

Heriot-Watt University's Mapping to the UK Quality Code

External Expertise

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Regulatory contexts for the Quality Code

The Expectations and Core practices of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) are mandatory for higher education providers in all parts of the UK. Common practices are mandatory in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and while providers in England may choose to work towards them, they are not required to do so as these are not regulatory requirements and will not be assessed as part of the OfS's regulatory framework. National regulators and QAA are not bound by the information in this advice and guidance and will not view it as containing indicators of compliance. This guidance does not interpret statutory requirements.

Terminology

External expertise: External experts are individuals who are not directly involved with a course and who can provide independent and impartial comment and input to a course design, its management, monitoring, evaluation and review. External experts will provide a level of independence that is important in decision-making and ensuring that quality and standards are met.

There are a variety of sources which a provider can access for external expertise. These include:

External examiners: Degree-awarding bodies engage external examiners to provide impartial and independent advice, as well as informative comment on the degree-awarding body's standards and on student achievement in relation to those standards. External examiners confirm that the provider consistently and fairly implements their own policies and procedures to ensure the integrity and rigour of assessment practices. They also comment on the quality and standards of the courses in relation to the national standards and frameworks and comment on the reasonable comparability of standards achieved at other UK providers with whom the examiner has experience. External examiners also comment on good practice, and make recommendations for enhancement.

External examiners will have sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command the respect of academic peers, and where appropriate, professional peers. External examiners do not contribute to delivery through teaching or any other direct capacity.

External advisers: Used to provide academic and professional expertise during the development and validation of new courses and at other relevant times. They can be called upon to provide academic, professional and industry/employer/business expertise to inform course design and to contribute to lecturing or teaching at the provider or in a professional setting, for example, workplace supervisors/mentors for education, nursing, apprenticeships, and students on placement.

- **Professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs)**

PSRBs are a varied group of bodies, regulators and those with statutory authority over a profession or group of professionals. PSRBs may provide membership services and accredit or approve courses as confirmation that the courses meet their standards and expectations.

PSRBs are recognised by employers; achievement of a PSRB-recognised course can be an essential requirement for entry to a particular role or occupation.

- **Employers and other external stakeholders**

Providers are encouraged to engage with employers and other external stakeholders at all stages of course design, approval and review in order to ensure that their courses continue to be relevant and fit for purpose in line with employer needs. There may be mandatory external requirements to involve employers and other external stakeholders in course design, approval and review; providers need to ensure they meet all relevant requirements for external input into their courses. There may be specific groups with whom education providers are required to engage, for example, user groups for courses in, and related to, health and employers for apprenticeships.

- **Guest speakers and visiting academics**

Providers can promote a wider engagement with guest speakers and visiting academics to support and enhance the overall student learning experience. This type of external expertise can provide students and staff with first-hand experience in a specialist area and facilitate students' motivation. It can also help to promote opportunities for networking, and improve community relations and connections between the higher education sector, industry and businesses.

- **Students and alumni**

Students and alumni from similar, and different, courses can provide useful input to course development, evaluation and review. They can also be invited to meet with applicants and new students to share their experiences and manage expectations. (See [Student Engagement Theme](#) for information on how students can be engaged, as partners, in their courses and other quality activities).

Conflicts of interest: Conflicts may arise during engagement or tenure, where providers reasonably believe the interests of one party affect the motivations or impartiality of another. This might include close personal or professional relationships with staff, students, or previous experts involved in their area of responsibility, an excessive influence due to their standing in other roles, or because their inclusion in a team of experts creates an unbalanced view. A conflict of interest might build up over time because of an excessive engagement period or re-engagement by the same provider.

Reciprocal arrangements: These may arise during the engagement or tenure of an external expert, if a reasonable person would interpret one service in exchange for another. For example, if one provider engages an expert from another provider and then provides an expert to the same or closely-related provision in return.

Expectations and Practices

The advice underneath the Expectations and Practices is not mandatory for providers but illustrative of a range of possible approaches.

<p>The Quality Code requires providers to seek external, impartial and independent academic and/or professional expertise ensuring that the standards and quality of a providers' courses cohere with the relevant national qualifications framework, Subject Benchmark Statements, Characteristics Statements and any relevant professional or other requirements. Providers can also use external expertise to identify good practice in learning, teaching and assessment, areas for enhancement and to inform the continuous improvement of their courses.</p>	
EXPECTATIONS FOR STANDARDS	EXPECTATIONS FOR QUALITY
<p>The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework. <i>External experts, including external advisers and external examiners, contribute to course design and approval, course review, setting and maintaining academic standards and alignment with the relevant national qualifications framework, Characteristics Statements and their alignment with Subject Benchmark Statements, and any other requirements, such as those from PSRBs or funding bodies.</i></p>	<p>Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable student's achievement to be reliably assessed. <i>External experts, including relevant PSRBs, employers and other external stakeholders, contribute to course design and review. External examiners play an important role in identifying good practice and making recommendations for enhancement of assessment policies and procedures.</i></p>
<p><i>HWU is able to confirm that it meets the above Expectations for Standards. Reference should be made to the detailed mapping provided against each of the Guiding Principles below as well as mapping documents to the 'Course Design and Development' and 'Annual Monitoring and Review' themes.</i></p>	
<p><i>HWU is able to confirm that it meets the above Expectations for Quality. Reference should be made to the detailed mapping provided against each of the Guiding Principles below, as well as the mapping documents to the 'Course Design and Development', and 'Annual Monitoring and Review' and 'Assessment' themes.</i></p>	
Core Practice(Standards)	Core Practice(Quality)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications frameworks. <i>In practice, this means that external experts contribute to course design, delivery and review and pay due attention to the requirements of the relevant national qualifications frameworks, Characteristics Statements and Subject Benchmark Statements. External examiners comment on the maintenance and application of academic standards through internal marking practices.</i> The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers. <i>In practice, this means that external examiners, and other external experts, comment on whether students have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level.</i> Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them. <i>In practice, this means that the external examiner role for provision in partnership with other organisations is consistent with the degree-awarding body's approved practices and, where appropriate, consideration is given to comparison of cohorts across location and provider.</i> The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent. <i>In practice, this means that providers ensure that appropriate criteria are applied in the engagement of external experts, paying due attention to the relevant expertise of each and the avoidance of conflicts of interest. External examiners comment on the setting, maintenance and application of academic standards through rigorous assessment processes, to the best of their professional knowledge.</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses. <i>In practice, this means that external experts such as advisers and, where relevant, PSRB and employer requirements, inform course design and approval, and course review. Course design and review involves consideration of all elements contributing to the learning journey including staff and resources to deliver a high-quality academic experience.</i> Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them. <i>In practice, this means that at course design, approval and review, and as part of ongoing monitoring, external expertise forms part of the evidence by which providers assure the quality of the student learning experience when working in partnership with other organisations.</i>
Common Practice(Standards)	Common Practice (Quality)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The provider reviews its core practices for standards regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement. <i>In practice, this means that external experts are used to contribute to reviews within a provider and to</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The provider's approach to managing quality takes account of external expertise. <i>In practice, this means that at course design, approval and review, and as part of ongoing monitoring, external expertise forms part of the evidence by which providers manage the quality of the student academic experience. The provider ensures external advisers are engaged to advise on new and revised aspects of provision which may have a substantial impact on the quality of student learning opportunities. This includes new policies, or major changes to these, for example, on student support or access to learning resources.</i>

comment on areas of good practice, innovation and enhancement.

***HWU** is able to confirm that it meets the above Core and Common Practices (Standards). Reference should be should be made to the detailed mapping provided against each of the Guiding Principles, as well as the mapping documents to the 'Course Design and Development', 'Annual Monitoring and Review', 'Assessment' and 'Partnership' themes.*

***HWU** is able to confirm that it meets the above Core and Common Practices (Quality). Reference should be made to the detailed mapping provided against each of the Guiding Principles below, as well as the mapping documents to the 'Course Design and Development' and 'Monitoring and Evaluation' themes.*

Guiding Principles with Mapping from HWU Practices

A 'Reference' document is available to use in conjunction with this mapping document.

The guiding principles given here are not mandatory for any provider. They are a concise expression of the fundamental practices of the higher education sector, based on the experience of a wide range of providers. They are intended as a framework for providers to consider when establishing new or looking at existing higher education provision. They are not exhaustive and there will be other ways for providers to meet their requirements.

Guiding Principles (Standards and Quality)	Heriot-Watt University Practice
<p>1. Providers use one or more external experts as advisers to provide impartial and independent scrutiny on the approval and review of all provision that leads to the award of credit or a qualification.</p> <p>Providers should make use of a range of external experts appropriate to the provision that is being developed or that is under review. These advisers may include PSRBs, employers, subject experts, past students, students and academic staff from other courses, subject librarians, care users, and so on. To ensure independence of decision-making, those involved with the submission of a proposal should not be the same as those who approve it</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with external stakeholders enables the University to adhere to internal and external requirements. • Expectations for the University's degrees are outlined within Part Two of the Code of Practice for the Management of Multi-Location, Multi-Mode Programmes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Principle 2.1 requires that the academic standards and the quality of learning of the University's programmes and awards, across all locations and modes, must meet the formal Expectations of the UK Quality Code and must be properly located in the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework and be consistent with the Subject Benchmark Statements. • Where programmes are accredited by UK Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB), their requirements and guidelines must be taken into account. • Programmes offered outside the UK must also meet the academic standards of, and be aligned with, the qualifications frameworks and other educational requirements of the overseas countries within which the University operates. For example: the Knowledge and Human Development Agency in Dubai; the Malaysian Qualifications Agency and Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia. For Approved Learning Partners, the due diligence and business approval processes ensure that programmes conform to local and national regulatory frameworks. • Expectations for the University's Postgraduate Research programmes of study are detailed within the Handbook on Examining for Research Degrees and the Postgraduate Research Degree Candidate Code of Practice • A range of external expertise contributes to the design, development, delivery and review of the University's courses and programmes in various and multiple ways. Some practices are formalised, particularly processes at the University level, whilst others are common and standard practice embedded into routine daily activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ External Examiners and Chief External Examiners ○ Accrediting bodies such as PSRBs, MQA, KHDA ○ Employers; business; industry partners ○ Industrial Advisory Boards ○ Students (current and past) ○ Internal staff (external to the subject being approved/reviewed) ○ Professional Services staff and staff providing a student support role ○ Independent external consultants (specific example from Edinburgh Business School) ○ External reference points such as the SCQF Framework; QAA Benchmark Statements; QAA Quality Code; HWU academics acting as External Examiners at other HEIs. • School-led development of programmes facilitates the involvement of academic staff with relevant disciplinary expertise and connection to their scholarly communities, professional bodies, learned societies and network of employers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Directors of Learning and Teaching and Directors of Academic Quality, through the work of School Studies Committees ensure that the necessary externality is brought to bear on the process through use of external reference points such as QAA Benchmark Statements, and the views of external stakeholders such as external examiners, PSRBs, industrial advisory boards, employers, business and industry partners. ○ School Studies Committees comprise members from different disciplines, thereby bringing about an element of externality at the design/early approval stages. ○ Advice and feedback is sought from these externals, for example: on the skills knowledge and qualities of students/graduates; to update Schools on employers' expectations; on the currency and appropriateness of the curriculum, assessment, knowledge and skills. ○ With the majority of Heriot-Watt disciplines being accredited by professional bodies, links with employers are integral to the University's undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. As already outlined above, other educational requirements (such as those overseas) must also be considered as part of course design and development. • Where proposed changes to a course or programme involve employment issues, or impact on industrial input, standard practice is to liaise with the relevant stakeholder, eg Industrial Advisory Board to have the proposal reviewed/approved prior to School/University-level approvals. • Funded PhD projects are aligned to national research priorities. Funding for doctoral training provided through Doctoral Training Centres (DTCs) is competitive and subject to strict scrutiny by peer reviewers to ensure it delivers support to national providers. Most DTCs will have a steering body with external members. Allocation of funding within DTCs usually involves a review and ranking process with external partners. • Some PhD students have an external approved supervisor where additional expertise of industrial input is required. • Regular contact is maintained between Schools and the academic support infrastructure (such as Library and IT) to ensure appropriate support for course/programme design and delivery. Sufficiency of resources is also a consideration of approval (as detailed within the University's Academic Approval procedures). • Relevant staff, as appropriate, are able to access information on students' additional assessment needs and their student learning profiles via Faculty Self Service. From a design perspective, adjustments to an assessment might be made to ensure it is fully inclusive. Wellbeing Services provides support for students with additional learning/assessment needs.

- The University supports staff who act as external experts for other institutions, for example: External Examiners (taught and research); participation in programme approval/validation events (taught and research); members of PSRB accreditation panels; members of QAA ELIR Teams.
- Academic staff undertake research, publishing their work and presenting at conferences for scrutiny and discussion. They also act as peer reviewers for other people's work.
- As detailed within the Guidance and Rules Governing Consultancy document, members of academic staff are encouraged to undertake consultancy provided this is not done to an extent which conflicts with the full time duties of the member of staff or with the interests of the University. Academic staff are also supported for taking sabbatical leave, for which procedures are in place. Sabbatical leave is one way by which academic staff remain at the cutting edge of their discipline and bring an external perspective back to the institution.
- Many of the University's academic staff act as External Examiners, enabling them to influence the development of, and to learn from, practice at other institutions.
- Students will contribute at all stages through various methods, for which a number of examples are provided above. Other engagement mechanisms, include:
 - The student body is represented on the University Committees of the Senate (and their sub-committees) where strategic level discussions take place, and which influence the design and re-design of courses and programmes.
 - Student Staff Liaison Committees are key fora to obtain feedback from the student body (via class representatives and School Officers).
 - Through focused forums, students will at times be consulted on proposed key changes to courses such as assessment methods. Key principles for meeting CMA guidelines (eg student consultation on programme/course changes) have been incorporated into the revised Global Code of Practice for the Management, Assurance and Enhancement of Taught Programmes.
 - Other examples of student engagement in the development and review of the curriculum are outlined within the University's mapping to the Student Engagement theme.
- The University's Studies Committee is responsible for (as delegated by the Senate and the University Committee for Quality and Standards) undertaking consideration and approval of the academic conditions associated with the establishing, modifying, or withdrawing undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses, programmes and disciplines. The Studies Committee has a fundamental role in assuring the academic standards of the University's undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes of study.
- The School Research Committee is a formal committee in each School that reports to the University Committee for Research and Innovation. Its responsibilities are detailed within the [Postgraduate Research Degree Candidate Code of Practice](#). As per the COP, each School is required to have a Research Student Committee to discuss the School's research degree provision and report to the School's Research Committee.
- The Research Degrees Committee is responsible for (as delegated by the Senate and the University Committee for Research and Innovation) considering and approving the academic conditions associated with the establishing, modifying, or withdrawing of programmes, and disciplines with respect to research degree programmes and higher doctorates. Each School is represented on the Research Degrees Committee.
- As outlined within the Academic Approval process briefing paper the School Studies Committee is responsible for considering and approving course and programme proposals for onward approval by the University's Studies Committee or Research Degrees Committee.
- The composition of School and University level committees provide independent external expertise:
 - The School Studies Committee, which is the key local committee for quality assurance of taught programmes, includes student representation (usually School Officer(s)), as well as academic representatives from all disciplines. Members will be engaged in discussions related to: programme and course approvals; Annual Monitoring and Review; Academic Review; External Examiner reports and responses, which will in turn influence the design/re-design of courses and programmes. Proposals will be scrutinised by representatives from other disciplines to provide a level of externality at the School approval level.
 - The School Research Committee is a formal committee in each School that reports to the University Committee for Research and Innovation. Its responsibilities are detailed within the [Postgraduate Research Degree Candidate Code of Practice](#) and encompass PGR programmes within the wider research activity of the school. The membership comprises senior research representative from Schools, such as the Director of Research, Heads of Research Institutes or, and PGR co-ordinators.
 - The University Studies Committee is chaired by a Dean of the University and includes representatives from all Schools (who must be able to represent both undergraduate and postgraduate provision) and representatives appointed by the Senate. As confirmed within the Terms of Reference, other colleagues from Schools and Professional Services with detailed knowledge of proposals may be invited to attend.
 - New to the composition of the Studies Committee (which became operational in January 2019) is an external representative from another Scottish Higher Education institution and student representation. A role description document clearly outlines the role of the external, the skills and qualities required and expectations about conflict of interest and confidentiality.
 - The Research Degrees Committee is chaired by the Deputy Vice-Principal (Dubai), and includes representatives from all Schools and representatives appointed by the Senate. As confirmed within the Terms of Reference, senior members of the Professional Services will be invited when the Committee's business requires their attendance.
- In advance of meetings of the University Studies Committee and Research Degrees Committee where programme proposals are considered and approved, each proposal is distributed for scrutiny, to two independent members of the Committee, who will report their findings at the Committee meeting. This process is managed by the Clerk to the Committee.
- The re-approval of programmes is undertaken through the Academic Review process, with teams comprising two, experienced, external subject specialists.
- Outcomes from periodic review processes and quality assurance activities, which require independent external input, will inform future design and development of courses and programmes:
 - Examination Boards are responsible for making decisions on progression and award. The remit, roles, responsibilities and membership of Progression and Award Boards is detailed within the University's Regulations and the [Heriot-Watt University Assessment and Progression System](#). The membership ensures there is an element of externality through the role of the Deans' Representative and the External Examiner (Award Board).
 - As per the University's Regulations, one of the Deans of the University (or their representative) shall be in attendance at every progression and award board. These representatives will be from outwith the Boards' discipline area (and in the majority of cases, School) and will comment upon the efficiency of the boards, particularly noting

	<p>whether fair and consistent consideration of students has taken place in accordance with University and Programme Regulations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The University's External Examiners are primary external contributors. Standard practice at Award Boards is for External Examiners to provide comments on the programme and following discussions with students (through focus groups attended by a spectrum of students across cohorts and range of performance levels). These comments are valued and will be taken into consideration by the discipline Board of Studies for action, as will those more formal comments received in reports submitted as part of the formal External Examiner system. ○ Outcomes from mechanisms such as PhD vivas (ie comments from External Examiners) and Postgraduate Research Experience Surveys are considered by the Research Degrees Committee and may result in revisions being made, for example, to progress rules and monitoring arrangements. ○ The Annual Monitoring and Review process incorporates feedback from external stakeholders, including students, external examiners (taught and research), PSRBs and external partners. A separate but parallel process, which feeds in to AMR process, is Partner Annual Monitoring and Review. The process requires the collaborative production of annual reports and action plans by HWU and the partner institution, which are reviewed by Associate Deans and Academic Quality. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DTCs are generally subjected to a mid-life review process by their external funders. ● A key process for incorporating external expertise into programme review is Academic Review. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The self-reflection element of Academic Review and consequently the production of the reflective document, will incorporate consideration of feedback received from external contributors such as external examiners, PSRB accreditations, industrial advisory boards, employers, business and industry partners. Additionally, students on programmes being reviewed are invited to contribute by writing a reflective 'Student Overview' section. ○ Review Teams incorporate two external subject specialists (one of whom may be a professional/industrialist), and, from Schools other than those being reviewed, there are two student representatives and two senior internal academics. ○ University guidance advises that all self-reflection activities undertaken as preparation for Academic Review activities must be undertaken collectively and collaboratively between the School/Discipline Team and the student body. The extent to which students are involved at the self-evaluation stage varies across the University, and is also dependent upon the time of year that the review is taking place and the School begins its preparations. ● The Academic Review process provides an opportunity for students to contribute to the reflective document by commenting on their student learning experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review Teams will meet with staff and students from the discipline area being reviewed. Guidance is provided for selecting students and staff, and Schools will be advised to include in review meetings staff with student support responsibilities (such as Disability Advisors) and if appropriate, Professional Services staff who provide key support for the discipline. Meetings regularly include former students or graduates. Feedback from IDL and ALP students is usually sought through a targeted survey but there have been times when it has been possible for Review Teams to meet with students by Skype (eg Petroleum Engineering and Edinburgh Business School 2017/18). Efforts will also be made to allow Teams to meet with ALP staff, for example, Petroleum Engineering, 17/18). There have been occasions when it has been possible for Review Teams to meet with ALP staff. ○ Enhancement workshops are undertaken as part of an Academic Review. Academic Quality provides support for the preparation and facilitation of these workshops and encourages wide participation and externality. For example, colleagues from other departments and Schools; current students; alumni (including industrial specialists); staff from professional services in student support and quality roles; employers. The extent to which external participation is achieved varies but wide engagement is encouraged. ● Internal Audit operates on a three year cycle. The process has an explicit focus on assurance and reviews all high-risk activity, including external partnerships. Internal Audit Teams include senior academics/professional service staff from Schools other than those being audited. ● Outcomes from student surveys are not only considered in isolation (ie, where specific action plans are produced, eg NSS) but they also feed into other periodic processes such as AMR and Academic Review. Free-text comments provided as part of the Course Feedback Survey are shared with course teaching teams; these are a very useful part of the survey as they are specific to the course. Students are informed whether (and if so how) any actions will be taken in response to comments submitted through the Virtual Learning Environment. ● Outcomes and action plans following external reviews, such as QAA ELIR and TNE, will be considered and approved by University Committees of the Senate. Implementations will be taken forward in Schools by Directors of Learning and Teaching, Directors of Academic Quality and Directors of Research.
<p>2. Degree-awarding bodies engage independent external examiners to comment impartially and informatively on academic standards, student achievement and assessment processes for all provision that leads to the award of credit or a qualification.</p> <p>External examiners need to be experts on the subject matter and the intended mode(s) of delivery and they will be familiar with quality and standards and quality assurance in a higher education context. Where this cannot be achieved by one external examiner, or the workload is extensive, additional engagements may need to be made, for example, where a programme is accredited by a professional body there may be a requirement for one external examiner with academic expertise and another from professional practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expectations for the University's taught degrees are outlined within Part Two of the Code of Practice for the Management of Multi-Location, Multi-Mode Programmes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Principle 2.1 requires that the academic standards and the quality of learning of the University's programmes and awards, across all locations and modes, must meet the formal Expectations of the UK Quality Code and must be properly located in the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework and be consistent with the Subject Benchmark Statements. ● Expected standards for Postgraduate Research courses of study are detailed within the Handbook on Examining for Research Degrees and the <u>Postgraduate Research Degree Candidate Code of Practice</u> ● The External Examiner system is a key process by which the University ensures the above principles are met and it can be assured that its academic standards are secure, being maintained and comparable with the rest of the sector. The same external examining procedures are applied in all forms of delivery: campus-based, independent distance learning and partnership. ● The Chief External Examiner has oversight of effectiveness of the team of External Examiners (taught), and reports annually on such to the University. ● The University has in place robust nomination processes for the appointment of External Examiners (taught and research), to ensure they are sufficiently experienced and familiar with quality and standards within a higher education context. Appointment criteria ensures external experts involved in the processes are sufficiently impartial and independent, and have the necessary professional experience and knowledge to contribute to the processes. The University Committee for Quality and Standards and the Research Degrees Committee retain oversight of External Examiner appointments. ● Handbooks on External Examining for Taught Courses and Examining for Research Degrees and the Postgraduate Research Degree Candidate Code of Practice provide guidance on appointment criteria and require that Examiners should have experience in the areas of teaching, programme assessment and research as well as technical experience in the

	<p>subject of the degree.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Taught provision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Principle 2.13, Part Two of the Code of Practice for the Management of Multi-Location, Multi-Mode Programmes requires that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External examining procedures for overseas campus, partnership or IDL programmes must be consistent with the University's normal practices. The University will retain ultimate responsibility for the appointment and functions of all External Examiners. • Each School must have at least one Chief External Examiner to provide oversight of all the School's provision across its various modes and locations of delivery. • The University needs to be satisfied that External Examiners have sufficient expertise and experience to enable them to discharge their role effectively. • The Handbook on External Examining for Taught Courses specifies that only persons with the appropriate level of academic and/or professional expertise and experience in relation to the relevant subject area and assessment who are able to command authority should be appointed. However, well qualified candidates with no previous experience as an External Examiner should not be excluded. In such cases, an inexperienced examiner may be appointed to a team of examiners or their appointment may overlap the existing examiner's appointment, in order to receive the appropriate support and guidance. These support mechanisms will be used, for example, where an External Examiner is appointed from industry or business, and has little, or no, academic experience. The approval process allows flexibility in the fulfilment of appointment criteria so as not to restrict the potential pool of examiners and opportunities for individuals to act as first time examiners. ○ For some disciplines, the PSRB requires the external examiner and the internal PSRB examiner to be the same individual. However, with the majority of Heriot-Watt disciplines being accredited by professional bodies, a common position is that the University's External Examiners are members of a relevant PSRB. ○ It is a requirement of the Engineering Accreditation Council Malaysia that members of their accrediting body are appointed as External Examiners for Engineering Programmes delivered in Malaysia. These Examiners have been appointed in addition to the standard External Examiner role. ○ Standard practice at Award Boards is for External Examiners to provide comments on programme standards and outcomes following discussions with students (if these have taken place), for example, through focus groups attended by a spectrum of students across cohorts and range of performance levels). These comments are valued and will be taken into consideration by the discipline Board of Studies for action. ○ External Examiners are required to submit annual reports, which require feedback on specific areas, for example (but not exclusively) programme objectives, consistency with QAA subject benchmark statements; assessment matters; academic standards and comparability with other institutions; areas of good practice; previous actions raised; experience as an examiner. ○ The process for, and circumstances relating to, the termination of a contract, are outlined within the Handbook on External Examining for Taught Courses. This includes, for example (but not exclusively) failure to uphold their duties and emerging conflicts of interest. Information on termination is also communicated within the formal appointment letter. • For PGR provision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expectations for the appointment of External Examiners (Research) are outlined within the Postgraduate Research Regulations, the Postgraduate Research Degree Candidate Code of Practice, but primarily the Handbook on Examining for Research Degrees which includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RDC ensures that at least two Examiners are appointed for each Research Degree Candidate, one of whom must be an External Examiner. Two External Examiners will be appointed, as well as an Internal Examiner, where the Candidate is a member of staff. • All Examiners (research) should normally hold a PhD and have been engaged in appropriate research or equivalent scholarly activity for a number of years. In some circumstances proposed Examiners who are able to provide evidence of equivalent experience and suitable technical competence in a relevant subject area may be appointed. • An Examiner should not hold any position within an industrial sponsor or other organisation that has involvement, whether direct or indirect, with the student's research. This requirement is in place to prevent potential conflicts of interest. • Following approval, a formal letter of appointment is provided, which indicates the name of the candidate, school, degree, Internal Examiner(s) and Supervisor. Early termination of contracts is also included. • Expected standards for Postgraduate Research courses of study are detailed within the Handbook. Each examiner is asked to complete an independent typewritten report on the thesis, using a standard template. • The University supports staff who act as external experts for other institutions. Many of the University's academic staff act as External Examiners, enabling them to influence the development of, and to learn from, practice at other institutions.
<p>3. Degree-awarding bodies have processes for the nomination, approval and engagement of external examiners and other independent external experts.</p> <p>Degree-awarding bodies provide clear guidance and procedures that set out the nomination process for the external examiners and other external advisers that need to be engaged to provide an appropriate range of expertise to inform the design and review of all of its provision. The approval and engagement processes are also clear and transparent, sufficiently robust and avoid conflicts of interest including reciprocal arrangements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University has in place robust nomination processes for the appointment of External Examiners (taught and research). Handbooks on External Examining for Taught Courses and Examining for Research Students and the Postgraduate Research Student Code of Practice provide guidance on appointment criteria, approval processes, roles and responsibilities, and conflict of interest. Approved External Examiners (Taught and Research) receive formal appointment letters. The approval processes and appointment of External Examiners are the responsibility of the University Committee for Quality and Standards and the Research Degrees Committee. • Members of a School Studies Committee are appointed as per its Terms of Reference (see Academic Management Structure). Membership is determined by the individual's role within the School. • The membership of the School Research Committee comprises senior research representative from Schools, such as the Director of Research, Heads of Research Institutes or, and PGR co-ordinators. • As per the COP, each School is required to have a Research Student Committee to discuss the School's research degree provision and report to the School's Research Committee. • For the University Committees of the Senate, the appointment process is managed by the Clerk to the Senate, in line with Section C – Ordinance 4 Standing Committees Of the Senate and the Committee's Terms of Reference. All appointments to the University Studies Committee are approved by the Senate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For the University Studies Committee, Schools are invited to nominate representatives, who should be experienced and able to represent both undergraduate and postgraduate provision. The Senate will also nominate its own representatives on to the membership. ○ For the Research Degrees Committee, Schools are invited to nominate representatives (who are able to represent the School on matters concerning research degree programme). Ordinarily this nominee will be the Director of Postgraduate Research Study (as defined in s.2.10 of the PGR Code of Practice as an academic member of staff

	<p>appointed by a School to oversee the operation of the Code of Practice in the School.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are given the opportunity to interact with externals in various ways, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ guest lectures; ○ PSRB - talks on professional membership; endowed lectureships ○ employer-led tutorials and workshop; ○ pre-recruitment advice sessions and mock interviews; ○ industry-based competitions ○ mentoring in the workplace (through placements/apprenticeships) ○ Exchange students engage with academics from other HE institutions (UK and overseas) ○ Student projects in collaboration with industry, UK and globally ○ Attending research seminars ○ Attending/presenting at conferences/workshops/seminars ○ Presenting work for peer review ○ External collaborators (through a formally approved external 'approved supervisor') ○ Placement opportunities (eg DTCs, EPSRC) ○ Interacting with seminar speakers and visiting academics • Where assessments are undertaken with industrial input only (ie at a HWU campus), academic staff have full control and supervision of all assessments. Where assessments take place away from a University campus (eg industry or exchange), policies, procedures and guidelines are in place which set out the parameters for the planning, approval, delivery, management and assessment of student placements (work and academic), ie, Students Placement Policy and briefing paper, a Guide to Exchange Partnerships; Guidelines on Work Placements. • As per the University's Regulations, one of the Deans of the University (or their representative) shall be in attendance at every progression and award board. These representatives will be from outwith the Boards discipline area and will comment upon the efficiency of the boards, particularly noting whether fair and consistent consideration of students has taken place in accordance with University and Programme Regulations. Representatives, who must meet specific criteria, are nominated by Heads of School and the process is managed by Academic Quality. • The nomination and approval process for members of Academic Review / Academic-Related Professional Services Review Teams is clearly outlined within guidance documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Externals experts on the Review Team are nominated by Schools, and approved by the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching). They must meet specific criteria to ensure they are appropriately experienced and can contribute to the enhancement of the provision. ○ Two internal academics are invited from the academic body (via invitations to Directors of Academic Quality). The internals must have wide knowledge of the University and one must be sufficiently senior to Chair a review. Both representatives are approved by the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching). ○ Two student representatives, appointed by the Student Union. ○ The guidance addresses conflict of interest for the nomination of externals. Internal academics and student representatives must be from Schools different than those being reviewed. • The University has in place processes to ensure compliance with UK employment legislation (see immigration and right to work). • HWU staff working as external experts at other HE institutions is managed at a School level. Conflict of interest and reciprocal arrangements is a standard/routine consideration prior to agreement of the activity.
<p>4. Providers ensure that the roles of those providing external expertise are clear to students, staff and other stakeholders.</p> <p>All providers will provide clear and transparent information on the roles of external experts (examiners and advisers) involved in the assurance of standards, maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the student learning experience. This information will be accessible to students, staff and other stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As outlined within the Academic Approval process briefing paper the School Studies Committee is responsible for considering and approving course and programme proposals for onward approval by the University's Studies Committee. The role of the Studies Committee is clearly outlined within the University's Academic Management Structure. • The School Research Committee is a formal committee in each School that reports to the University Committee for Research and Innovation. Its responsibilities are detailed within the Postgraduate Research Student Code of Practice. • The University's Studies Committee is responsible for (as delegated by the Senate and the University Committee for Quality and Standards) undertaking consideration and approval of the academic conditions associated with the establishing, modifying, or withdrawing undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses, programmes and disciplines. The Studies Committee has a fundamental role in assuring the academic standards of the University's undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes of study. The role of the Committee is clearly defined within its Terms of Reference. • On behalf of the Senate and the University Committee for Research and Innovation, the Research Degrees Committee is responsible for undertaking many of the duties concerning research degree programmes. The Research Degrees Committee will consider and report to UCRI in relation to approving the academic conditions associated with the establishing, modifying, or withdrawing of programmes, and disciplines with respect to research degree programmes and higher doctorates. The Committee also has oversight responsibility for the PGR student experience. The role of the Committee is clearly defined within its Terms of Reference. • The main purposes and functions of the External Examiner (Taught) system and expectations of the role, in relation to the maintenance of academic standards, are outlined within Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Regulations and the Handbooks on External Examining for Taught Courses. For example, scrutiny: of draft assessments and exam papers; sample of scripts and other assessments; attendance at Award Boards. • The main purposes and wider responsibilities of the External Examiner (Research) are incorporated within the Handbook on Examining for Research Degrees and the Postgraduate Research Student Code of Practice. • The Terms of Reference and composition of an Examination Board (which include members from a variety of disciplines, a Dean or their representative, and (if an Award Board) an

External Examiner, is clearly defined within the University Regulations and within the Heriot-Watt University Assessment and Progression System.

- As per the University's Regulations, one of the Deans of the University (or their representative) shall be in attendance at every progression and award board. These representatives will be from outwith the Boards' discipline area and will comment upon the efficiency of the boards, particularly noting whether fair and consistent consideration of students has taken place in accordance with University and Programme Regulations. Responsibilities of these representatives are clearly outlined within examination guidelines documents on the web: Guidelines for Deans, Associate Deans and Representatives; a Deans' Report proforma. Examination guidelines are reviewed and distributed to all Schools, Deans and their representatives on an annual basis.
- A list of External Examiners for all programmes is made available on the web.
- The opportunity for students to review External Examiner (Taught) reports is through UCQS (Student Union President) which receives an annual summary report, and the School Studies Committee (School Officers). The extent to which this practice occurs is variable as there are inconsistencies in practice around the attendance of School Officers at School Studies Committees.
- The main purposes and functions of the External Examiner (Research) in relation to the standards of research degrees is within the Postgraduate Regulations and the Handbook on Examining for Research Degrees. Expected standards for Postgraduate Research courses of study are detailed within the Handbook on Examining for Research Degrees.
- Applicants/students are initially made aware of the accreditation status of a programme of study through information published on the web (ie, "*Course Guide*" information). Specific accreditation information will also be communicated by Programme Teams and on occasions, PSRB affiliates may deliver to students talks on professional membership. Accredited programmes of study are also listed on PSRB websites.
- The accreditation status of a programme of study is also detailed within programme handbooks which are provided to students and External Examiners.
- Students are given the opportunity to interact with externals in various ways, for example:
 - guest lectures;
 - PSRB - talks on professional membership; endowed lectureships
 - employer-led tutorials and workshop;
 - pre-recruitment advice sessions and mock interviews;
 - industry-based competitions
 - mentoring in the workplace (through placements/apprenticeships)
 - Exchange students engage with academics from other HE institutions (UK and overseas)
 - Student projects in collaboration with industry, UK and globally
 - Attending research seminars
 - Attending/presenting at conferences/workshops/seminars
 - Presenting work for peer review
 - External collaborators (through joint projects with supervisors)
 - Placement opportunities (eg DTCs, EPSRC)
 - Interacting with seminar speakers and visiting academics
- *For Exchange and Work Placement (including Graduate Apprenticeships)*
 - For the management of students on placement (work and academic - including Graduate Apprenticeships) roles and responsibilities, assessment, quality assurance and risk, are outlined within policies, procedures and guidelines, ie Students Placement Policy and briefing paper, a Guide to Exchange Partnerships; Guidelines on Work Placements.
 - As outlined in the Student Placements Policy, "irrespective of the form and location of placements, the University remains solely responsible for the academic standards of its awards and the quality of the student learning experience".
 - Information for students on placement or exchange is provided within student handbooks and briefings are provided by HWU academic staff and the host institutions. International Week is an informative event for students joining HWU on exchange. School induction events are provided to all campus-based students (including incoming students).
- *For Exchanges Students:*
 - Each School provides information sessions for outgoing exchange students in advance of their placement. The sessions are attended by the University's Go Global Team. The host institution is also responsible for inducting students.
 - School Exchange Co-ordinators are responsible for the management of student exchanges with support from the Go Global Team.
 - All Erasmus+ Exchange students receive the Erasmus+ Student Charter which highlights their rights and obligations as well as what students can expect from their home and host institutions. The students must also sign an Individual Learning Agreement.
- *For Work Placement students*
 - Each programme with a mandatory, or optional, placement element has a more detailed handbook outlining student, employer and provider responsibilities and the supervisory and reporting arrangements during the placement period.
 - The Student Placements Policy and Guidelines outlines the roles and responsibilities at HWU and the placement provider.
 - The Guidelines on the Management of Work Placements advises that tutors are responsible for contacting students whilst on work placement, preferably with a visit.
 - Wherever possible site visits by an academic supervisor are conducted in person, if this is not possible then virtual visits through Skype are conducted.
 - Individual Schools are responsible for the management of student work placements, with support and guidance from the Careers Service.
- *For Graduate Apprenticeships*
 - Graduate Apprenticeship students receive a Graduate Apprenticeship Handbook (hard copy and e-version on the GA hub).
 - Roles and responsibilities for the student, HWU staff and the placement provider are outlined within the handbook.
 - Workplace visits are normally undertaken by the Personal Tutor, once per quarter.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Individual learning agreements are prepared for all students in collaboration with the student and the Personal Tutor. ○ Assessment arrangements are outlined within the handbook. • Where assessments are undertaken with industrial input only (ie at a HWU campus), academic staff have full control and supervision of all assessments. Where assessments take place away from a University campus (eg industry or exchange), policies, procedures and guidelines are in place which set out the parameters for the planning, approval, delivery, management and assessment of student placements (work and academic), ie, Students Placement Policy and briefing paper, a Guide to Exchange Partnerships; Guidelines on Work Placements. Assessment arrangements for Graduate Apprenticeships are also outlined within the Graduate Apprenticeship Handbook. • Key roles and responsibilities for monitoring and review processes such as External Examiners, AMR, Academic Review, Academic-Related Professional Services Review and Internal Audit are defined within Handbooks and guidance materials on the web.
<p>5. Providers ensure that external experts are given sufficient and timely evidence and training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities.</p> <p>External examiners and external advisers will need to be supported by the provider to fully understand and appropriately fulfill the role that they are asked to undertake. This may include a range of training and guidance and may vary depending on any previous experience in the role. External experts will need access to a range of evidence to enable them to fulfill their role; providers should be clear on what evidence will be provided and ensure that it is made available in a timely manner in line with the requirements of the experts' responsibilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Taught Provision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Those involved in course and programme approval decisions will receive guidance and support for reviewing proposals and making decisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior and experienced academics are members of the School Studies Committee (eg, Head of School, Directors of Learning and Teaching, Directors of Academic Quality, Heads of Disciplines). Where staff are new in their role on the Committee, they will receive support and guidance from more experienced members and their predecessors. They will bring to the committee their own expertise as experienced academics. The Terms of Reference for the School Studies Committee is clearly outlined within the Academic Management Structure. • Members of the School Studies Committee will be supported and guided by the Chair who, as the Head or Director of Academic Quality, is an experienced, senior academic. • Experienced School representatives are appointed to the University Studies Committee. New members are supported by existing members, with whom they are paired for scrutinising proposals. In January 2019, when the new single Studies Committee came into operation, new committee members were briefed by previous members on the process for scrutinising proposals. There needs to be formal briefing materials/inductions provided. • Evidence is provided in a timely manner, in line with schedules of meetings for School Studies Committees and the University Studies Committee (for which deadline dates are set and published). • External Examiners (Taught) are informed about their responsibilities, the External Examiner process and key aspects of the University's quality assurance processes through the provision of a Handbook, formal appointment letters and induction sessions delivered by Academic Quality and Schools. • Support mechanisms are in place for less experienced External Examiners through for example, the overlapping of appointments and/or appointing to a team of examiners. • Evidence provided to External Examiners (Taught) is timely and sufficient, so as to allow them to undertake their duties. Available evidence is detailed within the Handbook on External Examining for Taught Courses. Evidence includes documentary information such as draft exam papers, sample scripts and assessment data (such as course mark sheets). Examiners will also have an opportunity to meet with a representative sample of students across a cohort and range of performance levels. ○ For As per the University's Regulations, one of the Deans of the University (or their representative) shall be in attendance at every progression and award board. For undertaking their duties, guidance materials are available on the web (including a standard report proforma). A briefing session is delivered on an annual basis by a Dean of the University for Chairs and Deans' Representatives at Examination Boards. ○ The Terms of Reference and composition of an Examination Board is clearly defined within the University Regulations and within the Heriot-Watt University Assessment and Progression System. Examination Boards are chaired by senior academics (such as the Head of School) who are able to support and guide members of the Board and are attended by External Examiners where Award decisions are being made. All Chairs must attend at least one briefing session delivered by a Dean of the University (although staff are encouraged to re-attend for refreshment purposes). The Terms of Reference also outlines minimum attendance requirements, which will ensure there is sufficient representation of experienced staff. • For Research Provision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expectations for the University's Postgraduate Research programmes of study, as well as the main purposes and wider responsibilities of the External Examiner (Research), are detailed within the University's Regulations, the Handbook on Examining for Research Degrees and the Postgraduate Research Degree Candidate Code of Practice. ○ Decisions regarding programme approvals are made by staff with the knowledge and experience to take an informed view and who bring to the committee their own expertise as academics. This is achieved as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through using senior and experienced academics (e.g. School Directors of PGR, members of School Research Committees, Deans, Senate Members). • Where staff are new in their role or to the Committee, by pairing them with more experienced members. • Through support and guidance from the Chair who is an experienced, senior, academic. • Through providing materials in a timely manner, in line with the meetings of the Research Degrees Committee (for which deadline dates are set). • Expectations of External Examiners (Research) and the role of the Examiner are outlined within the Postgraduate Research Regulations, the Handbook on Examining for Research Students and the Postgraduate Research Student Code of Practice. Additionally, Guidelines for the Internal Examiner outline requirements for liaising with the External in advance of the viva. • Expected standards for Postgraduate Research programmes of Study are detailed within the Handbook on Examining for Research Degrees and each examiner is asked to complete an independent typewritten report on the thesis, for which a template is available (with guidance). Guidance for writing the independent report is also provided within the Handbook. • Approved External Examiners will receive a formal letter of appointment which indicates the name of the candidate, school, degree, Internal Examiner(s) and Supervisor.

- The relevant Student Service Centre will ensure that each Examiner is sent a copy of the thesis, together with information on how to access the appropriate Academic Regulations, guidelines and report forms using the Academic Registry website:

- On an annual basis, statistical data will be considered at all levels and outcomes will feed into programme development/design. Programme Teams will review statistics and look for patterns that might identify particular groups of students being disadvantaged. The Planning Office provides Schools with the data they require to undertake relevant and timely analysis, for improving course design, learning and decision-making. The University Committee for Learning and Teaching will review a suite of key performance indicators and other statistics provided by the Planning Office and the Equality and Diversity Officer, along with associated action plans from Schools.
- Annual Monitoring and Review guidance materials are available on the web, which include timelines for undertaking the activity. An annual briefing session is delivered by Academic Quality. Expectations of the AMR process are clarified, with an emphasis on expectations around the monitoring of external partnerships through the Partner Annual Monitoring and Review process. The School-level Review Template, completed as part of the Annual Monitoring and Review process, incorporates guidance for completion. Academic Quality supports Schools with the undertaking of this activity and delivers an annual briefing session (in 2018, two briefing sessions were delivered).
- Academic Review Teams are directed to guidance materials (including an audio presentation) on the web and receive a face-to-face briefing session from Academic Quality, to ensure all members are clear about their role in advance of reviews taking place. Additionally, Academic Quality provides support and guidance to Review Team members during and after a review event. During a review Teams will meet with a range of students and staff from the provision being reviewed. Timescales for undertaking this activity are clearly outlined within guidance materials on the web. Teams are provided with various documents including a reflective analysis document, programme specifications, monitoring and review reports, responses from ALP/IDL student surveys.
- Internal Audit Teams comprise senior staff including the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching), a Dean of the University and a Director of Academic Quality/Director of Learning and Teaching. An Internal Audit Handbook and a briefing paper provides guidance and a timeline, for undertaking an Audit. Team members are also guided and supported by the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) and the Academic Quality team.
- Evidence submitted as part of an external review or accreditation event, eg a PSRB accreditation, or the MQA, is done so in line with the accrediting bodies specified timescales.
- The Student Union provides assistance and training for the Sabbatical Officers and School Officers to enable them to be effective in their committee roles and to participate in quality assurance processes such as Academic Review.

6. Providers have effective mechanisms in place to provide a response to input from external examiners and external advisers.

External examiners and external advisers offer an important service to providers to ensure that all provision can meet a range of requirements including the achievement of quality standards and quality assurance, alignment with external frameworks, standards and benchmarks and a range of other stakeholder needs. Providers will have effective measures in place to ensure that input from external experts is considered, and where appropriate is actioned, a timely and reasoned response is made to the experts on actions taken or not taken as a consequence.

- The External Examiner (Taught) system involves a clear, systematic process for the completion, submission and review of reports. The process is clearly outlined within a Procedure document for review of External Examiner reports for taught programmes. A report proforma is available and guidance for completing the proforma is provided within the Handbook on External Examining for Taught Courses.
- The report from the External Examiner (Taught) is considered within the School, and a response letter produced, which may highlight actions to be taken to address issues raised. The report and response letter are reviewed by a Dean of the University and the Head of Academic Quality. In exceptional circumstances the documents will be reviewed by the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching).
- The School's review of the External Examiner (Taught) reports is reported upon as part of the Annual Monitoring and Review and Academic Review processes.
- Academic Quality maintains a central register of the University's External Examiner appointments, which includes all relevant information such as period of office, date of receipt of report and date of dispatch of response letter.
- The Handbook on External Examining for Taught Courses explains that External Examiners have the right to "submit a separate, confidential report to one or more of the Senior Officers of the University: the Dean of the University; the Senior Dean of the University; the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching); the Principal and Vice-Chancellor".
- The opportunity for students to review External Examiner (Taught) reports is through UCQS (Student Union President) which receives an annual summary report, and the School Studies Committee (School Officers). The extent to which this practice occurs is variable as there are inconsistencies in practice around the attendance of School Officers at School Studies Committees.
- As outlined within the Handbook on Examining for Research Degrees, each Examiner, having read the thesis, should prepare an individual typewritten report in advance of the viva. The report should cover all relevant issues arising from the candidate's thesis that the examiner wishes to highlight. Each report should be prepared on the Individual Examiner's Report Form template available on the Thesis Examination web page. The Examiners should discuss their individual reports before the start of the examination and a Joint Examiner Report Form will be completed after. In the unlikely situation where no viva takes place, the Joint Examiner Report Form will be completed and signed off by correspondence, and reported to RDC to approve or recommend appropriate action.
- Course and programme approvals are formally recorded within the minutes of the relevant School and University-level Studies Committee minutes.
- Academic Quality retains a central register of PSRB accreditations which is reviewed on an annual basis with Schools. Outcomes from professional accreditation visits are responded to by the School and a summary report on the outcomes is submitted to the University Committee for Quality and Standards on an annual basis. A formal part of Annual Monitoring and Review and Academic Review, is the reporting of PSRB accreditation outcomes occurring within the period under review.
- As per the Examination Guidelines (*see Document 1*), Examination Board decisions must be formally recorded within the minutes for which there is a standard template.
- A Dean or a Dean's representative from outwith the academic discipline is in attendance at every Exam Board at which progression and award decisions are made. These representatives are required to submit a report, for which there is a Dean's Report Proforma available on the web. Following the submission of all reports, Academic Quality produces an annual summary report for consideration and approval by the University Committee for Quality and Standards, and where relevant, an action plan addressing issues raised.
- The Committees of Senate receive for approval, reports and action plans following the completion of key quality assurance activities, including External Examiners, Academic Review and Annual Monitoring and Review (for which a key element is partner annual monitoring). Additionally, a 'summary of summaries' report is produced, summarising the outcomes of all key quality assurance activities.
- Outcomes from student surveys are not only considered in isolation (ie, where specific action plans are produced, eg NSS) but they also feed into other periodic processes such as AMR and Academic Review. Free-text comments provided as part of the Course Feedback Survey are shared with course teaching teams; these are a very useful part of the survey as they are specific to the course. Students are informed whether (and if so how) any actions will be taken in response to comments submitted through the Virtual Learning Environment.
- Outcomes from mechanisms such as PhD vivas (ie comments from External Examiners) and Postgraduate Research Experience Surveys are considered by the Research Degrees Committee and may result in revisions being made, for example, to progression rules and monitoring arrangements.
- Outcomes and action plans following external reviews, such as QAA ELIR and TNE, will be considered and approved by University Committees of the Senate. Implementations will be taken forward in Schools by Directors of Learning and Teaching, Directors of Academic Quality and Directors of Research.

