18 December 2019

Dear External Examiner,

Re: External Examiners overseeing standards in the 2019/20 academic session

I am writing to thank you for undertaking External Examiner duties at the University of Sussex in the 2019/20 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 2018/19 academic session and to welcome External Examiners who are new to the University in 2019/20. 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 2019/20. 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 2019/20, however, the presentation has been revised. You can access the regulations and a summary of the minor changes made for 2019/20 on our webpages (please see ‘Useful documents’ below).

Induction for External Examiners
You have been sent a separate invitation to the External Examiner Induction, which will take place on Wednesday, 12th February 2020. 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 2018/19 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 (formerly School Teaching and Learning Committee) to address the school-level issues that you raised in your report.

Please be advised that for 2019/20 you will 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 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 2019/20 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/eefaqs

The University’s Examination and Assessment Regulations for 2019/20 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

In response to feedback from External Examiners, we have sent this letter electronically and have not sent you a paper copy of these documents this year. However, if you would like to be sent paper copies please email externalexaminers@sussex.ac.uk.

Appendix 1 sent with this letter, sets out the timeframe for external moderation and for Progression and Award Boards (PABs) in 2019/20. 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. 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