is 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 may, however, 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.

The School will consult with you on your module allocation to ensure it is appropriate in terms of your subject expertise and workload. Your module allocation may change during the course of your appointment to take account of changes in the portfolio but you will be consulted before any changes are actioned.

Campus Visits

While the majority of your role will be undertaken remotely you may wish to attend campus to meet with staff and students, allowing for wider quality enhancement discussions and activities. You should discuss this with the School in order to make the necessary arrangements and agree an appropriate frequency for visits, usually a maximum of once per academic year. If overnight accommodation is required **this is normally within student residences**.

Meeting with Students

You may wish to meet informally with students to discuss their experiences on a programme or modules. Arrangements for this should be made with the School. While discussion might relate to assessment experiences, the meeting should not be used to discuss individual assessment outcomes.

Assessments

You will be invited to approve all assessment instruments at all levels, including coursework and examination question papers. Schools should make all forms of assessment available to you prior to their being distributed to students. Schools will ensure appropriate encryption is deployed when sharing assessments.

You will also review a sample of student assessments during the year. The sample will include all the modules that you have been allocated, including the

lower SCQF levels. It will include different types of assessment and material from part-time students and all relevant modes of delivery and campuses, including collaborative franchise partners. The University provides guidance on sampling methodology for the purposes of internal moderation which is also a useful guide for external examiner sampling: see section 5.3 of the [Assessment Handbook](#).

You are encouraged to liaise with the School to agree the sampling approach and to request any other evidence considered necessary to discharge your responsibilities. Where you are content that the samples reviewed have provided assurance of due process and academic standards for a specific module, you do not need to sample from other cohorts taking the module in the same academic year and can approve the results for those other cohorts.

Wherever possible, Schools are encouraged to stagger the review of student work throughout the year when assessments are completed rather than have them accumulate for review at the time of the SAB.

Recognition of Prior Learning

The University Regulation 2.16 states that Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) 'assessments shall be open to external examination and confirmation by SABs on the same basis as the formal assessment and examination of students.'

You may be asked to review APEL assessments as appropriate. As with any other assessment, you will have the opportunity to approve the method and marking rubric to confirm that the process of assessment is robust. Completed APEL assessments must be seen by an external examiner and go through an appropriate SAB. Whilst APEL claims can be infrequent, we acknowledge they can be time consuming to review. Schools are reminded to provide you with early notification, adequate time and appropriate supporting documentation to assist you in your review.

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. Assessments connected with WBL/PL are considered by the academic programme team and the appropriate external examiners including 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. On appointment, Schools will apprise you of the extent of WBL/PL within the portfolio of modules that you have been assigned and your expected input.

Module & Programme Amendments

In addition to confirmation of standards and comparability of awards, you may also be 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 a desktop approval of a new or significantly revised programme.

Extenuating Circumstances

The University operates a self-certification process 'Extenuating Circumstances Submission' (ECS), which applies to all students. If a student has been affected by extenuating circumstances and is either; not in a position to undertake an assessment; or has undertaken an assessment but has decided that extenuating circumstances affected their performance, they have up to 48 hours after the date of assessment submission to submit an ECS. Students are not required to submit any evidence in support of their ECS claim.

Before confirming their ECS claim, students are made aware that any mark achieved will not be counted, including when a pass has been achieved. They will receive a mark of 0% and will be given the opportunity to resit.

See the [UWS website](#) for further information on ECS.

Collaborative Provision for Franchise Partnerships

The University has a number of collaborative franchise arrangements where partners deliver UWS programmes leading to a UWS award. SAB external examiners are responsible for ensuring the modules offered on the collaborative provision are assessed fairly, impartially and consistently, irrespective of the mode and location of delivery or assessment. You may be asked to attend the site of delivery to confirm standards during your period of appointment.

3 SBE EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

Your responsibility as a 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. You will not review student work and cannot change marks. You will confirm progression and award decisions of the SBE, which are based on the outcomes of the SAB.

You will also provide an overview of the analysis of trends in award and progression data and the comparison of standards across different cohorts and campuses and comment on the overall performance of students in relation to their peers on comparable programmes of study in other UK Higher Education Providers.

A SBE external examiner will:

- attend meetings of the SBE as appropriate and, in light of information received from the SBE, confirm award and progression decisions;
- 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.

Engagement with SBE

In order to effectively fulfil your duties, you are required to engage with the SBEs where awards are confirmed for the programmes to which you are appointed. SBEs normally take place at the end of term in June and August and less frequently in January, however, this may vary depending on programme delivery and the School will provide you with the schedule of meetings.

In executing your duties, you must be confident that academic standards have been maintained. Decisions of the SBE for awards of the University at SCQF Level 9 or above (or the highest SCQF Level of award if that is below SCQF Level 9) require confirmation by the SBE External Examiner (Regulation 3.39) before students will be entered onto the graduation roll. This confirmation is obtained either through your attendance at the Board or by other appropriate means as determined by the Chair of the SBE.

Appointment as an SBE External Examiner

SBEs consist of groups of programmes within a School and a single external examiner is appointed to each group of programmes. Once you have acted as a SAB external examiner for at least one year you may be invited to become a SBE external examiner. This approach aims to recognise the contribution you have made at the SAB, acknowledging that you will now also have a greater understanding of the University's assessment processes and systems.

Typically, you will take on a dual appointment, continuing as a SAB external examiner as well as taking on the SBE role. The School will consult with you on the appropriateness of the workload.

At the time of your SBE appointment you will be provided with a list of programme titles for which you will be responsible. The School will then give you access to the programme specifications and supporting documentation. Please contact the School if you have not received this information.

Programme Amendments

You may be invited from time to time to contribute to programme amendments, for example, you may be asked for comment on proposed amendments to the programme content or assessment structure/format.

4 DEGREE ASSESSMENT BOARD EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

As a DAB external examiner, you will ensure that the standards of the University's awards are maintained and, where applicable, the University Regulations are applied on our validated programmes with external partners. The role is a hybrid of SAB and SBE external examiner as you will review individual student's work and confirm the progression and award decisions of the Board.

DABs combine the functions, responsibilities and authority of School Assessment Boards and School Boards of Examiners. They confirm the mark, grade and decision for each student. DABs also consider the performance of students on a validated programme and determine whether the student is eligible to progress to the next stage of their programme or to gain an award.

As a DAB external examiner you will:

- Attend DAB meetings as appropriate, and moderate the marks awarded by the internal examiner(s) and confirm award and progression decisions, in line with the 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 DABs.

Engagement with DABs

You will normally attend all DAB meetings, which usually occur in June and August 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. The Collaborative Partner, in consultation with UWS, will liaise with you regarding the dates of the boards and will arrange overnight accommodation if required. If you are unable to attend a Board, you should liaise with the Partner and UWS to ensure that other means of reviewing work

and confirming results and award decisions can be established. You will have a named contact at both the Partner Institution and the University.

Assessment

You will be invited to approve all assessment instruments at all levels, including coursework and examination question papers. Partners should make all forms of assessment available to you prior to their being distributed to students. Partners will ensure appropriate encryption is deployed when sharing assessments.

You will also review a sample of student assessments during the year. The sample will include all the modules that you have been allocated, including the lower SCQF levels. It will include different types of assessment and material from part-time students and all relevant modes of delivery and campuses where relevant. The University provides guidance on sampling methodology for the purposes of internal moderation which is also a useful guide for external examiner sampling: see section 5.3 of the [Assessment Handbook](#).

You are encouraged to liaise with the Partner to agree the sampling approach and to request any other evidence considered necessary to discharge your responsibilities. Where you are content that the samples reviewed have provided assurance of due process and academic standards for a specific module, you do not need to sample from other cohorts taking the module in the same academic year and can approve the results for those other cohorts.

Wherever possible, Partners are encouraged to stagger the review of student work throughout the year when assessments are completed rather than have them accumulate for review at the time of the DAB.

Any queries about dates of meetings and arrangements for reviewing documentation should be raised with the Partner in the first instance.

Meeting with Students

You may wish to meet informally with students to discuss their experiences on a programme or modules. Arrangements for this should be made with the Partner. While discussion might relate to assessment experiences, the meeting should not be used to discuss individual assessment outcomes.

Recognition of Prior Learning

The University Regulation 2.16, states that Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) 'assessments shall be open to external examination and confirmation by DABs on the same basis as the formal assessment and examination of students.'

You may be asked to review APEL assessments as appropriate. As with any other assessment, you will have the opportunity to approve the method and marking rubric to confirm that the process of assessment is robust. Completed APEL assessments must be seen by an external examiner and go through an appropriate DAB. Whilst APEL assessments can be infrequent, we

acknowledge they can be time consuming to review. Partners undertaking the APEL process, in consultation with the University, are reminded to provide you with early notification, adequate time and appropriate supporting documentation to assist you in your review.

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. The award of credit for WBL/PL will be confirmed by Degree Assessment Boards and will involve external examiners who should comment on WBL/PL in their annual reports. On appointment, Partners will apprise you of the extent of WBL/PL within the portfolio of modules that you have been assigned to and your expected input.

Programme and Module Amendments

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

Expenses and Fees for DABs

Expenses incurred when carrying out your duties are normally met by the University, but you should refer to their letter of appointment for variations in arrangements.

An additional attendance fee of £100 per Partner site visit to attend the DAB in person is payable. The payment of attendance fees will be processed on a claim form provided by the University, which must be endorsed by the DAB Chair. Any queries regarding this process should be raised with QuEST.

5 ANNUAL EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORTS

The following information provides guidance on what the University expects in the completion of your Annual External Examiner Report.

To align with the Quality Code for Higher Education and the QAA's External Examining Principles, the University requires its external examiners to report annually on:

- whether the threshold academic standards set for awards in accordance with the Frameworks for higher education qualifications and applicable Subject Benchmark Statements are being maintained;
- whether the assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the course(s) and is conducted in line with the University's Regulations and policies;

- whether the academic standards and the achievements of students are comparable with those in other UK higher education institutions of which the external examiner has experience;
- how teaching and learning approaches align with intended course outcomes;
- confirmation that sufficient evidence was received to enable the role to be fulfilled (and give details if the evidence was not sufficient);
- whether issues raised in any previous report(s) have been, or are being, addressed to their satisfaction;
- any issues as specifically required by any relevant professional body;
- whether they have received the required support to fulfil the role, including adequate time to consider samples of work and contribute to examination boards;
- collaborative provision, where relevant;
- an overview of their term of office, when concluded.

Reporting Process

An online survey platform is used for the reporting, which allows the questions to be tailored depending on your external examiner role(s). The survey can be accessed from a variety of platforms including smart phones and tablets. A link will be sent to you at the end of term 2.

When using the online survey platform please do not use the back button in your browser as your completed responses on subsequent pages may not save. You can, however, use the 'save and continue later' option, which will email you a link to continue the completion of the survey. Should you not receive the email, please contact QuEST on external-examiner@uws.ac.uk and we will be able to retrieve the link for you.

If you would prefer to use a report form in Microsoft™ Word format, this can be requested from external-examiner@uws.ac.uk

When is the Report required?

Reports should be submitted to the University as soon as possible after the final Board for the academic year and by **15 September** at the latest. Fees are only paid on receipt of annual reports.

How many Reports are required?

Most external examiners will only be required complete **one** report form. By selecting your specific role at the start of the report this will ensure you are asked the appropriate questions. If you have a SAB and SBE role, please select 'dual' and this will ensure questions for both roles are included and you will not have to complete separate reports.

There is no need to submit a report for both degree and honours years or produce a separate report for each module that you oversee (as there is room to note specific module observations within the report), but if you have been appointed to more than one SBE you should submit one report for **each** SBE.

You will be invited to the SBEs that consider the programmes to which you have been appointed to, as indicated in your appointment letter.

To whom should the Report be directed?

Please submit your completed report via the survey platform or alternatively return your completed Word version to the following email address: external-examiner@uws.ac.uk. Please do not e-mail reports to any other staff in the University; QuEST will arrange prompt availability of your report for relevant staff.

How long should my Report be?

The University is mindful of the significant contribution made by external examiners throughout the academic year. External examiner reports are fundamental to academic quality assurance and enhancement. In cognisance of this, it is imperative that reports are robust and strongly evidence-based, and we do ask that your report gives as much detail as possible in order to inform the School's annual monitoring activities and to advise the Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) of any issues in need of urgent action. To this end we have adopted a structured report form with focused questions.

The reports take the form of a series of yes/no questions and boxes for free text. We appreciate it can be a lengthy report, but it is key for our evaluation and monitoring processes, and we would ask you to be comprehensive in your responses to offer as much enhancement opportunity to the teaching team as possible.

An exemplar of a report is provided in [Appendix A](#).

What should my Report cover?

External examiners' reports are widely circulated. Please ensure that individual students and, where appropriate, individual staff are **not** identified in your report.

Positive practice should be highlighted alongside areas for development, and it is useful to suggest ideas for consideration in the future. The report form is intended to facilitate this.

If you are appointed to Nursing and Midwifery programmes jointly approved by the University and NMC you must report on practice-based learning and assessment, where this is part of your module allocation.

Who reads my External Examiner Report?

Your report will be published on Microsoft Teams, where it will be accessed and reviewed by relevant staff. It will inform the Programme Monitoring Reports that are completed by Programme Leaders as part of the Enhancement and Annual Monitoring process.

External examiner reports will also be viewed by reviewers (including externals) at the Institution-Led Quality Reviews (ILQRs) and the QAA Scotland's external review process – Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER).

In alignment with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and External Examining Principles, your name, institution and annual report is also made available to students via the UWS Student App, with the exception of any confidential reports made directly and separately to the Vice-Chancellor of the University. Students are instructed not to contact external examiners directly; should you be contacted by a student, please do not respond but forward any correspondence to the Head of QuEST, helen.butcher@uws.ac.uk, who will address any concerns. In line with the UK Quality Code, external examiner names are also included in the University's programme specification and module descriptor (PSMD) [website](#).

Your external examiner report will also be made available to new external examiners in order for them to see the points raised in the previous year and ensure they have been adequately addressed.

From time to time, we may use examples of reports to assist in training new external examiners. These are always anonymised, and we will as a courtesy contact you should we wish to use your report as an example of positive practice.

The University has clear procedures for the storage, access and disposal of personal data. You can find further details about how we handle the personal data that you provide to us in the [External Examiner Privacy Notice](#).

Conclusion of Appointment

At the conclusion of your period of appointment, the annual report form invites you to provide some feedback on your experience and the overall development of the programme/subject during the period of appointment. The University would appreciate you providing these concluding remarks.

Response to External Examiner Reports

You can expect to receive a formal, written response to your external examiner annual report from the School by November. This is normally provided on a proforma countersigned by the Head of Division. If you are a DAB external examiner, you can expect a combined response from the School and Partner institution. If you have any concerns about lack of feedback or the quality of feedback on your report, please contact the School in the first instance or thereafter, the Head of QuEST, helen.butcher@uws.ac.uk.

6 EXPENSES AND FEES

External examiners working with partner institutions should refer to their individual arrangements with the partner for further information.

The following section is intended to answer your questions on matters of payments and expenses. Further clarification on details issues relating to tax etc is available from the University's Finance Department. The guidelines concerning travel and subsistence have been developed in accordance with the following principles:

- The need for efficiency and effectiveness
- The importance of ensuring that individuals are fully reimbursed for expenses necessarily incurred at the most cost-effective rate
- The need for administrative effort to be the minimum compatible with adequate accountability
- The need for individuals to travel and be accommodated in safety
- Compliance with the regulations of the HM Revenue and Customs

These guidelines will be kept under review by the University and may be revised.

Claiming Expenses

Claims may be made only for expenses incurred in the course of making visits to the University and to placement sites (including schools for the PGDE and BA Education programmes). All claims will be dealt with according to the University's [Expenses Protocol](#), together with any offer letter you have accepted for specific work.

All claims should be shown in detail on an expenses claim form. A claim form will be provided by the School. **Supporting receipts must be attached to meet the requirements of the University's auditors.**

Claims for travel and subsistence should be returned to the School **within 3 months** of the expense being incurred. Claims submitted after the 3 month period will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances (e.g. long term illness).

Travel (Domestic Arrangements)

Consideration should be given to the most practical, efficient and cost-effective mode of travel to the University. Private car mileage will be reimbursed at the current car mileage rate of 45p for the first 180 miles of a return journey and 25p per mile thereafter.

Overnight Accommodation

If you require overnight accommodation for your visit, please contact the School/Partner and they will arrange local accommodation on your behalf. For University campus visits, this is normally within our student residences. The University will reimburse the accommodation provider for bed and breakfast

only. All additional charges incurred by individuals during their stay must be met by the individual on departure.

Subsistence

The University will pay for your evening meal on the night before or night after your visit to the University or Partner up to a **maximum of £30**.

Please note that the University will **not** reimburse any claims for tea/coffee.

Payment of Fees

Payment of your fee will be authorised when your annual report is received, which is due by **15 September** each year. Please be aware that we will not be able to pay you without having confirmed your eligibility to work in the UK and National Insurance number, as detailed in the Appointment and Induction section of this Handbook.

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 account, and we will request bank details prior to each payment. Your School contact will ask you to complete the relevant forms each session following receipt of your annual report to enable payment of your fee. All external examiners are subject to PAYE. A P60 can be supplied on request. Tax will be deducted at source from your fee. National insurance is not deducted from external examiner payments.

Scale of Fees (before tax)

For session 2025/26, the fee payment 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

Placement Visit Fees

If you undertake placement visits, as required by a professional, statutory or regulatory body, such as the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), you will receive a placement visit fee of £100 per day. The fees must be claimed on the appropriate form and authorised by the School. Any queries regarding this process should be raised with the School.

Postal Charges

On rare occasions it may be necessary to send physical copies of assessment material to external examiners. When returning scripts to the University or the Partner, they should be returned by the same manner in which they were forwarded. This will 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 your expense claims form.

School Contacts

School contacts for general operational queries are given below:

School	Name	E-mail
Business & Creative Industries (Business)	Laura Cairney	laura.cairney@uws.ac.uk
Business & Creative Industries (Creative)	Mark Thomson	mark.thomson@uws.ac.uk
Education & Social Sciences	Therese Allan	therese.allan@uws.ac.uk
Computing, Engineering & Physical Sciences	Rachel Hill	rachel.hill@uws.ac.uk
Health and Life Sciences	Carol McGarrie	carol.mcgarrie@uws.ac.uk

SECTION B – INFORMATION ABOUT THE SECTOR AND UWS

7 EXTERNAL EXAMINING: THE SCOTTISH CONTEXT

The Scottish Education System

The [Scottish Qualifications Framework](#) (SCQF) is the qualifications framework for Scotland. It features qualifications offered by schools, colleges, universities, workplaces and training organisations.

Children in Scotland complete seven years of primary school, starting in P1 (the equivalent of Reception classes in England), going up to P7 (the equivalent of Year 6 in England). After this, they do six years of secondary school from S1 to S6 (equivalent to Y7 to Y12 in England). The Scottish Education System follows the Curriculum for Excellence (also known as the CfE) for nursery, primary and secondary schools.

An honours degree in Scotland is normally four years duration and frequently includes some breadth of study beyond the subject specialism. Consequently, the honours sandwich award is five years duration. The ordinary or unclassified three-year degree also remains prominent in the Scottish Tertiary Education system.

In Scotland, the professional aspects of any programme leading to a teaching qualification (in primary, secondary or further education) are by statute a matter for the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS). The GTCS is responsible for ensuring that such programmes meet all criteria for registration without which a teacher may not hold a post in a primary or secondary school under an education authority. The GTCS advises the Scottish Government on the acceptability of teacher education courses.

School Education

Scotland's Curriculum – [Curriculum for Excellence](#) (CfE) aims to help Scotland's children and young people become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

All children and young people in Scotland are entitled to a coherent curriculum from age 3 to 18.

The [Scottish Qualifications Authority \(SQA\)](#) is one of three partner organisations responsible for the CfE 3-18 curriculum in Scotland. One of the roles of the SQA is to design and develop National Qualifications that support the principles and aims of CfE. The SQA also works closely with Education Scotland and the Scottish Government on wider CfE developments.

The National 1 to Advanced Higher qualifications have been designed to help young people develop the skills, knowledge and understanding they will need to succeed in the 21st century.

SCQF Level	Current National Qualification
1	National 1
2	National 2
3	National 3
4	National 4
5	National 5
6	Higher
7	Advanced Higher

Tertiary Education

Further and Higher education qualifications in Scotland range from Higher National Certificates (lasting one year and usually taught in a further education college), through four-year honours degrees to doctoral qualifications.

Further Education (FE) is central to lifelong learning in Scotland. Scotland's Colleges promote wider access for all and work with employers and partners to deliver innovative learning and training opportunities to help individuals, communities and employers maximise their potential, develop and grow.

The FE curriculum spans much of the range of learning needs, from general educational programmes through to highly specialised vocational education and training. Courses are available at a range of levels including:

- National Certificate modules or clusters of modules
- General Scottish Vocational Qualifications
- National Qualifications including project-based national courses and cluster units
- Higher National Certificate (HNC) and Higher National Diploma (HND)
- Degrees

8 UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF SCOTLAND

Strategy 2030

Our Purpose

The University of the West of Scotland is a placemaker within our communities, driving social inclusion and reducing inequalities through education, research and knowledge exchange

Our Goals

Driven by our purpose and aligning with our values, Strategy 2030 sets out three key goals on which we focus:

- Maximising our students' success
- Creating and applying new knowledge
- Growing our global impact

Our Values

Together, the four UWS values guide how we work as a community to achieve our goals and purpose:

- Integrity ~ we uphold integrity through transparency, adherence to values, and sound decision-making, even in challenging times.
- Respect ~ we treat everyone with dignity, act with awareness, collaborate effectively, and respect our environment.
- Inclusivity ~ we promote inclusivity by celebrating diversity, amplifying voices, and empowering communities through shared knowledge and skills.
- Accountability ~ we foster accountability, take pride in our work, trust each other, and own our actions to achieve shared goals.

Background information about the University of the West of Scotland

Since its inception in 1897, as the Paisley College of Technology, the University has provided distinctive education with the highest standards in teaching and learning. Developing over the years in response to individual needs and the needs of the regions it serves.

Our reach across the south and west of Scotland, together with our London campus, means that UWS is a significant force in global knowledge creation, innovation, and a leading provider of undergraduate, postgraduate and research degree education.

Our degrees provide students with a transformational experience, resulting in highly sought-after graduates in world-leading sectors, industries and businesses.

UWS's employer-focused degrees align with business, community, third sector, government and international priorities, and provide the perfect springboard to create economic benefits across Scotland, the UK and beyond.

With cutting-edge courses, modern pedagogy and practical knowledge, we enable our students and staff to experience the joy of learning, teaching, research and innovation, and apply their knowledge for the benefit of others.

School Structure

The University operates a School-based structure, each School under the direction of a Dean. There are four Schools:

- School of Business & Creative Industries;
- School of Education and Social Sciences;
- School of Computing, Engineering & Physical Sciences
- School of Health & Life Sciences;

Curriculum Framework

The [UWS Curriculum Framework](#) articulates the University's pedagogical and curriculum design principles

- Student-centred - Meeting the diverse needs of the distinctive UWS student cohorts, using an approach to curriculum that considers and seeks to impact positively on the wellbeing of all students.
- Engaging and active - Using best-in-class technologies and pedagogies, to provide engaging and active learning experiences meeting the learning needs of students in contemporary Scotland.
- Simple and coherent - Providing carefully-designed linear pathways for students whether part-time or full-time; on-campus or online, starting in first year or joining at any time in their degree pathway.
Authentic - Using real-world learning activities and assessments to best prepare students for the complex and ever-changing professional world and society in which they live and work.
- Inclusive - Recognising the diversity of the student body, and the need to be accessible to all.
- Sustainable - With efficient structures, pathways and number of modules.

Summary of UWS Awards and SCQF Credit rating

The University offers the following programmes and awards. The awards are rated for general credit against the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

Programme(s)	Abbreviation	SCQF Level	Credit Minima
International Foundation Programme	IFP		120 credit points equivalent to SCQF Level 6

Undergraduate Awards	Abbreviation	SCQF Level	Credit Minima
Certificate of Higher Education	CertHE	7	120 credit points at SCQF Level 7 or above
Diploma of Higher Education	DipHE	8	240 credit points of which a minimum of 90 are at SCQF Level 8 or above
Scottish Bachelor's Degree (Ordinary) Bachelor of Accounting Bachelor of Arts Bachelor of Divinity Bachelor of Engineering Bachelor of Laws Bachelor of Science	 BAcc BA BD BEng LLB BSc	9	360 credit points of which a minimum of 90 are at SCQF Level 9 or above
Scottish Bachelor's Degree (with Honours) Bachelor of Accounting (with Honours) Bachelor of Arts (with Honours) Bachelor of Divinity (with Honours) Bachelor of Engineering (with Honours) Bachelor of Laws (with Honours) Bachelor of Science (with Honours)	 BAcc (Hons) BA (Hons) BD (Hons) BEng (Hons) LLB (Hons) BSc (Hons)	10	480 credit points of which a minimum of 90 are at SCQF Level 9 and a minimum of 90 are at SCQF Level 10 or above

Graduate Awards	Abbreviation	SCQF Level	Credit Minima
Graduate Certificate	Grad Cert	9	60 credit points at SCQF Level 9 or above
Graduate Diploma	Grad Dip	10	120 credit points at SCQF Level 10 or above
Professional Graduate Diploma in Education	PGDE	10	120 credit points at SCQF Level 10 or above

Postgraduate Awards	Abbreviation	SCQF Level	Credit Minima
Postgraduate Certificate	PgC	11	60 credit points of which a minimum of 40 are at SCQF Level 11 and none less than SCQF Level 10
Postgraduate Diploma	PgD	11	120 credit points of which a minimum of 90 are at SCQF Level 11 and none less than SCQF Level 10
Taught Masters Master of Arts Master of Business Administration Master of Education Master of Engineering Master of Professional Practice Master of Public Administration Master of Public Health Master of Science	MA MBA MEd MEng MProf MPA MPH MSc	11	At least 180 credit points of which a minimum of 150 are at SCQF Level 11 and none less than SCQF Level 10
Integrated Masters Integrated Masters with Honours		11	600 credit points of which a minimum of 120 credit points are at SCQF Level 11

Research Degrees	Abbreviation	SCQF Level	Credit Minima
Master of Research	MRes	11	N/A
Master of Philosophy Doctor of Business Administration Doctor of Philosophy Professional Doctorate Engineering Doctorate	MPhil DBA PhD DProf EngD	12	N/A

Higher Doctorates	Abbreviation	SCQF Level	Credit Minima
Doctor of Letters Doctor of Music Doctor of Science Doctor of Technology	DLitt DMus DSc DTech	N/A	N/A

The full Regulatory Framework is available on the [UWS website](#)

9 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

UK Quality Code for Higher Education

The UK Quality Code for Higher Education sets out the principles of UK higher education for securing academic standards and assuring and enhancing quality, which all providers of UK Higher Education are required to meet. Further information can be found on the [QAA website](#).

Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework

In 2024 Scotland introduced a new approach to quality assurance and enhancement, Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework, or 'TQEF'. The Framework is designed to support the Scottish Funding Council's statutory duty as required in the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005 to 'secure coherent, high-quality fundable further and higher education provision, and to ensure provision is made for assessing and enhancing the quality of this provision.' The Framework is the mechanism for giving assurance on academic standards, the quality of the student learning experience and ensuring accountability for public investment in tertiary education.

TQEF seeks to answer the question 'is the learning provision delivered by Scotland's colleges and universities of high-quality and is it improving?'

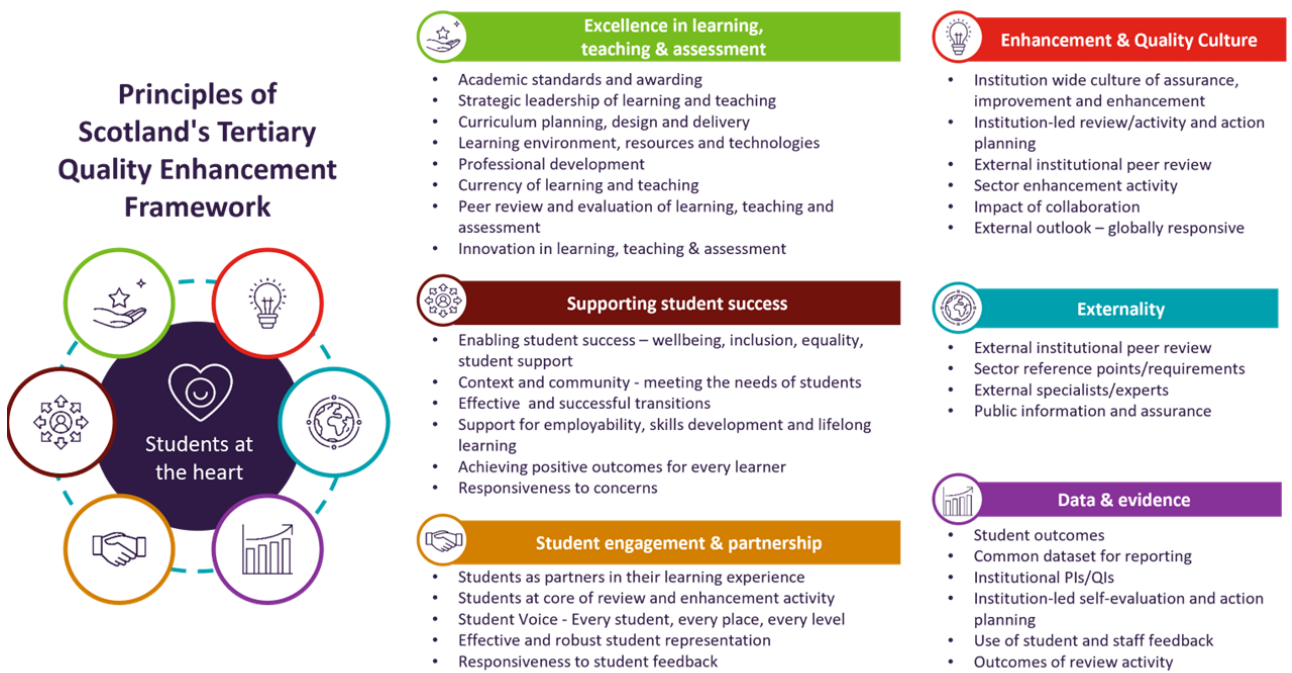
Detailed Guidance on TQEF has been set out for the sector for AY 2024-25 – 2030-31, however SFC intends to review the approach as implementation of the Framework develops and to adapt and update it as required. There is also recognition that institutions will take time to adapt to the new Framework in the initial phases, and SFC will work in partnership with institutions and students to identify appropriate adjustments and improvements.

TQEF sits in the wider UK education context where each nation has their own systems for quality assurance. However, there are shared underpinning principles agreed by UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment (now the Quality Council for UK Higher Education), which the TQEF is aligned to. The Framework is also fully compliant with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) as required by membership of the European Higher Education Area (both Scottish and UK Governments are signatories to the Bologna Process and members of EHEA). ESG provides a quality framework enabling trust, mobility and recognition between Higher Education systems across Europe.

The TQEF comprises **Principles**, **Delivery Mechanisms**, and **Outputs** to be applied to universities and colleges.

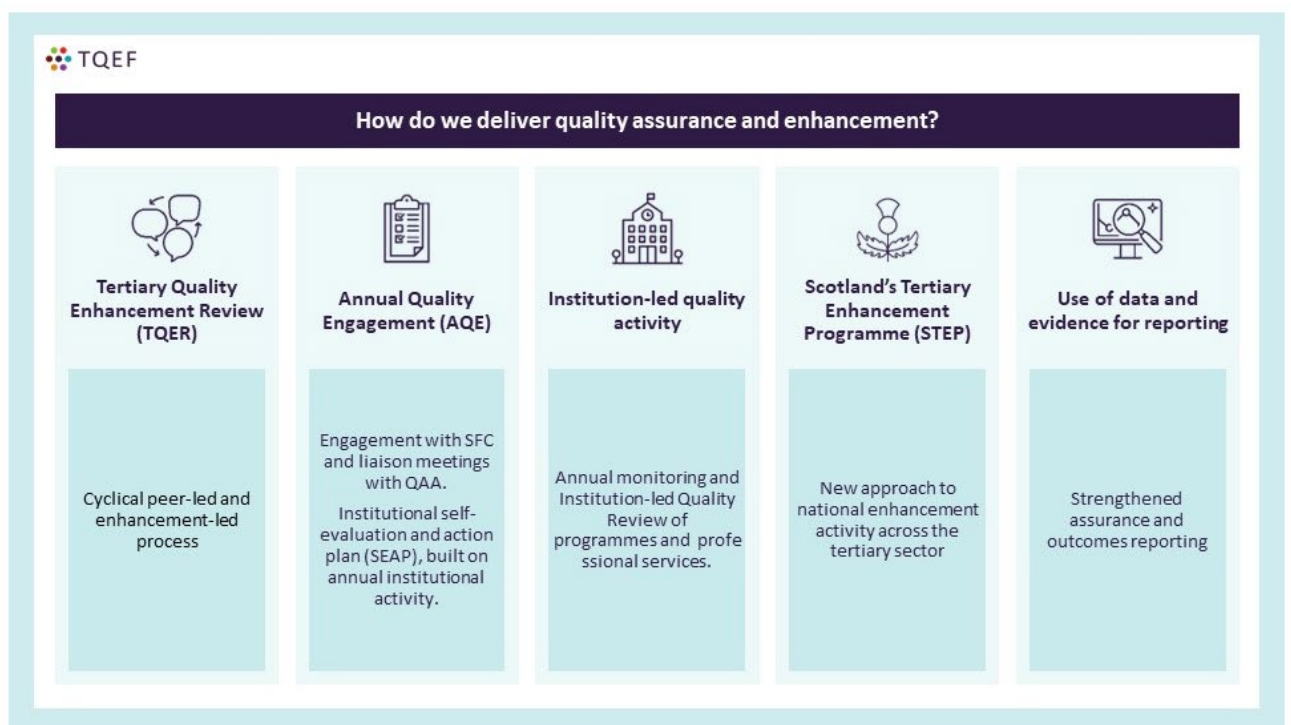
TQEF Principles

The TQEF is structured around a set of Principles developed to situate students at the heart of the Framework and support enhanced student outcomes. The principles are core to the delivery mechanisms of the TQEF and with which institutions will engage directly:



TQEF Delivery Mechanisms

The TQEF has five interconnected delivery mechanisms that collectively give assurance on the quality of provision delivered and support sector wide enhancement.



TQEF Outputs

The TQEF Principles and Delivery Mechanisms will support sector enhancement of provision of further, higher and work-based learning, outputs will support this to be assessed effectively to evaluate progress and identify areas of good practice, as well as areas for development.

See the [SFC's website](#) for more information on TQEF.

University of the West of Scotland approach to Quality and Enhancement

The Learning and Teaching Committee

Quality assurance and enhancement in the University is overseen on behalf of Senate by the Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC), which is chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning Teaching and Student Success. The Committee's remit is to make recommendations to Senate on the University's strategic direction for learning and teaching and to support and monitor the realisation of the Strategy. The Committee supports this through a range of activities, including, the development of enabling plans, frameworks and policy, the implementation and review of the framework for quality management and academic standards, and the delivery of teaching excellence, scholarly activities and pedagogical innovation through academic support and development.

The Academic Quality Committee

Academic Quality Committee (AQC) is a sub-committee of LTC, which advises and makes recommendations on the operation and development of the University's quality assurance and enhancement approach. The Committee advises on matters relating to the establishment of new or amended procedures and regulations for quality, based on institutional self-reflection and evidence arising from, institution-led quality review, School and Institutional enhancement and annual monitoring, review of collaborative provision, external examiners, programme approvals, and sector-wide best practice, and subjects these to a process of ongoing critical review providing assurance to LTC regarding effectiveness and impact.

Academic Quality Framework

The AQF is the University's prime Delivery Mechanism for the TQEF. It underpins our shared responsibility for maintaining and enhancing quality and academic standards allowing our students to thrive and succeed. Effective application of the AQF will also preserve the reputation of UWS awards and, more widely, Scottish tertiary education. Outputs from the monitoring and review activity in the AQF are core to wider elements of TQEF such as annual engagement and reporting, and periodic institutional review (TQER).

The AQF was developed in 2024-25, replacing the UWS Quality Handbook. It provides an overview of our quality processes and their interrelationships, along with more detailed procedural guidance to support colleagues and students involved in quality assurance and enhancement processes.

Quality is the responsibility of everyone at the UWS and we recognise that colleagues and students are committed to enhancement and a high-quality experience. The AQF and its processes are intended to support meaningful reflection and to recognise and disseminate innovative, positive and excellent practice, while allowing critical evaluation to harness development – thus allowing both positive and less effective activity to be used as learning points for enhancement.

AQF Principles

The AQF drives our institution-led quality activity and thus supports activity that sits at the heart of the TQEF. The TQEF Principles underpin the AQF as follows:

AQF drives Excellence in learning, teaching & assessment through sound procedures for portfolio development, and enhancement-focussed monitoring and review of our academic provision.

Student success is aligned to an excellent student experience delivered through our academic provision and student-facing professional services which are reviewed under the AQF.

The procedures operating under AQF support student engagement & partnership by ensuring student participation and that the student voice is heard. Student input comes through multiple sources, and students participate in consultation on changes, and as full members of review panels. Student feedback is central to quality driven activity such as annual monitoring.

AQF reinforces the principle that the quality of the student experience is a shared responsibility for everyone at UWS. AQF provides accessible guidance on quality procedures in order to embed an Enhancement & quality culture.

AQF is designed with reference to external sources including the HE Quality Code, Subject Benchmark Statements and sparqs. Externality is a key feature in the AQF running across all quality procedures to ensure that an external perspective is included in approval, monitoring and review activity. Externality comes from different sources such as external examiners, externally appointed panel members, members of professional and accrediting bodies, colleagues from other areas of the University.

Our quality procedures rely on Data & evidence to underpin development and assure the academic quality and standards of our provision. Reflection and decisions are informed by data across all AQF procedures.

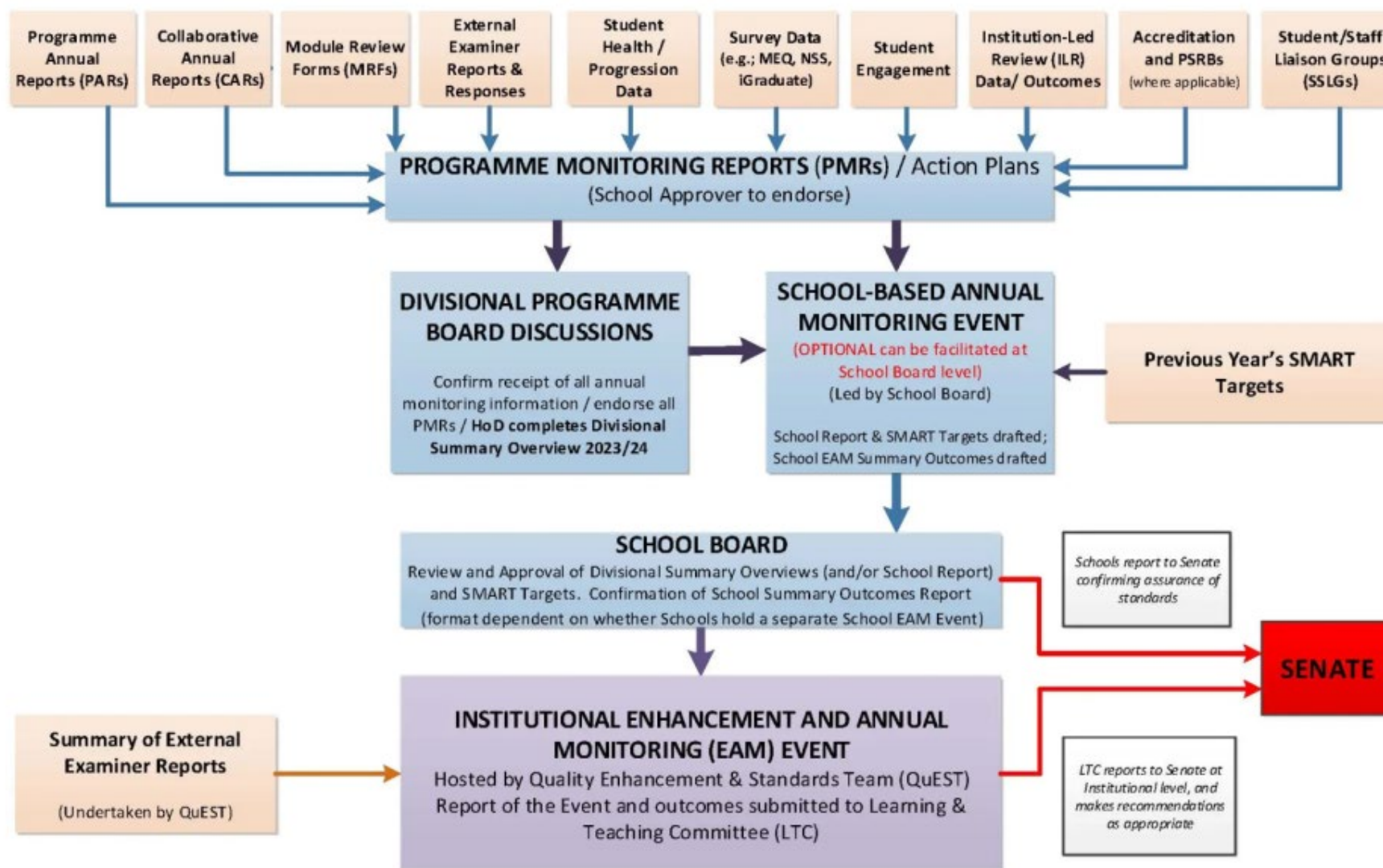
AQF Structure

The AQF is structured with two key areas of quality activity: Approval (Portfolio Development), and Monitoring and Review.

Approval activity includes the development and approval of new programmes and collaborative provision, as well as the processes of programme and module amendment.

Monitoring and Review activity incorporates the annual monitoring activity of Enhancement and Annual Monitoring, and external examining; and the periodic review activity of Institution-Led Quality Review of Academic Subjects and Professional Services, and Collaborative Review.

School Enhancement and Annual Monitoring Process



APPENDIX A**UWS External Examiner Report Form 2024/2025**

External examiner reports are an integral part of the University's quality assurance and enhancement arrangements. Your report is fundamental to the process of assuring academic standards and awards of the University. Therefore, we ask you to complete your report as fully as possible, answering each question and providing additional critical reflection where relevant. While ticking the necessary boxes often provides us with the confirmation of quality assurance, it is the critical reflection that enables us to make important enhancements to our provision and processes that ultimately improves the student experience.

External Examiners may report direct to the Principal & Vice Chancellor, in confidence if appropriate, if they have serious concerns about standards of assessment and performance. External Examiners may also invoke the QAA's Concern Scheme, further information is available at <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/scotland/reviewing-higher-education-in-scotland/how-to-raise-a-concern-in-scotland>

External Examiner Reports are due to be submitted by 15 September. External Examiners' fees are only paid on receipt of this annual report. For further information on the role of the External Examiner at UWS, please see the External Examiner Handbook, which is available at the following link, along with other documents which will support your role, including, the Quality Handbook, Regulatory Framework and Assessment Handbook: [Policies, Procedures & Guidance | UWS | University of the West of Scotland](#).

Your report will be made widely available to staff within the institution and will also be made available in full to students. Student and staff names and other identifying information, such as the titles of individual pieces of student work, MUST NOT appear in the report.

Thank you very much for your time and support.

Name		E-mail	
School / Partner	School of Literature	Date Completed	23/06/2025
Type of Examiner	School Assessment Board (SAB) / School Board of Examiners (SBE) / Dual / Degree Assessment Board (DAB)		
Areas Examined: Literary Classics			
1. Programme Materials (these are typically provided electronically via the VLE or public website)			
Were you given access to..?			
a. Programme handbook(s)			Y
b. Programme regulations (these may be in the programme handbook?)			Y
c. Programme Specification (this may be in the programme handbook?)			Y

d. Module Descriptors (these may be in the programme handbook?)	Y
e. Assessment briefs/marketing criteria?	Y
Please use this box to provide any additional comments with regard to the programme materials you have received. This could include opportunities for improvement or to identify examples of good practice: All the module descriptors are available to me and to the students via Aula. All module descriptors, teaching plans, assessments and assessment criteria are clearly and transparently set out.	
School Response (if appropriate):	
2. Assessments (This should include all types of assessment that you have been asked to review, e.g. coursework, exams, presentations etc, apart from dissertations and final year projects, which will be considered in the next question.)	
a. Were you given an opportunity to review the assessments prior to their use?	Y
b. Were the assessments appropriate and effective in assessing the required learning outcomes.	Y
c. Were sufficient assessment samples made available to you for review?	Y
d. Was the method and general standard of marking and consistency satisfactory?	Y
e. If reviewing performance/practical placement assessments, were suitable arrangements made for you to undertake this review?	Y
f. If you were reviewing an NMC approved programme, and if relevant to your role, were you give the opportunity to visit students on practice?	NA
Please use this box to provide any additional comments with regard to any assessment elements that you have reviewed. This could include opportunities for improvement or to identify examples of good practice: I was given the opportunity to review coursework briefs prior to them being issued to students and I provided some minor comments, which were taken on board by the team. Colleagues have gone to great efforts to make sure that I have had access to all the coursework completed by students, by giving me access to hidden sites on AULA where I was able to see marked work. I was comfortable with the standard of marking but advised the team I would like to see more consistency in the depth of feedback provided to students. I received all exam papers in advance of the exam with full marking criteria. I had the opportunity to comment on rubrics, appropriateness of content and typos in the text, although I have only rarely felt the need to make minor comments, e.g. on the wording of rubrics. Papers and marking criteria are always meticulously prepared. Scripts have always been meticulously marked and I have seen clear evidence of internal moderation. While all the students' oral work is available to me on AULA, this year I was particularly pleased to be able to attend some live presentations online. This was particularly valuable at the higher level, where I was able to observe student interactions with the lecturer. Colleagues are to be	

commended for the care and empathy with which they encourage students to give the best possible account of themselves on these occasions.	
School Response (if appropriate):	
3. Dissertations & Final Year Projects	
a. Does your remit require you to review dissertations or other final year projects?	Y
b. Was the choice of subjects for dissertations / projects appropriate?	Y
c. Was the method and standard of marking appropriate?	Y
Please use this box to provide any additional comments with regard to the dissertations or projects you have reviewed. This could include opportunities for improvement or to identify examples of good practice:	
There was a good range of project topics, which resulted in some very interesting submissions	
School Response (if appropriate):	
4. Recognition of Prior Learning	
a. Were you asked to review any claims for Recognition of Prior Learning?	N
b. Were you given appropriate support to examine the claim(s) e.g. criteria for award, guidance on RPL at UWS?	NA
Please use this box to provide any additional comments with regard to any claims for Recognition of Prior Learning that you have reviewed. This could include opportunities for improvement or to identify examples of good practice:	
School Response (if appropriate):	
5. Module-specific Observations	
Please use this box to provide any additional comments on specific observations that you have regarding individual modules. You may wish to use this space to copy and paste your comments from module reports provided directly to the School.	
Comments:	
Policy and Organisation This module allows students to look at literature in its social context and within an academic framework, and the range of topics offered ample scope for some interesting work. There was some good work at the higher end, and the self-plagiarism was well spotted and sensitively dealt with. I found the marking scheme and rubric useful, the marks fair, there was, however, some variation in the standard of feedback and more detail could have been provided for some submissions. Literary Practice Placements of this kind undoubtedly add an important practical element to these courses and to prepare students for work after graduation. There is evidence here of some excellent work produced under pressure in an industry environment. There was a good range of marks, but as	

so often happens in all universities, the reflective commentary mark tended to bring down the overall mark and in some cases work rightly awarded a First was pulled down by the commentary mark to the 2:1 level, which is a pity. Perhaps more guidance could be given to help students boost their performances in this equally important element of the assessment.

Media essay

As in previous years, the essays cover a wide range of subjects, some of them (in the sample I saw) rather unusual. The higher marks rightly go to those which are underpinned by rigorous academic reference. The PowerPoint presentations offered students an opportunity to exercise their abilities to use a quite different form of communication, and again the best marks go to those able to combine a high standard of content with user-friendliness. A good range of marks has been awarded in both tasks.

Creative Research Project

This is a challenging project which produced an impressive variety of responses with a strong social flavour, from rugby fans to benefit claimants. Having two components and a compulsory written/practical split makes it a demanding test of overall competence while offering students a wide range of areas in which to work. The requirement for a detailed pitch forces them to focus clearly on their stated objectives, and I was impressed by the marking criteria, which is clear and detailed and leaves students in no doubt as to why their work received the mark it did. Feedback from both first and second markers was detailed and positive. The reflective essay is of a manageable length but also requires students to think about the working decisions they took. The marks were fair and there was a good spread across the cohort. Some of the work at the top end of the range was exemplary.

School Response (if appropriate):

6. Module Parity

If the modules that you review are delivered across different campuses and or partners, we would appreciate your feedback on the parity of the provision:

Comments:

Some of the modules I examine are also offered through the University's partnership with the local college. The team ensured that I was provided with assessment samples from the partner, which I reviewed and can confirm they were comparable, in terms of the standard of marking and feedback, with those from the UWS campus. The standard of student work was also comparable.

School Response (if appropriate):

7. Results Processing and Board Operation (SAB / SBE / DAB)

a. Were the processes for the approval of module results conducted to your satisfaction (SAB and DAB externals only)	Y
b. Were processes for determination of awards and honours conducted fairly? (SBE and DAB externals only)	Y
c. If you engaged with any boards, either in person or online, were you satisfied with the operation and final recommendations of the board(s)?	Y

d. Were you satisfied that the operation of the Degree Assessment Board was in line with UWS Regulations? (DAB externals only)	NA
Please use this box to provide any additional comments with regard to the operation of the Boards and processes for approval of module results, programme progression and award. This could include opportunities for improvement or to identify examples of good practice: The boards were conducted online and I was impressed by the smooth organised process. The documentation was very clear and carefully explained. Colleagues were able to discuss in the detail the profile of the students and any general issues encountered in the delivery of the module in the current session and during my time at UWS I have seen that the feedback from these deliberations feeds into the delivery of the modules in the next session.	
School Response (if appropriate):	
8 a. Student performance, comparability of standards – subject level	
From the evidence available to you, are the standards of student performance in the modules that you have examined comparable with the standards of similar modules in other UK higher education institutions with which you are familiar?	Y
Please expand on your answer: The best students' work is of a very high standard indeed and the performance achieved in all aspects of student performance is fully comparable with other institutions I am familiar with. Colleagues are to be commended for maintaining such high standards.	
School Response (if appropriate):	
8 b. Student performance, comparability of standards - programme level (SBEs & DABs only)	
Your contact within the School can provide you with access to programme level data to assist with this question. In your role as a School Board of Examiners or Degree Assessment Board External Examiner, please comment on the overall performance of candidates in relation to their peers on comparable programmes of study in other UK Higher Education Providers as indicated by the distribution of results, honours classifications and other cohort analysis. Please comment on any identifiable trends in the data. For example, what observations can be made in relation to the spread of marks? Is there a particular module that impacts on the students' overall performance?	
The spread of awards is definitely comparable with my own institution. I note there has been a slight increase in the award of first class honours over the past couple of years but this is to be expected with the continued enhancements to the programme and the increase is not above what is seen across the sector.	
School Response (if appropriate):	
9. Programme Learning Outcomes	

Are the objectives of the programme still appropriate for the subject area and relevant to the students?		Y
Please expand:		
Yes they are - the presentational, analytical and critical thinking skills are well-developed in the modules and are fundamental to a degree level education.		
School Response (if appropriate):		
10. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion		
At UWS we are committed to advancing and promoting equality and diversity in all of our activities and aim to establish an inclusive culture, free from discrimination and based upon the values of fairness, dignity and respect. To what extent is this evident in the learning, teaching and assessment approach?		
Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Very evident
☐	☒	☐
Are there specific examples that you can elaborate on?		
The range of inclusive and authentic assessment instruments support diverse learning needs and backgrounds. The modules incorporate inclusive content that reflects diverse perspectives, authorship and global contexts.		
School Response (if appropriate):		
11. Are you satisfied that the points raised in last year's external examiner report have been addressed or appropriately responded to?		Y
If no, please expand:		
School Response (if appropriate):		
12. Are you content that the workload assigned to you in your current role is appropriate and manageable?		Y
If no, what would be your recommendation?		
School Response (if appropriate):		
13. Did you feel that you were adequately engaged and supported to fulfil your role?		Y
Please expand:		
The programme team and support staff within the School communicated well with me and provided me with any information I required or requested in a timely manner.		
School Response (if appropriate):		

14. Recommendations
If you have any additional recommendations or comments on any issue which has come to your attention as an External Examiner that you would like to draw to the attention of the School/ University please detail them here.
Comments: As above, it is pleasing to see that the university continues to support and facilitate this provision. Colleagues have been very resourceful in ensuring that relevant provision is available to as many students as possible and I hope this will be maintained.
School Response (if appropriate):
15. School Response
Schools are responsible for providing External Examiners with a written response to this report. If there are any particular issues which you would specifically wish to see addressed in their response please detail them here.
Comments: With regard to my comment about some inconsistencies in feedback for the Policy and Organisation module, I would like to hear how the team will address this.
School Response (if appropriate):
16. For Retiring External Examiners Only
If you are now concluding your appointment, please provide a brief summary of your overall experience and any recommendations you have for the future development of the subject:
I have thoroughly enjoyed my period as External Examiner for this programme. Colleagues have contacted me timeously with draft papers and exam scripts. Access to Aula has been of huge benefit to me in my role as examiner and has always worked very smoothly. This access is not available at other institutions I have worked with and UWS is to be congratulated on making it work so effectively. Over the period of my appointment, I have been aware of the difficulties caused by the loss of specific programmes and have also been impressed by the ingenuity and tenacity by which colleagues and the university as a whole have worked to maintain the provision. You have developed a range of ways in which students can access these modules and the university is to be commended on this.
School Response (if appropriate):
17. Form Review
Please provide any comments you would like to offer on the usefulness and appropriateness of this form.

This form is very user-friendly and efficient.	
Signed and dated by External Examiner: <i>(Digital signatures are acceptable provided that they are sent from your recognised e-mail address).</i>	
Author (on behalf of the Programme Team):	Date:
Approved (on behalf of the Divisional Programme Board):	Date:
Date sent to External Examiner by School:	☐ School Business Manager ☐ School Service Delivery Officer ☐ Divisional Programme Board Chair ☐ Donna MacAlister (QuEST) for uploading

External examiners are asked, wherever possible, to complete the online version of the report as it helps with the data analysis process. However, should you need to use the Word version, please return the completed form to external.examiner@uws.ac.uk by 15th September.

APPENDIX B**GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF SCOTLAND**

ADLT	Associate Dean Learning and Teaching
APPD	Academic, Personal and Professional Development
AQC	Academic Quality Committee
AQF	UWS Academic Quality Framework
BBB	Being, Belonging, Becoming survey
CLD	Community Learning and Development Standards Council
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DAB	Degree Assessment Board
DSS	Directorate of Student Success
EAM	Enhancement and Annual Monitoring
ECS	Extenuating Circumstances Submission
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
EE	External Examiner
ELT	Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment (TQEF)
ELIR	Enhancement-Led Institutional Review
EQC	Enhancement and Quality Culture (TQEF)
FE	Further Education
GA	Graduate Apprenticeship
GenAI	Generative Artificial Intelligence
GTCS	General Teaching Council Scotland
HE	Higher Education
IAB/G	Industrial Advisory Board/Group
IEAM	Institutional Enhancement and Annual Monitoring
ILR	Institution-led Review
IT	Information Technology
KEIF	Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund
KTP	Knowledge Transfer Partnership
LTC	Learning and Teaching Committee
LTSS	Learning, Teaching and Student Success
NCL	New College Lanarkshire
NES	NHS Education for Scotland
PAQ	Pre-arrival Questionnaire
PASS	Peer Assisted Study Sessions

PDP	Personal Development Planning
PGR	Postgraduate Research
PMR	Programme Monitoring Report
PRoTiP	Peer Reflection on Teaching Practice
PSF	Professional Standards Framework (2023)
PSG	Portfolio Strategy Group
PSR	Professional Services Review
PSRB	Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body
PVCLTSS Success	Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning, Teaching and Student
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QESR	Quality Enhancement and Standards Review
QuEST	Quality Enhancement and Standards Team
MEQ	Module Evaluation Questionnaire
NSS	National Student Survey
RTF	Retention Task Force
SAB	School Assessment Board
SABBs	Students' Union Sabbatical Officers
SAIP	Student Academic Integrity Panel
sALTiRE	Academic Learning and Teaching Routes for Excellence
SBE	School Board of Examiners
SDC	Senate Disciplinary Committee
SDS	Skills Development Scotland
SEAP	Self-Evaluation and Action Plan
SEC	Student Experience Committee
SED	School Enhancement Developers
SEP	Student Engagement and Partnership (TQEF)
SES	Student Experience Survey
SFC	Scottish Funding Council
SIA	Strategic Impact Analysis
SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
SLE	Student Learning Experience
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound
SPA	Student Partnership Agreement
SPAS	Student Partnership Ambition Statement
SPF	Student Partnership Forum
sparqs	Student Partnership in Quality Scotland

SPSO	Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
SSH	Student Success Hub
SSLG	Student Staff Liaison Group
SSS	Supporting Student Success (TQEF)
SSSC	Scottish Social Services Council
SSSM	Supporting Student Success Model
SST	Student Success Team
STEP	Scottish Tertiary Enhancement Programme
SU	Students' Union
TIGA	UK Games Industry Education Awards
TISG	TQEF Implementation Steering Group
TQEF	Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework
TNE	Transnational Education
UKrSURT	Ukrainian State University of Railway Transport
UNSDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
UPLIFT	UWS Professional Learning and Innovation for Teaching
VCE	Vice-Chancellor's Executive
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
WBL	Work-based Learning
WPL	Workplace Learning <u>Schools</u>
BCI	School of Business and Creative Industries
CEPS	School of Computing, Engineering and Physical Sciences
ESS	School of Education and Social Sciences
HLS	School of Health and Life Sciences