

University of Aberdeen
INFORMATION FOR EXTERNAL EXAMINERS
(Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught)

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

External Examiners are appointed by the University specifically to ensure that standards are maintained on a comparable level with universities throughout the UK and that the system of assessment is seen to be transparent and fair to all students. This is in accordance with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) 'UK Quality Code for Higher Education', the standards for external examining being in '[External Expertise](#)'.

The University's academic quality assurance policies, procedures and practices can be found in the [External Examining section](#) of the University's '[Academic Quality Handbook](#)'. Information on the role of the External Examiner at the University and information on assessment and examination can be found here.

Your attention is drawn in particular to:

1. the [University's Code of Practice on Assessment](#); and
2. the University's degree regulations, which can be found in the University Calendar:
 - [General Regulations for First Degrees](#)
 - [Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees](#)

Further Guidance:

AdvanceHE provides a handbook for External Examiners, entitled Fundamentals of External Examining.

PRINCIPAL ROLE OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

The principal role of External Examiners is as follows:

- Participate in the setting of examination papers.
- Review a sufficient number and range of assessments to confirm the marks awarded to students.
- Moderate internal marks where appropriate.
- Participate in other assessment activities (eg clinical and oral examinations), where relevant.
- Comment on and give advice on course and programme content, balance and structure, and on assessment processes.
- Annually provide formal comment on the standards of the University's awards by completing an External Examiner's Annual Report.

Further details of the role, responsibilities and authority of External Examiners can be found in the [External Examining section](#) of the University's '[Academic Quality Handbook](#)'.

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

At the beginning of each academic year, Schools will provide you with information specific to the course(s) and programme(s) you examine. As a minimum, this will include:

- A list of courses, programmes and/or qualifications(s) to which each External Examiner is appointed;
- Course Guides/Programme Handbooks, including syllabuses, at the beginning of each session and/or at an appropriate point prior to the assessment (e.g. when draft examination papers are sent for scrutiny);
- Schedule for the scrutiny of draft examination papers;
- Marking and classification criteria;

- Schedule for the review of student assessments (continuous assessment and examination scripts).
- Dates of the examination meetings as soon as these had been agreed.

In addition, at the start of your appointment the School will provide you with a copy of the outgoing External Examiner's final Annual Report.

INFORMATION GIVEN TO STUDENTS

Following the expectations of the QAA Quality Code, information regarding External Examiners (name, position and institution) is published in the course and/or programme information provided to students. Students are advised that they must not contact External Examiners directly. Should a student contact you, please redirect this correspondence to the School rather than responding to the student.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidential information that is not in the public domain will often be made available to External Examiners during the examination process. Such information may only be used for purposes connected with your examining role and should not be divulged to a third party without the prior written consent of the University and of any student to which the information relates.

ANNUAL REPORTING

In addition to any report that you might provide to the Examination Meeting(s), you are required to complete an Annual Report at the end of each academic year. The comments you provide in your Annual Report are central to the University's quality assurance mechanisms and your Report will be considered by the relevant School and College and by the Quality Assurance Committee and may be made available to other appropriate University Committees. Reports are made available to staff and to students and to panels for the purposes of internal and external review. Annual Reports are held for up to 6 years but are destroyed thereafter.

Your attention is drawn particularly to Part B of the Annual Report, where we would welcome comments on, and the identification of, good practice in learning and teaching. Please use this opportunity to identify programmes, courses or aspects of individual courses within which you are able to highlight activities in learning and teaching from which others might benefit and learn. These may include, for example, particular methods of delivery, specific activities that students undertake or interesting or novel assessment methods. By doing this, it will assist the University in identifying and collating examples of good practice that can be shared across the Institution.

Please ensure that your Annual Report does not include reference to students or staff by name or in a way that makes individuals identifiable.

Please submit your Annual Report as soon as possible after the examinations. The final dates for submitting undergraduate and postgraduate taught reports are:

Undergraduate	No later than 15 June each year
Postgraduate Taught	No later than 30 October each year
MBChB (Years 1, 2, 3 and 5)	No later than 15 June each year
MBChB (Year 4)	No later than 27 July each year
Physicians' Associate	No later than 27 July each year

The Annual Report form can be downloaded from the [External Examining section](#) of the University's '[Academic Quality Handbook](#)', where a list of [e-mail addresses](#) to which Annual Reports should be submitted - depending on the School to which the External Examiner has been appointed - can be found.

An Examiner who has serious concerns about the quality or standards of provision should do so in a separate report to the Principal. 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/reviewing-higher-education/how-to-make-a-complaint>) or inform the relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body.

RIGHT TO WORK CHECKS – PREVENTION OF ILLEGAL WORKING

In accordance with UK Visas and Immigration regulations, the University is required to undertake a right to work check prior to employment commencement. The right to work check must be done with the original documents and in person. If the individual is unable to attend in person for the check, the documents need to be sent to the relevant School in advance with a follow up video conference call thereafter.

DATA PROTECTION AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Data subjects have the right of access to material under the Data Protection Act 1998 and, even if marked confidential, your Annual Report, comments on student assessments or other reports or correspondence will be made available to data subjects on request. There are some exceptions to this within the Act; however, you should not assume – just because something is marked confidential – that it will not be released to the data subject, whether that be a student or a member of staff. Annual Reports will also be released to others if specifically requested under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. You will be informed should any requests for disclosure of your Report be received.

FEES AND EXPENSES

All reasonable out-of-pocket expenses, including those incurred in relation to essential visits to the University, will be paid on production of a completed expenses claim form and the appropriate receipts. Expenses are not subject to income tax.

Examiners should refer to the University's [Expenses and Benefits Policy](#) for guidance on what constitutes 'reasonable expenses'.

The External Examiner Expenses Claim form can be downloaded from the [External Examining section](#) of the University's '[Academic Quality Handbook](#)'.

Fees are paid after receipt of the Annual Report. Fees are subject to income tax and are paid by BACS to your nominated bank account on the last working day of the month. A payslip will also be sent by post.

All general queries regarding external examining at the University of Aberdeen should be addressed to extexam@abdn.ac.uk.