

## Undergraduate External Examiner Reports Overview Analysis for 2016/17

---

### Section 1: Summary and Analysis of Undergraduate External Examiner Reports 2016/17

Overall 91.4% reports were received by the Academic Development and Quality Enhancement Office and distributed widely throughout the institution in line with agreed procedures (74/81 reports received). This compared to a 98.6% response rate in 2015/16 (this was based on the number of reports expected, following the resignation of 11 External Examiners who had resigned by the end of 2015/16 due to industrial action). This excludes BSMS reports which JARB receives on behalf of the University of Sussex and the University of Brighton.

Actions plans in response to School level issues will be considered by the School TLCs and responses sent directly by the Chair of the Progression and Award Board (PAB) to External Examiners. The reports and the action plans will be reviewed during the Annual Course Review event. A proposed response to institutional issues raised in External Examiner Reports are set out below in italics.

Sections 2-4 provide a summary of data extracted from the External Examiner reports 2016/17 and areas of good practice amongst Schools.

### **Institutional Issues for 2016/17** (refer to relevant section for more detail)

- Variation in the volume and quality of feedback to students, with some examples of excellent practice but some lack of consistency – *Schools to review feedback practices*
- Time pressure on external examiners as a result of the present structure of the academic year – *University to review structure*
- A minority of external examiners have expressed disagreement with aspects of the University's regulations including the approach to moderation and discussion of borderline cases - *It is important to continue to engage in discussions on these issues with examiners through briefing and induction events, but also to note that regulations vary between institutions and that Sussex's have been approved as appropriate to maintain standards through normal committee processes.*

### **Update on Institutional issues from 2015/16**

- Timeframe for completing moderation for finalists at the end of the year is tight – *inclusion of level 6 submissions in ESEF should have resulted in earlier availability of sample for moderation. Rationalisation of exam durations may have resulted in shorter exams which could marginally reduce moderation workload. Ongoing review of use of exams. In addition, a review of the academic year structure is due.*
- The prescribed method of moderation is disliked by some External Examiners in particular Schools – *During 2015/16 the University addressed this by publishing (i) FAQs to support External Examiners in understanding the prescribed process for moderation and (ii) by*

*scheduling induction for new Externals in January in addition to the briefings that are scheduled annually in advance of the PABs. Attendance at the latter has been low but for those who attended understanding of the moderation process has improved.*

- *Feedback varies greatly and is sometimes too generic – University to review ESEF to see if technology can secure mark first and then allow individual feedback to student based on prior attainment and feedback. Instead, resources were provided via Study Direct to support Academic Advisors in their role e.g. guidance for meetings with students and links to relevant resources within the School.*
- *Reference to Teaching and Learning methods and opportunities on External Examiner report form –wording revised on the report so that External Examiners are asked to reflect on Teaching and Learning methods based on the standard set of materials sent and not based on observation of teaching or access to the teaching resources.*