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# UWE Bristol

## External Examiners Conference

**UWE  
Bristol**

University  
of the  
West of  
England

# External Examiners

- Chief EE appointed to a cognate group of programmes.
- Field EE appointed with responsibility for a module or specified group of modules within a named field.
- Field EE may also have responsibility for modules delivered at partner institutions in UK or overseas.
- External examiners will have an academic and/or practice background.
- All modules at FHEQ 5 and above require external examiner scrutiny.
- Overview only below FHEQ 5, unless PSRB requires otherwise.

# Roles and responsibilities of the Chief EE

- Award Board Attendance
  - Progression and achievement
  - Conduct of award board
  - Overall assessment process and parity of approach to assessment.
- Annual Reporting

# Roles and Responsibilities of the Field External Examiner

- Ensure assessments are properly conducted (includes pre scrutiny\*)
- Ensure standards/levels are appropriate; consider comparative performance across range of cohorts both at UWE and at partner institutions.
- Participate in Field Board decision-making e.g. consideration of any adverse cohort circumstances
- Report on the effectiveness of assessments
- Report on the conduct of the examining board
- Report any matters of serious concern arising from the assessments which put at risk the module standard

# Field EEs are not permitted to;

- Attend Award Boards (unless a PSRB requirement)
- Be involved in Award Board decisions regarding student progression and achievement (unless a PSRB requirement/appointed as non-modular EE also)
- Change marks for individual students
- Name individuals in their annual reports

# UK standards

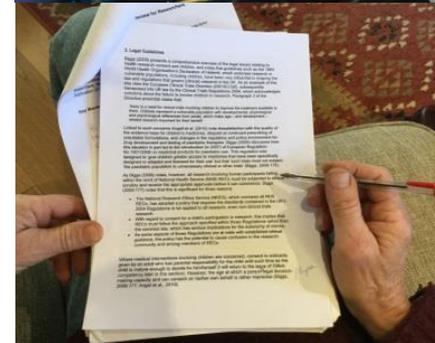
'Degree classification: statement of intent' to protect the value of UK degrees (May 2019):

- Supports opportunities for academics to work as external examiners, including professional development and subject *calibration* activities
- England's implementation statement requires '*a degree outcomes statement*' asking (inter alia) whether institutions are 'making use of Advance HE's external examiner professional development programme and subject-specific calibration activity or providing alternative arrangements'
- In October 2019 publication by UUK/GuildHE of guidance on degree outcomes statements & by QAA of Outcome Classification Descriptions

# Academic standards

- **Academic standards:** output measure focusing on student achievement
- **Quality standards:** input and process measures focusing on all other aspects of the assessment cycle (and other resources, procedures, etc.)

Reflects the structure of the revised Quality Code (2018)



Mark	Description	Analysis and Synthesis	Evaluation
> 90 Outstanding	Comprehension & Application: Good use of relevant literature. Outstanding use of literature. Evidence of deep understanding of discipline.	Analysis: Well developed. Very well developed. Clear logical train of thought. Good use of theory. Concepts are well developed. Very good use of theory. Concepts are well developed. Very good use of theory.	Excellent critical evaluation demonstrated. Excellent range and insight. Evidence of relevance.
> 70 Excellent	Excellent use of literature. Excellent use of literature. Excellent use of literature. Excellent use of literature.	Very well developed. Very well developed. Very well developed. Very well developed.	Excellent critical evaluation demonstrated. Excellent range and insight. Evidence of relevance.
60-69 Commendable	Evidence of high achievement. Up-to-date literature. Good use of literature. Good use of literature.	Very well developed. Very well developed. Very well developed. Very well developed.	Excellent critical evaluation demonstrated. Excellent range and insight. Evidence of relevance.



# Quality Code (2018)

## Expectations for standards - 'external expertise':

'The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications' frameworks'

'The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.'

## Core practices related to the external examiner role

- **Maintainer of academic standards:** ensuring that threshold standards for HE qualifications are consistent with relevant national standards.
- **Guardian of national standards:** Ensuring that students awarded qualifications have opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are comparable with those achieved in other UK providers
- **Process checker:** The provider uses assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent

# Quality Code (2018)

## Expectations for Quality – External expertise

Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed

*'External examiners play an important role in identifying good practice and making recommendations for enhancement of assessment policies and procedures'* **[Critical friend]**

# Activities include:

- Reviewing assessment tasks / tools / rubrics
- Sampling the marking of student work and assessing relative to national standards
  - Expected documentation
- *Placement visits for professional practice modules*
- Consider student feedback e.g. module reports/ student survey
- Attending Examination Boards
- Acting as a critical friend to the module / programme team
  - External reviewer (additional contract)
- Writing an Annual Report for the University

# Regulations

1. 5 day 'late submission window'
2. Reasonable adjustments eg:
  - 14 day RA period
  - Alternative assessments
3. Adverse Group Circumstances
4. Assessment Offences
5. Other policies

# Case Study

You are EE for a module that is delivered at UWE and at an FE college (collaborative provision).

During external moderation you note the following statistics;

HE/FE	Average Mark	Pass Rate
UWE	58.4%	88%
FE	68.4%	100%

**What are your questions/considerations?**

# Options

1. All FE work must be re-marked
2. Work marked at below 50% must be re marked
3. Allow all marks to stand
4. Something else.....

## Example of adverse group circumstances

Exam paper consisting of 4 compulsory questions.

Some key module content not delivered/poorly delivered.

Concerns raised by students post exam.

# Analysis; process and action

1. What is the evidence?
2. Does the evidence support the concern?
  - i. E.g. Analysis of student performance – current and comparable cohorts
3. What is the impact?
4. If a potential impact is agreed – should any action be taken?
5. If yes, what actions are available?

## Possible actions (needs board approval)

- Examples of actions available;
  - mark uplift - %age versus actual
    - Impact of changing marks – fail ↔ pass
    - Rigour; have LO's, professional standards been met
    - Mark reduction
    - Weighting of tasks
  - No action
  - Null and void (new assessment)

# Assessment and Feedback Policy

Quality processes related to assessment setting and marking will be found in the ['Assessment and Feedback Policy'](#)

- Separate Policy and Guidance Documents
  - Principles
  - Internal marking options
  - Moderation requirements
    - Guidance on sample selected
  - Aggregate mark guidance
  - Links to annual monitoring

# Assessment and Feedback Policy

## External moderation summary;

- EE sample moderation; 10% of cohort scripts; min 6 max 12.
- Where EE has oversight of collaborative provision they should also receive a sample as above, clearly identified as collaborative provision.
- EE provided with related documentation e.g. module handbook, evidence of moderation, assessment, marking criteria, module report – prospective, retrospective.
  - External examiner blackboard tab.

Questions?