

Code of practice for Moderators within the Associated Institutions of the University

Academic Year 2023/24

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Introduction

1. This Code sets out the University of Surrey's policy and procedural framework relating to the role and responsibilities of Moderators. This Code should be read in conjunction with the relevant University [Regulations](#) and [Codes of practice](#).
2. The main objective of the Moderator is to assure the University of Surrey that each student accepted onto a taught or research programme at an Associated Institution is being admitted to an environment that provides secure academic standards for undertaking research and learning about approaches, methods, procedures and protocols that are appropriate level of study. This environment offers students the support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their degree.
3. The Moderator will be kept abreast of the students' progress and development and will report annually on these matters to the University of Surrey.
4. The role of the Moderator is intended to be constructive and collegial and might be characterised as a critical friend or advisor. The relationship should be based on dialogue and problem solving, developing good communication with, and responding to the needs of, the programme or supervisory team.
5. The Moderator is not an additional external examiner nor are they a decision maker on issues concerning admissions, mitigating circumstances, student complaints etc. Guidance on all these matters and others such as plagiarism should be included in the Associated Institution's quality assurance guidelines or programme handbooks.

Nomination and approval of appointments

6. Due to the Associated Institutions being in Teach-out there is no expectation that there will be a need for the nomination or approval of Moderator appointments. However, if for any exceptional or unforeseen circumstance the situation arises when the nomination of a Moderator is necessary, then the relevant forms and process can be obtained from Academic Quality Services (AQS).

Organisational responsibilities

University of Surrey's responsibilities

7. The University is responsible for:
 - (i) approving the nomination of Moderators and inducting approved Moderators (including arranging handover meetings with leaving Moderators and meetings with programme team at the Associated Institution);
 - (ii) issuing the Moderator with the appropriate documentation to carry out their duties;
 - (iii) reviewing the Moderator reports and producing a summary analysis of comments to the Quality Enhancement Sub-committee (taught programmes) or Doctoral College Board (research degrees) highlighting good practice and any areas of concern;
 - (iv) ensuring the institution receives a copy of the report for action/response, where applicable;
 - (v) acting as a point of contact and guidance for Moderators with regards to any area of the collaborative arrangement;
 - (vi) ensuring the Moderator is kept up-to-date with any changes affecting the collaborative arrangements with their particular Associated Institution.

Associated Institution responsibilities

8. The Associated Institution is responsible for:
 - (i) providing programme specification(s), handbook(s) and any other relevant documentation for the validated programme(s);
 - (ii) facilitating contact with the supervisor, student(s) and any other relevant members of staff at the Associated Institution;
 - (iii) providing the Moderator with the student's progress reports on a six-monthly basis and the confirmation report;
 - (iv) working with the Moderator to ensure application of and compliance with the [Regulations](#) and [Codes of practice](#) of the University of Surrey;
 - (v) respond to the comments made in the Moderator's report in a timely fashion.

Duties and functions of the Moderator – taught programmes

9. The Moderator might expect to spend up to five days each academic year in fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of the role, including attendance for at least one meeting of the Board of Studies and the Board of Examiners (the Moderator is a full member of both Boards).
10. A Moderator should provide a source of advice and help to the Programme Convenor/Director and the teaching team, in particular as regards matters relating to the content and delivery of the programme of study, the scheme of assessment and procedures and regulations attaching to delivery and annual review of the programme.
11. The Moderator should maintain an overview of the regime of assessment, in line with the [Code of practice for assessment and feedback](#), to ensure that marking takes place appropriately and that the external examiner is asked to consider draft question papers and receives appropriate size samples of scripts, dissertations and coursework in good time to allow for the appropriate level of scrutiny.
12. The Moderator is charged with:
 - A quality enhancement and programme development role for an institution and its programme(s)
 - Responsibility to report to the Quality Enhancement Sub-committee as to whether practices and procedures at the Institution (for the validated programme) equate to those pertaining to the University of Surrey and that adequate resources are in place
13. The Moderator is expected to perform a key developmental and enhancement role in terms of:
 - (i) liaising on a regular basis with key academic/administrative staff at the institution;
 - (ii) meeting with staff and conducting staff development sessions as appropriate;
 - (iii) meeting privately with students to offer advice on the facilities available at Surrey to students and staff of the Institution;
 - (iv) attending at least one meeting of the Board of Studies each academic year (meeting with students outside the context of the Board if appropriate) and at least the final meeting of the academic year of the Board of Examiners (when recommendations are made for awards);
 - (v) attending any periodic or institutional reviews as required during the academic year as a panel member;

- (vi) reviewing and implementing of external examiners's and Moderator's recommendations;
 - (vii) providing a source of advice regarding the University's [Regulations](#), procedures and processes surrounding assessment and quality assurance of academic programmes;
 - (viii) identifying when problems arise regarding staffing and physical resources that are needed to maintain effective teaching at an appropriate level. The Moderator should inform the AQS office if there is a concern that an Associated Institution is unable to maintain resources at an appropriate level.
14. The Moderator will support the Chair of the Board of Examiners in applying University [Regulations](#) and, in dealing with difficult/exceptional cases, seeking advice from the Assessment and Awards office at the University as appropriate).
15. The Moderator is expected to make a report to the Quality Enhancement Sub-committee at least once a year to comment on any issues arising from delivery of the programme and the conduct of meetings of Boards. Academic Quality Services provides Moderators with detailed instructions about when and what they must report, and a [pro-forma](#) on which their reports should be submitted. This report should include informative comments and recommendations on:
- Whether the institution is adhering to the threshold academic standards set for the University of Surrey's awards within the QAA [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#) (FHEQ) and using applicable subject benchmark statements
 - Whether the assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the programme(s) and is conducted in accordance with the University of Surrey's policies and procedures
 - Whether the institutions' policies and strategies address student experience and student engagement adequately
 - Whether any staff development activities have been undertaken by the Moderator to develop good practices, awareness and adoption of University [Regulations](#) and academic standards, and identify any potential resource or other issues of concern
 - Whether issues raised in the previous report(s) have been, or are being, addressed to their satisfaction
16. The Moderator is expected to report on any issues identified as a result of the programme running down during a teach-out period. The Moderator will also report on any issues regarding the duties and functions of the moderator and any items for action and recommendation.
17. Where there are a significant number of programmes, across a range of subject areas, the University of Surrey may decide to appoint a Co-ordinating Moderator from amongst the individual programme moderators. In addition to the functions indicated in the paragraphs above, the Co-ordinating Moderator is expected to perform a key developmental and enhancement role in terms of:
- Co-ordinating staff development activities provide by Moderators
 - Ensuring consistency in the advice given by Moderators for the various programmes
 - Ensuring consistency in the procedures between the various programmes
 - Identifying and sharing good practice between programmes

- Providing advice, guidance and support to the individual programme moderators

Duties and functions of the Moderator – postgraduate research degrees

Contact and visits

18. It is not expected that the Moderator will make a visit to the Associated Institution in order to complete the Annual Report. However, if contact with the student reveals any issues then the Moderator is strongly advised to make a visit to the Associated Institution before completing the Annual Report.

Ongoing responsibilities

19. The Moderator is expected to perform a key developmental and enhancement role in terms of:
- (i) commenting on the ongoing suitability of the supervisory arrangements and endorsing any changes in supervision;
 - (ii) commenting on the suitability of the training and development opportunities available to and undertaken by the research student at different stages of their research;
 - (iii) commenting on the suitability of resources available to the student at different stages of their research;
 - (iv) ensuring that appropriate action is taken, in accordance with the [Regulations](#) and [Codes of practice](#), where a student's progress is unsatisfactory;
 - (v) receiving, for information and comment, progress reports (at least one every 6 months) including the student's end of year review report and the confirmation report;
 - (vi) receiving a copy of the final thesis, if requested;
 - (vii) making contact with the student, supervisory team or other staff at least once every academic year.
20. The Moderator will make an annual report to the University of Surrey using the standard report [pro-forma](#). The report will highlight any issues relating to the student's progress or support systems in place at the Associated Institution. In particular, it will cover:
- (i) the outcome of any meetings or discussions with the student, Supervisors or other staff. The Moderator is expected to make contact with the aforementioned people at least once a year;
 - (ii) the student's progress;
 - (iii) an evaluation of the ongoing supervisory arrangements and support;
 - (iv) the availability and effectiveness of discipline specific and generic skills training undertaken by the student;
 - (v) opportunities for the student to contribute to and benefit from the research environment;
 - (vi) monitoring opportunities for the student to provide feedback to the local department and University on their experience;
 - (vii) comparability of standards;
 - (viii) resources;
 - (ix) any issues or areas of good practice the Moderator wishes to highlight.

21. The Moderator is always expected to report on any issues identified as a result of the scheme of study running down during a teach-out period. The Moderator will also report on any issues regarding the duties and functions of the Moderator and any items for action and recommendation.

Analysis of moderator reports

22. Once received, the Moderator's report is logged and recorded by Academic Quality Services and the [claim form](#) is processed.
23. Academic Quality Services will review the reports noting any issues or areas of good practice identified by the Moderator.
24. Any areas of concern are highlighted for either the action of Academic Quality Services or the Moderator. If the issue is serious it may warrant a report to the University Education Committee and/or the Quality Enhancement Sub-committee (taught programmes) or Doctoral College Board (research degrees) for appropriate review and action.
25. An analysis report will provide an overview of all Moderators' reports, which will identify issues, and areas of good practice. The report will subsequently be issued to the Quality Enhancement Sub-committee or Doctoral College Board highlighting areas indicated in the review for information or for action.
26. Once the taught Moderator's report has been evaluated it will be sent to the appropriate institution for action together with the [Response to Moderator's comments form](#). The Associated Institution is required to complete Section 1 (general information) and 2 (response to the Moderator's comments) and return to Academic Quality Services for submission to the Moderator who will complete Section 3 to confirm that all remedial actions have been carried out to the satisfaction of the Moderator and the matter(s) has been dealt with appropriately (taught only).
27. Once the Moderator report has been evaluated it will be sent to the Associated Institution for action and files. All remedial action must be carried out to the satisfaction of the Moderator who will be required to report back to the University of Surrey that the matter has been dealt with appropriately.
28. The Moderator's report and associated response form will be held on the University's records in accordance with the Records Retention Schedules.
29. The Moderator's report will also be reviewed and referenced as part of the annual review report produced by the Institution and the submission documents for periodic review (if applicable).

Moderator fees and expenses

30. The payment of fees for moderatorship and reimbursement of related expenses is undertaken through Academic Quality Services. The fee for moderatorship will not be processed unless the University has received a written report. The fee for moderatorship comprises two elements: a fixed fee for attendance at the Boards of Examiners and Studies meetings, plus expenses. Fees will be paid annually on receipt of a written report and claim form(s) submitted to Academic Quality Services. Claim and Annual Report forms can be downloaded from the University's [website](#). Hard copies of the Claim Form and Report Form may be obtained directly from Academic Quality Services.
31. The payment of fees for attending a periodic or institutional review is undertaken through Academic Quality Services. The fee for attendance will be processed upon receipt of a claim form and the University has received approval of the event report and the programme's responses to conditions and recommendations.

32. The [Staff Travel and Expenses Policy](#) provides further information on reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses.
33. All Moderator's annual reports and claims for fees and expenses should be submitted to Academic Quality Services:

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