UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE
INSTITUTIONAL STAFF REGISTER OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper provides a summary of the proposed register to be created in relation to University staff who undertake a role as an External Examiner at another University. This institutional register is proposed to be held centrally and managed by the Academic Services team within the Registry, and will be updated biannually.

The Quality Assurance Committee is invited to approve the proposals contained within the paper.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

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<th>Board/Committee</th>
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<tr>
<td>Previously considered/approved by</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Policy and Regulations Group</td>
<td>15 Nov 2023</td>
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<td>Further consideration/ approval required by</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality Assurance Committee</td>
<td>13 Dec 2023</td>
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3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Quality Assurance Committee is invited to approve the proposals within the paper.

4. BACKGROUND AND PROPOSED APPROACH

4.1 Following a discussion at the Academic Policy and Regulations Group at its meeting on 8 March 2023 (minute 4.3 refers), it was agreed that further discussions should take place with the Lead School Administration Manager to identify possible solutions to avoiding situations of reciprocal arrangements for External Examiners across the University.

4.2 In taking this action forward, the Acting Assistant Registrar and Lead School Administration Manager met on 27 September 2023 to discuss whether a centrally held register would be beneficial for the Schools, and, if so, how best to operationalise it.

4.3 In discussion, it was agreed that a centrally held register of University staff acting as External Examiners elsewhere would be useful to Schools and that Schools should be responsible for updating this information. It is recognised that some Schools may already hold this information as part of workload modelling, for example, and as such, it is hoped that information can be easily submitted to the central register.

4.4 The proposed approach is as follows:

(i) Schools are required annually, as part of annual monitoring procedures, to undertake to identify which staff are acting as External Examiners for another institution. The means by which this information is collated is up to the Schools. Communications will be issued from the Academic Services team within the Registry to update the register with any changes.

(ii) Following the collation of the information, a spreadsheet (register) held centrally on the Quality and Planning Sharepoint site will be populated by the Schools. It is expected that there will be a single tab per School, thus allowing Schools to populate their information easily, but also allowing all Schools to review all information.
(iii) Thereafter, once the information is collated, it will be updated biannually in July and January. Communications will be issued to Schools as reminders to update the register to ensure it remains accurate.

(iv) Where a staff member’s External Examiner appointment concludes, the Academic Services team will undertake to remove them from the live database and their information will be deleted.

4.3 The central register will contain the following information: (i) Staff Name, (ii) School, (iii) Institution Examining for, (iv) Level of Study, (v) Programme(s) or Course(s), and (vi) Term of Office, including end date.

4.4 It has been confirmed with HR that there are no anticipated issues with central collation of this information. However, it has been suggested, in relation to data protection, that information collated must be held securely, only for the period in which it is required, and that only those who require access to it should be able to view the data. The access to the Sharepoint site will be managed by the Academic Services team.

5. NEXT STEPS

5.1 Following endorsement at the Academic Policy and Regulations Group and approval at the Quality Assurance Committee, the following will be undertaken:

(i) Initial communication will be issued by the Lead School Administration Manager to all Schools confirming the reasons for this information being collated and the process to be used.

(ii) A blank spreadsheet (register) created by the Academic Services team within the Quality and Planning Sharepoint site, with access granted to all Schools.

(iii) Communication to Schools by the Academic Services Team advise of the location of the spreadsheet (register) and request that this be populated by an agreed date.

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Liam Dyker (Acting Assistant Registrar), liam.dyker2@abdn.ac.uk or Rhona Moore (Lead School Administration Manager), r.moore@abdn.ac.uk.

10 October 2023

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open