



University of Sussex

# Handbook on the policy and procedures for the external examining of taught courses

Academic Development and  
Quality Enhancement Office

2015-16



<b>CONTENTS</b>	Page
<b>Section A: Duties and powers of External Examiners</b>	<b>2</b>
1. <i>Duties of External Examiners</i>	
1.1 Core duties	
1.2 Discipline and appointment-specific duties	
1.3 Level 4 assessments	
1.4 Meetings with students	
1.5 Lead External Examiner Duties	
2. <i>Attendance at Progression and Award Board (PABs) (general)</i>	
3. <i>Powers of External Examiners</i>	
4. <i>Limits of External Examiners' powers</i>	
5. <i>Summary of procedures for meetings between External Examiners and students</i>	
<b>Section B: Procedures for the nomination and appointment of External Examiners</b>	<b>7</b>
6. <i>Nomination of External Examiners</i>	
7. <i>Procedures for the nomination of External Examiners</i>	
7.1 Completion of a nomination form and consultation within the School /Partner Institution	
7.2 Scrutiny and processing of the nomination	
7.3 Extending the remit of an existing External Examiner and approval for the extension of these duties	
8. <i>Duration of the appointment</i>	
9. <i>Phasing of appointments</i>	
10. <i>Timing of the appointment process</i>	
11. <i>Early termination of appointments</i>	
12. <i>Maintenance of a co-ordinated list of External Examiners</i>	
<b>Section C: Criteria for the appointment of External Examiners</b>	<b>14</b>
13. <i>Policy on the criteria for the appointment of External Examiners</i>	
14. <i>Criteria for the appointment of External Examiners</i>	
15. <i>Exceptions to the policy</i>	
<b>Section D: The induction of External Examiners</b>	<b>17</b>
16. <i>Materials to be sent to the External Examiner</i>	
16.1 Materials sent to External Examiners by the ADQE Office	
16.2 Materials sent to the External Examiner by the School/Department/ Partner Institution/department/partner institution	
16.3 Related policy information	
17. <i>Induction</i>	
17.1 Induction of External Examiners with little or no previous experience of the role	
17.2 Induction of External Examiners from outside higher education	
17.3 Significance of an External Examiner's signature on the statement of Compliance at the PAB	
<b>Section E: Content and format of External Examiners reports</b>	<b>19</b>
18. <i>Annual reports</i>	
19. <i>Additional reports</i>	
20. <i>Procedure for late External Examiner Reports</i>	

<b>Section F: Procedures for the acknowledgement and circulation of External Examiners' reports</b>	<b>22</b>
21. <i>Acknowledgement and circulation of External Examiners' reports</i>	
<b>Section G: Procedures for responding to External Examiners' reports</b>	<b>24</b>
22. <i>Procedures for taught courses provided at the University</i>	
23. <i>Procedures for taught courses provided at partner institutions</i>	
<b>Section H: Additional Information</b>	<b>26</b>
24. <i>Fees and expenses</i>	
25. <i>Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006</i>	
<b>Section I: Electronic information and contact addresses</b>	<b>28</b>
26. <i>Web, email, telephone and mailing addresses</i>	
<b>Appendices:</b>	
Appendix 1 External Examiner nomination form	<b>30</b>
Appendix 2 External Examiner report form	<b>33</b>
Appendix 3 Statement of Compliance	<b>38</b>
Appendix 4 External Examiner action plan form	<b>39</b>
Appendix 5 Documentation available to External Examiners	<b>40</b>
Appendix 6 Framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and Qualifications Descriptors	<b>41</b>

## INTRODUCTION, FOREWORD AND SUMMARY GUIDANCE

This document sets out the University's policy and procedures for the external examining of taught courses (including collaborative provision) and is published by the Academic Development and Quality Enhancement Office (ADQE), University of Sussex. The handbook is updated regularly to take account of the requirements of the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality; chapter B7: External Examining and related national policy on the provision and publication of teaching quality information, and chapter B10: Managing higher education provision with others.

An electronic version of this document (in pdf format) together with the External Examiners report form (in Word format) can be found at:

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

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External Examiners are one of the principle means by which we uphold our academic standards at the University of Sussex.

The University regularly reviews its External Examiner policies and processes in accordance with the QAA Code for Higher Education Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality set out in chapter B7: External Examining. In line with the key principles of transparency, consistency and independence we made several revisions during the 2012/13 academic session as follows:

- Transparency – we will publish your report for current students and staff and intend to make this available to prospective students
- Consistency – revised award board powers with no scaling or alteration of marks permitted
- Independence – External Examiner role to be confined to moderation only with no involvement in the marking process.

We thank you for undertaking this important work on our behalf.

***Professor Clare Mackie (Pro Vice-Chancellor)***

***December 2015***

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## SECTION A: DUTIES AND POWERS OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

### 1. Duties of External Examiners

Duties fall into two categories:

- core duties (shared by External Examiners for all taught courses);
- discipline/appointment-specific duties.

#### 1.1 Core duties

The core duties of External Examiners are:

- (a) To report on whether the **standards set are appropriate for the University's awards**, or award elements, by reference to published national subject benchmarks, the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, course specifications and other relevant information. Schools /Partner institutions should agree with their External Examiners how their judgements are expected to relate to these agreed reference points and this should be **explicitly documented** as part of the material sent to External Examiners by Schools / Partner institutions.
- (b) To report on the **standards of student performance** in courses or parts of courses which they have been appointed to examine, and on the comparability of the standards with those of similar courses or parts of courses in other UK higher education institutions.
- (c) To report on the extent to which **processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards** are rigorous, ensure equity of treatment for students and have been fairly conducted in accordance with the University regulations and policies, as demonstrated by reviewing a sample of assessed work.
- (d) To report whether the **assessment processes** measure student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended learning outcomes and enable students to demonstrate the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.
- (e) To report on the appropriateness of the published **marking criteria**.
- (f) To scrutinise and approve draft examination papers and assessment briefs for essay/large weighted assessments. External Examiner will be advised of the School's marking strategy
- (g) To confirm that the marking and internal moderation processes have been conducted appropriately based on the marks and feedback provided in a sample of assessed work.
- (h) To be a full member of and attend the main meeting of the relevant

Progression and Award Board (PAB). At least one External Examiner who has attended the main PAB must also attend the resit PAB meeting.

- (i) To sign a statement of compliance to confirm that the University's assessment regulations and policies have been complied with. This should be completed at the end of the PAB.
- (k) To submit an annual report to the Pro Vice-Chancellor and a final report at the end of the appointment period.

External Examiners should refer to the University of Sussex Examination and Assessment Regulations Handbook (section 1: assessment regulations); (section 2: policy and procedures); (section 3: derogations from the standard regulations). *Note that there are separate Examination and Assessment Regulations for Partner Institutions.*

## 1.2 *Discipline and appointment-specific duties*

Discipline and appointment-specific duties are not detailed in this policy document but will be notified separately by the Board of Study as appropriate. For external courses validated by the University, other additional duties are specified by the institution.

## 1.3 *Level 4 assessments*

External Examiners are not required to see assessments or draft examination papers for level 4 assessment. External Examiners remain free to review and confirm the marking process for Level 4 assessments on request. In some cases the external accreditation body may require full engagement of the External Examiner in level 4 assessment; such cases will be notified to the External Examiner at the time of appointment.

## 1.4 *Meetings with students*

External Examiners should meet annually with students to assist in:

- understanding the context of the academic provision;
- gaining a general impression of the competence of the students;
- and obtaining feedback on the student experience.

Details of the procedures to be followed are set out in paragraph 4 below.

## 1.5 *Lead External Examiner Duties*

Where there is more than one External Examiner attached at course level, a lead External Examiner must be appointed. The lead External Examiner will act as a first point of contact for rare occasions where a quick decision is required by External Examiners and will act as a representative for the course. In addition to any normal examining duties, the Lead External Examiner will be expected to:

- confirm that a consistent and acceptable standard is being maintained across the course
- sign off assessment schedule for the course
- act as a first point of contact where a quick decision is required
- act as a mentor for new or inexperienced External Examiners
- attend the Main PAB and Resit PAB

External Examiners at module level will sign off exam papers and essay titles/topics that are set.

## **2. Attendance at Progression and Award Boards (PABs) (general)**

It is an integral part of the duties of an External Examiner to attend the Progression and Award Board (PAB) meetings to confirm that the examination and assessment processes have been conducted appropriately. External Examiners will be advised separately by the PAB Deputy Chair of the dates of the meeting(s) of the Board they are required to attend. External Examiners are not required to attend Module Assessment Boards (MABs) or Progression only PABs but may be contacted to discuss any anomalies. Lead External Examiners are required to attend the Main PAB and resit PAB as stated above and will receive an additional fee. All travel expenses will be paid by the University and any additional visits will be reimbursed.

If, exceptionally, an External Examiner is unable to attend a PAB meeting, the Deputy Chair of the Examination Board **must** be provided with contact details (phone/fax/email as appropriate) so that the PAB may consult with the External Examiner should the need arise. Where the External Examiner acting as the representative External Examiner attending the Resit PAB is unexpectedly unable to attend, a conference call may exceptionally be arranged.

## **3. Powers of External Examiners**

External Examiners review and confirm the appropriateness of the application of the marking and internal moderation process, based on the marks and feedback provided in a sample of assessments. They should not change marks nor act as additional markers on a par with internal examiners in any circumstances.

In their independent capacity External Examiners have the power to:

- 3.1 confirm that the outcome of the marking and internal moderation processes are appropriate, based on the sample of assessments reviewed for the cohort;
- 3.2 not confirm that the outcome of the marking and internal moderation processes are appropriate, based on the sample of assessments reviewed for the cohort. In this case the External Examiner may request a second sample for scrutiny or refer back for a full or partial remark for the whole cohort;



- 3.3 request and obtain reasonable access to assessed parts of any course taken within the academic year, including evidence about a student's performance on a placement.

In addition, External Examiners:

- 3.4 may comment on the method for selecting a sample of students' work for external scrutiny taking account of the need to provide a representative sample covering the full range of marking bands (NB: for e-submission assessments the sample is automatically generated in line with the regulations);
- 3.5 should have the opportunity to meet with internal examiners and students;
- 3.6 University Teaching and Learning Committee has agreed that the provision of a rationale for marks awarded and the provision of feedback provided to the student, must be made available and that any other relevant additional information must be provided if requested in advance. External Examiners should liaise with the Chair of the relevant Board of Study should they require any information additional to that provided in the routine way.

#### **4. Limits of External Examiners' powers**

- 4.1 Where an External Examiner is unwilling to endorse the outcomes for an individual student the final decision rests with the Chair of the PAB to determine the outcome within the authority delegated to the PAB as set out in the Examination and Assessment Regulations. In such circumstances, the Chair must report the fact to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) immediately. External Examiners retain the right to make a separate confidential report to the Vice-Chancellor on such occasions.

##### *4.2 Exceptional Circumstances and Academic Misconduct cases*

The University has separate procedures for considering matters of exceptional circumstances and academic misconduct and these are set out in the Examination and Assessment Regulations Handbook. The decisions of the panels determining the outcome of exceptional circumstances or academic misconduct are therefore outside the immediate remit of examiners. The role of the External Examiner in these instances is as a member of the PAB in determining the impact on progression or on the final award where such discretion is permitted within the assessment regulations.

#### **5. Summary of procedures for meetings between External Examiners and students**

The following procedure should be followed for all External Examiners:

- each External Examiner should be offered an opportunity to meet annually with students, to assist in: understanding the context of the academic provision; gaining a general impression of the competence

of the students (such as oral skills, general feel for the subject);  
obtaining feedback on the student experience.

- the meeting should normally be unsupervised by University faculty so as to encourage students to speak freely their experience;
- the meeting should last up to one hour (and normally not less than 20 minutes);
- the meeting need not take place on the same day as the PAB (instead the meeting can be arranged for any time during the academic session, and be linked to other visits the external might be making to the University);
- where time is constrained (such as where an examiner visits for only one day), it may not be possible to schedule a meeting, but every attempt to do so should be taken;
- the meeting can take any form appropriate to the subject/cohort (from informal meetings over lunch, round table sessions, visits to laboratories/workshops, post-seminar sessions), and this should be discussed with the External Examiner;
- students from all levels may be invited to the meeting, but no student is required to attend. Students should be advised that the meeting is an element of quality assurance and has no impact on individual marks or classification and that concerns about individual assessments (including guidance on appeals/complaints) fall outside the scope of the meeting;
- the meeting is **not** a formal part of the examining or assessment process. Meeting students can assist the External Examiner in evaluating the quality of the students being examined by providing a context in which to consider their work (the students' understanding of the purpose of their degree). It also serves to provide an additional avenue of student feedback on the overall quality of provision, and explicitly engages students in the quality loop;
- the External Examiner should be asked to provide feedback to faculty on any issues raised (strengths as well as weaknesses).

## **SECTION B: PROCEDURES FOR THE NOMINATION AND APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

### **6. Nomination of External Examiners**

The procedures for the nomination of External Examiners include:

- consultation within Schools/Partner Institutions
- discussion with the proposed External Examiner to ensure that the nature and extent of the role is understood;
- scrutiny of nominations by the School Teaching and Learning Committee/Collaborative Provision Committee;
- approval of nominations by the Chair of University Teaching and Learning Committee (UTLC) on behalf of Senate.

### **7. Procedures for the nomination of External Examiners**

#### *7.1 Completion of a nomination form and consultation within the School /Partner Institution*

The Academic Development and Quality Enhancement Office (ADQE) will routinely inform the Chair of the Board of Study, Director of Teaching and Learning (and the relevant School Curriculum and Assessment Officers) of the nominations needed for the forthcoming year. All External Examiner appointments should be made before the start of the academic year unless there are exceptional circumstances where an External Examiner has resigned part way through the year. Nomination forms can be downloaded from the following link and a copy of the form is available in Appendix 1:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/documents/external-examiner-nomination-form.doc>

The ADQE Office (Partnership) will advise partner institutions of nominations required.

The School Teaching and Learning Committee will wish to be assured of the suitability of the nominee, focusing particularly on the nominee's discipline expertise and will specifically address professional and statutory body requirements when considering nominations.

The proposed nominee should be approached informally to ascertain their willingness to be appointed normally by either the Chair of the Board of Study or Director of Teaching and Learning. The Chair of the Board of Study should provide sufficient information on the role, the sample size to be scrutinised, timing of Progression and Award Boards (PABs) and any other required duties to enable the proposed nominee to make a realistic decision about accepting the appointment.

A completed and signed nomination form, together with a supporting CV, **which makes explicit both the nominee's discipline expertise and their experience in assessment matters**, be returned to the following:

- In the case of courses provided at the University: The School Curriculum and Assessment Officer, who will put forward the proposal to the School Teaching and Learning Committee (STLC) for consideration. If endorsed by the STLC, the School Curriculum and Assessment Officer will forward the form to the Academic Development and Quality Enhancement Office for consideration by the Chair of UTLC. If unsuccessful, the nomination will be returned to the originating officer for revision or new nomination as appropriate.
- In the case of courses provided at a partner institution: The ADQE Office, will forward the proposal to the Collaborative Provision Committee. If endorsed by the Collaborative Provision Committee, the ADQE Office will forward the form for approval by the Chair of UTLC. If unsuccessful, the nomination will be returned to the originating officer for revision or new nomination as appropriate.

## 7.2 *Scrutiny and processing of the nomination*

The processing of a nomination has four stages:

### a) *Role of the School Curriculum and Assessment Officers/ADQE Office:*

Nomination forms are returned to the School Curriculum and Assessment Officers for courses provided by the University or to the ADQE Office (Partnership) (in the case of validated courses at partner institutions) who will:

- check that the form is complete and that all the criteria<sup>1</sup> are met. Where necessary the form will be returned to the School making the recommendation. The ADQE Office may be consulted for guidance.
- prepare the nomination for consideration by School Teaching and Learning Committee/Collaborative Provision Committee (as appropriate) for subsequent recommendation to the Chair of University Teaching and Learning Committee;
- inform the ADQE Office and proponents of the outcome of the School Teaching and Learning Committee/Collaborative Provision Committee scrutiny by forwarding a signed nomination form with CV to the ADQE Office following consideration by the School Teaching and Learning Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> Criteria for the appointment of external examiners are given in Section C

b) *Role of School Teaching and Learning Committees and the Collaborative Provision Committee*

Nomination forms with accompanying CVs will be scrutinised by the relevant committee in order to make recommendations to the Chair of the University Teaching and Learning Committee. It is expected that these committees will particularly focus on the experience and expertise of nominees in relation to assessment matters, research links and possible conflicts of interest, including avoiding reciprocal External Examiner arrangements.

c) *Role of the Academic Development and Quality Enhancement Office*

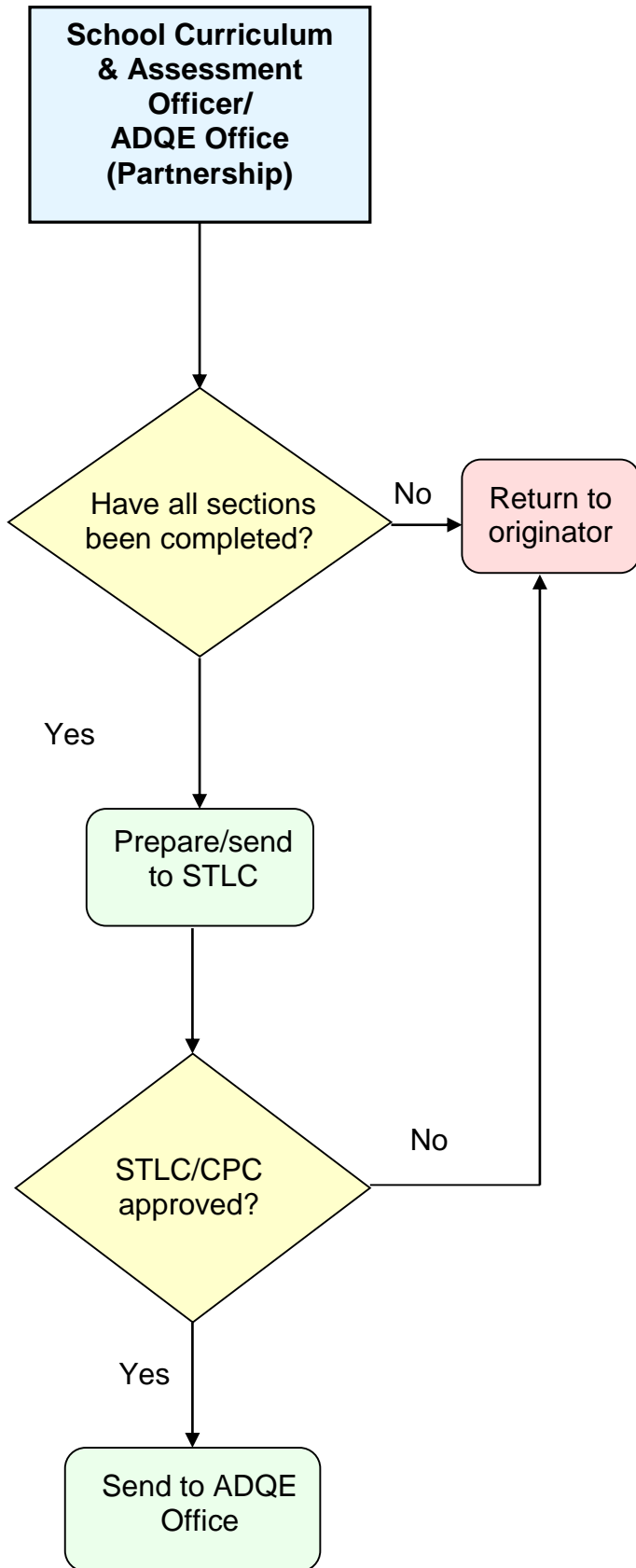
The ADQE Office will:

- produce a consolidated list of existing External Examiners for taught courses / modules. The consolidated list will enable the University to maintain an overview of the home institutions of External Examiners for a School when considering a new nominee.
- forward nominations recommended by School Teaching and Learning Committees/Collaborative Provision Committee to the Chair of UTLC for consideration.
- Notify relevant officers (Director of Teaching and Learning, Chair of the Board of Study and Curriculum and Assessment Officer) of the outcome of consideration by the Chair of UTLC.
- Issue the letter of appointment. This will include details of the course/s the External Examiner has been appointed to; period of appointment which states the start and finish date; information about the requirement to provide proof of eligibility to work in the UK and an acceptance form. (Section D provides a list of materials that will be sent by the University and the School).

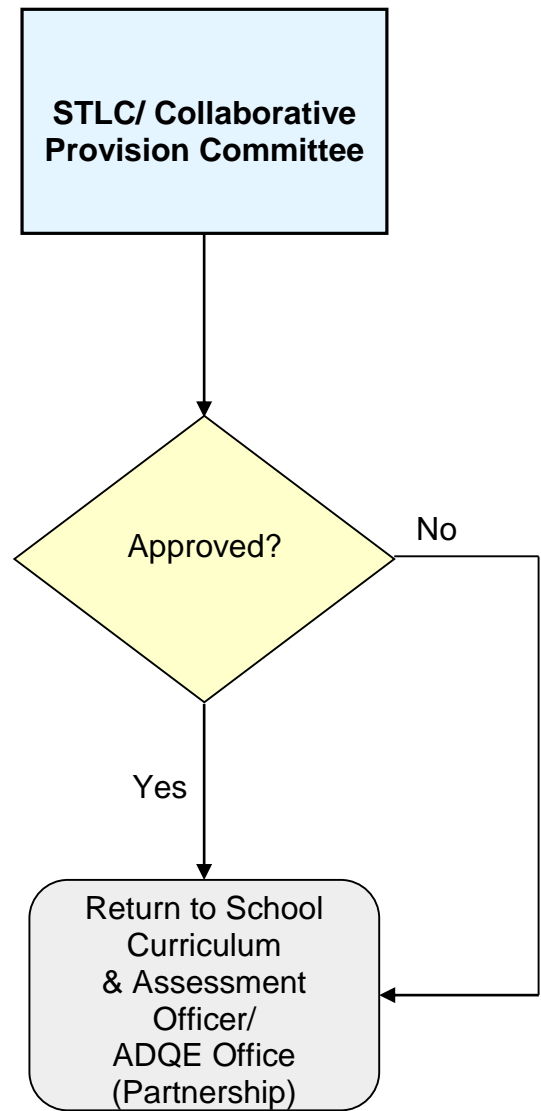
d) *Chair of University Teaching and Learning Committee*

The Chair of University Teaching and Learning Committee scrutinises the recommended nominations in the context of the existing approved appointments and any other relevant recommendations and approves (or otherwise) the appointment. If approved, the signed nomination form is returned to the ADQE Office and an appointment letter issued. If rejected, the School should be informed of the reasons and requested to bring forward an alternative nomination or provide further information.

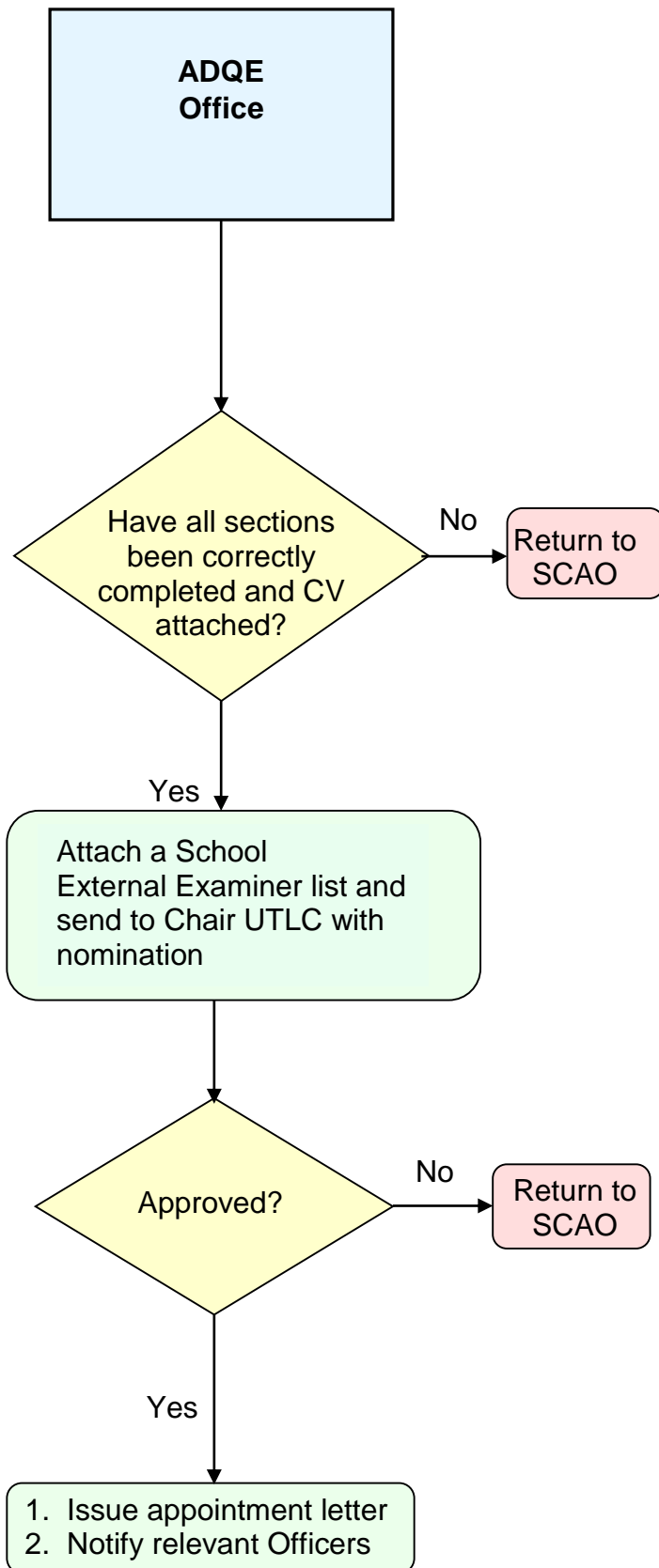
a) Flowchart for role of the School Curriculum and Assessment Officers/ADQE Office (Partnership)



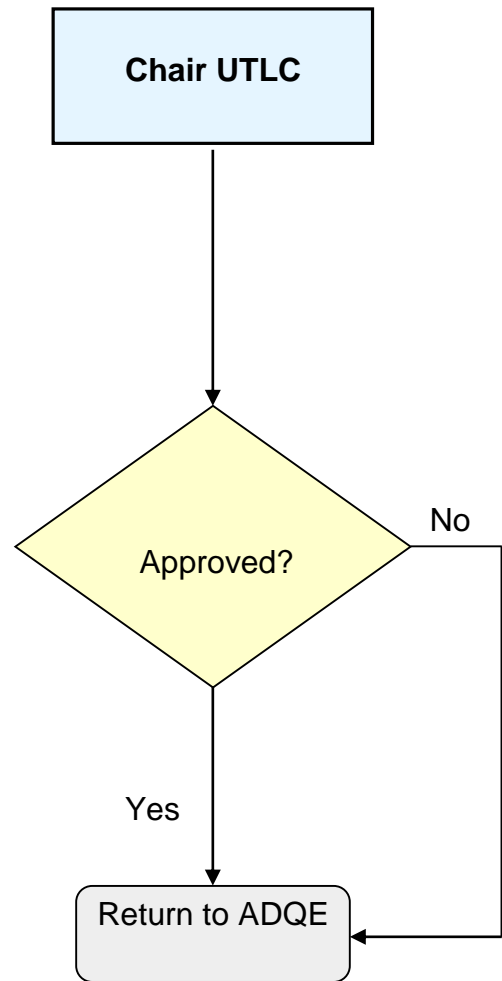
b) Flowchart for role of School Teaching & Learning Committees and the Collaborative Provision Committee (CPC)



c) Flowchart for role of the Academic Development and Quality Enhancement Office (ADQE)



d) Flowchart for role of Chair of University Teaching and Learning Committee



### *7.3 Extending the remit of an existing External Examiner and approval for the extension of these duties*

In order for an existing External Examiner to extend the remit of their duties the School or Partner Institution must inform the ADQE Office which courses the External Examiner will be covering and until which academic year. The Director of Teaching and Learning must provide a rationale to explain why an extension to the remit is required stating the number of modules the External Examiner will be moderating. The ADQE Office will forward the request to the Chair of UTLC, along with the original nomination form and the External Examiner's CV. If the extension of duties is approved, the ADQE Office will send out an appointment letter stating the course/s the External Examiner has oversight of and the tenure of the appointment.

## **8. Duration of the appointment**

External Examiners are appointed by the University normally for a period of four years. Undergraduate appointments will normally commence on 1 October of a given year and expire on the 30 September in order to coincide with the start date of an academic session. For postgraduate appointments the appointment will usually run until the 31 December to include the PABs and give time for any formal queries that arise after the PABs. An External Examiner will be asked to provide an overview of their term in office on completing the final report.

Exceptionally a period of appointment may be agreed to coincide with a term start date, for example in cases where the tenure of a previous External Examiner had been terminated part way through the session. In exceptional circumstances an extension of one year may be approved. Schools or Partner Institutions should submit a written request, supported by the STLC, setting out the rationale. Such requests will usually only be considered in order to provide continuity either where the tenure of more than one External Examiner is due to end at the same time or where the experience of another External Examiner needs to be complemented.

## **9. Phasing of appointments**

It is desirable to phase External Examiners' appointments where more than one External Examiner is appointed to a course. The induction of new External Examiners and effective liaison between outgoing and incoming examiners should be regarded as complementary to the principle of phasing. Previous External Examiner Reports will be made available to new External Examiners by the School or Partner Institution.

## **10. Timing of the appointment process**

Recommendations for the following academic year should be considered by the appropriate School Teaching and Learning Committee or Collaborative Provision Committee (as detailed above) at the spring term meeting for undergraduate courses and the summer term meeting (or earlier if possible) for postgraduate courses.



The early appointment of an External Examiner is vital. Where a course has been approved at validation, the School or Partner Institution will be asked to secure a nomination for an External Examiner ahead of the start of the course.

Where an External Examiner is not appointed ahead of the start of an academic year, exceptionally, the Pro Vice-Chancellor may consider withdrawing the course.

Schools are asked to publish the name of the External Examiner appointed to each course. This will usually be included in the course handbook provided to students).

## **11. Early termination of appointments**

Termination of contract or resignation

If an External Examiner is likely to be unavailable for an extended period of time during the period of appointment, the Academic Development and Quality Enhancement Office (ADQE) should be informed as soon as possible. This will ensure that alternative External Examiner arrangements can be put in place. Letters or emails of resignation/termination should be addressed to the ADQE Office.

Exceptionally, the University may terminate the appointment of an External Examiner before the completion of his/her appointment. This may be due to the following circumstances:

- failure to submit an annual report
- failure to attend the campus at least once per year
- where there is a conflict of interests which was not apparent at the time the appointment was made
- where there has been a significant change in circumstances of the External Examiner in relation to appointment
- where there has been a significant change in the circumstances related to the course to which the External Examiner has been appointed – e.g. discontinuation of the course/modules.
- where there has been an irretrievable breakdown in relations between the External Examiner and the School or Validated Institution

## **12. Maintenance of a co-ordinated list of External Examiners**

A list of External Examiners for University courses (including Partner Institutions) will be maintained by the Academic Development and Quality Enhancement Office. The list will act as both a check list for reviewing the home institutions of potential nominees at both School and University level, for recording incoming reports and enabling basic data gathering about the population of External Examiners.

## SECTION C: CRITERIA FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

### 13. Policy on the criteria for the appointment of External Examiners

The principles underpinning the **criteria** for the appointment of External Examiners:

- require that External Examiners have knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality;
- require that External Examiners are sufficiently qualified and have sufficient expertise and experience in both discipline-specific and assessment matters;
- support the exercise of objective, impartial and independent judgements about awards made by the University;
- avoid arrangements which result in undue reliance on nomination of External Examiners from any one university and arrangements where there is a known conflict of interest.

### 14. Criteria for the appointment of External Examiners

- 14.1 External Examiners should have **expertise and experience** both in the academic area of the appointment and in the assessment of modules and courses. Normally, External Examiners will be at Senior Lecturer level or above, be academically qualified to the level of the award being examined and will have knowledge of the Professional Statutory Body (PSB) requirements where relevant.

Nominations are not usually considered where the nominee is no longer employed in a Higher Education institution, such as where the nominee has retired and has no active involvement in the discipline area. This is to ensure that the nominee's practical experience remains current and up to date.

Criteria are not set for discipline-specific expertise, which are a matter for individual Schools/Boards of Study/Partner institutions. In relation to assessment expertise, nominees should demonstrate at least one of the following: experience of external examining at the appropriate level (for example DPhil examining alone would not be enough); experience as Chair or member of an examination board at the appropriate level; experience of Course leadership or significant curriculum development, or otherwise responsible for assessment at a course-wide level.

- 14.2 In the interests of impartiality, those making nominations must avoid **reciprocal arrangements** with other Schools of other Institutions. A period of three years must have elapsed before appointment.

An External Examiner should not normally be appointed who has any direct interest in, or ties to, the University, its staff or students, or who is from a department in a university where a member of the inviting university department is serving as an External Examiner.

If there are research links between the nominating department and the nominee, Schools/Departments/Partner Institutions should specifically indicate on the nomination form that such a link exists, the nature of the link and the way in which the School/Department/Partner Institution has satisfied itself that such a link does not endanger the potential objectivity of the relationship with the proposed External Examiner.

- 14.3 In order to have **sufficient time** for the proper performance of functions, no individual should hold, simultaneously, more than one other External Examinership at *undergraduate or postgraduate* level. That is a maximum of two external examiner appointments in total including the appointment at the University (excluding PhD/DPhil examining duties that are intermittent).
- 14.4 An External Examiner should not normally be succeeded by **another from the same Institution**.
- 14.5 **Former members of staff and former students** should not be invited to become External Examiners until at least five years after their staff appointment/student registration has ended. Each course may not have more than one External Examiner who is a former member of staff or a former student at any given time, regardless of the period of time that has elapsed.
- 14.6 No External Examiner will be appointed for a second four year appointment. Exceptionally, an interim extension may be considered as set out in B7.
- 14.7 No two External Examiners should be appointed from the same department/unit of the same institution to a School at the same time.
- 14.8 The nomination of External Examiners with **little or no prior experience of external examining** is encouraged, provided they met the criteria, and that appropriate arrangements are made for induction by the School/Department/Partner Institution.
- 14.9 An External Examiner should not be appointed to courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate level where this will result in them being a member of both the undergraduate and the postgraduate Progression and Award Board (PAB). An exception to this is Integrated Masters degrees where the External Examiner can be included in both.
- 14.10 All External Examiners will need to show evidence that they are legally entitled to work in the United Kingdom (Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006).
- 14.11 Former members of validation panels (i.e. Independent Academics should not be invited to be first External Examiner for a newly validated course, until a period of at least one year has elapsed.

### *Criteria related to courses and modules*

14.12 There should normally be at least one External Examiner for each:

- course leading to a named award, such that there is appropriate expertise to inform decision-making at the PAB
- module delivered at L5 or above. An External Examiner must be attached at module level – the School or Partner Institution should have a list available before moderation takes place.
- validated course at partner institutions.

14.13 The University does not currently publish criteria for the relationship between the number of External Examiners and the quantity of assessed material being scrutinised. It is the responsibility of the School to distribute the modules owned by the School between the appointed External Examiner.

Where more than one External Examiner is appointed to a course, a Lead External Examiner should be agreed, usually on appointment.

## **15. Exceptions to the policy**

Exceptionally, External Examiners may be appointed who work outside Higher Education (for example for Professional Regulatory and Statutory Bodies) or who have *discipline* expertise but not *assessment* expertise (for example in Medicinal Chemistry, Management, Environmental Science and validated courses in Restoration and Conservation). In the case of nominees without appropriate assessment expertise, such appointments will normally only be approved where there is at least one other External Examiner for that subject/course who has appropriate assessment expertise. This should be clearly indicated on the nomination form.

## SECTION D: THE INDUCTION OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

### 16. Materials to be sent to the External Examiner

In addition to the appointment letter setting out contractual arrangements, External Examiners should receive the following information (some material may be provided by URLs):

#### 16.1 *Materials sent to External Examiners by the ADQE Office:*

- Handbook on the policy and procedures for external examining of taught courses
- Examination and Assessment Regulations Handbook
- Teaching and Learning Strategy (currently being revised)
- Summary and Analysis of External Examiner Reports (Institutional Issues identified by the University including agreed actions)
- Schedule of UG/PG PAB dates and proposed timescale for external moderation

Material is also available on:

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

*In the case of validated courses, the ADQE Office will send the Handbook on the policy and procedures for external examining of taught courses and will request that the partner institution sends a copy of their own examinations and assessment regulations.*

#### 16.2 *Materials sent to the External Examiner by the School/Department/Partner Institution/department/ partner institution:*

- List of courses the External Examiner is appointed to
- Course specifications setting out course structure and modules
- Course aims and learning outcomes
- List of module(s) to be externally moderated
- Module aims and learning outcomes
- Module assessment modes
- Marking criteria
- Reading lists
- Copy of most recent Annual Course Report
- Copy of previous External Examiner's report
- Copy of Progression and Award Board's annual report
- Confirmation of the name of the person to act as primary contact with the External Examiner
- Date of Progression and Award Board (PAB) meetings.

*In the case of validated courses, the ADQE Office (Partnership) will inform the partner institution of the appointment. The partner will then arrange for the above materials, relevant to their own institution, to be sent to the External Examiner.*

### 16.3 *Related policy information*

The following information can be accessed via the web. External Examiners are requested to acquaint themselves with University policy in these areas:

- Equality and Diversity policy

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/equalities/documentsandpolicies>

## **17. Induction**

New and continuing External Examiners will be invited to a centrally organised induction session annually. New External Examiners are primarily inducted through the materials indicated above. New External Examiners should also have the opportunity to meet the School/Department/Partner Institution staff prior to the first formal visit.

### 17.1 *Induction of External Examiners with little or no previous experience of the role*

Schools/Boards of Study/Partner Institutions are asked to ensure that inexperienced External Examiners are mentored by an existing External Examiner and are encouraged to identify specific requirements and given appropriate support for their role.

### 17.2 *Induction of External Examiners from outside higher education*

It is not normally University policy to appoint externals from outside higher education, but such cases may be considered where the appointee is not the sole External Examiner for the award or his/her expertise is complemented by others who satisfy the criteria. In these cases the School/Board of Study/Partner Institution will need to pay particular attention to the induction of such externals in relation to understanding assessment issues.

### 17.3 *Significance of an External Examiner's signature on the statement of compliance at the PAB*

As part of their induction process, Schools /Partner Institutions are asked to draw External Examiners' attention to the following points:

- the signature of an External Examiner on the statement of compliance (Appendix 3) indicates the External Examiner's endorsement of the outcomes of the assessment process and the PAB.
- once a statement of compliance has been signed by an External Examiner at a PAB those outcomes represent the final decision of the PAB and will not normally be reconsidered except in the case of the discovery of factual errors or an appeal.

## SECTION E: CONTENT AND FORMAT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS REPORTS

### 18. Annual reports

External Examiners are required to submit an annual External Examiner report to the University within 6 weeks of the exam board. Generic issues of concern and areas of good practice will be considered as part of the University's Annual Course Review. If you are coming to the end of your appointment, we do ask for an overview of your term of office in your final report. This is valuable both to the institution but also the incoming External Examiner. External Examiners are asked to complete the University's standard report form. The first link provides a fully formatted form.

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/documents/external-examiner-report-form.docx>

Each report should be submitted electronically (if possible) to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor at the address given below:

*All reports for University of Sussex courses should be submitted to:*

[externalexaminersreports@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:externalexaminersreports@sussex.ac.uk)

*All reports for validated partnership courses should be submitted to:*

[partnerextreports@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:partnerextreports@sussex.ac.uk)

Please note that the report template may be subject to change from year to year, External Examiner's are requested to download the latest version for completion. A copy is included in the Appendices to this booklet for reference. This form comprises a full report for use by the University.

We recognise that our External Examiners give important feedback on the process/running of our courses, and the timely receipt of reports enables us to take early action to address issues raised and make an impact on the experience of the next cohort of students. It is therefore vital that you meet the deadline for the submission of reports as given below. Please note that those who are representing a School at the Resit Progression and Award Boards are still required to submit a report by the deadlines below, however you may send a revised version of the report following the Resit PAB if appropriate.

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| • Undergraduate reports | by the last day of August                             |
| • Postgraduate          | six weeks from the date of the end of year PAB        |
| • Validated courses     | six weeks from the date of the end of year exam board |

Reports which are incomplete or not in the correct format may be returned to the External Examiner by the ADQE Office for amendment and completion. All External Examiner reports should be completed in sufficient detail to fulfil their role in safeguarding the standards and quality of provision.

External Examiners are asked to complete a statement of compliance which acts as a checklist stating whether or not the relevant examination and assessment procedures and policies have been adhered to in a satisfactory manner. This checklist needs to be completed in addition to the External Examiners Report.

## 19. Additional reports

- 19.1 External Examiners are asked to submit a **concise overview report** at the end of their term of office, both as a précis of the outcomes of their period of office and to highlight matters which would be helpful to an incoming External Examiner.
- 19.2 External Examiners retain the right, should they so wish, to make a separate, **confidential report** to the Vice-Chancellor at any time on matters of particular importance and/or sensitivity. The University will respond to the concerns raised, in a timely manner, outlining actions that may be taken as a result.
- 19.3 Where an External Examiner has a serious concern relating to systemic failings with the academic standards of a course or courses and has exhausted all published applicable internal procedures, including the submission of a confidential report to the Vice-Chancellor, he/she may invoke QAA's concerns scheme. QAA advise that, "Such an investigation will be appropriate where there is evidence of systematic failings in quality management in the institution, but not where there is a one-off case of ineffective practice." Further information on the Scheme can be found on the QAA website at:  
(<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/complaints/concerns/Pages/default.aspx> )

## 20. Procedure for late External Examiner reports

- i) Annual Reports should be submitted to the University within the deadline specified in 19 above. This is usually within 6 weeks of the final Examination Board attended by the External Examiner for the academic year in question.
- ii) If a report is not received within 6 weeks of the final Examination Board, the ADQE Office will contact the External Examiner to enquire about the reason for the lateness of the report and to agree a further deadline. This is because the report is one of the main reference points in the Annual Course Review process.
- iii) Where an External Examiner report remains outstanding following the initial reminder a second reminder will be sent by the ADQE Office giving a final date for the receipt of the report.



iv) If the ADQE Office does not receive the report in time for the Annual Course Review the Pro-Vice Chancellor may consider terminating the contract.

Fees will not be payable for reports that have been delayed beyond usefulness, i.e. after the Annual Course Review has taken place. The ADQE Office will notify the External Examiner of the final deadline. It is important to note that travel expenses will always be paid by the University on submission of an expense claim form.

## SECTION F: PROCEDURES FOR THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND CIRCULATION OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS' REPORTS

21. There is a three stage process for the acknowledgement and circulation of External Examiners' reports as follows:

21.1 The Academic Development and Quality Enhancement Office (ADQE), on receipt of an External Examiner's report, will send an acknowledgement to the External Examiner.

The ADQE Office will be responsible for monitoring that all expected reports are received and will take appropriate action on outstanding reports.

21.2 The ADQE Office will distribute reports electronically on receipt as detailed below:

### *Undergraduate and taught postgraduate courses*

- (a) Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning)
- (b) Head of School
- (c) Director of Teaching and Learning
- (d) Chair of the Board of Study
- (e) School Curriculum and Assessment Officer

### *Validated courses*

- (a) Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning)
- (b) Link Tutor
- (c) Head of the partner institution
- (d) One other named contact responsible for quality assurance.

21.3 *Distribution of reports at School level*

Directors of Teaching and Learning are responsible for ensuring:

- further circulation of the report to Chairs and Deputy Chairs of MABs and PABs, course convenors and those involved in teaching;
- formal and minuted consideration of the reports at appropriate meetings, including Boards of Study.

#### 21.4 *Guidance for School Teaching and Learning Committees*

The following guidance is intended for all members and officers of School Teaching and Learning Committees:

1. Committee secretaries will include the reports within the formal circulation to committee members.
2. The External Examiner provides assurance to the University on the standards and quality of the teaching, learning and assessment processes at the University. In addition, the External Examiner confirms that the assessment and moderation processes have been conducted consistently and appropriately in accordance with the University's regulations and policies.
3. The External Examiner's report is intended as a tool to assist the University in identifying strengths and weaknesses in provision and a key purpose of the report is to encourage the External Examiner to act as a critical friend to the course. It is therefore to be expected, and is an essential part of the process that External Examiners raise queries and concerns related to courses or modules and make proposals to better manage assessments.
4. The University publishes the full report (or extract of) to the current students and staff and External Examiners should therefore not identify individuals directly or indirectly. In addition, the University intends to publish reports to prospective students and the public.

## **SECTION G: PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO EXTERNAL EXAMINERS' REPORTS**

### **22. Procedures for taught courses provided at the University**

- 22.1 All External Examiners' reports are subject to detailed scrutiny by the Academic Development and Quality Enhancement Office. The ADQE Office will draw to the attention of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) individual reports where there is evidence of good practice, or where there are matters of particular significance or concern. Reports falling into the latter category are raised directly with the relevant School or support unit to ensure appropriate action is being taken. In addition to this, the Pro Vice-Chancellor reads all External Examiner reports at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.
- 22.2 Chairs of Board of Studies, Chairs of Module Assessment Boards and Progression and Award Boards should discuss issues raised in the External Examiners' reports. Every effort should be made to engage with elected student representatives when reviewing these reports within the formal committee structures. The Director of Teaching and Learning should ensure that an action plan is prepared for the School Teaching and Learning Committee that addresses each issue and that where no action is proposed a clear reason must be given for that recommendation. The External Examiners' report(s) and the proposed action plan should:
- a) be considered by the Board of Study/department meeting where relevant, and
  - b) be submitted to the School Teaching and Learning Committee (STLC) in the autumn term (undergraduate provision) or spring term (postgraduate provision).
- 22.3 The STLC will consider the External Examiner's reports and associated action plans and either approve the action plan or ask for further action to be taken. The STLC will also monitor actions taken in the previous year and ensure that any issues have been resolved.
- 22.4 The Chair of the PAB is responsible for ensuring that the agreed action plan is implemented and for writing to External Examiners to inform them of any action that has been taken or is intended. Copies of the External Examiner action plan should be sent to the ADQE Office for audit and monitoring purposes.
- 22.5 The ADQE Office will draft a consolidated overview report for consideration by UTLC which will then be sent to all External Examiners (undergraduate or postgraduate as appropriate). The report will normally focus on matters of generic issue, in particular in relation to university-wide policy where such matters are not within the authority of the School to alter. The University Teaching and Learning Committee (UTLC) will consider and approve this report annually and identify action or review as appropriate.

- 22.6 The ADQE Office will ensure that any issues affecting University-wide rules or procedure are raised at the relevant committee, or with appropriate officers.
- 22.7 The ADQE Office will write back to the External Examiner on behalf of the Pro Vice-Chancellor to address institutional issues raised.

### **23. Procedures for taught courses provided at partner institutions**

- 23.1 All External Examiner reports are subject to detailed scrutiny by the ADQE Office (Partnership). The ADQE Office (Partnership) will draw to the attention of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) individual reports where there is evidence of good practice or where there are matters of particular significance or concern. Reports falling into the latter category are raised directly with the relevant partner institution to ensure that appropriate action is being taken. In addition to this, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor reads all External Examiner reports.
- 23.2 The relevant partner institutions officers should discuss issues raised in the External Examiner's report and prepare an action plan which addresses each issue; where no action is proposed, a clear reason must be given for that recommendation. The External Examiner's report and the proposed action plan should be appended to the Annual Monitoring Report and submitted to ADQE (Partnership) in December, for consideration at the next meeting of Collaborative Provision Committee.
- 23.3 Collaborative Provision Committee will consider the External Examiner reports and associated action plans and either endorse the action plan or ask for further action to be taken. Collaborative Provision Committee will report to UTLC on the outcome of this confirming which plans have to be endorsed and which have been referred back. It will also present an overview of significant issues raised.
- 23.4 The relevant officers in the partner institutions (in consultation with the principal officer responsible for quality assurance) are responsible for writing to the External Examiner to inform him/her of the action taken or planned. A copy of the response should also be sent to the ADQE Office (Partnership).
- 23.5 The ADQE Office (Partnership) will write back to the External Examiner on behalf of the Pro Vice-Chancellor to address institutional issues raised.
- 23.6 The ADQE Office (Partnership) will monitor responses.
- 23.7 The Pro Vice-Chancellor will write to thank all outgoing External Examiners.
- 23.8 In the following year's Annual Monitoring Report, the partner institution should confirm that all action has been implemented, monitor progress of any actions not yet implemented and evaluate the effectiveness of any changes made.

## SECTION H: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### 24. Fees and expenses

External Examiners will receive an annual fee which covers all the duties that have been carried out on behalf of the University. The minimum expectations from the External Examiner in order to receive the annual fee are the following:

- Progression and Award Board (PAB) attendance
- A minimum of 1 visit onto campus per year
- Completion of External Examiner Report
- Sign off exam papers and essay titles for modules that they are appointed to

Upon appointment the External Examiner will be requested to complete and return an External Examiner acceptance form, providing details of a bank account into which fees and expense payments will be made. Payment will be delayed if this is not provided at the beginning of appointment. Please note that **payment is made on the last working day of the month and will only be made on receipt of an External Examiner Report**. All External Examiner reports must be completed on the latest version of the External Examiner Report template which can be accessed on the Academic Development and Quality Enhancement Office (ADQE) website or under section 18 of the handbook via the link available.

A basic fee of £320 will be paid to each undergraduate or postgraduate External Examiner per annum. In addition, a workload fee of £50.00 per module (either UG or PG) will be paid to reflect the workload allocated to the External Examiner. The workload fee will vary depending on the number of modules that the External Examiner is appointed to.

An additional fee will be paid for:

- (i) Resit PAB attendance: £100.00
- (ii) Appointment as a Lead External Examiner on a course with more than one External Examiner: £100.00

No External Examiner will receive less than £320 and no more than £800 (excluding additional fees and expenses)

Partner Institutions: Fee levels are set by the Partner Institution and payment of expenses are the responsibility of the Partner Institution (unless other arrangements have been agreed with the University).

The Inland Revenue requires all universities to deduct income tax, at the basic rate, from all payments of fees for examining (except higher degrees). When payment is made, a docket will be sent showing the tax deducted. This should be retained and submitted with the annual tax return.

Expense claims may be submitted as soon as expenses have been incurred during the course of the academic year. Expenses claim forms must be completed

correctly and supported by the appropriate receipts and/or travel tickets. Expenses cover travel and subsistence expenses. These should be sent separately to your relevant School administrative contact. Expenses will be paid independently from fees and will not be delayed until receipt of the annual report.

The University of Sussex Expenses Claim form and Policy can be found at:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/finance/newfinancesystem/expenses>

## **25. Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006**

One requirement relating to your appointment as an External Examiner is that the University are required to check your eligibility to work in the UK at the start of your appointment. Under the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, External Examiners are required to provide evidence that they are legally entitled to live and work in the United Kingdom (UK). Prior to any work being undertaken for the University, originals of the documents/combination of documents detailed in the letter of appointment will need to be brought for formal verification to the School that owns the course that you are appointed to by the start of the academic year. Confirmation of appointment is subject to evidence of proof of identity and the School Administrator is responsible for ensuring that this evidence is provided and retained in the School records.

Please note that fee payments may be significantly delayed without production of these documents/combination of documents.

Exceptionally, if the External Examiner does not come onto campus at the start of the academic year, then the University will need a stamp of approval from your current employer as confirmation that they have seen the original copies of identity. This should be done using the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality form and providing scanned attachments of the relevant proof of identity, along with the signature and stamp of approval.

Visas that expire before their contract ends: The Permitted Paid Engagement route allows employers to invite visitors to undertake a short-term, fee-paid permitted paid engagement which falls under a permissible activity.

External Examiners fall under the category of a permissible activity which allows the employer to invite External Examiners to visit the UK to examine students for up to a period of one month and receive payment. The individual must be highly qualified in their own field of expertise, and be formally invited by the University of Sussex.

You must provide a formal invitation to undertake the pre-arranged engagement and to show the engagement relates to:

- the individuals expertise and/or qualifications; and
- their full-time occupation in their home country

For more details: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/visiting/paid-engage/engagements/>

## SECTION I: ELECTRONIC INFORMATION AND CONTACT ADDRESSES

26. All centrally produced information, included report forms, expenses forms and handbooks, can be found on the Academic Development and Quality Enhancement Office (ADQE) web pages at:

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

Enquiries concerning the University's External Examiner policy and procedures, administrative matters, appointments and payments should be sent to:

Academic Development and Quality Enhancement Office  
Room 302, Sussex House  
University of Sussex  
Falmer  
Brighton BN1 9RH

01273 678130

[externalexaminersreports@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:externalexaminersreports@sussex.ac.uk)

External Examiner reports should be sent to the Pro Vice-Chancellor at the following email address:

[externalexaminersreports@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:externalexaminersreports@sussex.ac.uk)

All enquiries about Partnership and Validated courses should be addressed to:

ADQE Office (Partnership)  
Sussex House  
University of Sussex  
Falmer  
Brighton BN1 9RH

01273 877063

Partner/Validated Reports should be sent to:

[partnerextreports@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:partnerextreports@sussex.ac.uk)



# Appendices

<b>Appendix 1</b>	External Examiner nomination form	<b>30</b>
<b>Appendix 2</b>	External Examiner report form	<b>33</b>
<b>Appendix 3</b>	Statement of Compliance	<b>38</b>
<b>Appendix 4</b>	External Examiner action plan form	<b>39</b>
<b>Appendix 5</b>	Documentation available to External Examiners	<b>40</b>
<b>Appendix 6</b>	Framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and Qualifications Descriptors	<b>41</b>



University of Sussex

### Nomination of External Examiners for Taught Courses

Please refer to notes on page 4 and return completed document to the Academic Development and Quality Enhancement Office

**PLEASE ENSURE THAT THE FORM IS COMPLETED IN FULL AND THAT A CURRENT CV IS ATTACHED**

DETAILS OF POST TO BE FILLED	
Course title(s) (must be consistent with approved title on database) [ ]	
Award (BA/ BSc / MA/ MSc etc.)	[ ] UG <input type="checkbox"/> PG <input type="checkbox"/>
Owning School/Department/Partner Institution	[ ]
Owning Exam Board	[ ]
Reason recommendation sought	New Course <input type="checkbox"/> End of contract <input type="checkbox"/> If end of contract, please state name of examiner being replaced

DETAILS OF NOMINEE FOR THE ABOVE APPOINTMENT	
Proposed dates of appointment (normally 4 years)	From: [ ] to [ ]
Title: [ ] Forename(s): [ ]	Surname: [ ]
Current Academic Post/Employment [ ]	
Department or Faculty [ ]	
Address for Correspondence: [ ]	
Post Code: [ ]	
e-mail address: [ ]	Tel number: [ ] Fax number: [ ]
Has the nominee ever been a registered student, external examiner or employee of the University of Sussex (or the Partner Institution)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, please provide details: (Needed for data recording purposes)	

**Please complete all sections of the form and ensure that all boxes are ticked**

1 Please confirm that the nominee has indicated informally a willingness to serve in the above capacity	Confirmed <input type="checkbox"/>
---	------------------------------------

2 Summary of relevant expertise and experience of the nominee in both the <b>academic area</b> of the appointment and <b>assessment</b> of courses and programmes	

3 If the nominee works outside Higher Education and does not have appropriate assessment expertise, please indicate if there is another external examiner for that subject with appropriate assessment expertise	

4 Please confirm that the nominee does not have any direct interest in, or ties to, the university or (Partner Institution) or its staff	Confirmed <input type="checkbox"/>
--	------------------------------------

5 If there are research links between the nominating department/interdisciplinary group/partner institution, please indicate the nature of the link and the way in which the department/interdisciplinary group/partner institution has satisfied itself that such a link does not endanger the potential objectivity of the relationship	

6 Please confirm that the nominee is not from a department in a university where a member of the inviting university department (or Partner Institution) is serving as an external examiner	Confirmed <input type="checkbox"/>
---	------------------------------------

7i Please confirm that the nominee will not be holding more than one other external examiner appointment at the time of the proposed appointment (i.e. only one other UG or PG appointment may be held).	Confirmed <input type="checkbox"/>
7ii If any other external examiner appointments are held at taught level, please provide name of institution and course examined.	

8 Please confirm that the previous external examiner was not from the same institution as the nominee	Confirmed <input type="checkbox"/>
---	------------------------------------

9	If the nominee is either a former member of staff or Sussex student, please confirm that at least five years have elapsed since their staff appointment/student registration ended	Confirmed	<input type="checkbox"/>
		N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>

10	Please confirm that the nominee has not previously acted as external examiner at Sussex	Confirmed	<input type="checkbox"/>
----	---	-----------	--------------------------

**RECOMMENDATION: SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT/PARTNER INSTITUTION**

I recommend the appointment as external examiner for the period indicated as set out above

Signed:  
(Head of School/Department/Partner Institution)

Print Name

Date:

**RECOMMENDATION: School Teaching & Learning Committee/Collaborative Provision Committee**

I recommend the appointment on behalf of the STLC/CPC

Signed:

(Chair of STLC/CPC)

Date:

**APPROVAL: University Teaching & Learning Committee**

I approve the recommendation on behalf of UTLC

Signed:

(Chair of UTLC)

Date:

**GUIDANCE NOTES ON THE NOMINATION OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

Guidance notes regarding the procedures to be followed and the information which is required can be found in sections B and C of the University's *Handbook on the Policy and Procedures for the External Examining of Taught Courses*.

Copies of the Handbook and all forms are available from the Academic Development and Quality Enhancement Office and can be downloaded from

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

Please ensure that all the relevant sections are completed. Any queries about completion of the form may be addressed to: Amy Horwood (☎01273 876683 /[externalexaminersreports@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:externalexaminersreports@sussex.ac.uk)) in the ADQE Office



University of Sussex

### External Examiner’s Report Form

The University intends to publish the full report (or extract of) to the public, prospective and current students.

Please use tab key to move from field to field.

Name:
Your institution or Professional Association:
Course title(s) (full course name)
Where applicable, Partner Institution examined:
Progression and Award Board:
Academic Year: <span style="float: right;">Undergraduate <input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate <input type="checkbox"/></span>

### REPORT SUBMISSION

Please submit your completed form electronically to the CORRECT address as follows:

For courses delivered at the UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX: [externalexaminersreports@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:externalexaminersreports@sussex.ac.uk)

For courses delivered at a PARTNER INSTITUTION: [partnerextreports@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:partnerextreports@sussex.ac.uk)

University reports should be submitted no later than:

Undergraduate provision:	last day of August
Postgraduate provision:	6 weeks after the Progression and Award Board
Partner courses:	6 weeks after the end of year examination board

### FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Validated courses

Undergraduate and Postgraduate

PVC  
Link Tutor  
Head of partner institution  
Named contact responsible for quality assurance at the partner institution

PVC  
Head of School  
Director of Teaching and Learning or  
Board of Study  
Chair of the Module Assessment Board  
Chair of the Progression and Award Board  
School Curriculum and Assessment Officer

1 Please comment on whether the **standards set by the University** are, in your view, appropriate for the **qualification being studied**.

*Please relate your comments to published national subject benchmarks, the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, course specifications and other relevant information as appropriate*

2 Please comment on the appropriateness of the published **marking criteria**.

3 Please comment on whether you believe **standards of student performance and achievement** are comparable to those of similar courses in **other higher education institutions**?

4 Please comment on whether you believe existing assessment processes measure student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended course and module **learning outcomes**.

5 On the basis of the sample of assessments that you have reviewed, please comment on the appropriateness of the application of the marking and moderation processes as evidenced by the annotated scripts and **marks and feedback given**. *(For reasons of confidentiality and data protection individual students should not be named).*

6 Please indicate whether you are satisfied that the **processes** for assessment, examination and the determination of awards have been **sound, appropriate and fairly conducted**.

7 Do you have any comments on **resources** as they impact on student performance in assessment processes?

8 Please comment on any good practice that you have observed related to **teaching, learning and assessment**.

9 Please comment on the quality of **teaching and learning methods and learning opportunities**.

10 Have you had **sufficient access to and the power** to call upon any materials needed to make the required judgements? If not, please give details.



11 Are there any **other issues** on which you wish to comment? Please consider if issues raised in previous reports have been addressed satisfactorily and/or if you are required to comment on any issues related to a PSB.

**12 Conclusions and recommendations**

(a) Good practice and innovation.

(b) Areas requiring attention

(i) Essential

(ii) Advisable

(c) Conclusion of tenure. (Please append an overview of your term of office if this is your final report)

Name

Date:

e-mail address (for acknowledgement)

### Appendix 3

#### Statement of Compliance

External Examiners are asked to complete this checklist stating whether or not the relevant examination and assessment procedures and policies have been adhered to in a satisfactory manner. External Examiners are reminded that a report must be completed in addition to completing this statement of compliance and that the report will be made available to students. The statement of compliance is for internal use only.

#### **Course materials**

Did you receive:

a)	Course handbook(s)?	Yes / No
b)	Exam and assessment regulations?	Yes / No
c)	Module descriptions (these may be in the course handbook)?	Yes / No
d)	Assessment schedule/marketing criteria?	Yes / No

#### **Draft examination papers**

a)	Did you receive all the draft papers?	Yes / No
	If not, was this at your request?	Yes / No
b)	Was the nature and level of the questions appropriate?	Yes / No
	If not, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	Yes / No

#### **Marking examination scripts**

a)	Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts?	Yes / No
	If you did not receive all the scripts, was the method of selection satisfactory?	Yes / No
b)	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	Yes / No
c)	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	Yes / No

#### **Dissertations/project reports**

a)	Was the choice of subjects for dissertations/projects appropriate?	Yes / No
b)	Was the mode and standard of assessment appropriate?	Yes / No

#### **Coursework/continuously assessed work**

a)	Was sufficient coursework made available to you for assessment?	Yes / No
b)	Was the mode and general standard of marking and consistency satisfactory?	Yes / No

#### **Orals/performances/recitals/appropriate professional placements**

a)	Were suitable arrangements made for you to moderate performances/recitals/appropriate professional placements?	Yes / No
----	--	----------

#### **Meeting to consider Classification (Undergraduate Progression and Award Board)**

a)	Were you able to attend the meeting?	Yes / No
b)	Was the meeting conducted to your satisfaction?	Yes / No
c)	Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Progression and Award Board?	Yes / No

Signed ..... Date .....

Name (please print) .....

**Note:** if you have answered 'No' to any of the questions above, please include comments (as appropriate) in your written report

**UNIVERSITY of SUSSEX – EXTERNAL EXAMINER ACTION PLAN**

**School:**

**Academic Year:**

**Level (UG or PG):**

<b>Course title(s)</b>	
<b>Name of External</b>	

<b>Comment requiring School action</b>	<b>Proposed actions and delivery method</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Evaluation Method</b>

***\*Note that institutional responses will be the responsibility of the ADQE Office and will be sent to the STLC for information.***

## Documentation available to External Examiners

Carried out by	Following appointment	During appointment	Annually
<b>Academic Development and Quality Enhancement Office</b>	<p>Letter of appointment which sets out the contractual arrangements including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Course/module for which you are responsible, period of appointment, annual report requirement, acceptance form along with confirmation of eligibility forms</li> </ul> <p>Examination and Assessment Regulations Handbook will be made available to External Examiners via the University of Sussex website: <a href="http://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/documents/examination-and-assessment-regulations-handbook-2015-16-v4-(final).pdf">http://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/documents/examination-and-assessment-regulations-handbook-2015-16-v4-(final).pdf</a></p> <p>This includes information on the progression and award regulations, examination boards, academic misconduct policy, exceptional circumstances procedure.</p> <p>Handbook on the policy and procedures for the External Examining of taught courses:</p> <p><a href="http://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/standards/externalexaminers">http://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/standards/externalexaminers</a></p> <p>This includes the duties and powers of External Examiners, procedures for nomination and appointment, induction of External Examiners, completion of annual reports, fees and expenses payable, forms and key contacts at the University.</p>	<p>Information on how fees are calculated</p> <p>Updates to External Examiner appointments (where necessary the reallocation of duties or extension of tenure)</p>	<p>Induction: New External Examiners will receive an induction carried out centrally by the University</p> <p>Updated versions of the following will be made available via the University of Sussex website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examination and Assessment Regulations</li> <li>External Examiners' Handbook</li> </ul> <p>Acknowledgement of External Examiner annual report by email. External Examiner Reports will be summarised and made available on the website. Examples of good practice and common issues across Schools will be highlighted.</p>
<b>School/Department</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Course specifications setting out course structure and modules</li> <li>List of courses and modules to be examined</li> <li>Course/module aims and learning outcomes</li> <li>School assessment policy – including information on marking criteria, modes of assessment</li> <li>Reading lists</li> <li>Copy of the Progression and Award Board's annual report</li> <li>Date of Progression and Award Board (PAB) meetings.</li> </ul>	<p>Sample of assessments following the internal moderation process (level 5 and above) – including indication of number of scripts</p> <p>Arrangements for the PAB meetings (and other visits)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School Annual Course Review Report</li> <li>Copy of previous External Examiner report</li> <li>Action plan: Feedback on how comments made in the External Examiner report are to be addressed</li> </ul>

## Appendix 6

### The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland – August 2008

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Pages/default.aspx>

#### Qualification descriptors

##### Section 4: Qualification descriptors

**27** Descriptors exemplify the nature and characteristics of the main qualification at each level, and comparison demonstrates the nature and characteristics of change between qualifications at different levels. They provide clear points of reference at each level and describe outcomes that cover the great majority of existing qualifications. However, the FHEQ has the flexibility to accommodate diversity and innovation, and to accommodate new qualifications as the need for them arises.

**28** Qualification descriptors are in two parts. The first part is a statement of outcomes, achievement of which is assessed and which a student should be able to demonstrate for the award of the qualification. This part will be of particular relevance to higher education providers in designing, approving and reviewing academic programmes. They will need to be satisfied that, for any programme, the curriculum and assessments provide all students with the opportunity to achieve, and to demonstrate achievement of, the intended outcomes.

**29** The second part is a statement of the wider abilities that the typical student could be expected to have developed. It will be of assistance to higher education providers during discussions with employers, and others with an interest in the general capabilities of holders of the qualification.

**30** Each descriptor sets out the outcomes for the typical qualification at each level - for levels 6, 7 and 8 this is usually a degree. 'Naming qualifications', paragraph 69, provides further guidance on the naming of qualifications and specifically the use of the title 'degree' for both undergraduate and postgraduate awards at all levels.

**31** At most levels there may be more than one type of qualification which can be achieved. Short programmes are often offered as continuing professional development opportunities. The qualification descriptors provide points of reference that will help institutions determine at which level of the FHEQ any qualifications resulting from such programmes should be placed. The guidance on naming qualifications (paragraphs 65-75) may be used to determine an appropriate title. A range of qualifications are encompassed by each level of the FHEQ. Each level is deliberately broad to provide flexibility and space for the development of new qualifications, for example, occupationally related awards.

**32** QAA will keep under review the need for any additional qualification descriptors, or amendment to them, in the light of the development of other points of reference, such as benchmark statements or European developments, for example arising from the Bologna Process.

#### Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 4: Certificate of Higher Education

The descriptor provided for this level of the FHEQ is for any Certificate of Higher Education which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor can also be used as a reference point for other level 4 qualifications.

Certificates of Higher Education are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with their area(s) of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret these within the context of that area of study
- an ability to present, evaluate and interpret qualitative and quantitative data, in order to develop lines of argument and make sound judgements in accordance with basic theories and concepts of their subject(s) of study.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to their area(s) of study and/or work
- communicate the results of their study/work accurately and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments
- undertake further training and develop new skills within a structured and managed environment.

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility.

**33** Holders of a Certificate of Higher Education will have a sound knowledge of the basic concepts of a subject, and will have learned how to take different approaches to solving problems. They will be able to communicate accurately and will have the qualities needed for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility. The Certificate of Higher Education may be a first step towards obtaining higher level qualifications.

### **Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 5: Foundation Degree**

The descriptor provided for this level of the FHEQ is for any Foundation Degree which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor can also be used as a reference point for other level 5 qualifications, including Diplomas of Higher Education, Higher National Diplomas, etc.

Foundation Degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of their area(s) of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed
- ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context
- knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in the subject(s) relevant to the named award, and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study
- an understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis
- effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist audiences, and deploy key techniques of the discipline effectively
- undertake further training, develop existing skills and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within organisations.

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.

**34** The Foundation Degree is an example of a qualification that meets, in full, the expectations of the qualification descriptor (and the Foundation Degree qualification benchmark).

**35** Holders of qualifications at this level will have developed a sound understanding of the principles in their field of study, and will have learned to apply those principles more widely. Through this, they will have learned to evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems. Their studies may well have had a vocational orientation, for example HNDs, enabling them to perform effectively in their chosen field. Holders of qualifications at this level will have the qualities necessary for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.

## Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 6: Bachelor's degree with honours

The descriptor provided for this level of the FHEQ is for any bachelor's degree with honours which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor can also be used as a reference point for other level 6 qualifications, including bachelor's degrees, graduate diplomas etc.

Bachelor's degrees with honours are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study, including acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline
- an ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
  - to devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of a discipline
  - to describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or equivalent advanced scholarship, in the discipline
  - an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge
  - the ability to manage their own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (for example, refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline).

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- apply the methods and techniques that they have learned to review, consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge and understanding, and to initiate and carry out projects
- critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete), to make judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution - or identify a range of solutions - to a problem
- communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
  - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
  - decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts
  - the learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature.

**36** Holders of a bachelor's degree with honours will have developed an understanding of a complex body of knowledge, some of it at the current boundaries of an academic discipline. Through this, the holder will have developed analytical techniques and problem-solving skills that can be applied in many types of employment. The holder of such a qualification will be able to evaluate evidence, arguments and assumptions, to reach sound judgements and to communicate them effectively.

**37** Holders of a bachelor's degree with honours should have the qualities needed for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility, and decision-making in complex and unpredictable circumstances.

**38** Bachelor's degrees with honours form the largest group of higher education qualifications. Typically, learning outcomes for these programmes would be expected to be achieved on the basis of study equivalent to three full-time academic years and lead to awards with titles such as Bachelor of Arts, BA (Hons) or Bachelor of Science, BSc (Hons). In addition to bachelor's degrees at this level are short courses and professional 'conversion' courses, based largely on undergraduate material, and taken usually by those who are already graduates in another discipline, leading to, for example, graduate certificates or graduate diplomas.

## Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 7: Master's degree

The descriptor provided for this level of the framework is for any master's degree which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor can also be used as a reference point for other level 7 qualifications, including postgraduate certificates and postgraduate diplomas.

Master's degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
  - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
  - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
- the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
- decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
- the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

**39** Much of the study undertaken for master's degrees will have been at, or informed by, the forefront of an academic or professional discipline. Students will have shown originality in the application of knowledge, and they will understand how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research. They will be able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, and they will show originality in tackling and solving problems. They will have the qualities needed for employment in circumstances requiring sound judgement, personal responsibility and initiative in complex and unpredictable professional environments.

**40** Master's degrees are awarded after completion of taught courses, programmes of research or a mixture of both. Longer, research-based programmes may lead to the degree of MPhil. The learning outcomes of most master's degree courses are achieved on the basis of study equivalent to at least one full-time calendar year and are taken by graduates with a bachelor's degree with honours (or equivalent achievement).

**41** Master's degrees are often distinguished from other qualifications at this level (for example, advanced short courses, which often form parts of continuing professional development programmes and lead to postgraduate certificates and/or postgraduate diplomas) by an increased intensity, complexity and density of study. Master's degrees - in comparison to postgraduate certificates and postgraduate diplomas - typically include planned intellectual progression that often includes a synoptic/research or scholarly activity.

**42** Some master's degrees, for example in science, engineering and mathematics, comprise an integrated programme of study spanning several levels where the outcomes are normally achieved through study equivalent to four full-time academic years. While the final outcomes of the qualifications themselves meet the expectations of the descriptor for a higher education qualification



at level 7 in full, such qualifications are often termed 'integrated master's' as an acknowledgement of the additional period of study at lower levels (which typically meets the expectations of the descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 6).

**43** First degrees in medicine, dentistry and veterinary science comprise an integrated programme of study and professional practice spanning several levels. While the final outcomes of the qualifications themselves typically meet the expectations of the descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 7, these qualifications may often retain, for historical reasons, titles of Bachelor of Medicine, and Bachelor of Surgery, Bachelor of Dental Surgery, Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine or Bachelor of Veterinary Science, and are abbreviated to MBChB or BM BS, BDS, BVetMed and BVSc respectively. Note

The Master of Arts (MA) granted by the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge are not academic qualifications. The MA is normally granted, on application, to graduates of these universities with a Bachelor of Arts (BA). No further study or assessment is required, but the recipient may be required to pay a fee.

At the University of Oxford, the MA may be granted during or after the twenty-first term from matriculation and at the University of Cambridge, the MA may be granted six years after the end of the first term.

### **Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 8: Doctoral degree**

The descriptor provided for this level of the FHEQ is for any doctoral degree which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor can also be used as a reference point for other level 8 qualifications.

Doctoral degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication
- a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice
- the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems
- a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches.

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.

**44** Doctoral degrees are awarded for the creation and interpretation, construction and/or exposition of knowledge which extends the forefront of a discipline, usually through original research.

**45** Holders of doctoral degrees will be able to conceptualise, design and implement projects for the generation of significant new knowledge and/or understanding. Holders of doctoral degrees will have the qualities needed for employment that require both the ability to make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields and an innovative approach to tackling and solving problems.

**46** Doctoral programmes that may include a research component but which have a substantial taught element (for example, professional doctorates), lead usually to awards which include the name of the discipline in their title (for example, EdD for Doctor of Education or DClInPsy for Doctor of Clinical Psychology). Professional doctorates aim to develop an individual's professional practice and to support them in producing a contribution to (professional) knowledge.

**47** The titles PhD and DPhil are commonly used for doctoral degrees awarded on the basis of original research.

**48** Achievement of outcomes consistent with the qualification descriptor for the doctoral degree normally requires study equivalent to three full-time calendar years.

**49** Higher doctorates may be awarded in recognition of a substantial body of original research undertaken over the course of many years. Typically a portfolio of work which has been previously published in a peer-refereed context is submitted for assessment. Most higher education awarding bodies restrict candidacy to graduates or academic staff of several years' standing.