

8th December 2016

Dear External Examiner,

Re: External Examiners overseeing standards in the 2016/17 academic session

I am writing to thank you for undertaking External Examiner duties at the University of Sussex in the 2015/16 academic session. We really value our External Examiner commitment which enables us to ensure we are delivering to the highest academic standards. I would like to welcome External Examiners who are new to the University in 2016/17 and thank you all in advance for your contribution to the quality assurance of our course portfolio. I know that the UCEA recommendation that External Examiners resigned, put you in a difficult position towards the end of the last academic year, and I wanted to thank you for your ongoing commitment to the University.

Examination and Assessment Regulations

The Examination and Assessment Regulations were reviewed and have been published for 2016/17. Comments provided by External Examiners and Progression and Award Board Chairs are taken into consideration as part of the review. There are no major changes to the regulations for 2016/17. A summary of the minor changes can be found in the Examination and Assessment Regulations Handbook, along with a useful summary of regulations.

Electronic Submission and Feedback (ESEF) project

In 2014/15 the University introduced an end-to-end process to enable electronic submission of assessment, electronic marking and electronic feedback for all text based assessments at Level 4. This system was developed for 2015/16 to include all text based assessments at Level 5 and to include the functionality to support electronic moderation, both internal and external. Therefore, you may already have used the process and completed moderation remotely last year. Further developments for 2016/17 enabled text based assessments at Levels 6 and 7 to be included and for assessments which are not suitable for submission via TurnItIn to be included, for example, assessments with multiple files. Where an assessment has been set up for e-submission, a sample will be automatically generated for you to review remotely. I hope that you will support the University with this and that you will appreciate the benefits that this is expected to bring to faculty and to you as External Examiner in relation to the short timescale for completing moderation before the PAB. Feedback from students and staff on Level 4 and 5 assessments has been positive. Instructions and log in details to access the system will be provided separately.

Induction for External Examiners

You have been sent a separate invite to the External Examiner Induction which is taking place on Friday, 3rd February 2017. This induction session includes a meeting held centrally with the PVC (Teaching and Learning) and an opportunity to meet with the School faculty and students.

External Examiner Reports

The summary of External Examiner undergraduate reports for 2015/16 and agreed institutional actions is enclosed for your information. This paper was presented to University Teaching and Learning Committee in October and will be discussed at our Annual Course Review event in January, along with a summary of the postgraduate reports.

Please be advised that for 2016/17 you do need to complete the report template provided at:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/standards/externalexaminers>

Role of the External Examiner and attendance at the University

The Academic Development and Quality Enhancement (ADQE) office have provided some FAQs on the role of the External Examiner. These FAQs have been published on our web pages along with External Examiner reports. External Examiner reports will be available to staff, students and External Examiners.

In relation to attendance at the University, please note that part of the role is to attend an annual meeting with students. Schools will therefore be contacting you to discuss an appropriate time to meet with students in 2016/17. This is a key part of the External Examiners role as indicated in the FAQs. In addition to the External Examiner induction, you will be invited to attend a University briefing on the assessment regulations and how these are applied across the University. These briefings are usually held immediately prior to the PAB meetings. An invite will be sent to you in due course.

Enclosures

I enclose a copy of the Handbook on the Policy and Procedures for the External Examining of Taught Courses 2016/17 which is also available at:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/standards/externalexaminers>

I also enclose the University's Examination and Assessment Regulations Handbook for 2016/17 which includes the University's Academic Framework in Appendix A. The handbook is also available at:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/standards/examsandassessment>

I attach a paper (**Appendix 1**). This sets out the timeframe for external moderation and for Progression and Award Boards (PABs) to meet in 2016/17. The Deputy Chair of the PAB will be in touch with you shortly, if s/he hasn't already, to agree the specific date and time for the PAB.

I would like to thank you for your continued support and commitment to the University.

Kind regards,



Professor Clare Mackie
Pro Vice-Chancellor

CC: Chair of the PAB (undergraduate/postgraduate)
Head of School
Chair of Board of Study
Director of Teaching and Learning
School Administrator

Appendix 1

Timeframe for External Examiner moderation and PAB schedule for 2016/17

Assessment period	External moderation	Actual date	PAB
A1	UG (Term 1 progression /finalist): 9 th January - 10 th March PGT (Term 1): 16 th January – 3 rd March	School to agree with External Examiner dates	UG PAB: n/a UG MAB (progression/finalist): by 17 th March PGT Resit PAB: Physical/virtual by 10 th March
A2	UG (Term 2 finalist): 22 nd May - 8 th June UG (Term 2 progression): 5 th – 22 nd June PGT (Term 2): 5 th – 29 th June	School to agree with External Examiner dates	UG Finalist PAB: 14 th or 15 th June UG Progression PAB: 28 th or 29 th June PGT PAB T1/T2 modules: virtual normally on 5 th or 6 th July (to offer resits in A3)
A3	UG progression /finalist resits): 28 th August – 1 st September PGT resits: 18 th September - 12 th October	School to agree with External Examiner dates	UG Resit PAB: 7 th or 8 th September PGT Main PAB: Normally on 18 th or 19 th October

*MAB – Module Assessment Board; PAB – Progression and Award Board