



UNIVERSITY OF
PORTSMOUTH

EXTERNAL EXAMINERS REGULATIONS & PROCEDURES

September 2014

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The latest version of this document is always to be found at:

<http://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-128.pdf>

SUMMARY

What is this document about?

This Policy document sets out the role of the External Examiner at the University of Portsmouth. It explains how we appoint, instruct and engage External Examiners on our undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses, no matter where or how they are delivered.

Who is this for?

This document will be of most interest to our new and existing External Examiners, staff and students. It will be of interest also to professional, statutory and regulatory bodies and the UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). It may also be of interest to the wider public.

How does the University check this is followed?

The role of the External Examiner is very important to the University. The University has various formal ways it checks that the External Examiner Policy is working effectively. This includes receiving a written report each year from the External Examiner which asks the Examiner to respond to specific questions on how well the University enabled them to act as an External Examiner. The University responds to the External Examiner comments made in their report. Depending on the nature of the comment, the University response may be from the Head of Department, the Academic Registrar or the Vice-Chancellor. These processes are checked through our annual monitoring mechanism as well as through our Periodic Programme Review process.

Who can you contact if you have any queries about this document?

If you are external to the University and you have any questions about this Policy please contact Academic Standards, Quality and Partnerships at asqp@port.ac.uk.

If you are internal to the University please contact your Faculty Associate Dean (Academic).

This document is pending revision subject to the outcome of the University Academic Regulations review scheduled for 2021/22.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Authority and scope

This document states policies and procedures approved by Academic Council on 26 June 2012, with revisions approved by Academic Council on 12 November 2013, relating to the appointment, roles, duties, rights and responsibilities of External Examiners for undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses. These policies are underpinned by the principles set out in the QAA Quality Code and do not apply to Higher Degrees by Research or by Publication, or to Stage 2 Part 2 Professional Doctorates, which are included in the relevant regulations for those awards.

1.2. University Assessment Policy

The University of Portsmouth operates a 'two tier' system of formal meetings to agree assessment outcomes. The assessment regulations of the University of Portsmouth establish distinct roles for External Examiners at each tier. External Examiners acting in the first role are given the title of 'Subject External Examiner'; those acting in the second role are given the title 'Award External Examiner'. All are Subject External Examiners and annually one of these Subject External Examiners will be appointed as an Award External Examiner. External Examiners may be associated, either at the 'first' or 'second tier', with units or awards at all levels of provision, i.e. both undergraduate and postgraduate.

The 'first tier', or Unit Assessment Board, considers units grouped into 'cognate' areas and confirms marks at unit level for all students studying the units in its area, regardless of which named award the students may be registered upon. A unit will normally have only one Subject External Examiner. A Subject External Examiner will normally be associated with many units.

The 'second tier', or Board of Examiners, considers named awards similarly grouped into 'cognate' areas and recommends awards, including classification of award, and makes decisions about the progression of students. A named award will normally have only one Award External Examiner. An Award External Examiner may be associated with a range of named awards.

2. APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

2.1. General policies on appointment of External Examiners

- 2.1.1. External Examiners are appointed by and are accountable to Academic Council and operate on behalf of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC). In practice, the appointment of External Examiners will be approved by the External Examiner Nominations Panel prior to the date the appointment commences.
- 2.1.2. The External Examiner Nominations Panel will normally comprise one Head of Department and one Associate Dean (Academic), who will not be from the same Faculty, and will be chaired by the Chair of QAC.
- 2.1.3. Units will normally have a Subject External Examiner appointed before they are delivered to students.
- 2.1.4. Only Examiners appointed in accordance with these policies and procedures can carry out the duties of External Examiners in relation to awards of the University and to units which contribute to awards of the University.
- 2.1.5. The Award External Examiner(s) is (are) nominated from the pool of Subject External Examiners on an annual basis. Award External Examiners are nominated and confirmed prior to the start of the academic year.
- 2.1.6. Subject External Examiners are identified to students within the unit description document. Award External Examiners should be identified on the relevant Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) page.
- 2.1.7. The standard period of appointment for External Examiners is four academic years. Under exceptional circumstances the appointment period for External Examiners may be extended for a further year (see section 2.7 below).
- 2.1.8. All External Examiners will have a written contract with the University. Appointments will normally begin on 1 September and will end on 30 September for External Examiners responsible for units or courses where the final Board is held before 31 August and on 31 January of the following year where the final Board is held after this date.

2.2. Initial action

2.2.1. External Examiner appointments are approved by the External Examiner Nominations Panel prior to the commencement of their duties. An Examiner whose appointment commenced on 1 September must be appointed by the last meeting of the External Examiner Nominations Panel in the preceding academic year, which is normally held in June. It would therefore be advisable to begin the appointment process one year before the commencement of the appointment. The formal responsibility for ensuring that a Subject External Examiner is appointed in respect of each unit lies with the Head of the Department in which the unit resides.

2.2.2. The Head of Department will liaise with unit coordinators to identify a suitable External Examiner. Before nomination, it is important to ensure that the proposed Examiner has a clear understanding of the proposed duties, the University's policies and procedures relating to External Examiners, and the scale of remuneration. To this end, it is helpful to send a copy of this document before the proposed Examiner agrees to the nomination. During this informal contact, it should be ascertained that the External Examiner meets the criteria for the appointment in section 2.8 below and that it is clear that no appointment can be made without the approval of the External Examiners Nominations Panel.

2.3. Formal process of appointment

2.3.1. The External Examiner Proposal Form seeks brief information from the proposed External Examiner and confirmation of willingness to fulfil the role. It should be sent to the proposed External Examiner as soon as the decision to proceed with the nomination has been made. The nomination form makes reference to and includes an URL link to this Policy.

2.3.2. The External Examiner should check and complete the following sections of the form:

- contact details;
- details of any possible conflicts of interest, including other External Examiner appointments;
- declaration of receipt of this document and willingness to act as an External Examiner for the University, and of the right to work in the UK, evidenced by the External Examiner's signature. Documentary proof of the right to work in the UK will be requested in the form of a photocopy of the proposed External Examiner's passport, submitted with the proposal form, which will be verified against the original on the Examiner's first visit to the University after appointment.

The form should then be returned to the University with a brief CV to provide evidence of their suitability for the role.

2.3.3. The Head of Department formally proposes the nominated External Examiner, names the predecessor and their institution. The scale of fees for External Examiner appointments is detailed at www.port.ac.uk/externalexaminers. Exceptionally the Head of Department may make a request for a non-standard fee payment, which must be approved by the External Examiner Nominations Panel.

- 2.3.4. The Associate Dean (Academic) (AD(A)) considers the form and the CV of the proposed Examiner and, if satisfied that the proposed Examiner meets the criteria for appointment, signs and dates the form and forwards it to ASQP, DSAA. If the AD(A) does not believe that the proposed Examiner meets the criteria but nevertheless supports the proposal, they must state the grounds on which the case for exceptional consideration is supported.
- 2.3.5. The CV and the original nomination form will be stored securely by ASQP and made available for inspection on request by any member of the External Examiner Nominations Panel or of QAC.
- 2.3.6. Normally, the members of the External Examiners Nominations Panel will receive only the proposal form and CV. If the Panel is exceptionally to consider an appointment which does not meet the published criteria, members will receive any supporting documents required to inform the decision. The Panel will also receive any non-standard fee payment request.
- 2.3.7. The Chair of the Nominations Panel signs the form on behalf of Academic Council to confirm the appointment and, where applicable, any non-standard fee payments.
- 2.3.8. If, after any additional information requested has been considered, the Panel does not recommend either the appointment of a proposed Examiner or a request for a non-standard fee, the proposal will be returned to the AD(A) and Head of Department with a clear explanation of the Panel's reasons for the decision based on the criteria of appointment set out in section 2.8.
- 2.3.9. A list of all proposals considered by the External Examiner Nominations Panel, whether approved or rejected, will be presented to the next available meeting of QAC to be noted on the Committee's records.

2.4. Letter of appointment

- 2.4.1. Following appointment, the External Examiner shall receive a letter of appointment from ASQP, DSAA including a formal written agreement between the University and the External Examiner.
- 2.4.2. The written agreement shall identify the following:
- a) the beginning and end dates of the appointment;
 - b) details of the induction programme and mentoring process (if appropriate) described in section 3.3 below;
 - c) role(s) and responsibilities of the External Examiner as described in sections 3 and 4;
 - d) the duties to be undertaken including the meetings to be attended as described in sections 3 and 4;
 - e) the expected flows of information from the University;
 - f) the inputs expected from the External Examiner as described in sections 3 and 4;
 - g) the process by which the agreement might be terminated by either party as detailed in section 6;
 - h) the remuneration and arrangements for its payment in accordance with section 2.10 below.

- 2.4.3. The External Examiner shall be required to sign and return a copy of the agreement to signify acceptance of the appointment and the terms and conditions outlined in it. This copy shall be retained in ASQP, DSAA throughout the term of the External Examiner's appointment.
- 2.4.4. External Examiners will receive a list of the units, including details of web access to these units, for which they will have responsibility. They will also be provided with details of the web address at which other useful documents, including the University's Assessment Regulations, can be found.

2.5. Appointment of Award Examiners

- 2.5.1. Subject to the provisions of the University's Assessment Regulations, there must be one Award External Examiner present at any meeting of a Board of Examiners at which conferment of an academic award of the University is recommended.
- 2.5.2. An accrediting body might stipulate an additional Award External Examiner must attend (see section 2.6).
- 2.5.3. If a Board considers cognate groups of awards, the Award External Examiner must have sufficient subject expertise to form a judgement as to the standard of each award.
- 2.5.4. Heads of Department shall appoint the Award External Examiners for each Board of Examiners within their Department, subject to the principles set out in 2.8.5 and in accordance with the criteria in paragraph 2.8, before the start of the academic year.

2.6. Procedures for appointment of Award Examiners for accredited programmes

- 2.6.1. The University recognises that, in the case of certain programmes of study leading to an award of the University and an award of, or exemption from, the examinations of, a professional, statutory and regulatory body, it may be necessary to appoint additional Award External Examiners with responsibility for some units to ensure that the standard of the award as a whole accords with the requirements of the professional institution.
- 2.6.2. The procedure for appointing such Examiners will follow, as closely as possible, the procedure for appointing Subject Examiners.
- 2.6.3. Such Examiners should be included in the list of Award Examiners reported to QAC each year.
- 2.6.4. The criteria for the appointment of Award Examiners for Accredited Programmes shall also accord as closely as possible with the University's criteria for the appointment of Subject Examiners, as described in section 2.8. If the requirements of the accrediting body are substantially different from the University's criteria, it shall be the responsibility of the AD(A) to ensure that a second Award Examiner is nominated from the Subject Examiners for units that contribute to one or more of the awards to be recommended by the Board of Examiners.

2.7. Extension of appointment

- 2.7.1. The term of office for External Examiners is four academic years.
- 2.7.2. Exceptionally, for example if a programme and its associated units will soon be discontinued, an appointment may be extended by one year. Difficulty in identifying an appropriate replacement will not be considered 'exceptional', although the unpredicted incapacity of a replacement Examiner who has already been appointed might be.
- 2.7.3. Extensions are considered by the External Examiner Nominations Panel through the completion by the Head of Department of the form Proposal for the Extension of an External Examiner's Appointment. The Head of Department should state the grounds for the extension, the new date of expiry of the appointment and the reasons why it is impossible or inappropriate to appoint another External Examiner. The AD(A) must sign the form to confirm their satisfaction with the proposed extension, before sending it to the Administrator in Academic Standards, Quality and Partnerships, DSAA.
- 2.7.4. If the Nominations Panel supports the proposal, ASQP shall send the Examiner a new letter of appointment, confirming the revised appointment dates, as described above. The External Examiner shall be required to sign and return a copy of a new agreement to signify acceptance of the extended appointment and the terms and conditions outlined in it. This copy shall be retained in ASQP, DSAA throughout the term of the External Examiner's appointment.
- 2.7.5. If the extension is not granted, the Head of Department will write to inform the Examiner stating the reasons for the decision.

2.8. Variation of appointment

- 2.8.1. External Examiners are provided at appointment with a list of units for which they will be responsible during their term of office (see paragraph 2.4.4). Any major change to the portfolio of units covered by an External Examiner will require the approval of the Nominations Panel. Major changes are defined as those that involve one or more of the following:
- a) a change to the level of units for which the External Examiner is responsible (i.e. from undergraduate to postgraduate or *vice versa*);
 - b) a change to the subject area of the units for which the External Examiner is responsible;
 - c) the addition or removal, in one academic year, of more than four units from the External Examiner's portfolio;
 - d) the addition of responsibilities for a Credit Bearing Short Course (see section 5).
- 2.8.2. Variations of an External Examiner's duties are considered by the External Examiner Nominations Panel through the completion by the Head of Department of the form Proposal for the Variation of an External Examiner's Appointment. The Head of Department should state the grounds for the variation and provide a revised list of the units to be covered by the External Examiner. The AD(A) must sign the form to confirm their satisfaction with the proposed extension, before sending it to the Administrator in ASQP, DSAA.

2.8.3. If the Nominations Panel supports the proposal, ASQP shall send the Examiner a letter confirming the change of duties, including a revised list of units for the External Examiner's records.

2.8.4. If the variation is not approved, the Head of Department will write to inform the Examiner stating the reasons for the decision.

2.9. Criteria for appointment

2.9.1. All External Examiners are appointed as Subject External Examiners. The appointment process defined below is solely for that purpose and not for the role of Award External Examiner who are appointed as the result of a nomination by the Head of Department from the pool of Subject External Examiners within the department or subject area.

2.9.2. External Examiners shall be appointed only if they can show appropriate evidence of the following:

- a) knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality;
- b) competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study or units;
- c) relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate;
- d) competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures;
- e) 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;
- f) familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed;
- g) fluency in English, and where programmes are delivered and assessed in languages other than English, 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);
- h) meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies;
- i) awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula;
- j) competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

2.9.3. There will also be areas that may result in a conflict of interest. Examiners will not be appointed if any of the following apply:

- a) they are a member of a governing body or committee of the University of Portsmouth or one of its collaborative partners, or a current employee of the University of Portsmouth or one of its collaborative partners;
- b) they have a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme of study;
- c) they are required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study;
- d) they are, or know they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study;
- e) they are 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(s) or units in question;
- f) they are former staff or students of the institution unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the External Examiner have completed their programme(s);
- g) they have previously been an appointed External Examiner for a taught course at the University of Portsmouth, unless at least five years has elapsed since the completion of this previous appointment;
- h) they already hold more than one substantial External Examiner role, as External Examiners should normally hold no more than two External Examiner appointments for taught programmes/modules at any one time;
- i) there is a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another institution;
- j) that their appointment would constitute the succession of an External Examiner by a colleague from the Examiner's home department and institution;
- k) that their appointment would constitute the appointment of more than one External Examiner from the same department of the same institution.

2.9.4. The External Examiner Nominations Panel may on occasion recommend the appointment of a proposed Examiner where the department has an existing Examiner from the same department of the same institution. Such a recommendation will only be accepted where the home department is large with relatively autonomous 'discipline areas' within them, and that the individuals concerned work in different 'disciplines'.

2.9.5. External Examiners drawn from business, industry or the professions make a significant contribution to external examining across a range of disciplines. If any situation arises where the criteria set out in section 2.8 cannot be met in full, then the department will seek to appoint the Examiner as part of an examining team.

2.9.6. Award External Examiners are nominated from the Subject Examiners for units that contribute to one or more of the awards to be recommended by the Board of Examiners. It follows, therefore, that the criteria for Award External Examiners are identical to those for Subject Examiners.

2.10. Resolution of a conflict of interest

2.10.1. The appointment process is designed to ensure that no potential conflicts of interest exist and that any matters arising are resolved prior to an appointment being made. It is acknowledged that at times such a conflict might arise during the appointment; it is incumbent upon the External Examiner to declare any potential conflict of interest at the earliest possible opportunity to the Head of Department. The issue will then be raised with the AD(A) who will undertake an investigation and report the findings to the Academic Registrar. If such a conflict of interest is found to exist, and a resolution cannot be found, then the University will terminate the duties of the External Examiner.

2.11. Scales and methods of remuneration

2.11.1. Subject External Examiners will be paid normally according to one of two possible fee structures:

- a) a flat fee with a maximum responsibility of no more than 360 credits at undergraduate or postgraduate level, or a combination of both levels; or
- b) a lower flat fee with a maximum responsibility of no more than 180 credits at undergraduate or postgraduate level, or a combination of both levels.

Details of the fee currently payable under each structure is available from www.port.ac.uk/externalexaminers . These structures apply to all provision including most UK-based collaborative provision.

2.11.2. Award External Examiners are appointed to be members of Boards of Examiners to report on key quality assurance aspects. A flat rate fee is paid to External Examiners who are appointed to the Award role in each academic year.

2.11.3. External Examiners who are appointed to cover one or more Credit Bearing Short Course will be paid an additional flat rate fee.

2.11.4. In addition to the remuneration detailed above, External Examiners will be reimbursed for any reasonable expenses incurred in connection with their duties. Such expenses may be incurred for travel, subsistence, accommodation, postage, electronic communication or any other purpose agreed by the budget holder and which accords with the University's Financial Regulations.

2.11.5. Expenses should be claimed as and when they are incurred. The Examiner's fee is only paid on receipt of the External Examiner's report, and must be claimed using Form SAL6, the current version of which should be downloaded each year from the University of Portsmouth website.

3. THE ROLE, RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUBJECT EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

3.1. The role and responsibilities of Subject External Examiners

3.1.1. External Examiners are appointed as Subject External Examiners, with responsibility for a defined list of units, to provide the University with impartial and independent advice, as well as informative comment on the institution's standards and on student achievement in relation to those standards. The role is achieved by sampling and commenting upon the evidence of the operation of those procedures and processes in the expectation that such comment will be acted upon.

3.1.2. Subject External Examiners are appointed to cognate groups of units and shall attend the Unit Assessment Board, having already sampled students' assessed work. Unit Assessment Boards are normally held in June and dates will be communicated at departmental level. Subject External Examiners who are exceptionally unable to attend a meeting shall send a letter indicating the reason for absence, stating the extent of their involvement with the units during the year in question.

3.1.3. Subject External Examiners act as consultants and advisers to Unit Assessment Boards.

3.1.4. Subject External Examiners should satisfy themselves that:

- students are assessed fairly;
- learning outcomes of the units are appropriately demonstrated;
- standards are maintained at a unit level which is comparable with such assessments undertaken elsewhere in the United Kingdom with which the External Examiner is familiar.

3.1.5. Where major anomalies or other causes for concern have been identified, the Subject External Examiner shall be alerted and, in consultation with the Chair, may recommend a solution to the Unit Assessment Board.

- 3.1.6. Once the Unit Assessment Board has agreed the marks, with or without moderation, the Subject External Examiner shall sign the mark sheet to endorse the outcomes of assessment. Once the mark sheet has been signed marks may not be altered other than in exceptional circumstances. Any such exceptional changes will be reported as actions taken under Chair's action to the next Unit Assessment Board. The endorsement of the Subject External Examiner on the final mark sheet agreed by the Unit Assessment Board signifies general satisfaction with the fairness, effectiveness and adequacy of the relationship between the assessment strategy and the learning outcomes of the unit, but does not necessarily indicate agreement with every individual confirmed mark. An Examiner who declines to endorse the mark sheet shall in all instances report to the Vice-Chancellor, as described in paragraph 3.2.11 below.
- 3.1.7. The Subject External Examiner shall consider the outcomes of assessment and their relationship to the assessment strategies and marking criteria outlined to them by the course team, and report on the effectiveness of the assessment process in this context. The report must be submitted to ASQP, DSAA on the University's report form within four weeks of the Unit Assessment Board, as specified under guidelines approved by Academic Council.
- 3.1.8. External Examiners are not permitted to conduct *viva voce* examinations to determine an individual student's marks. There are occasions where courses with professional accreditation may require examiners external to the University. If these are required then they do not act as External Examiners as defined here and an additional Examiner is required to take on the role as defined in this Policy.

3.2. The rights of Subject External Examiners

- 3.2.1. Subject External Examiners will be notified on appointment of the units for which they will have responsibility. It is the responsibility of the Head of Department to notify Subject External Examiners and the AD(A) of any subsequent changes to the portfolio of units to be covered as well as their content.
- 3.2.2. Subject External Examiners will be notified on appointment of the total remuneration for the examining duties.
- 3.2.3. Before the commencement of the delivery of the unit, Subject External Examiners shall receive, in respect of each unit for which they have responsibility, the unit assessment strategy and its relationship to the learning outcomes of the unit(s), together with a statement of the way in which the elements of assessment will meet the strategy. This is normally achieved by provision of the unit description which is made available online.
- 3.2.4. The Subject External Examiner may comment on these but may not require immediate changes with effect for the current delivery of the unit.

- 3.2.5. By the end of year, or as soon as possible afterwards, and before the Unit Assessment Board meets, Subject External Examiners shall receive the elements of assessment (i.e. each assessment item such as a coursework assignment or an examination paper) with their respective marking schemes and an adequate sample of the students' work. The size of the sample is to be decided by negotiation, but as a rule of thumb it is suggested that not less than 20% of the total assessment for a unit is seen by the External Examiner. This sample would normally contain within it samples of work that have been mark verified. The sample should contain the full range of marks allocated for that artefact. A cover sheet, on which the Subject External Examiner can make any comments on that particular assessment element, will accompany the sample of student work. This form will also contain a section that offers the opportunity to pass relevant comments relating to the unit to the Award Examiner.
- 3.2.6. The Subject External Examiner has the right to access any work submitted for assessment of any unit for which she or he has examining responsibility. This procedure is intended to enable the Subject External Examiner to comment to the Unit Assessment Board and subsequently report to Academic Council on the appropriateness of the assessment and the standard of the students' performance. It is, however, explicit in the principles approved by Academic Council that the External Examiner shall not act as an additional marker nor require the alteration of individual marks.
- 3.2.7. The University does not require any further consultation with Subject External Examiners on the nature and content of assessments, but if the department and the Examiner wish to adopt a practice of approval of elements of assessment before they are undertaken by students, it should be subject to the following proviso:
- only the final version of an assessment, agreed by the unit team and free of drafting errors, should be sent;
 - it should be accompanied by an explanation of how, and for what, marks will be assigned;
 - the Subject External Examiner should not be expected to propose changes, but may comment on the standard and suitability of the assessment paying particular emphasis to the place of the assessment in the unit assessment strategy;
 - in consulting with Subject External Examiners on the nature and content of assessments, examinations and coursework must be treated in the same way.
- 3.2.8. The Unit Assessment Board may not apply moderation to the range of marks within a unit, nor may it set pass or other criteria at levels other than those specified in the approved unit descriptor, without the explicit agreement of the Subject External Examiner.
- 3.2.9. Subject External Examiners may meet and undertake discussions with students, from time to time, in order to identify examples of good practice and potential areas for development.
- 3.2.10. Subject External Examiners may expect that any comments made in their reports will be considered by appropriate staff of the University and may expect to receive feedback on their reports. This feedback will be communicated via the Head of Department.

3.2.11. Subject External Examiners have the right, exceptionally, to report in confidence, directly to the Vice-Chancellor, as Chair of Academic Council, if they are concerned about matters of particular importance relating to assessment, standards or procedures. In the unlikely event of the matter not being resolved at University level, the Subject External Examiners have the right to invoke QAA's concerns scheme or inform the relevant professional, statutory and regulatory bodies.

3.3. Induction programme

3.3.1. On first appointment, External Examiners will be invited to attend an induction programme. As well as clarifying the role of External Examiners in the University's system, the induction programme will brief Examiners on assessment strategies and criteria for marking. On appointment External Examiners will be notified of the next induction event. Attendance at the induction programme is not compulsory but is strongly encouraged. Online training resources will also be made available to all Examiners.

3.3.2. External Examiners will receive remuneration for their attendance, plus reasonable travel and subsistence expenses, for attendance at the Induction Day. This will be paid through the normal procedures from departmental budgets and detailed at www.port.ac.uk/externalexaminers.

3.3.3. Subject External Examiners with limited examining experience will be mentored during their first year in post. Mentoring may take on a variety of forms but may include mentoring by a senior member of the course team or from an existing External Examiner appointed to other areas within the same or closely related department.

4. THE ROLE, RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF AWARD EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

4.1. The role and responsibilities of Award External Examiners

4.1.1. Award External Examiners shall be members of a Board of Examiners and shall participate in its meetings. Award External Examiners who are exceptionally unable to attend a meeting shall send a letter indicating the reason for absence, stating the extent of their involvement with the programmes during the year in question.

4.1.2. Award External Examiners shall, as members of the Board of Examiners, consider the array of each student's marks as confirmed by the Unit Assessment Boards.

- 4.1.3. Award External Examiners shall, as members of the Board of Examiners, make recommendations on progression and award, having taken due account of the student's overall performance, and the University Regulations.
- 4.1.4. Award External Examiners shall, as members of the Board of Examiners, ensure that the standard of the award is maintained at a level comparable with that of similar awards elsewhere in the United Kingdom of which they have experience.
- 4.1.5. Award External Examiners shall submit an annual report within four weeks of the main meeting of the Board of Examiners, to ASQP, DSAA on the University's *pro forma* report form.
- 4.1.6. Award External Examiners shall contribute to discussion with University staff of the overall curriculum and assessment strategy for the programme(s) within the remit of the Board of Examiners.
- 4.1.7. External Examiners are not permitted to conduct *viva voce* examinations to determine an individual student's marks or to make recommendations to Academic Council for awards or particular classifications of awards.
- 4.1.8. Award External Examiners shall sign the Conferment List (UP6) to endorse the outcomes of assessment they have been appointed to scrutinize. The endorsement of the Award External Examiner(s) on the Conferment List agreed by the Board of Examiners relates to:
- student profiles;
 - issues of fairness and equity to students in the application of regulations and procedures;
 - the processes of assessment and their relationship to the strategies and criteria outlined to them by the course team.
- The endorsement does not relate to the marks of, or classification of awards to, individual students. An Examiner who declines to endorse the Conferment List shall in all instances report to the Vice-Chancellor, as described in paragraph 4.2.8 below.
- 4.1.9. Award External Examiners shall participate as required in any review of decisions taken about the assessment of an individual student's work to which they have been party.

4.2. The rights of Award External Examiners

- 4.2.1. Award External Examiners will be notified in writing of the awards for which they will have responsibility. Any subsequent changes in those awards will be notified by ASQP, DSAA.
- 4.2.2. Award External Examiners will be notified, on appointment or when nominated, of the remuneration for award examining duties (see paragraph 2.10).
- 4.2.3. On appointment or when nominated, Award External Examiners shall receive, in respect of each programme for which they have responsibility, the Programme Specification, the Programme Level Assessment Matrix and any programme specific regulations. It shall be the responsibility of the Head of Department to provide this information to the Award External Examiners.

- 4.2.4. As soon as practicable after Unit Assessment Boards, and before the Board of Examiners meets, Award External Examiners shall receive the cover sheets on which the Subject External Examiners have made any comments on particular assessment elements. The Award External has the right to view any student work if they wish. This procedure should enable the Award External Examiner to comment to the Board of Examiners and subsequently report to Academic Council on the appropriateness of the assessment and the standard of the students' performance in the programme.
- 4.2.5. The Award External Examiner has the right to access any or all assessed work and therefore to specify the size and scope of the sample. The Award Examiner may not, however, amend any individual student's marks or moderate marks that have been confirmed by the Unit Assessment Board.
- 4.2.6. Award External Examiners are encouraged to meet and undertake discussions with students, from time to time, in order to identify examples of good practice and potential areas for development and to form an opinion of the effectiveness of the programme as a whole.
- 4.2.7. Award External Examiners may expect that any comments made in their report will be considered by appropriate staff of the University and may expect to receive feedback on their report. This feedback will be communicated via the Head of Department.
- 4.2.8. Award External Examiners have the right, exceptionally, to report in confidence, directly to the Vice-Chancellor as Chair of Academic Council, if they are concerned about matters of particular importance relating to assessment, standards or procedures of the programmes within their remit. In the unlikely event of the matter not being resolved at University level, the Award External Examiners have the right to invoke QAA's concerns scheme or inform the relevant professional, statutory and regulatory bodies.

5. CREDIT BEARING SHORT COURSES

- 5.1. A Credit Bearing Short Course (CBSC) is a discrete taught course carrying 55 or less academic credits at level 4 to level 7 of the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and which does not in itself lead to a named award (for example a Bachelor or Master's degree).
- 5.2. CBSCs will normally have an External Examiner appointed before they are delivered to students. This External Examiner will usually be the Subject External Examiner for the equivalent unit, or for a related subject area where the CBSC is not based on a pre-existing unit.
- 5.3. Consideration should be given to the total workload, including the pre-existing subject and, if appropriate, award roles, when appointing an External Examiner to take responsibility for one or more CBSCs.

- 5.4. External Examiners will be appointed to cover CBSCs using the procedure for the Variation of an External Examiner's Appointment (see section 2.8). In the rare event that no existing External Examiner is able to cover a particular CBSC and a new External Examiner appointment is needed, this appointment will be proposed and approved under the standard appointment procedure laid out in section 2.3 of these Regulations.

6. REPORTING

- 6.1. External Examiners' reports are an important component of the University's Quality Assurance processes. The aspects that the University requires its Examiners to comment upon are specified in the *pro forma* report form.
- 6.2. External Examiners are required to submit their report within four weeks of the relevant Board. The report, using the *pro forma* report form, is to be returned to the Academic Registrar, who is the Secretary of Academic Council. If a professional, statutory or regulatory body also requires a report from an External Examiner appointed by the University, it will be the responsibility of the External Examiner to provide it in the form and with the coverage specified by that body.
- 6.3. External Examiners appointed to scrutinise one or more Credit Bearing Short Course will be required to complete and submit an additional, specialised *pro forma* report in relation to these courses.
- 6.4. Because their reports will be considered at meetings which include the Board of Studies, membership of which includes student representation, Examiners are requested to maintain the confidentiality of Unit Assessment Boards and Boards of Examiners in their reports. If it is necessary to refer to individual cases or decisions, Examiners are requested to do so in a confidential addendum to the report. Examiners should not include in their reports references to identifiable individuals.

External Examiner reports will be made available to students via a dedicated VLE site, and to members of the public on request, via an online request form. For units and programmes run by collaborative partners, these reports may be made available via the partner's VLE. Reports and departmental response will be discussed at the Board of Studies.

- 6.5. Receipt of the report is acknowledged and the AD(A) and the Head of Department are alerted via the University Electronic Document Management System. The AD(A) has responsibility to ensure that any matters identified for attention are addressed by the appropriate person and/or in the appropriate forum. The AD(A) will confirm with the External Examiner any matter that they wish to raise and at what level they would expect a response whether at University or departmental level.
- 6.6. Subject External Examiners and Award External Examiners reports will receive a response by way of a standard *pro forma* from the Head of Department in which the units or programme reside, with a copy to sent to the responsible AD(A). The response will specify:
- the mechanisms whereby issues raised have been considered and addressed;
 - actions taken or to be taken as a result of the report with a timescale for implementation;

- c) clear reasons for not accepting any recommendations or suggestions.

If an Award Examiner raises issues relating to a unit that resides in another department, the Heads of Department will liaise to address those issues. The Head of Department in which the programme resides will respond to the Award Examiner and the Head of Department in which the unit resides will report the comments and outcome to the Annual Subject Review.

- 6.7. Consideration of External Examiners' reports will be undertaken in the Board(s) of Studies for the award(s) where discussion will be informed by the full context of the delivery of units in the programme as a whole. The Head of Department will report the outcome of that consideration to the Subject External Examiner and Award External Examiner as appropriate. In order to close the 'quality loop', External Examiners are asked to confirm that issues raised in their previous annual report have been addressed in a formal response from the Head of Department.
- 6.8. The AD(A) will compile a brief summary of points of substance arising from External Examiner reports with particular attention to any matters of University-wide relevance. These summaries will be considered on an annual basis by Quality Assurance Committee and used by the Chair of Quality Assurance Committee to inform the annual report to Academic Council. A summary of faculty-wide issues with relevance to Learning and Teaching will be reported on an annual basis to the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee. Departmental and course related issues will be discussed as part of the Departmental Annual Review Process. Issues relating to academic regulations are forwarded directly to the Academic Registrar whilst any concerns about academic standards are forwarded directly to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor upon receipt by the AD(A). Any issues relating to collaborative provision will be reported to the Principal Academic Standards and Quality Officer (Regulations and Policy). All issues are logged in the University's Electronic Document Management System and ASQP, DSAA informed as part of this process.
- 6.9. The University may terminate its agreement with an External Examiner who fails to submit a report that is adequate in either form or coverage (see section 6.2).

7. TERMINATION OF EXTERNAL EXAMINER DUTIES

- 7.1. An External Examiner who wishes, for any reason, to terminate their duties as an External Examiner with the University of Portsmouth, shall write to the Academic Registrar, as secretary of Academic Council, stating the effective date of termination, and the reasons for it.
- 7.2. If an External Examiner is not meeting the responsibilities specified, the University will take action that may lead to the termination of the External Examiner's duties. In such cases, it is expected that the reasons for the proposed termination will have been discussed with the External Examiner before such a decision is reached. It is the responsibility of the Head of Department to write to the External Examiner stating the effective date of termination, and the reasons for it. This letter should be copied to ASQP, DSAA for inclusion in the Examiner's file.

- 7.3. If the units or award(s) for which the Examiner was appointed should be closed so that the External Examiner is no longer required, it may become appropriate to terminate the agreement with the External Examiner before the agreed end date. In such cases, the Head of Department should ensure that the External Examiner is notified in advance of this decision, and that written confirmation of the effective end date of the agreement is sent to the External Examiner. This letter should be copied to ASQP, DSAA for inclusion in the External Examiner's file.
- 7.4. The University will pay any remuneration due for the academic year in which such notice of termination is received or issued and reimburse any reasonable expenses incurred by the External Examiner.

APPENDIX 1

Guidelines:

on appointments where professional bodies have particular requirements that prompt arrangements that are exceptional by reference to the document 'External Examiners Regulations and Procedures'

1. The University normally appoints its own External Examiners who act exclusively for the University as part of the assessment process for the units and/or courses to which the External Examiner is assigned.
 - a) On occasion, as a particular requirement of accreditation by a professional body the University may agree to the professional body appointing an External Examiner who will then act in accordance with the University's published regulations and procedures as well as having additional reporting accountability to the professional body.
2. The University does not expect External Examiners to act as markers, either first markers or second markers.
 - a) On occasion External Examiners may be required by the professional body to participate in particular assessments.
 - b) The University may agree to this involvement in one of the following ways:
 - a) Either by agreeing that the External Examiner may carry out the process of sampling marks and verifying appropriate standards for subsequent inclusion in their report to the University through being present at particular forms of assessment, typically interview and review of portfolios, although accepting that the final mark is agreed by consensus and confirmed at the Unit Assessment Board;
 - b) Or where the terms of the professional accreditation explicitly require the External Examiner to directly evaluate and mark any element of student performance, that an internal marker is also involved in the process and that a separate External Examiner be involved at Unit Assessment Boards to carry out the independent confirmation of standards and equitable processes through the sampling and reporting mechanisms defined in the document 'External Examiners Regulations and Procedures' as published by the University of Portsmouth.
3. In all such cases that meet the potential criteria for variation as defined at 1 a) or 2 a) above, the actual protocol for the detailed operation of the varied arrangements should be agreed by QAC and included in the signed agreement between the University and the External Examiner on appointment.