

**CARDIFF**  
UNIVERSITY

PRIFYSGOL  
**CAERDYDD**

**EXTERNAL EXAMINER  
PROCEDURE  
(TAUGHT PROGRAMMES)**

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Key Principles

This Procedure has been designed around the following Principles, as set out by the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assurance (UKSCQA) [External Examiner Principles](#) in August 2022 and in [Supplementary Guidance](#) published by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in November 2022. The relevant principles have been cited at the beginning of each section of this Procedure to illustrate how they have been applied.

To be effective external examiners should:

1. Protect standards and ensure comparability and consistency.
2. Act as an expert in providing independent critical review, performing the role with integrity and supporting enhancement.
3. Ensure fairness and transparency in assessment.
4. Maintain the currency of their knowledge.
5. Support inclusivity and equity in teaching, learning and assessment.

To promote an effective external examining system, institutions should:

6. Appoint the right examiners, ensuring that conflicts of interest are avoided.
7. Should provide adequate training to enable external examiners to fulfil the role.
8. Ensure the role is fully understood.
9. Enable students to understand the value and purpose of external examining.
10. Engage with and support the external examiners they appoint.
11. Engage with and support their own staff acting in the role elsewhere.
12. Review their policies and practices against these principles on a regular basis.

## 1.2 Scope and Exclusions

From 1 August 2024, this procedure sets out the University's approach to the use of external examiners on taught programmes, and sets out expectations for their appointment, support and duties. It is a supporting document of the [Assessment and Examining Board Regulations](#) and the [Monitoring and Review Policy](#) as approved by Senate.

The purpose of the procedure is to ensure that Cardiff University can effectively discharge its responsibilities for the academic standards of awards and the quality of

learning opportunities provided for students, thereby ensuring that the programmes offered by the University are comparable to cognate provision offered elsewhere.

The following are excluded from the scope of this procedure:

- Postgraduate research programmes (Please see [Policy and Procedure for the Appointment of Research Degree Examining Boards](#)).
- Non-credit bearing programmes or activities (such as doctoral training or CPD).
- Cardiff University staff acting as external examiners elsewhere.

### 1.2.1 Cardiff University staff acting as external examiners elsewhere

*Key Principle 11: To promote an effective external examining system, institutions should engage with and support their own staff acting in the role elsewhere.*

The management of opportunities for Cardiff University staff to act as external examiners elsewhere is outside the scope this Procedure. However, the following resources provide further information:

- [The Cardiff Academic, and associated College specific expectations](#), which sets out the expectations for external examining opportunities as part of performance review processes.
- [Workload Model Guidance](#), which sets out the provisions for external examining activities being undertaken.
- [Learning and Teaching Academy courses and workshops](#), which offer a range of learning and teaching related Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses, including a specific external examining course.

### 1.2.2 Professional, statutory, and regulatory body requirements.

The University recognises that some programmes have specific requirements set by professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies (PSRB). In such cases it is normally expected that PSRB requirements be applied in addition to those set out in this procedure. Where specific PSRB requirements conflict with the implementation of this Procedure, an exemption will be required from the Chair of the Academic Standards and Quality Committee.

## 1.3 Institutional oversight

*Key Principle 12: To promote an effective external examining system, institutions should review their policies and practices against these principles on a regular basis.*

This Procedure has been approved by the Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQC) in May 2024. The procedure will be kept under regular review to ensure it continues both to support internal processes that function efficiently and effectively, and to fully meet the requirements of the [UK Quality Code for Higher](#)

[Education](#), and other relevant external reference points. Minor changes will be considered on an annual basis, with a holistic review to be undertaken at least every 5 years.

An annual overview of issues and good practice raised by external examiners will be presented to ASQC. Feedback provided by external examiners is also be used to inform the University’s [Annual Review and Enhancement](#) process.

### 1.3.1 External Reference Points

This procedure adheres to the sector agreed principles of the [UK Quality Code](#), with particular reference to the key practices set out in principle 5.

<b>Principle 5 - Monitoring, evaluating and enhancing provision</b>
Providers regularly monitor and review their provision to secure academic standards and enhance quality. Deliberate steps are taken to engage and involve students, staff and external expertise in monitoring and evaluation activity. The outcomes and impact of these activities are considered at provider level to drive reflection and enhancement across the provider.
<b>Key practices</b>
a. Providers agree strategic principles for monitoring and evaluation to ensure processes are applied systematically, operated consistently and appropriate to their operational context.
b. The methods for monitoring and evaluation activity are documented to clarify their aims, objectives, intended actions and targets. They are explicit about how they will be conducted, the nature of evidence (data) to be considered and the form of reporting, along with key indicators of success.
c. Staff and students are engaged in monitoring and evaluation activities and receive appropriate training and support to undertake them.
d. The actions and outcomes from monitoring and evaluation activities are communicated in an accessible manner to staff, students, the governing body and, where required, external stakeholders.
e. Improvements and enhancements that have been implemented as a result of monitoring and evaluation are, in turn, monitored and evaluated to ensure their impact is positive and remains fit for purpose.
f. Monitoring and evaluation activity facilitates providers’ insights and promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion, and education for sustainable development.
g. Programmes and modules are monitored and reviewed regularly by internal and external peers, employers and students, in line with the provider’s strategic approach to quality and standards. Outcomes from processes required from funding, accrediting, professional and approval bodies feed into monitoring and review.

## 2. Appointment

UK Standing Committee for Quality Assurance (UKSCQA) [External Examiner Principles](#)

**Key Principle 4:** *To be effective, external examiners should maintain the currency of their knowledge.*

**Key Principle 6:** *To promote an effective external examining system, institutions appoint the right examiners, ensuring that conflicts of interest are avoided.*

### 2.1 External Examiner Requirements

Requirements for the external examining of taught programmes are set out in the University's [Assessment and Examining Board Regulations](#) and the [Monitoring and Review Policy](#).

Schools should consider the following when reviewing external examiner requirements for their programmes.

- How many External Examiners are currently appointed to the programme or closely related programmes?
- Are there PSRB requirements that prescribe the number of External Examiners per programme?
- If External Examiners are covering subject specific modules, which External Examiner will comment on the overall academic standards and quality of the programme?
- Are there sufficient External Examiners already in place to cover all taught elements? If not, what are the perceived gaps in coverage (module or programme level)?
- If new programmes have been introduced / discontinued, can Existing External Examiners cover the additional work based on an appropriate sampling of assessment?
- What sample of student work will the External Examiner be asked to consider and at what time of year?

### 2.2 Process for Appointment

External examiners for taught programmes are appointed by the Head of Quality and Academic Standards on behalf of the Academic Standards and Quality Committee and Senate.

The process for appointing taught external examiners is managed by the External Examiner Administration team within Education Governance. During the spring semester each year, the External Examiner Administration team will contact the relevant staff in schools to review the list of external examiners serving the School to identify those whose term of office is coming to an end and confirm the external examiner requirements for the following academic year.

Nominations for both new and replacement external examiners should be submitted for consideration by the Head of Quality and Academic Standards by the first working day of October to ensure appointments can be completed at the start of the autumn semester.

The External Examiner Administration team will inform the relevant staff in schools of the outcome of nominations and issue a letter of appointment to each external examiner following approval of the nomination.

The required forms for nomination and re-nomination of external examiners are available on the [staff intranet](#).

When seeking suitable candidates for nomination, Schools should ensure they use a wide range of recruitment methods to ensure opportunities are made available to a diverse range of candidates. This may include advertising via professional/discipline specific networks and news outlets, and Higher Education forums such as JISC Mail.

## **2.2.1 Eligibility to Work in the UK**

### Undergraduate External Examiners

For external examiners appointed to undergraduate programmes, each school will need to undertake appropriate 'Right to Work' checks before the external examiner can be approved. This should be carried out by a trained 'Right to Work Checker' within the School, in line with process outlined by HR in the ['Right to Work' Sharepoint page](#).

This documentation will need to be submitted with the nomination form before the External Examiner undertakes any duties.

Please note that the nomination form cannot be approved without the correct 'Right to Work' documentation. For further advice and guidance please contact your School HR Manager or College HR Business Partner.

### Postgraduate External Examiners

Right to work checks will not normally be required to be carried out for Postgraduate External Examiners. However, additional guidance should be sought from HR for nominees based overseas.

## **2.3 Criteria for Appointment**

Nominees will normally satisfy the following criteria:



1. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of UK-agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality.
2. Have a high degree of competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme, or parts thereof, in the design and operation of a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and in the operation of assessment procedures.
3. Possess relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate.
4. Be of sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command the respect of academic peers and, where appropriate, professional peers.
5. Be familiar with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed.
6. Possess fluency in English and/or Welsh as appropriate to the programme, and where programmes are delivered and/or assessed in other languages, fluency in the relevant language(s) (unless other secure arrangements are in place to ensure that external examiners are provided with the information to make their judgements).
7. Meet any applicable criteria set by professional, statutory, or regulatory bodies, where appropriate.
8. Have an awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula.
9. Have competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

### **2.3.1 Conflicts of Interest**

Nominees **must not** fall into the following categories:

10. A member of the University Court, Council or Senate or of any committee of the University or any relevant collaborative partners, or a current employee of the University or any relevant collaborative partners.
11. Anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the Programme.

12. Former staff or students of the University unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the external examiner have completed their programme(s).
13. An external examiner from another institution when that institution appoints one from the first institution in a cognate course in return (known as a reciprocal arrangement).

Nominees **should not usually** fall into the following categories (Special cases to be considered in exceptional circumstances):

14. Anyone significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme or modules in question.
15. An incoming external examiner from the same department in the same institution as an outgoing external examiner.
16.
  - a. The appointment to an Examining Board of more than one external examiner from the same department of the same institution;

*or*

  - b. where more than three external examiners are appointed to cover the same programme, the appointment of more than a third of those external examiners from the same department of the same institution.
17. The reappointment of a previous external examiner prior to a period of 5 years since completion of their last appointment.

### 2.3.2 Special Cases

The Head of Quality and Academic Standards, in consultation with the relevant College-Dean, may approve legitimate cases for making an appointment that does not fulfil all criteria. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Where there is a limited potential pool of examiners to choose from in small and specialist courses (the School may be asked to confirm strategies for future recruitment).
- Where a large number of external examiners are engaged on a programmes, which may make identifying suitable candidates from different institutions difficult.
- Where specific PSRB requirements require alternative criteria be applied.
- Special cases will not be considered unless reasonable effort has been taken to identify suitable nominees that meet all criteria.

## **2.4 Term of Office and Renomination**

The duration of an external examiner's appointment will normally be for four years, however renomination for a fifth year will be permitted in exceptional circumstances. Renominations will be approved by the Head of Quality and Academic Standards on behalf of Academic Standards and Quality Committee. Circumstances where a renomination will be considered may include, but are not limited to:

- Continuity for a new programme as initial cohorts go through.
- Continuity during a period of change for the programme (such as when major changes are being proposed or have recently been made).
- Continuity during the teach-out of a programme to ensure standards are maintained (where an extension of a fifth year would not be sufficient to cover the teach-out period a sixth year may be exceptionally considered).
- Staggering the tenures of externals where there is more than one to a programme.
- Where the School exhausted all methods in searching for a suitable candidate within a suitable timeframe for the start of the appointment (the School may be asked to confirm strategies for future recruitment).
- Where another external examiner for the programme has unexpectedly resigned or fallen ill and cover is needed at short notice.

An external examiner may be reappointed, but only after a period of five years or more has elapsed since their last appointment.

### **2.4.1 Change of employment or retirement of a serving external examiner**

An external examiner who changes employer or retires from their substantive role during the period of their appointment may continue as an external examiner provided they will be able to maintain the currency of their knowledge for the remainder of their tenure.

## **2.5 Ending an Appointment**

### **2.5.1 Early Termination**

The appointment of an external examiner may, in exceptional circumstances, be ended early by the Head of Quality and Academic Standards on behalf of Academic Standards and Quality Committee following consultation with the Head of School (or nominee). This may occur under the following circumstances:

- Where it is perceived that the external examiner has not fulfilled his/her duties and responsibilities associated with the post. This may include:

- Failure to consider assessment work for review within reasonable timescales.
  - Failure to attend or provide sufficient feedback to Examining Boards to enable them to operate.
  - Repeated failure to complete annual reports as requested.
  - Non-engagement with University or School communications requiring a response.
- Following the discontinuation of, or non-recruitment to, the programme.
  - Where a conflict of interest arises which cannot be satisfactorily resolved.

### **2.5.2 Resignation**

An external examiner may resign by writing to the Head of Quality and Academic Standards, giving a period of 6 months' notice to allow the University to identify and appoint a suitable replacement.

## **2.6 Fees and Expenses**

The budget available for the payment of external examiners and their expenses will be approved by the University Senate and Council. The appointments of external examiners will be made within the limits imposed by the budget, and in accordance with the [fee schedule](#) agreed by Senate and Council.

Fees will be paid by the External Examiners Administration team following receipt of an external examiner's annual report. External examiners are also able to claim reimbursement of reasonable expenses, in accordance with the staff allowances in the [University's Travel and Expenses Policy](#).

## **2.7 Welsh Language Provision**

The University has an approved [process for Welsh-medium assessments](#) to ensure that students who wish to submit their assignments in Welsh can do so without any barriers. This includes the following expectations for external examining:

- If a module is taught primarily or entirely in Welsh, then exam procedures should aim to minimise the need for translation. On the other hand, if a module is taught in English (with or without some Welsh elements) and a student submits their work in Welsh, it should not be necessary to make additional arrangements for translation. This is because examiners should have sufficient English-language samples to evaluate the work.
- The appointment of bilingually competent external examiners, who meet generic criteria, minimises the risk of external examination.

- When appointing an external examiner for bilingual competency, if someone who meets the normal criteria is not available, an associate external examiner with appropriate subject expertise and bilingual competency should be appointed.
- When reviewing assessments on the same module, the associate external examiner should work closely with the designated external examiner to consider assessments in both languages.

## 3. Engaging with External Examiners

UK Standing Committee for Quality Assurance (UKSCQA) [External Examiner Principles](#)

**Key Principle 7:** *To promote an effective external examining system, institutions should provide adequate training to enable external examiners to fulfil the role.*

**Key Principle 8:** *To promote an effective external examining system, institutions should ensure the role is fully understood.*

**Key Principle 10:** *To promote an effective external examining system, institutions should engage with and support the external examiners they appoint.*

### 3.1 Institutional support

The External Examiner Administration team will provide the following to each external examiner:

1. **Letter of Appointment** – this will be issued following confirmation of appointment by the Head of Quality and Standards. It will provide details of the appointment, including the academic years covered, programmes or subject areas to be reviewed, and confirmation of fees payable.
2. **Login details for University Intranet and Learning Central** – This will be provided along with the appointment letter.
3. **External Examiner Handbook** – This will be provided on appointment, and at the beginning of each teaching session. This provides guidance on institutional expectations from external examiners, as well as outlining University Regulations, Policies and Procedures relevant to their role, including any changes since the previous year.
4. **Annual Report Template** – This will be provided prior to the start of summer Examining Boards each year, along with instructions for submission of the reports.
5. **Training for External Examiners** - Where available institutional level training for new external examiners will be provided through the [AdvanceHE Personal Development Course for External Examiners](#).

### 3.2 Induction of new external examiners by the School/Programme Team

Following confirmation of appointment by External Examiners Administration, Schools should be in contact with the new external examiner to provide an introduction to the programme and modules they will be responsible for, as well as an introduction to the School in general.

This should include:

- **Specific points of contact within the School**, including the relevant Examining Board and Boards of Studies Chair, as well as an administrative team contact to allow for timely response to general queries.
- **Programme Information**, such as curriculum structure and design; assessment strategy; generic assessment criteria and mark schemes; rules on assessment, progression and awards, and any other specific regulations or PSRB requirements.
- **Module Information**, such as module descriptions, specific assessment criteria and mark schemes.
- **Administrative/Operational Guidance** setting out systems for accessing access information and materials for review.
- **Arrangements for an introductory meeting** (either in person or virtually) with programme and module leads to welcome the new external examiner, introduce the programme and the School, and answer any questions.

### 3.2.1 External examiners without prior experience

Where an external examiner has been appointed to their first external examining role, Schools should ensure that an introductory meeting takes place at the earliest opportunity in order to identify any further information or guidance that may be required.

Where possible it is also recommended that a meeting be arranged with an existing external examiner within the School who will be able to provide advice and guidance during the first year of their appointment.

## 3.3 Access to Resources

On appointment external examiners will be provided with an intranet username and password by the External Examiner Administration team. This will also provide access to Learning Central.

Schools must ensure that external examiners are able to access all relevant documentation for the programmes and modules they are responsible, either via enrolment on Learning Central, or by other means. This should include:

- Student programme handbooks
- Module guides, maps
- Any assessment guidance provided to students
- Access to systems for reviewing assessment materials.

### 3.4 Routine communication and updates

#### At the beginning of the teaching session

At the start of the teaching session ALL external examiners should be provided with the following information:

- Confirmation of School contacts for the academic session.
- A summary of any programme/module changes introduced since the previous year.
- An opportunity to meet (virtually) with programme/module leads to discuss any changes made since the previous year.
- An expected schedule of work for the academic session, including:
  - Arrangements for the review of assessment questions
  - Expected schedule of assessment and review of work.
  - Expected timing of Examining Boards.
  - External examiners should be asked to agree to the expected schedule of work and be accommodated as far as possible if there are scheduling difficulties.
- Arrangements for an opportunity to meet with students during the year.

#### During the course of the academic session

Schools should update External Examiners throughout the academic year with the following information:

- Confirmation of Examining Board dates (when confirmed with Registry Operations).
- Confirmation of final arrangements for reviewing assessments (agreed with the external examiner):
  - How work will be sampled.
  - Methods for accessing work (ensure they have access to necessary systems).
  - Deadlines for the return of work. Expectations for attendance.
- Updates on any in-session changes to assessment.

Aside from sending external examiners details of assessment tasks / titles for approval and providing access to marking guidance and submissions to review post-marking, Schools should seek, where possible, to involve External Examiners in social moderation and calibration exercises and involve them in any planned changes to the ways in which marking and moderation are conducted on that programme.

**Throughout the year external examiners must be kept updated on any in-session changes to assessment, or any changes to their expected schedule of work.**



## 4. Role and Duties of External Examiners

UK Standing Committee for Quality Assurance (UKSCQA) [External Examiner Principles](#)

**Key Principle 1:** *To be effective external examiners should protect standards and ensure comparability and consistency.*

**Key Principle 3:** *To be effective external examiners should ensure fairness and transparency in assessment.*

**Key Principle 5:** *To be effective external examiners should support inclusivity and equity in teaching, learning and assessment.*

**Key Principle 9:** *To promote an effective external examining system, institutions should enable students to understand the value and purpose of external examining.*

### 4.1 The Role of an External Examiner

The general role of external examiners within the University's quality assurance processes are set out in the [Monitoring and Review Policy](#).

#### 4.1.2 Specific Duties of External Examiners

In relation to the programmes/subject areas they are appointed to, external examiners are expected to undertake the following duties.

1. Consider, comment on, and approve all assessments which contribute 50% or more to the mark for any module or unit of study assessment contributing to the final award.
2. Consider sufficient samples of assessments and coursework to determine that internal marking and classifications are of an appropriate standard.
3. As appropriate to the programme participate in clinical and/or practical-based assessments.
4. Attend meetings of Examining Boards at which award classifications or specified elements of them are confirmed (either in person or by virtual means).
5. Contribute to discussions about the degree outcome profiles for the programmes they are appointed to.

6. Submit written reports to the University annually on the programmes/subject areas they are appointed to.
7. Be consulted by Boards of Studies on substantive changes to programme design or assessment strategy, or to the forms of assessment for any module or unit of study contributing to the final assessment of an award.

## 4.2 Approving Forms of Assessment

Schools should ensure that external examiners are informed of the procedures for approving forms of assessment at the start of each academic year.

External examiners should be asked to comment on and approve all assessments which contribute 50% or more to the mark for any module or unit of study assessment contributing to the final award. Where no single assessment is worth 50% or more of a module than a representative sample of assessments should be agreed with the external examiner for review.

It is good practice for schools to provide a response to external examiners on any suggested amendments to papers or other assessments.

In undertaking their duties, it is recommended that external examiners should seek to ensure that:

- Assessments are appropriate to the level of study.
- They enable learners to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes.
- They cover the subject content appropriately.
- They are accessible and fair, so that all learners have equal opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes.

Boards of Studies are required to consult with external examiners on major changes to the methods of assessment for any module or unit of study contributing to the final award.

## 4.3 Marking and Moderation

Schools are required to put in procedures to ensure to ensure reliable marking and moderation of assessments, in line with the University's [Marking and Moderation Policy](#).

The schedule for marking and moderation activities should be confirmed in consultation with external examiners at the start of each academic session, to ensure that markers, moderators and external examiners have sufficient time to undertake their responsibilities.

As set out in the Marking and Moderation Policy, external examiners should be given access to:

- [A sample of] all summative assessments that contribute to award outcomes for all modules taught in the academic year under review – not just a snapshot of modules, as student performance should be reviewed within and between cohorts across time.
- The provisional marks within all these modules, to enable External Examiners to review assessments that contribute to award outcomes.
- The completed proformas used to record evidence of the full marking and moderation process and the outcomes of any discussions between markers and moderators.
- Full information about any scaling that has taken place [because of the moderation process], clearly recording the outcomes from this and reasons for any changes to marks that have been made.

Marks will be ratified at an Examining Board when work has

- a) been made available to an External Examiner, and
- b) that [at least] a sample of that work has been reviewed by the External Examiner.

External examiners may recommend reconsideration by the Examining Board of the level of marking across student cohorts or across individual assessment components.

External examiners should not:

- Be required or invited to make recommendations on or change the marks of individual students.
- Be involved in marking, except in the case of clinical and/or practical-based assessments.
- Be requested to arbitrate and/or 'third mark' assessments where two internal markers have arrived at substantially different marks. Where 'third marking' does take place, both original marks should be made available to external examiners to help illustrate standards.

#### **4.3.1 Resits**

External examiners are not usually expected to review assessments submitted in the resit period except in the following circumstances:

- it is a requirement of PSRB accreditation.
- there are a high number of 'first attempts' being considered during the resit period.
- the resit assessments follow a different format or process from the main assessments (e.g. synoptic assessments).

### **4.3.2 Sampling**

Where internal moderation has taken place by sampled second marking, then usually the same sample should be sent to external examiners as it includes evidence of the full marking and moderation process and outcomes of any disagreements between marker(s) and moderators.

A moderated sample should normally include:

- i. A representative sample of submissions from across the marking range and in each decile band.
- ii. A representative example of the whole population of fails e.g., marks in the 10's, 20's and 30's.
- iii. Examples of all upper borderlines (39, 49, 59, 69).
- iv. The higher of either: at least 10 submissions, or the square route of the total number of submissions.

In assessments that have been marked by more than one marker, the sample should usually include examples of work marked by all the markers in that team.

### **4.3.3 Unfair Practice**

If an external examiner suspects that an unfair practice has taken place, they should report this to the Chair of the Examining Board, who will invoke the University's Academic Misconduct Procedure. Examining Boards must not consider suspected cases of plagiarism/unfair practice outside of this Procedure.

## **4.4 Examining Board Meetings**

### Expectations for Attendance

External examiners are appointed as full members of Examining Boards and are permitted to attend all meetings should they wish to. However, they are usually expected to attend only one Examining Board per year (either in person or by virtual means). Usually this will be the main board at which the final award for students is determined.

External examiners appointed to undergraduate programmes are expected to attend the meeting of the Examining Board where the final award for students is determined (either in person or by virtual means).

External examiners appointed to postgraduate taught programmes are expected to attend at least one meeting of the Examining Board per year (either in person or by virtual means) and the meeting(s) attended should be agreed, in advance, by the external examiner and the Chair of the Examining Board.

Schools should notify external examiners of the dates on which Examining Boards meet well in advance of the meeting. External examiners should seek to make every effort to attend meetings of the Examining Board.

If an external examiner is unable to attend a meeting, they should be available for consultation by providing a written report to the Chair of the Examining Board, which covers the work they have reviewed along with any recommendations for consideration. The format of the report should be agreed in advance with the Chair of the Examining Board.

Information on the conduct of Examining Boards can be found in the [Assessment and Examining Board Regulations](#).

## **4.5 Meetings with Students**

Senate encourages the provision of opportunities for external examiners and students to meet (either in person or by virtual means) to discuss the programme of study and its assessment. Such meetings may lead to the identification of possible programme enhancements and provide the external examiner with a rounded overview of the quality and standard of the student experience and enhance the external examiner's contribution to the consideration of such matters by the Examining Board. The annual reports of external examiners often usefully include headline issues raised in such meetings.

The school is expected to confirm to external examiners, at the start of the academic year, the opportunities available to them to meet with students in the absence of members of staff.

It is anticipated that such meetings should normally include the opportunity to meet with student representatives in the later stages of the programme(s) in question. Such students should be well placed to provide informed views of the overall student experience.

Where meetings between students and external examiners are arranged by the school, staff should ensure that students attending are given clear guidance about the purpose of that meeting and what is outside the scope of the meeting (for example, individual assessment outcomes)."

### **Inappropriate Contact from Students**

Except as indicated above, it is inappropriate for students to initiate direct contact with external examiners. Any direct contact received by external examiners should be referred to the Head of Quality and Academic Standards. External examiners should not respond to any direct contact initiated by students.

## **4.6 Conflicts of Interest**

External examiners are required to draw the attention of the Head of Quality and Academic Standards to any possible conflict of interest that might arise during their appointment.

## **4.7 Serious Concerns**

External examiners have a right to raise any matter of serious concern with the Vice-Chancellor, if necessary, by means of a separate confidential written report. The

University will provide a considered and timely response to any confidential report received, including details of any action that will be taken as a result.

Where an external examiner has a serious concern relating to systemic failings with the academic standards of a programme or programmes and has exhausted all published internal procedures, including the submission of a confidential report to the Vice-Chancellor, they may raise their concerns directly with the [Commission for Tertiary Education and Research \(Medr\)](#) or inform any relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body.

## 5. Annual Reports to the University

UK Standing Committee for Quality Assurance (UKSCQA) [External Examiner Principles](#)

**Key Principle 2:** *To be effective external examiners should act as an expert in providing independent critical review, performing the role with integrity and supporting enhancement.*

**Key Principle 9:** *To promote an effective external examining system, institutions should enable students to understand the value and purpose of external examining.*

### 5.1 Submission of Reports

External examiners are required to submit an External Examiner's Report to the University on an annual basis. It is the normal expectation that this be submitted following the main awarding Examining Board for a programme, and in line with the following deadlines:

- **31 July:** Undergraduate, 9-month or 18-month postgraduate programmes
- **20 December:** 12-month or 24-month Postgraduate programmes

Where an external examiner holds more than one appointment (for example undergraduate and postgraduate appointments) a report should normally be provided by the external examiner for each appointment.

**The University requires external examiners to report on:**

- The appropriateness and information provided by the school to prepare them to undertake their duties, as well as arrangements for the review of work.
- The appropriateness of the design and delivery of programmes/modules including reference to the relevant published qualification frameworks, subject benchmarks, and the requirements of any professional or statutory regulating bodies.
- The appropriateness of assessments as well as processes for marking, moderation, and feedback.
- Any good and innovative practice in learning, teaching, and assessment, as well as any opportunities for enhancement.
- The appropriateness of assessment and award outcomes, including comparability with other UK higher education institutions.
- Year-on-year comments on any issues raised, and whether these have been addressed to their satisfaction.
- An overview of their appointment following the completion of their term.

## 5.2 Templates

The External Examiners Administration team will provide an annual report template to external examiners in advance of their attendance at the relevant Examining Board, which will invite comments for each of the above. The template will also be made available on the University [intranet](#).

Completed reports should be returned by external examiners to the External Examiners Administration team at [externalexaminers@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:externalexaminers@cardiff.ac.uk).

## 5.3 Responding to Reports

External examiners' reports are received by the External Examiners Administration team on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor, who has delegated responsibility for responding to external examiners' reports to the Head of Quality and Academic Standards.

Upon receipt of an external examiner's report, the External Examiners Administration team will provide a copy to the relevant school contacts requesting that any issues which may require a detailed response be identified and considered by the school.

The recipients of the reports will be agreed with the school, but it is normally expected that the report will be shared with the appropriate Chair of the Examining Board, Chair of the Board of Studies, and Director of Learning and Teaching, either directly by External Examiners Administration, or by the agreed contacts in the School.

The School's response to any issues raised in a report should normally be provided to External Examiners Administration within 20 working days. Once received the school's response will form the basis of the institutional response issued by the Head of Quality and Academic Standards, subject to any further dialogue with the school concerned.

When issuing the institutional response, a copy will also be provided to the relevant contacts identified by the school.

## 5.4 Circulation of Reports

### Within the School

The contents of reports (and the institutional response if issued) should be considered at the relevant Boards of Studies, and where comments have been made regarding teaching or learning processes across programmes, or School wide, it should also be referred to the School Education and Student Experience Committee.

Schools should ensure mechanisms are in place for the sharing of external examiners' reports with their students (normally through student representatives on Boards of Studies, or via Student-Staff Panels).

### Professional Bodies

The school will send a copy of the report to the relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body where this is a requirement of that PSRB.



## **5.5 Institutional consideration**

The Head of Quality and Academic Standards will report annually to the University Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQC) on:

- The operation of procedures for the treatment of external examiner reports.
- The compliance of Schools with the requirements of these procedures.
- Institutional themes arising from issues of concern and noteworthy practice identified in external examiner reports.

The Vice-Chancellor and/or Head of Quality and Academic Standards may refer any issue raised in an external examiner's report for the consideration of ASQC or other appropriate committee. The Vice-Chancellor may also request an immediate response to an external examiner's report from the Head of the relevant School.

## **5.6 Availability to Students and Data Protection**

External Examiner Annual Reports and Institutional Responses are made available to all students and staff via our [SharePoint page](#).

External examiners are therefore asked not to make any reference to any individual students or members of staff in their reports in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (2018). Where references to individuals are included in reports, these will be appropriately redacted.