

## **Post of Chief External Examiner: Remit and Criteria for Appointment**

This paper sets out the remit for the post of Chief External Examiner, as approved by the Quality and Standards Committee, June 2012. The remit and criteria for the post of Chief External Examiner were reviewed and updated in November 2015 and October 2018.

### **Background**

In September 2011, the Quality and Standards Committee approved the introduction of the post of "Chief External Examiner" (as part of the "Quality and Standards" section of *the Multi-Location, Multi-Mode Code of Practice*), an individual who should have oversight of all the School's provision across its various modes and locations of delivery. Schools should have the flexibility to determine how to manage this oversight, eg a separate appointment to this role (particularly for Schools where the non-UK campus provision is large scale in some disciplines) or extending the remit of an existing External Examiner (where student numbers on multi-location/mode programmes are relatively small).

### **Multi-Location, Multi-Mode Programmes: the Requirement for a Chief External Examiner**

There must be at least one Chief External Examiner who has responsibility for overseeing programmes in all locations and for all variants. Schools may appoint two or more Chief External Examiners, as befits the scale of their multi-location, multi-mode provision and/or the range of disciplines.

### **Remit**

The principal duties of a Chief External Examiner are as follows:

1. Participate in University and School training and briefing sessions, in order to gain an understanding of the nature of the role and of the School's multi-location, multi-mode provision.
2. Attend Boards of Examiners meetings, as appropriate. Attendance at a Board of Examiners is mandatory in the first year of appointment; thereafter, Schools may permit the Chief External Examiner to conduct his/her role by correspondence. The Chief External Examiner should, however, attend a Board of Examiners where there has been a significant increase in the scale or scope of multi-location, multi-mode provision during the period of office (eg first time a programme is delivered at a new campus or an Approved Learning Partner).
3. Comment on the programme curriculum and structure across the various versions, including quality of provision, assessment process and marking/classification schemes (differences between versions of a programme should be communicated in advance to the Chief External Examiner).
4. Oversight of the implementation and effectiveness of the School's moderation procedure, and comment on such to the Board of Examiners (to be recorded in the Minutes of the Board). Moderation is used by Schools to assure the consistency of academic standards at course and programme level across locations, modes of study, methods of assessment, languages etc.
5. Review the minutes and other relevant documentation related to all of the programme's Award Boards of Examiners (all locations, all modes).
6. Comment on the effectiveness of the team of External Examiners, and summarise key comments and recommendations of other External Examiners.
7. Review a sample of student work (exam scripts, assessed coursework and dissertations) in order to confirm that standards are consistent at course and programme level across locations, modes of study, methods of assessment, languages etc
8. Identify particular versions of a programme (by partner, campus or mode of study), where there are disparities, areas of concern or examples of good practice.

9. Conduct a paper-based review at the end of each academic year, which will include the School's moderation activities, exam board minutes and other relevant documentation, a sample of student work, and the reports of the External Examiners on the programme.
10. Submit a Chief External Examiner Report to the University at least once per academic year. The headings in the report template will be tailored to the specifics of the above duties. The report will be informed by the outcomes of the aforementioned document-based review and by observations at the Board of Examiners.

The role of the Chief External Examiner will **not include**:

1. Commenting on assignment tasks or examination papers/questions.
2. Reviewing or making judgements on course assessment results, progression decisions or award decisions.
3. Scrutinising the activities of individual External Examiners.
4. Meeting with individual students.
5. Commenting on the judgements of individual External Examiners.

### **Criteria for Appointment of Chief External Examiner**

#### *Number of Chief External Examiners*

1. All Schools must have at least one Chief External Examiner. Schools may make a specific appointment to the Chief External Examiner role or expand the remit of an existing appointment.
2. It is expected, but not required, that, in cases where the remit of an existing appointee has been extended, the Chief External Examiner role will be undertaken by an External Examiner who oversees the UK-based programme.
3. Schools have the flexibility to determine the number of Chief External Examiners and the range of provision covered within their remit. For example, Schools with relatively smallscale provision may appoint an existing External Examiner to the role and may include an overview of both UG and PGT within the remit of the Chief External Examiner. By contrast, Schools which have an extensive multi-location, multi-mode portfolio may find it more practical to appoint two or more Chief External Examiners, with remits differentiated by, for example, discipline or by UG/PGT.

#### *Expertise*

4. The Chief External Examiner should have a minimum of three years' experience as an external examiner (either at HWU or at another UK HEI; overseas appointees may be made in exceptional circumstances).
5. The Chief External Examiner should have an appropriate level of academic and/or professional expertise, and should be recognised as a figure of authority in his/her subject area. The appointee should be able to command respect amongst the other HWU External Examiners and HWU staff.
6. The Chief External Examiner should have the ability to comment on the effectiveness of processes across disciplines (including those outwith their own subject area) and to make effective judgements in relation to programmes which may incorporate a wide range of locations and modes of study.
7. It is desirable, but not essential, for a Chief External Examiner to have experience of multi-location/mode provision or UK HEI overseas activity.
8. The Chief External Examiner does not need to have subject-based expertise in all of a School's disciplines, since the role will not focus on subject specifics, but rather evaluating matters such as: consistency across different versions of programmes; moderation processes; the effectiveness of the team of External Examiners.

9. If the proposed appointee has retired, the CV should make it clear how the individual has retained an ongoing involvement in UK HEI activity, thereby ensuring the currency of their knowledge and skills.

#### *Appointment*

10. Nominations for Appointment should be made on the *Nomination for Appointment of Chief External Examiner* form [<http://www.hw.ac.uk/quality/external-examiners.htm>]. New appointments should be accompanied by a brief CV; where a current External Examiner is to be appointed in addition to the role of Chief External Examiner, a brief supporting statement should be provided with the nomination form. The CV for new appointees should provide sufficient evidence that the appointee is able to fulfil the requirements specified in the above sections on "Remit" and "Expertise".
11. Appointments may be up to a maximum of four years in duration. A one-year extension may be permitted in exceptional circumstances. Appointments are approved by a Dean of the University and reported to the University Committee for Quality and Standards.

#### **Management/Operational Issues**

1. There is a set of specific paperwork relating to the Chief External Examiner role (this documentation is different from that of the External Examiner post), which outlines the distinctive requirements of the role: duties; nomination form; letter of appointment; report proforma.
2. Tailored briefing/training sessions must be provided – for example, University-level in the morning; School-specific in the afternoon – in order to communicate the specifics of the role and particular context of the University's multi-location, multi-mode provision.
3. Chief External Examiners will receive a higher fee than External Examiners, due to the complexity, seniority and level of responsibility associated with the role.

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