22 November 2018

Dear External Examiner,

Re: External Examiners overseeing standards in the 2018/19 academic session

I am writing to introduce myself as the new PVC (Education and Student) at the University of Sussex. I would like to thank you for undertaking External Examiner duties at the University of Sussex in the 2017/18 academic session. We really value our External Examiners’ 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 2018/19 and 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 2018/19. 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 regulations for 2018/19. A summary of the minor changes can be found at the beginning of the Examination and Assessment Regulations Handbook, along with a useful summary of regulations.

Induction for External Examiners
You have been sent a separate invitation to the External Examiner Induction which is taking place on Friday 8th February 2019. This induction session includes a centrally organized meeting with myself in the morning and an opportunity in the afternoon to meet with the School faculty and students.

Electronic Submissions
The University of Sussex electronic submission and feedback 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. Feedback from students and staff has been positive. 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
I attach for your information the summary of undergraduate External Examiner reports for 2017/18 and actions agreed by the University to address the institutional issues raised. This summary was also sent to you separately. The summary and actions are agreed at the University Education Committee (formerly University Teaching and Learning Committee) and are considered at Annual Course Review. You will separately receive an individual Action Plan from the Chair of the Progression and Award Board in the School. This will set out actions agreed by the School Teaching and Learning Committee to address the School level issues that you raised in your report.

Please be advised that for 2018/19 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 along with External Examiner reports. 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 Handbook on the Policy and Procedures for the External Examining of Taught Courses 2018/19 is available at:

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

The University’s Examination and Assessment Regulations Handbook for 2018/19 (which includes the University’s Academic Framework in Appendix A) is 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 handbooks this year. However, if you would like to be sent paper copies of the handbooks 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) to meet in 2018/19. 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 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,

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