

EXTERNAL EXAMINERS REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES

September 2023

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Summary

What is this document about?

This document details the criteria and appointment process of External Examiners and EPA External Assessors and their roles and responsibilities in relation to undergraduate and postgraduate taught modules and courses. It does not include Higher Degrees by Research and Publication or Professional Doctorates.

Who is this for?

This document will be of most interest to existing and proposed External Examiners and EPA External Assessors, University staff, students and applicants, collaborative partners and Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). It will also be of interest to the [Office for Students](#), the [Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education \(QAA\)](#) and the wider public.

How does the University check this is followed?

The University has various formal ways it checks that the External Examiner Regulations are being followed and are working effectively. This includes scrutiny of appointment proposals by senior staff, providing support to External Examiners and EPA External Assessors, and receiving an annual report from External Examiners and EPA External Assessors. The report includes how well the University enabled them to act in their role.

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 document please contact Academic Registry at academicregistry@port.ac.uk. If you are internal to the University please contact your Faculty Associate Dean (Academic).

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

1.1.1 This document details the purpose, appointment process and the roles and responsibilities of External Examiners, for undergraduate and postgraduate taught modules and courses. This document is underpinned by the principles set out in the Office for Students (OfS) External Examining Principles and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: External Expertise. These regulations do not apply to Higher Degrees by Research and Publication or Professional Doctorates which have their own regulations.

1.2 Purpose of External Examiners

1.2.1 External Examiners are constructive critical peers and have a critical role in ensuring the level of academic standards at the University of Portsmouth are comparable to those at other higher education institutions. They review processes for assessment and examination to ensure they have been fairly conducted and treat students equitably. External Examiners provide independent and impartial advice and identify good practice, innovation and areas for enhancement in learning, teaching and assessment.

1.2.2 The critical role undertaken by External Examiners ensures that students, applicants, staff, collaborative partners, Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) and the wider public can be confident that the degrees being awarded by the University of Portsmouth are a reliable and consistent reflection of graduate attainment.

1.2.3 All External Examiners are appointed as Subject External Examiners responsible for a number of modules. Some External Examiners will also be appointed as Award External Examiners, and as well as modules, will be responsible for a number of courses.

1.2.4 There may be occasions where courses with accreditation by PSRBs may require examiners that are external to the University. If these are required then they would not act as External Examiners as defined in this document, and those courses must also have a University approved External Examiner.

1.3 Assessment and Examination Boards

- 1.3.1 The University of Portsmouth operates a two-tier system of assessment and examination boards to agree assessment outcomes in accordance with the [Examination and Assessment Regulations](#) . These are Module Assessment Boards (MABs) and Boards of Examiners (BoEs).
- 1.3.2 Module Assessment Boards (MABs) consider modules grouped into cognate areas and confirms marks at module level, and Subject External Examiners are required to attend the (MAB). The Boards of Examiners considers named awards, similarly grouped into cognate areas, and confirms awards and decisions on progression. Award External Examiners are required to attend the (BoE).

2 APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

2.1 General

- 2.1.1 All External Examiners are appointed by, and are accountable to, Academic Council by delegation to the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) and are formally approved by the External Examiner Approval Panel. The External Examiner Approval Panel comprises a Head of School, a Faculty Associate Dean (Academic) from separate Faculties, and is Chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).
- 2.1.2 Only External Examiners approved by the External Examiner Approval Panel in accordance with these regulations can carry out the duties of External Examiners. External Examiners cannot undertake any work for the University until they are formally approved by the External Examiner Approval Panel and their Right to Work in the UK as required by the [UK's Home Office Visa and Immigration](#) has been confirmed.
- 2.1.3 External Examiners are appointed prior to the start of the academic year. The period of appointment for standard provision is four academic years, which are from 1 September to 30 September for undergraduate provision and 1 January to 31 January for postgraduate provision. The start and end dates may differ depending on the start of the courses who have an approved course exemption. In exceptional circumstances the period of appointment may be extended for a further academic year therefore five years in total.
- 2.1.4 Award External Examiners are appointed prior to the start of the academic year from existing External Examiners, on an annual basis and are for one academic year. The same Award External Examiner can be appointed each academic year.

- 2.1.5 The name of each Subject External Examiners is on the Module Specification and Award External Examiners should be identified on the relevant course Moodle (Virtual Learning Environment) area.

2.2 Identifying a proposed External Examiner

- 2.2.1 The responsibility for ensuring External Examiners are appointed lies with the Head of School. As the appointment process may take a number of months from identifying a proposed External Examiner to formal approval, it is important to begin the process well in advance of the expected commencement of the appointment.
- 2.2.2 The Head of School should liaise with the Module Coordinators and Course Leader to identify a suitable External Examiner. It is important to ensure that the proposed External Examiner has a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities, policies and procedures relating to External Examiners, and the scale of remuneration. It is therefore advisable to provide a copy of this document to the proposed External Examiner.
- 2.2.3 During initial contact it should be ascertained that the proposed External Examiner meets the criteria for appointment and that there are no conflicts of interest. It must also be made clear no appointment can be made, and no work can be undertaken by the proposed External Examiner without the formal approval of the External Examiner Approval Panel and confirmation of the Right to Work in the UK.

2.3 Criteria for appointment

- 2.3.1 All proposed External Examiners must meet the following criteria:
- 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 modules and courses;
 - c. relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive professional and 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 standards to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed;
 - g. fluency in English, and where modules and courses are delivered and assessed in languages other than English, fluency in the relevant language, unless other secure arrangements are in place to ensure that External Examiners are provided with the information to make their judgements;

- h. awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula;
 - i. competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.
 - j. meeting applicable criteria set by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs);
- 2.3.2 External Examiners from business or professional industry make a significant contribution to external examining, and for those it is recognised not all the criteria stated above will be met.
- 2.3.3 In exceptional circumstances where the criteria for appointment is not met but the Head of School and the Associate Dean (Academic) nonetheless wish to progress with the proposal, they must provide details of the criteria that is not met and the reasons why the proposed External Examiner should be appointed. The School would need to put in place additional mentoring and support arrangements and ensure the External Examiner will be part of a wider School's External Examining team. The Head of School will need to provide details of those arrangements on the proposal form.

2.4 Conflicts of Interest

- 2.4.1 There may be areas that would result in a conflict of interest that would mean the proposed External Examiner would not be appointed if any of the following apply:
- a. they already hold more than one substantial External Examiner role as University of Portsmouth External Examiners will not hold more than two External Examiner appointments including the one at the University of Portsmouth;
 - b. they have previously been appointed as an External Examiner at the University of Portsmouth, unless at least five years has elapsed since the completion of the previous appointment;
 - c. they are former staff or students of the University of Portsmouth unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the proposed External Examiner have completed the course;
 - d. they are a current employee or member of a governing body or committee of the University of Portsmouth or one of its collaborative partners;
 - e. they have a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with University of Portsmouth staff or students involved with the course;
 - f. they are required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the course;
 - g. they are, or know they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the course;
 - h. they are significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the course;
 - i. there is a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate courses at the proposed External Examiners' institution;
 - j. that their appointment would constitute the succession of an External Examiner by a colleague from the proposed External Examiner's home School;
 - k. that their appointment would constitute the appointment of more than one External Examiner from the same School as the proposed External Examiner.

- 2.4.2 In relation to (k), under exceptional circumstances the Head of School can still submit a proposal. The proposal would only be approved if the University's academic School is large, has relatively autonomous subject areas, and that the individuals concerned will work in different subjects.
- 2.4.3 It is the responsibility of the proposed External Examiner to declare any potential conflicts of interest on the proposal form. In exceptional circumstances that the Head of School and the Associate Dean (Academic) nonetheless wish to progress with the proposal, they must provide details of the conflict and the reason why the proposed External Examiner should be appointed.
- 2.4.4 If any conflicts of interest arise during an External Examiner's appointment, it is their responsibility to inform the Head of School as soon as possible. The Head of School will raise this with the Associate Dean (Academic) who will undertake an investigation and report the findings to the Academic Registrar to determine if the appointment is able to continue. If a resolution cannot be found then the University will terminate the External Examiner's appointment.

2.5 Remuneration

- 2.5.1 The annual fee for Subject External Examiners is determined by the total number of credits of the modules they will be responsible for, and will be either:
- For a maximum responsibility of 180 credits the annual fee is £200
 - For a maximum responsibility of 360 credits the annual fee is £400
- 2.5.2 If External Examiners with a maximum responsibility of 180 credits will have an exceptional high workload the department can propose a fee of £400.
- 2.5.3 In exceptional circumstances the department can propose a fee more than £400. The proposal must be approved by the External Examiner Approval Panel in advance of any additional work undertaken by the External Examiner. Exceptional circumstances include, but are not limited to:
- the responsibility of more than 360 credits;
 - different subject areas;
 - a requirement to attend more than one set of boards in one academic year;
 - a requirement to attend boards or meetings held at an overseas collaborative partner's location.
- 2.5.4 An additional annual fee of £100 will be paid to Subject External Examiners who are also appointed as Award External Examiners who are responsible for courses.
- 2.5.5 An additional annual fee of £100 will be paid to those Subject External Examiners who are also responsible for Credit Bearing Short Courses (CBSC).

- 2.5.6 In addition to the annual fee External Examiners will be reimbursed for any reasonable expenses incurred such as travel, accommodation, subsistence or any other purpose agreed by the Head of School which accords with the University's Financial Regulations.
- 2.5.7 All fees and expenses are paid annually and only after receipt of the External Examiner annual report. To enable payment to be made the External Examiner must complete the SAL6 External Examiner Engagement form and return it to the School. The form is available to be downloaded on the [External Examiner webpage](#).

2.6 Appointment process

- 2.6.1 The School will complete the Proposal for the Appointment of an External Examiner form and send to the proposed External Examiner to add their information, sign and return with a copy of their Curriculum Vitae and passport. The passport is needed to confirm identification and the status of the Right to Work in the UK, as required by the [UK's Home Office Visa and Immigration](#).
- 2.6.2 The Head of School will review the completed proposal form, sign if the criteria are met, or detail a case for exceptional approval if the criteria are not met, and send to the Associate Dean (Academic) to review and sign to support the proposal, and if relevant, the case for exceptional approval if the criteria is not met. The proposal documentation will be sent to Academic Registry who will submit the proposal form and the Curriculum Vitae to the External Examiner Approval Panel.
- 2.6.3 If the External Examiner Approval Panel approves the appointment the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) will sign the proposal form. If the proposal is not approved the External Examiner Approval Panel will provide the reason for their decision which Academic Registry will communicate to the School.

2.7 Confirmation of appointment

- 2.7.1 When the proposal is approved Academic Registry will add the details to the student records system (SITS). A Confirmation of Appointment email with details of the appointment dates, the annual fee and the list of modules will be sent to the External Examiner and copied to the School. The External Examiner is required to email confirmation they agree to undertake the role of an External Examiner in accordance with these regulations.
- 2.7.2 The completed proposal documentation will be stored securely on eRecords, the University's document management system, in accordance with the [Retention Policy](#).
- 2.7.3 The School will provide the External Examiner with account details to access Moodle, the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) platform, which is used by the School to provide documentation and information on the modules and courses.

2.8 Appointment of Award External Examiners

- 2.8.1 The Head of School is responsible for appointing Award External Examiners for each taught undergraduate and postgraduate course, on an annual basis, from existing External Examiners. It is advisable the Head of School follow the same process as detailed in Section 2.2 Identifying a proposed External Examiner. The proposed Award External Examiner must have sufficient subject expertise to form a judgment as to the standards of the awards presented at the Board of Examiners (BoE).
- 2.8.2 When the Head of School has identified the Award External Examiner the School will add the details to the student records system (SITS). A Confirmation of Award Appointment email will be sent to the Award External Examiner with a list of courses they will be responsible for in that academic year and the additional annual fee. The Award External Examiner role is for one academic year, although they can be the Award External Examiner for the duration of their appointment. The School must add the information for each academic year to the student records system (SITS).
- 2.8.3 The University recognises that in the case of courses accredited by a Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) it may be necessary to appoint additional Award External Examiners to ensure the standards of the awards as a whole accord with the requirements of the PSRB.
- 2.8.4 The criteria for the appointment of Award External Examiners for courses accredited by PSRB should also align as closely as possible with the University's criteria. If the criteria of the PSRB is substantially different from the University's criteria, it shall be the responsibility of the Head of School and Associate Dean (Academic) to ensure that a second External Examiner is appointed for modules that contribute to one or more of the courses.

3 SUBJECT EXTERNAL EXAMINERS ROLE, RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS

3.1 The role of Subject External Examiners

- 3.1.1 All External Examiners are appointed as Subject External Examiners with a defined list of modules. The role is to be a constructive critical peer by providing independent and impartial advice and informative comments relating to academic standards and students' achievement in relation to those standards.

3.2 The responsibilities of Subject External Examiners

- 3.2.1 Subject External Examiners are responsible for a number of modules, in terms of confirming assessment processes are appropriate fair and consistent, student performance is comparable with other institutions, and the curriculum is relevant and coherent. Subject External Examiners are required to sample assessed work, attend Module Assessment Boards (MABs) and submit annual reports.
- 3.2.2 The School will provide the Subject External Examiner with the link to the Course and Module Catalogue detailing the assessment activities and learning outcomes, the elements of assessment and their marking schemes. The Subject External Examiner may comment on these but may not require immediate changes with effect for the current delivery of the module.

A sample of the students' assessed work will be provided to the Subject External Examiner, which should be no less than 20% of the total assessment for the module, although this can be agreed with the School. The sample should contain work that has been verified and spans the full range of marks. A cover sheet will also be sent to which the Subject External Examiner can add comments to on particular assessment elements.

- 3.2.3 The Subject External Examiner should satisfy themselves that students are assessed fairly, learning outcomes are appropriately demonstrated and standards are maintained at a module level which is comparable with those at other institutions.
- 3.2.4 In accordance to the [Examination and Assessment Regulations](#) Subject External Examiners are required to attend the Module Assessment Boards (MABs) and act as consultants and advisers to the MABs. For undergraduate provision MABs are held in the summer and for postgraduate provision MABs are held in the autumn, and the School will confirm the dates. MABs are usually held once a year, although can be held more depending on the structure of the course.

- 3.2.5 The Subject External Examiner will consider the outcomes of assessment and their relationship to the assessment strategies and marking criteria, and report to the MAB on the effectiveness of the assessment process in that context.
- 3.2.6 Once the MAB have agreed the marks they cannot be altered other than in exceptional circumstances. Any such exceptional changes will be reported as taken under Chair's actions to the next MAB. The agreement of the Subject External Examiner of the marks presented at the MAB signifies general satisfaction with the fairness, effectiveness and adequacy of the relationship between the assessment strategy and the learning outcomes of the modules. It does not necessarily indicate agreement with every individual confirmed mark. If the Subject External Examiner declines to endorse the marks the Chair of the MAB will report this to the Vice-Chancellor.
- 3.2.7 The MAB may not apply moderation to the range of marks within a module, nor may it set pass or other criteria at levels other than those already approved, without the agreement of the Subject External Examiner. Subject External Examiners are not permitted to conduct viva voce examinations to determine an individual student's mark.
- 3.2.8 If any major anomalies or other causes for concern have been identified, the External Examiner shall be informed and in consultation with the Chair may recommend a solution to the MAB.
- 3.2.9 Under exceptional circumstances if a Subject External Examiner is unable to attend the MAB they must make their views known to the MAB before it meets. After the MAB they must write to the Chair of the MAB stating the extent of any involvement with the modules during the year and confirming satisfaction, or otherwise, with the processes of assessment. This shall not be considered to signify agreement with every decision of the MAB.
- 3.2.10 After the MAB, and within four weeks of the last MAB attended in each academic year, the Subject External Examiner is required to submit an annual report. The report is submitted via the Annual Report Form, the link to which is on the [External Examiner](#) webpage. If the Subject External Examiner is also an Award External Examiner and therefore also attends a BoE, only one report is required, again, to be submitted within four weeks of the BoE. Payment of the Subject External Examiner fee (and Award if applicable) and any expenses will not be processed until the annual report is received.

3.3 The rights of Subject External Examiners

- 3.3.1 The Subject External Examiner has the right to see any work submitted for assessment for any module for which they are responsible for. This enables the Subject External Examiner to report to the MAB and via their annual report, on the appropriateness of the assessment and standards of students' performance.
- 3.3.2 The Subject External Examiner has the right to comment on the standard and suitability of the assessment paying particular emphasis to the place of the assessment in the module assessment strategy. The School does not require approval by the Subject External Examiner on the nature and content of assessments, although they can discuss confirm the assessment with the Subject External Examiner before delivery.
- 3.3.3 The Subject External Examiner has the right, and are encouraged, to meet and undertake discussions with students, in order to identify examples of good practice and potential areas for development, and to form an opinion of the effectiveness of the modules.
- 3.3.4 The Subject External Examiner has the right to receive feedback on their annual reports from the Head of School.
- 3.3.5 Under exceptional circumstances regarding concerns relating to assessment standards or procedures, the Subject External Examiner can contact the Vice-Chancellor in confidence. This can be outside of any issues reported via the Annual Report.

4 THE ROLE, RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHT OF AWARD EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

4.1 The role of Award External Examiners

4.1.1 Award External Examiners are appointed from Subject External Examiners with a defined list of courses. The role is the same as Subject External Examiners in so much as being a constructive critical peer by providing independent and impartial advice and informative comments relating to academic standards and students' achievement in relation to those standards.

4.2 The responsibilities of Award External Examiners

4.2.1 Award External Examiners are responsible for a number of courses, and confirm, or not, that the standard of the award is maintained at a level comparable with that of similar awards elsewhere, and the curriculum is relevant and coherent. Award External Examiners are required to attend the Board of Examiners (BoE), in accordance to the Examination and Assessment Regulations and submit annual reports.

4.2.2 The Award External Examiner will be provided with the link to the Course and Module Catalogues and relevant assessment documents for each course they are responsible for.

4.2.3 Award External Examiners and act as consultants and advisers to the BoE. For undergraduate provision BoEs are held in the summer and for postgraduate provision BoEs are held in the autumn, and the School will confirm the dates to the Award External Examiner. BoEs are usually held once a year, although can be held more than once depending on the structure of the course.

4.2.4 As soon as practicable after MABs and before the BoE meets, the Award External Examiner shall receive the Subject External Examiners comments. This enables the Award External Examiner to comment to the BoE and subsequently in their annual report, on the appropriateness of the assessment and the standard of the students' performance in the course.

4.2.5 Award External Examiners shall contribute to the discussion of the overall curriculum and assessment strategy for the course at the BoE, and may be required to review decisions about the assessment of an individual student's work.

- 4.2.6 Award External Examiners shall make recommendations to the BoE on progression and award, having taken due account of the array of each student's marks as confirmed by the MAB, the student's overall performance, and the Examination and Assessment Regulations. The Award Examiner cannot amend any marks that have been confirmed by the MAB.
- 4.2.7 Award External Examiners are not permitted to conduct viva voce examinations to determine an individual student's mark or to make recommendations to Academic Council for awards or particular classifications of awards.
- 4.2.8 Under exceptional circumstances, if an Award External Examiners is unable to attend the BoE, they must as far as possible, make their views known to the BoE before it meets. After the BoE they must write to the Chair of the BoE stating the extent of any involvement with the course during the year and confirming satisfaction, or otherwise, with the processes of assessment. This shall not be considered to signify agreement with every decision of the BoE.
- 4.2.9 After the BoE and within four weeks of the last BoE attended in each academic year, the Award External Examiner is required to submit an annual report. The report is submitted via the Annual Report Form, the link to which is on the External Examiner webpage. As Award External Examiners are also always Subject External Examiners, only one report is required, to cover both modules and courses. Payment of the External Examiner fee and any expenses will not be processed until the annual report is received.

4.3 The rights of Award External Examiners

- 4.3.1 The Award External Examiner has the right to see any work submitted for assessment for any courses for which they are responsible. They have the right, and are encouraged, to meet and undertake discussions with students, in order to identify examples of good practice and potential areas for development and enhancement, and to form an opinion of the effectiveness of the courses.
- 4.3.2 Award External Examiners have the right to receive feedback on their annual reports from the Head of School.
- 4.3.3 Under exceptional circumstances regarding concerns relating to assessment standards or procedures, Award External Examiners can contact the Vice-Chancellor in confidence. This can be outside of any issues reported via the Annual Report.

5 VARIATION OF APPOINTMENT

5.1 General

5.1.1 An External Examiner's appointment can be varied by the following:

- a. Extension of appointment end date
- b. Variation of module portfolio
- c. Variation to the annual fee

5.1.2 Variations of appointment are approved by the External Examiner Approval Panel, and it is the responsibility of the Head of School to discuss the variation with the External Examiner before any submission is made.

5.1.3 Under exceptional circumstances a variation may be submitted if an External Examiner has to take on additional responsibilities from another External Examiner who is unable to continue with their role, at short notice. This will be an emergency short-term measure and will be for one additional academic year only.

5.2 Extension of appointment end date

5.2.1 The standard period of appointment for External Examiner is four academic years, although in exceptional circumstances it can be extended for one further year. The circumstances for an extension could be when a course and their modules are due to be closed shortly and the current External Examiner is required to continue in the role for the run-out period. An appointment can also be extended if a replacement External Examiner has already been appointed for the next academic year but there are unforeseen circumstances mean they will be unable to take on the role.

5.2.2 Difficulty in identifying a replacement External Examiner will not be considered exceptional so it is imperative that a replacement External Examiner is identified well in advance.

5.2.3 The Head of School will complete a Proposal for the Variation of an External Examiner Appointment form. The Head of School must state the reasons for the extension of the current External Examiner instead of a replacement External Examiner being proposed, and the revised appointment end date, which must not be more than one year from the current end of appointment date. The form is sent to the Associate Dean (Academic) and if supported the Associate Dean (Academic) will sign the form. The proposal form will be sent to Academic Registry who will submit the proposal form to the External Examiner Approval Panel.

- 5.2.4 If the External Examiner Approval Panel approves the proposal Academic Registry will update the External Examiner SITS record and email confirmation of the new appointment end date to the External Examiner, copied to the School.
- 5.2.5 If the extension is not approved Academic Registry will inform the School of the Panel's decision and reason. The Head of School will need to inform the External Examiner and put alternative arrangements in place to ensure the modules are not left without an External Examiner assigned when the current External Examiner's appointment has ended.

5.3 Variation to module portfolio

- 5.3.1 External Examiners are assigned a number of modules for which they will be responsible for at the start of their appointment. Changes to modules are part of the standard annual review of courses, so it stands to reason there will be changes to the modules the External Examiner will be responsible for throughout their appointment.
- 5.3.2 It is the responsibility of the Head of School to discuss changes with, and gain agreement from, External Examiners of any changes to the portfolio of modules, as well as the structure.
- 5.3.3 The School has the discretion to add up to four modules to the External Examiner portfolio that does not need approval by the External Examiner Approval Panel. The School will update the External Examiner's record and inform the External Examiner of the changes.
- 5.3.4 Approval is required by the External Examiner Approval Panel if any of the following apply:
- a. the addition of more than four modules;
 - b. a change to the level of modules from undergraduate to postgraduate or vice versa;
 - c. addition of a subject area and more than four modules;
 - d. the removal of modules that would affect the fee.
- 5.3.5 For variations that fall under the criteria above, the variation must be approved by the External Examiner Approval Panel. The Head of School will complete the Variation of External Examiner Appointment form and the Associate Dean (Academic) must sign the form to confirm their agreement with the variation and send to Academic Registry for processing.
- 5.3.6 If the External Examiner Approval Panel supports the proposal Academic Registry will update the External Examiner SITS record and confirm to the School. For any decisions to changes to modules, either locally by the School or through the External Examiner Approval Panel, the School will inform the External Examiner of the changes.
- 5.3.7 If the variation is not approved Academic Registry will inform the department of the Panel's decision and reason. The Head of School will inform the External Examiner, and if the variation was to add modules, must be alternative arrangements in place to ensure those modules are assigned to another External Examiner.

5.4 Variation to the annual fee

- 5.4.1 As well as a variation to the standard annual fee at the point of proposing a new External Examiner, the School can propose a variation for an existing External Examiner if any of the following apply:
- a. overseas collaborative provision where the External is required to attend Boards or other meetings at the collaborative partner's location
 - b. requirement for the External Examiner to attend more than one set of Boards in one academic year, where such multiple Boards are an approved exemption from the Examination and Assessment Regulations;
 - c. a higher than the standard number of 360 credits in exceptional circumstances;
 - d. different subject areas.
- 5.4.2 The variation to must be approved by the External Examiner Approval Panel. The Head of School will complete the Variation of External Examiner Appointment form and the Associate Dean (Academic) must sign the form to confirm their agreement to the variation of fee and send to Academic Registry for processing.
- 5.4.3 If the External Examiner Approval Panel supports the variation to the fee Academic Registry will update the External Examiner SITS record and email confirmation of the revised fee to the External Examiner, copied to the School.
- 5.4.4 If the variation to the fee is not approved Academic Registry will inform the School of the decision and reason. The Head of School will need to inform the External Examiner and if applicable, put alternative arrangements in place to ensure any modules are not left without an External Examiner assigned.

6 CREDIT BEARING SHORT COURSES

- 6.1 A Credit Bearing Short Course (CBSC) is a discrete taught course with up to 55 credits at between Level 4 to Level 7 and which does not lead to a named award, such as a Bachelor or Master degree. The modules that make up the CBSC will normally be taken from existing modules on undergraduate and postgraduate courses and therefore would have a Subject External Examiner. It is expected the External Examiner for the CBSC will be the current Subject External Examiner for those modules. Consideration should be given to the total workload of the current External Examiner to take responsibility for CBSCs.
- 6.1.1 To add the CBSC to the responsibilities of the current External Examiner the Head of School will complete a Proposal for the Variation of an External Examiner Appointment form. The form is sent to the Associate Dean (Academic) and if supported the Associate Dean (Academic) will sign the form. The proposal form will be sent to Academic Registry who will submit the proposal form to the External Examiner Approval Panel.
- 6.1.2 In the event that no existing External Examiner is suitable to take on the CBSC a new External Examiner appointment will be required following the standard appointment process.

7 PROFESSIONAL, STATUTORY AND REGULATORY BODIES (PSRBs)

- 7.1 A number of courses delivered by the University are accredited by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). On occasion as a particular requirement of the accreditation the University may agree that the PSRB can appoint its own External Examiner. Those External Examiners will work with the University's External Examiner and in accordance with the University's regulations, as well as having additional reporting accountability to the PSRB.
- 7.2 On occasion External Examiners may be required by the PRSB Body to participate in particular assessments. The University may agree to this involvement in one of the following ways:
- a. Agreeing that the External Examiner may carry out the process of sampling marks and verifying appropriate standards for subsequent inclusion in the External Examiner report, through being present at particular forms of assessment such as interview and review of portfolios. The External Examiner will accept that the final mark is agreed by consensus and confirmed at the Module Assessment Board (MAB);
 - b. Where the terms of the 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 will be involved at Module Assessment Board (MAB) to carry out the independent confirmation of standards and equitable processes, through the sampling and reporting mechanisms.

8 ANNUAL REPORTS

- 8.1 The External Examiners provide an important role with regards to the academic standards and quality of the University's curriculum, and their annual reports are an integral and important part to ensure the maintenance of those standards. Both Subject and Award External Examiners are required to submit an annual report, which feeds into the University quality assurance processes. The reports are submitted via a form on the [External Examiners webpage](#) and must be submitted within four weeks of the last examination board attended in each academic year. If the Subject External Examiner is also an Award External Examiner only one report is required.
- 8.2 External Examiners must bear in mind the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and must not include names of any students or staff in the reports, and are requested to maintain the confidentiality of Module Assessment Boards and Boards of Examiners
- 8.3 The Head of School will respond to the External Examiner acknowledging receipt of the report. The Head of School will also confirm what actions will be taken as a result of the External Examiners comments, with a timescale for implementation, or reasons for not progressing any recommendations or suggestions.
- 8.4 The reports are stored on the document management system, eRecords, and sent to the Head of School and Associate Dean (Academic) and will be viewed by Module Co-ordinators, Course Leaders and other colleagues. They are also presented at Board of Studies, which is attended by academic colleagues and student course representatives. They are also available to students and collaborative partners via the relevant Moodle site. The public may also request reports via submission of a Freedom of Information request.
- 8.5 The AD(A) has responsibility to ensure that any matters identified for attention are addressed by the appropriate person and 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.
- 8.6 If an External Examiner raises issues relating to a module that resides in another School, the Heads of those Schools will liaise to address those issues. The Head of School in which the course resides will respond to the Award Examiner and the Head of School in which the module resides will respond to the Subject External Examiner.
- 8.7 The Board of Studies will receive the External Examiner reports where discussion will be informed by the full context of the delivery of modules in the course as a whole. The Head of School 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 School.

- 8.8 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. School and course related issues will be discussed as part of the Annual Review Process. Issues relating to academic regulations or standards should be forwarded directly to the Academic Registrar.
- 8.9 The University may terminate the appointment of an External Examiner appointment who fails to submit a report that is inadequate in either form or coverage.
- 8.10 If a PSRB also require 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 the PSRB.

9 END OF APPOINTMENT

- 9.1 At the end of the External Examiner appointment it is courtesy that the Head of School writes to the External Examiner thanking them for their contribution as an External Examiner.
- 9.2 External Examiners can end their appointment at any time before the stated appointment end date and for any reason. The External Examiner should write to the Academic Registrar, as secretary of Academic Council, stating the date they wish the appointment to end and the reasons why they want to end the appointment. The Academic Registrar will inform the Head of School, who has the responsibility to write to the External Examiner confirming the end date of the appointment.
- 9.3 If an External Examiner does not meet their responsibilities the University will take action that may lead to the termination of the appointment. Before any termination of appointment is made the Head of School will discuss the reasons for the proposed termination with the External Examiner and to resolve any issues. If the University does decide to terminate the appointment it is the responsibility of the Head of School to write to the External Examiner stating the end date of the appointment and the reasons for it. This communication will be copied to Academic Registry and held with the External Examiners proposal documentation in eRecords.
- 9.4 If the modules or courses for which the Examiner was appointed are closed so that the External Examiner is no longer required, it may become appropriate to terminate the appointment before the appointment end date. In such cases, the Head of School should ensure that the External Examiner is notified at the earliest opportunity of this and the actual end date of the appointment. This communication will be copied to Academic Registry and held with the External Examiners proposal documentation in eRecords. The External Examiner will receive any remuneration due for the academic year in which the appointment is ended and any reasonable expenses incurred by the External Examiner.

10 SUPPORT AND CONTACT DETAILS

10.1 Support and Mentoring

10.1.1 All External Examiners are supported by and work closely with a number of staff in the School. This includes Module Co-Ordinator's, Course Leaders and Assessment and Awards Managers. For External Examiners who have limited examining experience they should be mentored and supported during their first year and it is good practice for this to be provided by both academic staff and other External Examiners in the School.

10.2 Online events

10.2.1 All External Examiners will be invited to attend online events delivered by Academic Registry. These events will give an overview of the role of External Examiners and examination and assessment boards. The events focused on assessment and examination boards will be held in the summer before the examination boards, and the events providing a general overview of the role will be for newly appointed External Examiners and held in the autumn.

10.3 Contact details

10.3.1 The Confirmation of Appointment email sent to External Examiners provides the name and the email address of the academic and administrative contacts in the academic School. These contacts are for all academic and administrative matters, such as dates of boards, samples of work, payment of fees and Moodle log in details. The [External Examiner webpage](#) also provides the name and email contact of the Assessment and Award Managers in the Schools.

ANNEX A – END POINT ASSESSMENT (EPA) EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

1 Introduction

- 1.1 For Integrated apprenticeships the End Point Assessment (EPA) requires an independent EPA External Assessor to ensure the quality assurance and academic standards of the assessment that takes place. They will be professional experts who have oversight of the qualification linked to the apprenticeship.
- 1.2 EPA External Assessors are appointed prior to the start of the academic year and normally before modules are delivered. In circumstances where the EPA External Assessor is also the existing Subject External Examiner, therefore the duration is the standard 4-year period, the appointment will be from 1 September to 30 September for undergraduate provision and 1 January to 31 January for postgraduate provision. However, depending on when the EPA is due to take place, the end date can be extended as required. If the EPA External Assessor is new just for this role, then the duration and dates would be as required specific to each apprenticeship standard. As EPAs are the last module within an integrated apprenticeship, post Gateway, they take place at different points in the academic year, depending on the length of the apprenticeship.

2 Role of the EPA External Assessor

- 2.1 EPA External Assessors will be required to perform quality assurance activities during live assessment as well as sampling assessor documentation post assessment. EPA External Assessors are subject specialists actively observing live assessment to ensure practice is fair, consistent, and has validity to meet the EPA assessment plan. The EPA External Assessor will review the following in relation to the EPA:
 - a. the EPA plan and how this is delivered in practice;
 - b. the management of gateway and mandatory qualification requirements and involvement of the employer in deciding the apprentice is ready for the EPA;
 - c. the assessment instruments/methods;
 - d. the EPA assessor's knowledge;
 - e. the accessibility of EPA and the management of reasonable adjustments;
 - f. a sample of assessments, including live assessments;
 - g. physical or digital versions of documents, including marked assessment materials from apprentices;
 - h. assessor standardisation or moderation meetings;

- i. interviews with assessors and other EPAO staff and
 - j. feedback from apprentices and employers;
 - k. the reliability and comparability of EPA;
- 2.2 EPA External Assessors should satisfy themselves that;
- a. Apprentices are assessment fairly;
 - b. EPA assessment criteria are appropriately assessed and competence demonstrated;
 - c. standards are maintained at a level which is comparable with such assessments
 - d. undertaken else undertaken elsewhere in the United Kingdom with which the EPA External Assessor is familiar.
- 2.3 Where major internal quality assurance concerns have been identified, the EPA External Assessor shall raise these to the Quality Manager for Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning, within 48 hours of the EPA taking place and prior to the EPA Assessment Board
- 2.4 The EPA Assessment Board signifies general satisfaction with the fairness, effectiveness and adequacy of the EPA, but does not necessarily indicate agreement with every individual confirmed mark
- 2.5 The EPA External Assessor 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 EPA External Assessor must complete an annual report to be submitted to the Quality Manager for Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning, on the University's report form within four weeks of the EPA Assessment Board, as specified under guidelines approved by Academic Council.

3 Appointment of an EPA External Assessor

3.1 Identifying a proposed EPA External Assessor

- 3.1.1 The responsibility for ensuring EPA External Assessors are appointed lies with the Head of School. As the appointment process may take a number of months from identifying a proposed EPA External Assessor to formal approval, it is important to begin the process well in advance of the expected commencement of the appointment.
- 3.1.2 The Head of Department should liaise with the Course Leader to identify a suitable EPA External Assessor. It is important to ensure that the proposed EPA External Assessor has a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities, policies and procedures relating to EPA External Assessor, and the scale of remuneration. It is therefore advisable to provide a copy of this document to the proposed EPA External Assessor.
- 3.1.3 During initial contact it should be ascertained that the proposed EPA External Assessor meets the criteria for appointment and that there are no conflicts of interest. It must also be made clear no appointment can be made, and no work can be undertaken by the proposed EPA External Assessor without the formal approval of the EPA External Assessor Approval Panel.

3.2 Criteria for appointment

3.2.1 All proposed EPA External Assessors must meet the following criteria:

- 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 modules and courses;
- c. relevant academic and professional qualifications, as well as industry experience as outlined by the End Point Assessment Plan for the apprenticeship standard;
- 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 standards to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed;
- g. fluency in English;
- h. meeting applicable criteria set by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs);
- 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.

3.3 Conflicts of Interest

3.3.1 There may be areas that would result in a conflict of interest that would mean the proposed EPA External Assessor would not be appointed. This will be the case if any of the following apply:

- a. they are not a member of staff at the employer that has any direct involvement with the apprentices on the current programme of study;
- b. they are a former or current member of staff or student of the University of Portsmouth who have had direct teaching or assessment responsibilities with the apprentices taking End Point Assessment;
- c. they have a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with University of Portsmouth staff or apprentices involved with the programme of study;
- d. they are required to assess colleagues who are recruited as apprentices to the programme of study;
- e. they are, or know they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of apprentices on the programme of study;
- f. they are significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme of study.

- 3.3.2 It is the responsibility of the proposed EPA External Assessors to declare any potential conflicts of interest to the Head Department before the department submits a proposal. In exceptional circumstances that the Head of Department and the Associate Dean (Academic) nonetheless wish to progress with the proposal, they must provide details of the conflict and the reason why the proposed EPA External Assessors should be appointed.

4 Appointment process

- 4.1 If a new EPA External Assessor is required the School will complete the Proposal for the appointment of an EPA External Assessor for End Point Assessment (EPA) form and send to the proposed EPA External Assessor to add their information, sign and return with a copy of their Curriculum Vitae and passport. The passport is needed to confirm identification and the status of the Right to Work in the UK, as required by the UK's Home Office Visa and Immigration.
- 4.2 The Head of School will review the completed proposal form, sign if the criteria are met, or detail a case for exceptional approval if the criteria are not, and send to the Associate Dean (Academic) to review and sign to support the proposal, and if relevant, the case for exceptional approval. The proposal documentation will be sent to Academic Registry who will submit the proposal form and the Curriculum Vitae to the External Examiner Approval Panel. The Quality Manager for Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning will be a member of the External Examiner panel for those proposals to ensure all EPA External Assessors meet the requirements outlined in the apprenticeship EPA plans.
- 4.3 If the External Examiner Approval Panel approves the appointment the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) will sign the proposal form. If the proposal is not approved the External Examiner Approval Panel will provide the reason for their decision, and Academic Registry will communicate that to the School.

5 Approval process

- 5.1 When the proposal is approved Academic Registry will add the details to the student records system (SITS). A Confirmation of Appointment email with details of the appointment dates, annual fee, apprenticeship standards and EPA External Assessor webpage will be sent to the EPA External Assessor and copied to the School. The EPA External Assessor is required to email confirmation they agree to undertake the role of an EPA External Assessor in accordance with these regulations.
- 5.2 The EPA External Assessor will also be provided with the login details to access the University's EPA system (ACE360), which is used by the department to hold all assessment documentation used during the EPA.

- 5.3 The completed proposal documentation will be stored securely on eRecords, the University's document management system, in accordance with the [Retention Policy](#).
- 5.4 The Quality Manager for Degree Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning will review the appointments annually as part of the annual quality review cycle.

6 Remuneration

- 6.1 The fee for EPA External Assessors is £350 per academic year specific to the roles and responsibilities required to perform as an EPA External Assessor. This fee covers all required elements of the EPA event, including, but not limited to:
- Quality Assurance of all assessment materials, ensuring they meet the requirements of the EPA plan.
 - Observation of live assessment, ensuring consistency, reliability and validity of assessment in line with EPA plan;
 - Any resit EPA activity that may be required to take place;
 - Completion of quality assurance reporting documentation;
 - Attendance to EPA standardisation meetings
- 6.2 In the circumstance where multiple live events are required, an additional £50 per event will be granted.
- 6.3 In addition to the annual fee EPA External Assessors will be reimbursed for any reasonable expenses incurred such as travel, accommodation, subsistence or any other purpose agreed by the Head of School which accords with the University's Financial Regulations.
- 6.4 All fees and expenses are paid annually and only after receipt of the EPA External Assessor annual report. To enable payment to be made the EPA External Assessor must complete the SAL6 EPA External Assessor Engagement form and return it to the School. The form is available to be downloaded on the EPA External Assessor webpage.

7 Addition of EPA External Assessor duties to existing External Examiners

- 7.1 If the School wish to add EPA External Assessor duties to an existing External Examiner they should complete the Variation of Appointment form. The proposal will be submitted to the External Examiner Approval Panel, and as for new EPA External Assessors, The Quality Manager for Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning will be a member of the External Examiner panel to ensure the proposed EPA External Assessor meets the requirements outlined in the apprenticeship EPA plans.

8 Support and Contact Information

- 8.1 All EPA External Assessors are supported by and work closely with a number of staff including Module Co-Ordinator's, Course Leaders, Assessment and Awards Managers and the Quality Manager for Degree Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning. For EPA External Assessors who have limited examining experience they should be mentored and supported during their first year and it is good practice for mentoring to be provided by both academic staff and other EPA External Assessors in the School.
- 8.2 The Confirmation of Appointment email sent to EPA External Assessors provides the contact details of the academic and administrative contacts in the School.

9 End of Contract

- 9.1 At the end of the EPA External Assessor appointment it is courtesy that the Head of School writes to the EPA External Assessor thanking them for their contribution as an EPA External Assessor.
- 9.2 EPA External Assessors can end their appointment at any time before the appointment end date, for any reason. The EPA External Assessor should write to the Academic Registrar, as secretary of Academic Council, stating the date they wish the appointment to end and the reasons why they want to end the appointment. The Academic Registrar will inform the Head of School, who has the responsibility to write to the EPA External Assessor confirming the end date of the appointment, and the Quality Manager for Degree Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning.
- 9.3 If an EPA External Assessor does not meet their responsibilities the University will take action that may lead to the termination of the appointment. Before any termination of appointment is made, the Head of School will discuss the reasons for the proposed termination with the EPA External Assessors to resolve any issues. If the University does decide to terminate the appointment, it is the responsibility of the Head of School to write to the EPA External Assessor stating the end date of the appointment and the reasons for it. This communication will be copied to Academic Registry and held with EPA External Assessors proposal documentation in eRecords.