



Code of practice for external examining,
external examiner's key roles and responsibilities



Code of practice for external examining: taught programmes

- Based on [QAA UK Quality Code](#)
- Sets out the following principles:
 - ✓ fairness
 - ✓ consistency
 - ✓ reference to University regulations
- External examiner's role is to ensure that:
 - ✓ Academic standards are sound
 - ✓ Assessment methods are appropriate
 - ✓ Student achievement is comparable
 - ✓ Policies and procedures applied *consistently* and in accordance with the regulations
- Quality enhancement: addresses the role of the external examiner in promoting quality enhancement

Types of external examiners

- External examiner for the entire taught programme(s)
- External examiner for taught components of practitioner doctorate programme(s)
- External examiner for a number of modules (shared on cognate programmes)
- Lead external examiner's role (*Where more than two external examiners are appointed to a programme/award, or cluster of closely related awards*):
 - ✓ To take an informed view of the programme as a whole (to receive the reports/comments of all other external examiners)
 - ✓ To confirm that a consistent and acceptable standard is being maintained across the programme
 - ✓ To act as a mentor for new or inexperienced external examiners
 - ✓ To attend all of the Board of Examiners meetings (this could be done via Skype, etc)



Board of Examiners and the role of external examiners

- External examiners are ex-officio members of the Board of Examiners
- When the award of Degrees, Diplomas or Certificates are being made, at least one external examiner should be present
- The Board of Examiners considers the views of the external examiner(s) on any matter concerning the assessment of the programme
- External examiner signs a copy of the agreed Board of Examiners report
- Attend Boards of Examiners: attendance is compulsory where results are being considered that contribute to final awards (Level 5, 6 and 7):
 - ✓ UG final Board of Examiners: end of June – beginning of July
 - ✓ PGT final Board of Examiners: September – November



Key Responsibilities

- Consider the programme(s) as a whole (**Annual Report – template**), as well as any particular modular components (**Module Comments form – free style format**)
- Consider relationship between learning outcomes and assessment methods
- Comment on draft examination and other types of assessment papers for Level 5 and above
- Engagement *with*, not *in* the assessment process in various ways and stages so as to offer informed judgements
- Receive proportionately representative sample of student work across the full ability range that contains:
 - ✓ at least 10%, across the range,
 - ✓ or a minimum of 20 scripts or pieces of work, whichever is the lesser.

NB. Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts? Was the method of selection of scripts satisfactory?

- Meeting with graduating students
- Provide advice for the enhancement of modules and programme(s)
- Identify examples of good/best practice and programme(s) strengths



Academic year 2019/20

Semesters (15 weeks)

Semester 1: October – February (Exams Boards in February)

Semester 2: February – June (Exams Boards in June-July)

Late Summer resit period: August (Exams Boards in September)

Induction for new students Week 0	30 September 2020
Start Semester 1	7 October 2019
Christmas vacation	23 December '19 – 10 Jan '20
Exams start Week 12 S1	16 January – 31 January 2020
Reading Week 15 S1	3 February 2020
Start Semester 2	10 February 2020
Easter vacation	30 March – 24 April 2020
Exams start: Week 12 S2	29 May 2020
Last day of Semester 2	19 June 2020
Board of Examiners meetings (Semester 2)	22 June – 14 July 2020
Late Summer Reassessment period	24 August – 4 September 2020

For further information, see [Academic Registry Schedule of Dates](https://surreynet.surrey.ac.uk/): <https://surreynet.surrey.ac.uk/>

Annual report

Overview of the annual report

- External examiners are requested not to identify individual students or staff in the report. In exceptional circumstances where the recognition of noteworthy practice or exemplary performance is felt to be important, use confidential annex!
- Information available on the Quality Enhancement and Standards website (http://www.surrey.ac.uk/quality_enhancement/)
 - ✓ Codes of practice
 - ✓ Notes of guidance
 - ✓ Links to University regulations
 - ✓ Links to external QAA pages updated
 - ✓ Expenses claim form
- Checklist – at the start of the report template (**Section 1**)
- Timescales:
 - ✓ 3 weeks after the end-of-year Board for UG (no later than end of July)
 - ✓ 3 weeks after the final Board for PGT (no later than end of November – beg. of December)
- Reports submitted electronically at: externalexaminers@surrey.ac.uk
- **If a report isn't submitted**: Failure to submit the annual report will lead to the premature termination of an external examiner's contract. Fees are not paid until a satisfactory report is submitted.

Annual report

What to include in the report

The [annual reporting template](#) must be used for external examiners' comments, including observations on the structure and content of the programme(s) of study and its delivery and also areas of good practice and opportunities to enhance the quality of student learning opportunities.

Main themes include:

❖ **Standards and Student Performance**

- Comments on the academic standards of the programme(s) that you externally examine, programme aims, learning outcomes and structure
- Comments on the student performance and how it is compared with standards established elsewhere, based on your personal experience, [subject benchmarks](#), PSRBs requirements, etc

❖ **Assessment Methods and Practice**

- Comments on the appropriateness and comprehensiveness of assessment methods of the programme(s) that you externally examine and whether these allow each student to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcome(s);
- Comments on the quality and standards of the assessment process, drawing particular attention to: internal marking and moderation, quality and consistency of feedback, particular strengths and weaknesses revealed during your involvement in the assessment process, etc.

❖ **Assessment Administration and Board of Examiners Arrangements**

- was adequate information provided on the programme/course aims?
- did you receive assignment scripts for approval?
- if appropriate, were the organisation and administration of assessment procedures and the conduct of the Board(s) of Examiners satisfactory?
- Other comments might include: arrangements for external verification of assessment and feedback, opportunity to meet students (if appropriate), etc.

❖ **Other Aspects**

- Please provide examples of best/good or innovative practice and/or
- Areas for further enhancement

Consideration process

...and who can view external examiners' reports?

- Vice-Chancellor / Vice-Provost (Education)
- Office for Quality Enhancement and Standards
- Dean / Associate Dean Learning & Teaching
- Board of Studies/Programme Leader/ Director of Learning and Teaching/
programme team
- Students (including via SurreyLearn Student Sites)
- Lead external examiner (where applicable)
- New external examiners



Concerns

Key elements of the process

- EE's right not to sign the mark sheet(s), - inform the Academic Registrar in writing as soon as possible. These remarks will be subsequently submitted to the Vice-Provost (Education), the Head of Quality Enhancement and Standards and to SPAB for consideration and reaching a decision.
- Serious concerns: write to the Programme Leader for addressing the issue.
- Where problems have not been dealt with satisfactorily – a confidential report to the President and Vice-Chancellor



Communication

Main University contacts

- Quality Enhancement and Standards:
(<https://www.surrey.ac.uk/quality-enhancement-standards/external-examiners>)
 - ✓ Externalexaminers@surrey.ac.uk – general QES queries
 - ✓ Dr Svetlana Reston, Academic Quality Officer (Quality Enhancement and Taught Programmes): e-mail: s.reston@surrey.ac.uk, tel: +44 (0)1483 689108 – queries regarding annual reporting process, University/departmental responses, summary of issues and trends to ULTC, etc.
 - ✓ Mr Stephen Holden, Quality Administrator (Externalexaminers@surrey.ac.uk) – queries regarding submission of reports, fees and re-imburement of costs (travel, accommodation, subsistence), etc.

- Faculty:
 - ✓ Examinations/Assessment Officer
 - ✓ Programme Leader and/or Module Leader

- Student Services and Administration (Academic Registry):
 - ✓ Assessment and Awards Teams
 - ✓ SurreyLearn (access to samples, programme documentation)