

18 December 2020

Dear External Examiner,

Re: External Examiners overseeing standards in the 2020/21 academic session

I am writing to thank you for undertaking External Examiner duties at the University of Sussex in the 2020/21 academic session. We really value the commitment of our External Examiners, which enables us to ensure we are delivering to the highest academic standards. I would like to thank those of you who undertook External Examiner duties at the University of Sussex in the 2019/20 academic session and to welcome External Examiners who are new to the University in 2020/21. I thank you all in advance for your contribution to the quality assurance of our course portfolio.

Examination and Assessment Regulations

The Examination and Assessment Regulations were reviewed and have been published for 2020/21. Comments provided by External Examiners and Progression and Award Board (PAB) Chairs are taken into consideration as part of the review. There are no major changes to the content of the regulations for 2020/21. You can access the regulations and a summary of the minor changes made for 2020/21 on our webpages (please see 'Useful documents' below).

Induction for External Examiners

You will soon be sent a separate invitation to the External Examiner Induction, which will take place on Wednesday, 10th February 2021. This induction session includes a centrally organised meeting with myself in the morning and an opportunity in the afternoon to meet with school faculty and students.

Electronic Submissions

The University of Sussex online system enables electronic submission of work by students and electronic marking and feedback by academic staff. It is used for all suitable text-based assessments. Where an assessment has been set up for e-submission, a sample will be automatically generated for you to review remotely. This should benefit External Examiners completing external moderation where the timescale is short before the PAB. Instructions and log in details to access the system will be provided separately along with information on resources available to support you.

Feedback on External Examiner Reports

You will be sent the summary of postgraduate External Examiner reports for 2019/20 and actions agreed by the University to address the institutional issues raised. This will be sent to you once it has been approved in Semester 2. The summary and actions are agreed at the University Education Committee and are considered further at Annual Course Review. You will separately receive an individual Action Plan from the Chair of the School Progression and Award Board. This will set out actions agreed by the School Education Committee to address the school-level issues that you raised in your report.

Please be advised that for 2020/21 you will need to complete the report template provided at:

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

Please note that if you have a serious concern relating to academic standards you should raise this directly with the PVC for Education and Students. As a last resort, if the concern has not been resolved and relates to a systematic issue rather than a one off case of ineffective practice, you may raise the matter externally with the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA).

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 are published on our web pages (please see 'Useful documents' below for the link). At the end of each academic year, you will be asked to complete a report. External Examiner reports will be available to staff, students and External Examiners.

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 nearer the time.

In relation to attendance at the University, please note that a key 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. This may coincide with Induction or the Progression and Award Board.

Useful documents

The Policy and Procedures for the External Examining of Taught Courses 2020/21 is available at:

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

Frequently Asked Questions, to support External Examiners in the role are available at:

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

The University's Examination and Assessment Regulations for 2020/21 are available via the link below. Section 1 consists of the Progression and Award Regulations (and includes the University's Academic Framework in Appendix A); Section 2 consists of assessment related policy and procedures, presented as stand-alone documents. The regulations are available at:

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

Appendix 1 sent with this letter, sets out the timeframe for external moderation and for Progression and Award Boards (PABs) in 2020/21. The Deputy Chair of the PAB will be in touch with you shortly, if s/he hasn't already, to confirm the specific date and time that you are asked to attend for the PAB this year.

I would like to thank you for your continued support and commitment to the University, particularly your support in helping us maintain the quality and standards of our awards during the Covid-19 pandemic. I look forward to meeting you, if I haven't already, at the induction event in February or later in the year.

Kind regards,



Professor Kelly Coate
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students)

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