

**University of Aberdeen**  
**Academic Quality Handbook**

**External Examiner Reporting**

- Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught External Examiners' Annual Reports Annual Reports should be submitted as soon as possible after the relevant examinations, and no later than the submission deadlines detailed below:

Undergraduate, MBChB and Physicians' Associate	No later than 31 July annually
Postgraduate Taught	No later than 31 October annually

- All external examiners are required to submit a final report (as part of their last annual report) at the end of their period of office. In late May each year, the Registry reminds all external examiners of how to submit their annual reports for the current academic year and of the dates for submission.
- In addition to answering the set questions on the External Examiner Report, external examiners are encouraged to add any other comments they wish to make, including any observations on teaching, course and programme structure and content, and assessment policies and practices.
- External examiners' attention is drawn particularly to Part B of the Annual Report template, where the University would welcome comments on - and the identification of - good practice in learning and teaching. External examiners are therefore asked to use this opportunity to identify programmes and/or courses within which they are able to highlight activities from which others might benefit and learn. These may include, for example i) particular methods of delivery ii) specific activities that students undertake or iii) interesting or novel assessment methods. By doing this, external examiners can assist the University in collating examples of good practice to be shared across the Institution.
- External examiners are asked to ensure that their annual reports do not include reference to staff or students by name or in any way which would make individuals identifiable.
- As reports will be discussed widely within the University (see paragraph 9 below), external examiners may, if they wish, send an additional, separate and confidential, report to the Principal if they consider that this, exceptionally, would be appropriate.
- Where an external examiner has a serious concern relating to systemic failings with the academic standards of a programme or programmes and has exhausted the University's internal procedures, including the submission of a confidential report to the Principal, the examiner may invoke QAA's concerns scheme (<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/scotland/reviewing-higher-education-in-scotland/how-to-raise-a-concern-in-scotland>) or inform the relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body.
- Examiners' fees are paid on receipt of a fully completed report. Where a report is incomplete, external examiners will be asked for further comment where deemed necessary.
- External examiners' reports are circulated to the following:
  - the Chair of the University Committee on Teaching and Learning (UCTL);
  - the Chair of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC);
  - the Head of the relevant School (via the School Administrative Manager, where appropriate) or, in the case of MBChB and BSc MedSci, the appropriate Phase Coordinator;

- for validated degrees, the head of the relevant academic unit;
  - other relevant School and University committees as appropriate;
  - staff and students;
  - internal and external review panels.
10. Heads of School/Phase Coordinators are asked to discuss the reports with relevant staff and to prepare their School's response, which should be added to 'part C' at the end of the examiner's report to the QAC by stated deadlines.
  11. The external examiner reports and School responses are considered by the QAC at its November and January meetings. Any concerns are referred back to the Head of School by the Convener of QAC (or delegate). Policy issues are referred by the QAC to the UCTL.
  12. The QAC will close the 'feedback loop' by informing external examiners of the action taken by the School or QAC in response to their comments. If a matter is referred to the UCTL by the QAC, the Clerk to UCTL will inform external examiners of any action taken by that Committee in response to their comments.
  13. The University circulates external examiners' reports extensively within the institution, including to student representatives through the Staff–Student Liaison Committees. External examiners should be made aware that the University may be required to provide copies of reports, or summaries or other information derived from them, to professional and statutory bodies, to panels of internal and external audit or teaching reviews, or to other agencies.
  14. Annual reports are held for up to 6 years but are destroyed thereafter.