

Summary of university-level issues raised by undergraduate External Examiners and institutional responses (extract from the report approved by UEC)

6 Institutional Issues emerging from External Examiner reports 2020/21

6.1 The following issues have been raised by External Examiners. Proposed responses and actions are included in italics

6.1.1 Timeframe for completing moderation is tight (for Schools and Externals)

Examiners observed that the moderation deadlines are exceedingly tight for both faculty and external examiners. This issue was also raised in 2019-20 and previously.

It is recommended that External Examiners are informed of timeframes for moderation and that a sample is provided via Box for non e-submission assessments, where possible. This concern should also be taken into consideration in a future review of the academic year structure.

6.1.2 Feedback on assessment

Examiners observed that the quality and quantity of feedback can vary considerably and that it is sometimes too generic. This issue was also raised in 2019-20 and previously.

It is recommended that Schools continue to review feedback practices with a view to providing more consistent and helpful feedback to students. Work is underway to systemise the expected date for marks and feedback to be published for each assessment. This is to manage student expectations and to support Schools in keeping 'turnaround' times under review. The online learning baseline includes the requirement to ensure that the methods for returning feedback are clearly explained.

6.1.3 On-line exams

Some concerns were raised regarding online exams and the need to ensure that they are the most appropriate assessment mode and securely test student understanding, especially with reference to 24-hour DEXs. This issue was also raised in 2019-20.

It is recommended that Schools review use of assessment modes and online exams questions to ensure they are robust and that assessments are shared with examiners prior to their use.

6.1.4 Marking Criteria

Marking criteria in some Schools to be reviewed to ensure clear differentiation at the upper end and clarity regarding different assessment modes, to support further usage at the upper end. This issue was also raised in 2018-19.

Schools to review marking criteria. The online learning baseline include the requirement to include clear instructions, marking criteria and/or rubrics for all assessed tasks.

6.1.5 Overall, reports contained many positive comments recognising the effort that went into supporting students, adjusting assessments and moving teaching online in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was widely noted that this had helped maintain strong student performance despite the difficult circumstances.

7 Update on further Institutional Issues

7.1 Academic Year 2019-20

7.1.1 Data on degree outcomes

Some externals indicated that they would like more data on degree outcomes
Schools are reminded that a rank list web report is available and can be provided at the PAB. Whilst at institutional level, the Annual Report on Degree Outcomes will be shared with External Examiners (Action: ADQE)

7.2 **Academic Year 2018-19**

7.2.1 Distribution of marks - data

Some Externals indicated a preference to receive more data on the distribution of marks
Schools to ask some Externals to attend the MAB instead of the PAB.

7.2.2 Marks Checking and Moderation

Some concerns were raised about marks checking processes used and moderation.
Schools to advise Externals of marks checking process used e.g. double marking on all heavily weighted assessments prior to moderation. ADQE sent a short guide to External Examiners in June 2020 to support them in the marks checking and moderation process. This [guide](#) is available in the [FAQs](#) to support External Examiners.

7.3 **Academic Year 2017-18**

7.3.1 Moderation

Some examiners expressed a preference to prescribe the moderation sample, for example, to see scripts of highest and lowest marks given, instead of a random sample.
For e-submission assessments, the sample is automatically selected in accordance with the criteria (10% of the assessments (minimum 7 maximum 25), all fails, scripts from all classification bands). These criteria should also be used for moderation samples provided in hard copy. ADQE sent a short guide to External Examiners in June 2020 to support them in the moderation process. This [guide](#) is available in the [FAQs](#) to support External Examiners.