

Procedure for review of External Examiner reports for taught programmes

1. Introduction

The procedure for the review of External Examiners' Reports within the University is detailed below and has been devised to allow the Reports to be considered sequentially within the School and thereafter by the relevant Dean of the University. In addition, Chief External Examiner Reports are considered by the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching).

2. Order of Procedure

Guidelines issued to External Examiners contain a formal request that they submit completed Report forms to Maggie King, Head of Academic Quality. However, some External Examiners may submit a Report to other persons within the University, such as the Head of School or the Programme Co-ordinator. All Reports from External Examiners should be forwarded to the Head of Academic Quality as soon as possible after receipt in order that the process of scrutiny may commence without delay.

The process of review of the Reports is co-ordinated by the Senior Admin Assistant, Academic Quality, and is as follows:

Scrutiny Stage	Action
Report received by Head of Academic Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Academic Quality emails the External Examiner confirming receipt of the Report. • Head of Academic Quality reviews the Report, noting any pertinent issues for the purposes of producing the annual Summary Review of External Examiner Reports. • Head of Academic Quality advises the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) immediately where serious issues are contained in the Report. The Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) may advise the Principal if appropriate. • Senior Admin Assistant (SAA) in Academic Quality prepares a Report Action Form and emails to the School admin contact with a copy of the Report.
Report and Action Form received by School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Admin contact forwards the Report and Action Form to the Director of Learning and Teaching (DLT)/Director of Academic Quality (DAQ). • DLT/DAQ scrutinises the report and makes comments on the Action Form. • DLT/DAQ prepares a response letter and Response Proforma to the External Examiner, indicating how the School will deal with any issues raised in the Report. (see paragraph 3 for details of content of letter and Proforma). Note: If Report merits no response other than a 'thank you', then the Response Proforma need not be completed. • DLT/DAQ signs the response letter. • School contact emails annotated Action Form, Proforma and

	<p>signed response letter to the SAA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School admin contact emails Report and response Proforma to the relevant Chief External Examiner.
Action Form and response letter received by Academic Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAA emails Report, Action Form, Response Proforma and response letter to the Dean.
Report, Action Form and response letter received by Dean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dean comments on the contents of the Report and the Response Proforma on the Action Form. • Dean emails the signed Action Form to the SAA.
Action Form received by Academic Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the response has been approved by the Dean, the SAA emails it to the External Examiner (copied to School). • If changes to the response are required the SAA informs the School Admin contact who arranges for the Proforma to be revised and returned to the SAA. The SAA then re-sends the Action Form and response to the Dean who responds as above. • <i>For Chief External Examiner Reports only: the SAA emails the Report, Action Form and Response Proforma to the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching).</i>
<i>CEE Report, Action Form, Response Proforma and response letter received by Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) comments on the Report and response on the Action Form.</i> • <i>The Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) emails the signed Action Form to the SAA.</i>
Process completed by Academic Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Academic Quality signs the Action Form to confirm that the process is complete. • SAA emails a copy of the fully completed Action Form to the School Admin contact.

3. Response Letter and Response Proforma

The Response Proforma should be completed and approved by the School, highlighting issues raised by the External Examiner and the School's response. The School should also use the Proforma to highlight any University issues/recommendations, although those in the External Examiner's Report will have already been identified by the HAQ at the time of receipt of the Report.

The response letter from the School to the External Examiner should be written to indicate that it is sent from the School, having been approved by the Dean of the University. The letter should contain the following standard paragraph:

'This letter has been prepared in consultation with appropriate colleagues in the School. A copy of this letter will be lodged with the Report. *(Insert name and title of Dean)*, has confirmed that all the points raised in your Report are being addressed by the School to the satisfaction of the University. If you feel that this is not the case, or if any points you have highlighted in previous reports have not been dealt with appropriately, then please contact *(insert name of Dean)*.'

4. Confidentiality of Reports

In terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, the term 'examination' includes 'any process for determining the knowledge, intelligence, skill or ability of a candidate by reference to his/her performance in any test, work or other activity'.

Students have certain subject access rights on the examination process. Information recorded by students during examination (e.g. examination scripts) is specifically exempted from subject access provisions. All other data associated with examinations including 'raw' examination marks, Examiners' comments and Board minutes are covered by subject access provisions.

Reports are disclosable under the terms of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, unless particular parts of them qualify for an exemption and External Examiners should be aware of this when writing such Reports. External Examiners are advised on this matter in the letter of appointment.

Confidentiality of Reports should always be observed until the University has sent its response on a Report to an External Examiner. Whilst the University is considering its response to the Report, the Report should be read only by appropriate members of staff and considered by the School Studies Committee (including student representatives), and the consent of an External Examiner should be sought before a Report may be viewed by an individual outwith the School concerned or the formal line of scrutiny specified.

Where an External Examiner has asked to make a Report in confidence to the Principal, the External Examiner is asked to indicate in the Report whether or not he or she consents to the Report being made available to successive External Examiners.

External Examiners should note that when the University has sent its response, Reports may be made available for reviews, audit and accreditation. Reports are also disclosable under the terms of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, and to data subjects under Section 7 of the Data Protection Act (1998), unless particular parts of them qualify for an exemption and External Examiners should be aware of this when writing such Reports.

5. Data Protection Act

The Data Protection Act requires registration for all use of personal data stored in hard copy and on word processors, computers and similar automatic equipment and requires that any information so held should be disclosed to the data subject on application. External Examiners are required to observe the terms of the Act in respect of their duties.

6. Additional Information

Any additional information regarding the procedure for review of Reports may be obtained from the Head of Academic Quality or the Senior Admin Assistant, Academic Quality.

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External Examiner website: <https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/academic-registry/quality/ga/external-examiners.htm>