

A guide to external examining at DMU

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This guide provides an overview on the external examining process (for taught provision), at De Montfort University (DMU).

It is intended both for external examiners appointed to DMU programmes, and for members of DMU staff who deal with external examiners as part of their role.

For forms, templates, and further guidance about external examining, please contact:

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This guide relates to all taught provision. Guidance on external examiners for research provision is available from the Graduate School Office. It draws upon both the University's Handbook and Regulations for Undergraduate Awards and the Taught Postgraduate Programmes University Regulations.

Introduction

De Montfort University (DMU) complies fully with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B7: External Examining, October 2011. External examining provides one of the principal means for the maintenance of nationally comparable standards within autonomous Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). External examiners act as independent and impartial advisors and provide informed comment on the standards set and student achievement in relation to those standards. External examining is therefore an integral and very important part of institutional quality assurance.

External examiners ensure that:

- Postgraduate awards, degrees and intermediate awards granted by the university are comparable in standard to those of other HEIs
- Awards comply with national threshold standards in subjects
- The assessment system is fair and is fairly operated
- Management of processes for progression of students and for determining awards provides for equity of treatment

In addition, external examiners are required to advise on curriculum development and design – the currency, relevance and coherence of curricular material.

No postgraduate award, degree or intermediate award of the university shall be awarded without participation in the assessment process by at least one external examiner. External examiners are responsible to both the vice-chancellor of the university and to the Academic Board which appoints them. The point of contact between the university and an external examiner for the notification of appointment, for the clarification of formal requirements and duties, and for the external examiner's reports is the chair of the External Examiner and Reviewer Appointments Committee.

External examiners are appointed to serve on assessment boards with responsibility for programmes. The number of external examiners appointed to any particular assessment board should be sufficient to cover the full range of duties for which the board is responsible. External examiners are also appointed to cover provision validated by the university but arranged and offered by collaborative partners.

For information regarding the university structure, please visit the governance pages of the [DMU website](#).

Whilst the university recognises the importance of DMU staff partaking in external examiner duties at other institutions, this guide is not intended to cover members of DMU staff who wish to take on an external examining role elsewhere. Further support can be gained from the Learning and Development team although the appointing institution should provide full training and support. For additional guidance, please refer to the [Higher Education Academy](#) external examining handbook.



External Examining – an overview

About External Examining

External examiners confirm that:

- DMU's awards are comparable in standard to awards granted by other institutions
- They comply with national threshold standards
- The assessment of students is fair.

They are provided with appropriate evidence to make their judgements and are explicitly asked to confirm standards and the fairness of assessment in the annual reports they submit each academic session. In addition external examiners provide advice on curriculum development.

Who are they?

External examiners are subject experts appointed from other institutions or from industry and are normally in post for 4 years.

Appointment Process

Timescales

Examiners who are due to complete their appointments in the summer and autumn terms must be replaced by the 31st March of the previous session. Those appointments completing in November and after must submit nomination forms no later than the 31st May. Newly validated programmes must nominate an external examiner nomination form soon after the validation.

How to appoint an external examiner

Allow sufficient time (at least 12 months) before an external examiner is due to start their term of office to identify a suitable external examiner of the appropriate calibre, appraise them of their role and then follow the correct university appointment procedures:

- Approach possible nominees
- Review [appointment criteria](#)
- Complete nomination, extension, reallocation of duties form and obtain internal endorsements from Head of School/Department and Head of Quality
- Email form to the Quality Officer (External Examiners) in DAQ and await decision from the External Examiner and Reviewer Appointments Committee
- Confirmation of approval will be sent by DAQ. The examiner is not formally in post until the examiner has accepted the appointment. Further confirmation of acceptance will also be sent by DAQ.

After appointment approval

Information sent from DAQ

- Appointment letter
- Web link to the current undergraduate/ postgraduate regulations
- Web link to the current General Regulations and Procedures Affecting Students
- Web link to the guide to external examining at DMU
- University administrative arrangements for the operation of the external examining system

Information sent by the faculty/validation service partner

- Full programme and module specifications (templates)
- Programme information
- Professional body requirements (if applicable)
- Student handbooks
- Summary of review and evaluation reports
- Dates of assessment board meetings and timeline of expected work
- Relevant discipline assessment criteria, marking schemes, model answers, etc

Role and Responsibilities

External examiners are specifically required to scrutinise and advise on curriculum development and design, standards and assessment.

Role in assessment

Examiners are expected to:

- Be consulted on all draft assessments
- Sample work (see the [Assessment and Feedback Policy](#) for more information)
- Attend assessment boards

Whilst it is not a DMU requirement to meet students to assist in the evaluation of the appropriateness of assessment methodologies, examiners are advised to do so.

Reporting

External examiners are required to submit written reports on an annual basis to the university using the standard report proforma within one month after the main assessment board and before payment of fees is authorised. Such reports should cover the full range of activities with which the examiner has been involved.

How reports are processed

- Received centrally and circulated to faculties and relevant collaborative partners by DAQ within 3 working days of receipt
- Initial response sent from the dean (or representative) within 28 days of receipt
- Full response sent from the board chair/programme leader after discussion at the management board. The response should be sent within 2 weeks of that meeting.
- An overview report will be written by DAQ and presented to the Academic Quality Committee (AQC).

Fees

Each faculty office has responsibility for paying all fees and expenses of its external examiners. The annual fee is paid on receipt of an external examiners report and also on submission of the claim form.

Undergraduate

Annual fee = £360.00

Visit fee = £90.00 per visit

Postgraduate

Annual fee = £360.00

Visit fee = £90.00 per visit

Viva fee = £90.00

Dissertation fee = £12.00 per dissertation up to £180.00

Useful resources

Publication	Website
A Guide to External Examining at DMU	dmu.ac.uk/external-examiners
Assessment & Feedback Policy	dmu.ac.uk/teaching-learning-assessment
Louise Newell, Quality Officer (External Examiners)	lnewell@dmu.ac.uk x6076
OAA Quality Code	http://www.oaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code
HEA External Examiners Handbook	https://www.headcam.ac.uk/system/files/downloads/JHE_Academy_External_Examiners_Handbook_2012.pdf

Section 1: Appointing an external examiner

Guidance for identifying potential external examiners

Approximately a year before an external examiner's term of office is due to expire, the Quality Officer (External Examiners/Awarding Bodies) will advise the faculty head of quality that replacement examiners must be sought. Board chairs/programme teams are advised to start looking for replacement examiners at this point. In addition, the Faculty Academic Committee (FAC) should review the whole of the faculty's external examiner provision at the beginning of every academic year and identify external examiners coming to the end of their term of appointment the following academic year.

When presenting new modules or programmes for university approval, the board/programme team concerned should indicate whether new external examiners will be required. Once the modules or programmes have received university approval it is the responsibility of the faculty to ensure nominations are sought. This should be done as soon after the validation as possible to ensure that external examiners are in place for the commencement of the new programme or modules. If the programme is not likely to recruit in the following academic session, the faculty is responsible for informing the Department of Academic Quality (DAQ) to ensure that the central records are up to date.

The number of external examiners appointed to any particular assessment board should be sufficient to cover the full range of studies for which the board is responsible. Wherever possible, arrangements should be made to stagger appointments of new external examiners to provide continuity within an examining team.

External examiners appointed to examine provision validated by the university but arranged and offered by collaborative partners should be external both to the university and the collaborative partner concerned.

Faculties sometimes encounter difficulties in finding appropriate external examiners. It is therefore prudent to allow sufficient time (at least 12 months) before an external examiner is due to start their term of office to identify a suitable external examiner of the appropriate calibre, appraise them of their role and then follow the correct university appointment procedures. With this in mind, the following guidance for locating external examiners is offered.

Potential sources of new external examiners

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

The faculty may contact departments at other HEIs delivering similar programmes to see if staff may wish to become external examiners.

Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs)

PSRBs may have lists of approved external examiners which can be used.

Members of validation panels

The external subject specialist on previous validation events may be suitable as an external examiner, or may be able to recommend suitable external examiners. The faculty should balance the benefits of engaging someone who is familiar with the programme and its rationale with any risk to their ability to provide a fully independent perspective.

Current external examiners

Current external examiners may be able to suggest potential candidates; however, replacement externals should not be from the same department as the retiring external examiner. Programme teams should avoid external examiners rotating in regular order from institution to institution.

Discussion forums

JISC mail is a national academic mailing service, facilitating discussion, collaboration and communication within the UK academic community. This discussion forum is specifically for external examiners and those who are involved with external examiner processes. The forum can also be used to seek out prospective external examiners: jiscmail.ac.uk. To join, individuals are required to subscribe to the relevant forum to enable access.

Selection and appointment criteria

The authority for appointing external examiners rests solely with the Academic Board, which may, however, delegate this responsibility to the Academic Quality Committee (AQC). In line with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B7: External examining, October 2011, the university has adopted the national appointment criteria to ensure that examiners are competent to undertake their duties and to ensure that conflicts of interest are identified and resolved prior to appointment.

In appointing external examiners, the AQC shall have regard to the following:

Academic standing and examining experience

External examiners will be expected to have:

- Knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality.
- Competence and experience in the field covered by the programme of study, or parts thereof.
- Relevant academic qualifications/professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate.
- Academic and teaching experience at the level at which assessment is taking place including competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures (either externally or internally). External examiners from outside the higher education system,¹ for example, from industry or the professions, may be appointed where appropriate; but each board shall have at least one external examiner who has recent examining experience at the relevant level and who is familiar with the standards required for comparable programmes.
- 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.
- Familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed.
- Fluency in English, and where programmes are delivered and assessed in languages other than English, fluency in the relevant language(s) (unless other secure arrangements are in place to ensure that external examiners are provided with the information to make their judgements).
- Met the applicable criteria set out by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies.
- Awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula.
- Competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

Colleagues who are new to external examining or have professional experience relevant to a professional or vocational programme can be appointed with detailed [mentoring arrangements](#) approved by the faculty

¹ Care should be taken to avoid appointing external examiners from outside the sector for the purpose of consultation on the appropriateness of curriculum design to a profession or vocation. External advice and guidance should be sought during the curriculum development, approval and review process rather than during the assessment process.

head of quality. In such circumstances AQC will have due regard to the internal examining experience of nominees. Retirees can be considered provided they have sufficient evidence of continuing involvement in the academic area in question.

Volume of work

An external examiner should not normally be appointed if this would entail holding more than two concurrent external examinerships covering taught provision. The nominee should provide further information indicating wherever possible the volume of work associated with each examinership.

Independence and impartiality of the external examiner

External examiners shall be entirely independent of De Montfort University (DMU) and any partner institutions. External examiners should not normally be appointed if they have had close and persistent contact with a current member of staff of the university (or partner) at any time during the previous five years (either prior to, or during, their employment at the university or collaborative partner).

To avoid potential conflicts of interest, external examiners should not be appointed if they are covered by any of the following categories or circumstances:

- A member of a governing body or committee of DMU or one of its collaborative partners, or a current employee of DMU or one of its collaborative partners.
- Anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme of study.
- Anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study.
- Anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study.
- Anyone significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme(s) or modules in question. (However, for example, the contributions of university staff to edited works will not normally preclude the editor from consideration as an external examiner).

Nominating an individual who has acted as an external panel member for the validation of the programme is acceptable; however the faculty should balance the benefits of engaging someone who is familiar with the programme and its rationale with any risk to their ability to provide a fully independent perspective.

Any examiner, once appointed, who has a potential conflict of interest (for example being related to or a close friend of a student under consideration), must declare that interest to the chair of the appropriate assessment board(s) as soon as the possibility arises, and should not normally be expected to be the examiner for the student concerned.

No more than one external examiner should be appointed from the same department of the same institution.

Reciprocal arrangements between institutions involving cognate programmes are not permitted. An external examiner should not be appointed from a department in which a member of DMU is serving as an external examiner. To ensure this does not occur, faculties and nominees will be asked to confirm (on the nomination form) that external examiners are not being exchanged. In order to assist with this requirement, a list of members of staff and their external examiner appointments should be kept up to date on an annual basis by the head of school/department and a copy circulated to the faculty head of quality.

If a member of DMU staff applies to be an external examiner in the same department in which one of our own existing external examiners is based, then the member of DMU staff must decline the appointment. It is also hoped that all universities are following the national appointment criteria and would therefore turn down the nomination on the basis of a reciprocal arrangement. If a reciprocal arrangement is discovered at a later date or is created when our existing examiner moves to another institution, the appointment will be reviewed.

The replacement of an external examiner from an institution by a colleague from the same department in the same institution is not permitted.

The External Examiner and Reviewer Appointments Committee (EERAC) will take into account where there is a legitimate case for making an appointment that does not fulfil all the criteria for example where external examiners are drawn from business, industry or the professions. Nominees from these backgrounds make a significant contribution to external examining across a range of disciplines but may be unable to fulfil all the criteria. Whilst these nominees may possess considerable professional experience they may not have the formal qualifications anticipated, the academic background, or sufficient experience of assessment. Likewise, a team may wish to appoint an external examiner who has, as a researcher, eminent standing in the respective discipline, but lacks experience in providing and enhancing the student learning experience. The committee will consider such cases formally as exceptions to the criteria. This consideration may be assisted where the appointee is not the sole external examiner for the award; hence his or her expertise is complemented by that of others who do satisfy the criteria.

Where an appointee does not fulfil all the criteria, the team should take steps to provide appropriate training and support in relation to academic expectations for example in the form of a mentor. The committee will also make appropriate use of exceptions when addressing nominations for external examiners in disciplines which are very small and specialist and where the pool of potential external examiners is therefore restricted.

Members and former members of De Montfort University and collaborative partner staff

Former members of the university (and collaborative partners) staff shall not be appointed as external examiners before a lapse of at least five years, or sufficient time for students taught by that member of staff to have completed their registration at the university, whichever is the longer (the same shall apply in respect of former members of collaborative partners).

Guidance for collaborative provision

External examiners who cover collaborative provision are appointed by the faculty owning the programme(s) or in the case of validation service programmes by the partner with the assistance of Educational Partnerships, in the same way as for other provision within the university. The usual appointment criteria will apply and an external examiner who will be responsible for programmes at other collaborative partners must be entirely independent to all sites and staff involved.

There are no requirements for the appointed external examiner to visit all locations although examples of work from all sites where the module is delivered must be available as part of the module sample. Examiners should be made aware of which sample is from which site to enable them to comment in their annual report appropriately.

In the annual report examiners are asked to advise on the comparability of standards and the effectiveness of assessment arrangements across sites where modules are delivered at more than one location. Examiners are also asked to be specific about the locations to which the comments refer to enable appropriate action.

Period of office

The period of office of an external examiner shall be four years normally from 1 October. The period of office of an external examiner shall not normally exceed four years, but may be extended **exceptionally** by AQC for a further year to ensure continuity.

An external examiner may be reappointed in exceptional circumstances but only after a period of five years or more has elapsed since their last appointment.

Extending appointments

In exceptional circumstances applications for extensions of appointment length for one year only will be considered by the appointments committee eg during a transitional phase or to ensure continuity within the examining team. A reallocation of duties ie to include further or new modules/programmes will also be considered however the number of current external examiner appointments (including those at DMU) will be taken in to account.

All applications for extensions of office or reallocation of duties must be submitted on the appropriate form (available from the DAQ website dmu.ac.uk/external-examining). All sections must be completed fully and must include a robust rationale. The board chair/head of school/department, the faculty head of quality and the dean must endorse the extension via email before the form and the internal endorsements are emailed to DAQ and for onward submission to the appointments committee.

Appointment process

When a potential external examiner has been identified, and before the appointment forms are completed, the faculty (usually the head of department/school or the programme leader) should give the proposed external a brief appraisal of the role and responsibilities (described later in this guide), an indication of the number of visits involved and an overview of the university's academic regulations, to ensure that the proposed external will be able to fulfil their duties. It is recommended that the head of department/school or programme leader in consultation with appropriate colleagues (the dean, faculty head of quality and/or subject team) enter into a dialogue with the potential external and gain his/her informal agreement to act. It is also useful if relevant programme/academic regulation briefing material is sent to the proposed examiner.

The programme/subject team should be mindful of the appointment criteria and ensure that the proposed external examiner meets these standards. The faculty should also ensure that the nominee is eligible to work in the UK and therefore meets the UK Visas and Immigration requirements before nomination.

The head of school/board chair/programme leaders should check to ensure that no member of the school/department staff has been appointed as external examiners to a board at which the nominee is a member or submits assessments for consideration. In order to assist with this requirement, a list of members of staff and their external examiner appointments should be kept up to date on an annual basis by the head of school/department and a copy circulated to the faculty head of quality.

Any intellectual property difficulties, such as might arise from the need for commercial confidentiality, should be resolved prior to appointment.

Nomination form

In order to recommend a nominee for the external examining role, a nomination form must be completed. The form can be located on the DAQ website (dmu.ac.uk/external-examining). The form should be completed electronically using the tab key to navigate from field to field. Do not convert the form to a PDF document in case amendments need to be made.

- The nomination form along with all internal endorsements should normally be completed and submitted by the end of March for appointments due to start in the following academic session. For all nominations received after this date, an explanation for the late submission is required. If the programme is validated after the deadline, this information should also be included in this section.
- Before the form is submitted, ensure that the nominee meets **all** of the [appointment criteria](#).
- Provide a rationale for **all** nominations and if required provide details of the mentor support for the nominee.
- **Ensure all sections are completed.** Failure to do this may result in the nomination form being returned which will cause a delay in the appointment process.
- Once the form has been completed, it should be emailed (with the nominees CV) to the board chair/head of school/department/division requesting that they forward the form in an email with endorsement to the faculty head of quality. In some faculties, the form will need to be sent directly to the faculty head of quality. Teams will need to ensure that they are aware of individual faculty procedures.
- By endorsing the form the head of department/school is confirming that none of the staff of the faculty are serving as examiners in the nominee's department and also that they have paid due regard to the PSRB requirements where relevant.
- The faculty head of quality will forward the form with approvals to the pro vice-chancellor/dean for endorsement. The complete email trail with the form attached will then be sent to the Quality Officer (External Examiners) in DAQ. The form must not be submitted without the internal endorsements attached.
- For validation service programmes, internal endorsement will be required from the collaborative partner from the curriculum area manager (or equivalent), the HE manager (or equivalent) and the head or manager of Educational Partnerships at DMU.
- It is important to note that an external examiner cannot be considered to have been appointed until the board chair/head of school and programme leader have been formally notified by DAQ that the nominee has accepted the appointment.

After the nomination form has been submitted

Applications for appointment will be processed by the Quality Officer (External Examiners/Awarding Bodies). To facilitate the work of the External Examiner and Reviewer Appointments Committee, the Quality Officer will check all proposals against the university's appointment criteria and refer back those proposals which fall short of the criteria for clarification or further information.

Where appropriate, following the submission of supporting material (if necessary), proposals shall be submitted to the External Examiner and Review Appointments Committee of the AQC. The committee consists of the head of academic quality as chair and four senior faculty representatives, one from each faculty. The committee conducts all of its business by correspondence, and where necessary, will refer proposals back to the relevant faculty for further information.

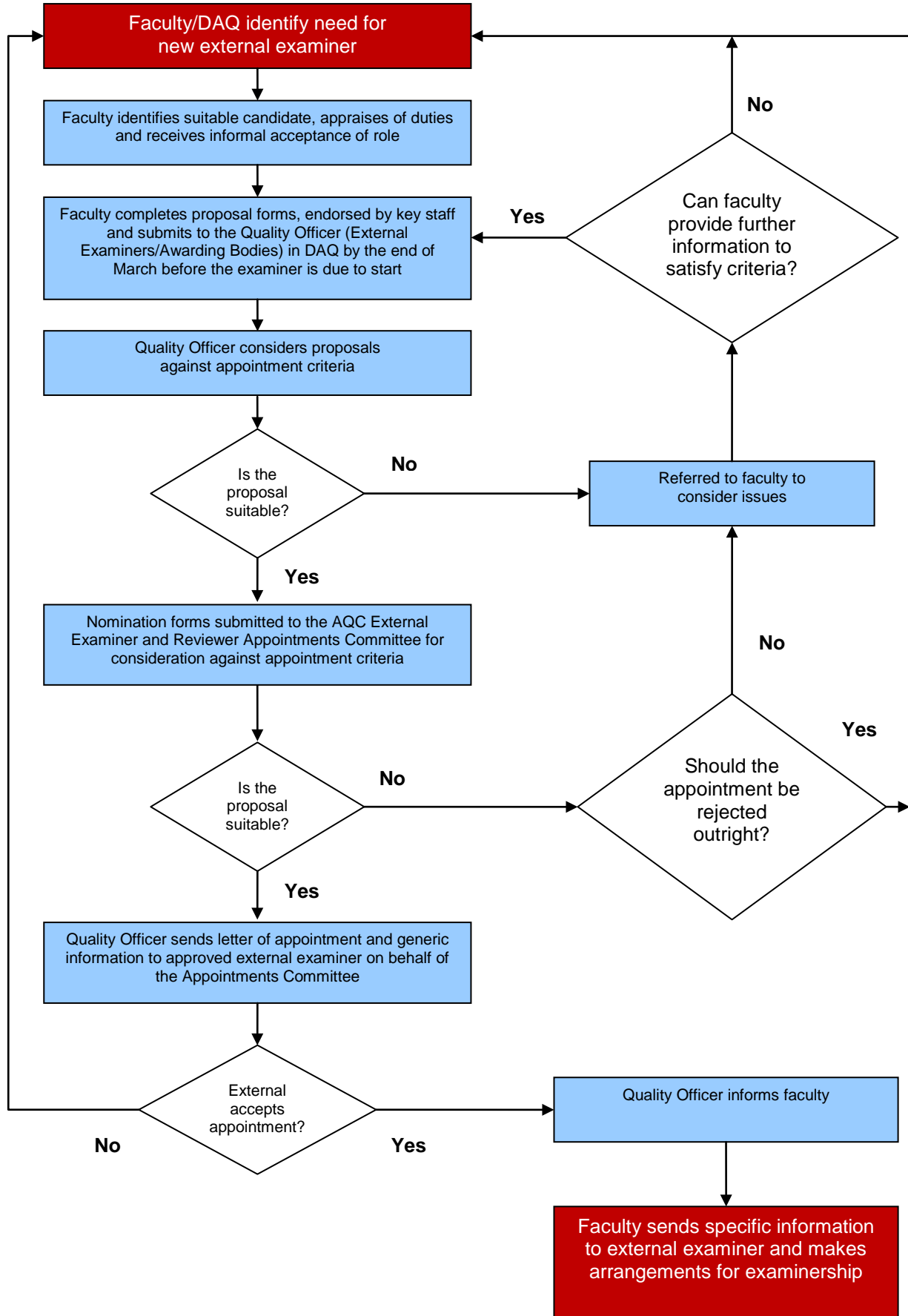
Members will not be expected to approve appointments from their own faculty. The four eligible members will be required to make a decision based on the appointment criteria. In exceptional circumstances when members are absent; a decision may be made with fewer members or by chairs action.

Where nominations have been rejected, an entirely new nomination will be sought. The faculty will be advised of the reasons for rejections and of the options available. Appeals against decisions made by the appointments committee may be discussed further at the AQC. It is the responsibility of the faculty to inform the candidate that their nomination has been rejected by the committee.

On approval, the Quality Officer (External Examiners/Awarding Bodies) will issue an appointment letter to the examiner and also ensure that the relevant members of staff are informed of the decision.

Each approval made by the appointments committee shall be reported to the AQC at its next meeting, and notified to the dean, faculty manager (or equivalent), faculty head of quality, head of studies/postgraduate studies and relevant board chair. The AQC will also receive a list of proposals that have been rejected and a report on process failures eg where appointments have expired and no replacement examiner has been nominated.

Appointment process flowchart



How and why appointments are terminated

The appointment of an external examiner may be terminated by the Academic Board if the Academic Board judges that the responsibilities of the appointment have not been or cannot be fulfilled in the manner or to the standard which the university requires. Reasons for termination could include:

- Failure to provide reports using the standard report proforma, to the expected professional standard and to be submitted within reasonable timescales, normally within a month after the main assessment board.
- Inability to attend two successive boards over two years where recommendations or decisions on progressions or awards are made, without good reason and without arranging alternative means to input into the meeting.
- Failure to undertake external examiner duties to the satisfaction of the university by providing inadequate scrutiny of proposed assessments and/or an unacceptable delay in corresponding with the programme team.
- Any change in the external examiners' circumstances which brings about potential conflicts of interest which might jeopardise objectivity.
- Persistent refusal to work within the university's academic regulations.
- Relocation of the external examiner far from the United Kingdom.
- Withdrawal of, or non-recruitment to, programmes.
- If a reciprocal arrangement is discovered after the appointment or is created when an existing examiner moves to another institution, the appointment will be reviewed.

Resignations

Examiners wishing to resign from their position should contact the programme leader, board chair and Quality Officer (External Examiners/Awarding Bodies) to confirm the resignation in writing (emails are acceptable) and should give a minimum of three months' notice.

Section 2: Upon confirmation of appointment

Information sent by the university

Upon appointment, the external examiner should receive the following information:

From the chair of the External Examiner and Reviewer Appointments Committee

The chair of the External Examiner and Reviewer Appointments Committee will ensure that the following generic information is provided to brief external examiners:

- Appointment letter containing the name of the programme, collaborative partners (if appropriate), tenure dates, main duties, fee and expenses information
- Website link to the current undergraduate/postgraduate handbook and regulations
- Website link to the current General Regulations and Procedures Affecting Students
- Website link to the guide to external examining at DMU which details the role of the examiner on quality assurance policies and protocols
- Administrative arrangements for the operation of the external examining system including:
 - Website link to external examiner report proforma
 - External examiner expenses claim forms
 - Contact information
 - List of documents to be provided to meet the right to work in the UK requirements

External examiners are required to check the information provided and inform the Department of Academic Quality (DAQ) if there are any amendments. Examiners should keep DAQ and the faculty informed of any further changes to contact details. Examiners will need to formally accept the appointment either via email or by returning the acceptance form. All newly appointed examiners are also required to submit documents to prove that they are eligible to work in the UK.

Documents to prove eligibility to work in the UK

In order for the university to comply with its legal duties under the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act (2006), checks that all external examiners are eligible to work in the UK must be conducted. To avoid any possibility of racial discrimination this documentation is required from everyone, even if they are a UK or European Economic Area (EEA) citizen.

Once their appointment has been approved and before any work is commenced, examiners must provide the university with documentation which evidences their right to work in the UK. A list of appropriate documentation can be found in [appendix 1](#). It is strongly advised that when staff members approach suitable candidates, they should also mention to the candidate that they will be required to provide evidence of their eligibility to work in the UK.

Information sent by the faculty

Once the external examiner has accepted the appointment and submitted documents to prove eligibility to work in the UK, DAQ will contact key individuals in the faculty to confirm this and to request that the following programme specific information is sent to the examiner:

- The full specifications (templates) for each module for which the examiner has responsibility
- Programme information

- Professional body requirements (if applicable)
- Student handbooks
- Programme templates to place module specifications in the broad contexts of wider curriculum provision, local approaches to disciplines and the academic level
- Summary of review and evaluation reports including previous external examiner reports
- Dates of assessment board meetings at which attendance of external examiners is required and/or meeting where external examiners' attendance would be beneficial along with a timeline of when to expect draft assessments and scripts for comment
- Any relevant discipline assessment criteria, marking schemes, model answers, etc

Support for newly appointed examiners

External examiners will be briefed before the start of their duties. The faculty and subject teams in conjunction with DAQ will arrange briefing sessions for external examiners to be held annually in the spring term. All newly appointed examiners will be invited in the autumn term to attend one of three sessions. The aim of these sessions is to provide information on the role of the external examiner at De Montfort University (DMU) as well as looking at the undergraduate and postgraduate scheme and associated regulations, the board structure and faculty operations. The briefing days are intended to be interactive and informal and will give newly appointed examiners the opportunity to familiarise themselves with DMU processes.

Briefing day programme

10.30–11am	Registration and coffee
11am–12.30pm	Welcome and introduction Regulations The role of the external examiner Assessment board structure and process Using academic management information External examiner reports
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12.30–1.30pm	Lunch with key faculty staff
-----	-----
1.30–3pm	Afternoon programme to be confirmed on the day and to be led by the faculty Topics for discussion may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion with programme/subject groups to consider the operation the boards including management of assessment • Modules, subjects and programmes • Collaborative arrangements • Moderating examination questions and assignments etc • Sampling assessed work, both assignments and examinations • Programme Enhancement Plans • Arrangements for meeting students

- How the faculty responds to external examiner reports with reference to actions taken on issues raised by the previous external examiner
- Reporting lines within the faculty

Mentoring arrangements for new external examiners

On occasion, a programme team may wish to nominate an external examiner who, whilst is well qualified to examine in terms of their specialist subject knowledge, does not have sufficient recent external examining experience. Nominees without external examining experience should, where possible, join an experienced external examining team and the faculty is also required to allocate a mentor to offer support on the university's processes in their first year as external examiner. The mentor must be an existing and experienced DMU external examiner and should preferably be associated to a similar subject area. For further info please see the [appendix 2](#).

Section 3: Role and responsibilities

The external examiner role at De Montfort University (DMU) has been designed to fully comply with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B7: External examining, October 2011.

External examiners are specifically required to scrutinise and advise on the following:

- **Curriculum development and design:** the currency, relevance and coherence of curricular material
- **Standards:** that learning materials and learning outcomes are appropriate to curricula and that students are able to achieve standards comparable with those elsewhere and comparable to subject and level threshold requirements
- **Assessment:** that assessment aims and objectives are appropriate, the purposes and philosophy of assessment are clearly articulated and understood, that the load of assessment is appropriate, and assessment is properly and impartially conducted

Participation in assessment

An external examiner shall be an ex officio member of the programme board to which she/he is appointed and shall approve module marks determined by the board.

The focus of examiners' duties for undergraduate programmes shall be at levels 5 and 6; however, examiners shall have discretion to sample and audit work at level 4 to be assured that it is appropriate preparation for study at level 5. For foundation degrees and University Certificate of Professional Development (UCPD) the focus shall be on all years. The focus for postgraduate external examiners' duties shall be the modules and programmes concerned as appointed to by the board, which leads to postgraduate awards.

External examiners shall be consulted on draft examination papers at undergraduate levels 5 and 6, and for all levels for foundation degrees, UCPDs and all postgraduate modules. To facilitate consideration by examiners model answers, outline solutions and related marking schemes, where appropriate, shall be provided along with draft papers. Such documents shall be provided to external examiners at least four months in advance of the examination itself. External examiners should also be consulted regarding the range of coursework tasks set across a programme. This is particularly important for programmes that have coursework only assessment.

External examiners shall normally be consulted regarding students' choice of projects and/or design exercises and/or dissertations where these are integral components of module assessment at level 5 and/or level 6 and for postgraduate programmes.

Sampling

The external examiner has the right to see all assessed work in order to select an appropriate sample for moderation and/or audit against marking schemes/model answers/outline solutions. Examiners shall have discretion to sample material necessary to render judgements about the consistency of internal marking. Detailed arrangements for selection shall be agreed with the external examiner in advance.

To assist the external examiner, it is expected that a reasonable sample of material would include:

- The assessment(s) marked highest overall
- A selection of passed assessments from each classification band
- Any problematic assessments

- A sample of fails. At the external examiner's discretion all fails in dissertation/major projects can be reviewed

Assessments include all components contributing to a module including coursework elements and examination scripts. The reference to 'problematic assessments' is intended to cover a variety of eventualities where a department wants the particular advice of the external examiner. This would include, for example, exceptional cases where there is internal disagreement about a mark for a script or coursework assignment.

The external examiner has the right to see any worked scripts and other assessed assignments, including coursework, projects, dissertations which contribute to the module mark. Examiners shall have discretion to sample material which will allow them to render a judgement as to the:

- (a) Overall suitability of the assessment methods in practice
- (b) Coherence of the assessment strategy
- (c) Consistency of internal marking

The external examiner shall conduct viva voce examinations in such exceptional cases as shall be determined by the chair of the programme board in consultation with the external examiner.

The external examiner may meet with a small group of [students](#) in order to assist in evaluation of the appropriateness of assessment methodologies, as well as to assist the external examiner in forming a view on standards and on quality of delivery.

For further information, examiners encouraged to read the university Assessment Policy (dmu.ac.uk/assessment) as useful context on the conduct of assessment at DMU.

Assessment boards

The university operates a single-tier programme board which covers one or more programmes within a discipline and its constituent modules. When programme boards function as assessment boards their primary purposes are to discuss individual problem cases that cannot be dealt with by routine protocols, to review student performance at module and programme level and adjust as necessary the overall spread of marks for a module, formally to confirm the award of marks, to make decisions in relation to student progression between levels of study and agreeing awards and classification decisions.

External examiners are present at the board to ensure that assessment is at an appropriate level and appropriate to the subject, and that students' work has been fairly marked. Examiners must also ensure that the processes for progression of students and for determining awards provide equity of treatment. External examiner will be asked to provide a verbal report to the board.

Some programmes are professionally accredited and have additional regulations above and beyond generic university regulations. Where this is the case the assessment board ensures that these are fully adhered to.

External examiners are expected to attend the main assessment board which considers assessment results and they must agree their involvement in the reassessment process which follows. If examiners are unable to attend any of the boards, they must contact the faculty to inform them of this and to arrange alternative means to input into the meeting.

They should also be invited to the management board although attendance at this is not essential. The minutes of the relevant boards should be sent to each examiner as a matter of course.

Models of engagement for examiners

Each assessment board will decide how they would like their external examiners to engage with process by choosing one of four approved models of engagement:

1. External examiner receives student work for moderation and attends the assessment board (ie one visit).
2. External examiner attends the university twice, once to review student work and for discussions prior to the boards with the programme team and then to attend the assessment board (ie 2 separate visits).
3. External examiners associated with the assessment board attend the university to review student work and for discussions prior to the boards with the programme team(s) and nominate at least one external examiner to represent them at the assessment board.
4. External examiner attends university for several consecutive days to review student work and possibly interview students and for discussions prior to the boards with the programme team and attends the assessment board.

External examiners will be informed of the chosen model each academic session. Some boards are responsible for a wide and varied selection of programmes and may use more than one model.

Specific functions

The role of the external examiner comprises:

- Adjudicating as necessary on individual cases, reviewing student profiles and exercising discretion. External examiners are not employed as a 'third marker' and programme teams must not try to utilise them in this fashion.
- Adjudicating on any moderation of module marks and to confirm all module marks awarded.
- Confirming internal assessment processes within modules and programmes.
- Raising any issues of concern for debate.
- Advising on curriculum design and change.
- Advising on assessment design and change.
- Moderating assignments, exercises, examination questions etc. Postgraduate external examiners should pay particular attention to dissertations.
- Sampling students' assessed work and sampling the assessment of student work, and moderating as necessary.
- Conducting viva voce examinations in cases where the assessment board or the external examiner so wishes.
- Considering statistical analyses (performance indicators) relating to modules and programmes with which she/he is associated.
- Auditing and confirming the rigour of assessment practices and protocols adopted by the board.
- Considering and advising on the comparability of standards where modules and programmes are delivered at more than one location.
- At undergraduate level focusing on levels 5 and 6 modules and programmes, but sampling and auditing the level 4 work of the subject to an extent necessary to assure that it provides an adequate preparation for level 5 modules within the subject. For foundation degrees and UCPDs the focus should be on all years. Postgraduate external examiners focus on the whole programme.

- Reviewing and confirming progression decisions and recommendations for the award of qualifications.
- Confirming the standards achieved by students on programmes offered by the university.
- Advising when required in relation to aegrotat awards and similar exceptional student cases.
- Reporting on the above to the university verbally at the board and in the written report.

Additionally to this, from time to time we may ask current external examiners to act as a [mentor](#) to newly appointed examiners. This is not intended to be an onerous task and it is hoped that the mentor will be able to offer further support to the new examiner, attend the same assessment board and be available via email or the telephone to answer any queries.

Meeting with students

External examiners should discuss with the programme team whether it is beneficial for them to meet with students. There is no formal De Montfort University requirement for examiners to do this, however, they should be provided with the opportunity to engage with students where this is deemed appropriate by the board or the programme team. This will in part be determined by the nature of the discipline and assessment methods. External examiners find it useful to meet with students in order to assist in evaluation of the appropriateness of assessment methodologies, as well as to assist them in forming a view on standards and on quality of delivery.

Where external examiners do meet with students the focus of discussion should be on the students' experience of learning and assessment. Questions might include:

- Are students made aware of the overall outcomes for the programme?
- Are timetables and workloads appropriate?
- Do students feel they are being challenged?
- Do students know how they are doing?
- What feedback do students get on their progress and does it help them improve?
- Are the library and IT facilities reasonable?
- What are the programme strengths and are there any other areas for improvement?

The university expects the external examiner to exercise judgement when reporting on student views, and interpret them against their wider knowledge of the programme. Students should be encouraged to support and illustrate their views with examples of practice. The contribution from the examiner is to provide an independent critical perspective on what students have to tell us. The university values student feedback and the programme team should already have a good understanding of student opinion. It does not always add value for examiners to simply report student views as stated without placing them in a critical context.

Written reports

External examiners are required to submit written reports to the university annually and at the end of their periods of office (such reports should be completed on the form available from the Department of Academic Quality (DAQ) website (dmu.ac.uk/external-examining)). Each report should be emailed directly to the qaenquiries@dmu.ac.uk mailbox and will be picked up by the Quality Officer (External Examiners/Awarding Bodies), who is responsible for ensuring that reports are considered and that any necessary actions are taken within the university (see later sections of this guide for information on how to complete a written report).

Section 4: reporting process

Completing the annual/final report

External examiners are required to submit written reports on an annual basis to the university within one month after the main assessment board and before payment of fees is authorised. Such reports should cover the full range of activities with which the examiner has been involved.

The final report (completed on the same proforma as the annual) made at the end of the term of office, should give general observations based on the whole period as well as covering the year in question. Particular attention should be paid to any issues that have been raised, but not addressed during the examiner's period of office.

Interim/supplementary reports may be submitted at any times where an examiner considers that issues have arisen which require prompt attention. This report is intended to be exceptional and it will not be necessary for examiners to report on the satisfactory operation, or progress of the work, of the assessment board.

An external examiner may send a separate report to the vice-chancellor on any matter which she/he deems necessary; such a report may be sent in confidence at any time. If an external examiner has serious concerns about issues related to standards within the institution, and has exhausted all internal procedures including a confidential report to the vice chancellor, they should access the independent mechanism for addressing concerns about standards and quality in higher education managed by [Quality Assurance Agency \(QAA\)](#).

Each report should be emailed to qaenquiries@dmu.ac.uk. The reports will be picked up by the Quality Officer (External Examiners/Awarding Bodies) who is responsible for ensuring that reports are considered and that any necessary actions are taken within the university.

Report content

Annual written reports should be completed on the appropriate form available on the [Department of Academic Quality website](#). The report is a major source of information in the annual monitoring process. The report should contain clear information on academic standards and should advise on good practice, innovation and areas for enhancement. The most useful reports not only celebrate the positive aspects of programmes but also give specific recommendations for actions.

In the unlikely event of a report not being sufficiently clear or informative, the university may seek further details.

Once completed, the report should be sent via email to the qaenquiries@dmu.ac.uk mailbox and will be picked up by the Quality Officer (External Examiners/Awarding Bodies).

Completing the annual report

- The report should be submitted within **one** month after the main assessment board meeting. If examiners are unsure as to when this is, they should consult with the programme leader or administrator.
- To ensure that the most up to date version of the report proforma is completed, examiners should check the [Department of Academic Quality's website](#) each year. Usually, a copy of the most recent proforma is emailed to all examiners during May of each year.
- In the summary report, examiners are required to tick yes or no to three questions:
 - Are the standards set for the award or award elements appropriate?

- Are the standards of student performance comparable with similar programmes or modules in other UK institutions with which you are familiar?
- Are the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards sound and fairly conducted?

If the standards are above what is expected, the examiner should still tick yes but include a comment in the free text section below. There are free text sections for examiners to expand on any issues with the above, any good practice and innovation and briefly highlight the areas that require a response from the programme team, school/department, faculty or university.

- Examiners are required to be specific in each section of the report if comments relate to all modules, programmes and locations or if they relate to a specific module, programme or location. This is particularly important if the programmes are linked to our [collaborative provision](#). This will enable our partners to be clear if any action needs to be taken specifically with their provision.
- Examiners views will influence how the university develops its programmes. Examiners need to ensure that their report contains clear feedback on academic standards and on good practice, innovation and areas for enhancement. One word or one sentence responses throughout the report may not give the programme team enough information to enable them to enhance the programme. There should be a comment on each bullet point in the grey boxes.
- It is vital for examiners not to name or otherwise identify any individuals. To comply with the QAA UK Quality Code requirements, all external examiner reports will be made available, in full, to all students, with the sole exception of any confidential report which may be made to the vice-chancellor.
- All sections must be completed. If the section is not applicable, the examiner should insert N/A into the comments box.
- The university does not accept handwritten reports. All reports should be word process your report on the standard report proforma and then emailed to qaenquiries@dmu.ac.uk.
- DAQ will always acknowledge receipt of the report via email. If examiners do not receive an acknowledgement within three working days, the report should be submitted again.
- A claim form should be submitted to claim for the annual [fee](#) and any expenses incurred.

Undergraduate report

Use this proforma for undergraduate programmes and the postgraduate proforma for taught postgraduate provision.

Undergraduate external examiner report

External examiner's name	
External examiner's place of employment	
DMU Faculty	Pick from one of the following faculties: Art, Design and Humanities Business and Law Health and Life Sciences Technology University Wide Learning
Assessment board name	
Date(s) of main assessment board	

Programmes or modules	
Collaborative partners Are any elements taught at collaborative partners? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, please specify which locations below: You must refer to all locations in each section of the report. Please be specific about which location your comments refer to. <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div>	
Academic year	
Report status Please click in appropriate box:	
Interim (not mandatory) <input type="checkbox"/> Annual (after end of session assessment) <input type="checkbox"/> Final (end of office report. Only tick this box if it is your final year as external examiner) <input type="checkbox"/>	
If this is your final report you should give general observations based on the whole period as well as covering the year in question in section 9 of the report.	
Permissions All external examiner reports will be made available, in full, to all students, with the sole exception of any confidential report which may be made to the vice-chancellor. Occasionally De Montfort University would like permission to reproduce part or all of the statements made within this report for promotional material. Please click in one of the following permission boxes for use of comments in promotional material:	
I am happy for De Montfort University to reproduce any part or all of the contents of this report <input type="checkbox"/> I require a written request in advance of reproducing any part of this report <input type="checkbox"/> I do not give my permission for De Montfort University to reproduce any part of this report <input type="checkbox"/>	
<div style="border: 1px solid green; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;"> This is a QAA Quality Code requirement </div>	
<div style="border: 1px solid green; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;"> This refers to using extracts from the report in promotional material. Examiners are requested to confirm if they are happy for the university to do this and if they require a written request. </div>	
<h2 style="color: red;">Summary report</h2>	
Box.	
1) Are the standards set for the award or award elements appropriate?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
2) Are the standards of student performance comparable with similar programmes or modules in other UK institutions with which you are familiar?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
3) Are the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards sound and fairly conducted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
4) If you have answered no to any of the above questions, please insert a comment below.	

5) Identify in brief areas of good practice and innovation below including a summary of the items of good practice identified elsewhere in this report.	<div style="border: 1px solid green; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"> Bullet point lists are useful here </div>
6) Identify in brief the areas that require a response from the programme team, school/department, faculty or university.	

Main report

Please comment on all sections

1 Academic standards and module content

- Evaluate the module content (module aims, learning outcomes and indicative content) in relation to subject requirements and comparable provision at the equivalent academic level.

The comments in this section apply to:

DMU only	<input type="checkbox"/>
DMU & the following collaborative partner(s):	<div style="border: 1px solid green; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"> On occasions, programmes/modules are taught at collaborative partners only and not at DMU. </div>
The following collaborative partner(s) only:	

2 Academic standards and student performance

- Evaluate the overall performance of students in relation to academic level, module and where appropriate programme learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
- Evaluate student performance relative to their peers on modules delivered at a comparable level at other HEIs.
- Refer to the [Framework for Higher Education Qualification \(FHEQ\)](#) for generic guidance on qualification levels where appropriate.
- Comment on how the programme meets Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements if relevant.

The comments in this section apply to:

DMU only	<input type="checkbox"/>
DMU & the following collaborative partner(s):	
The following collaborative partner(s) only:	

3 Module assessment

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment on the appropriateness and comprehensiveness of the assessment strategy and methods employed in relation to stated module aims, learning outcomes and assessment criteria. • Judge whether the range of assessed activities is set at an appropriate level and comment on the consistency of internal marking. Particular attention should be focused on the fairness and objectivity of the assessment process as a whole. 	
<p>There should be a comment on each bullet point in the grey boxes.</p>	
The comments in this section apply to:	
DMU only	<input type="checkbox"/>
DMU & the following collaborative partner(s):	
The following collaborative partner(s) only:	

<h4>4 Delivery and support</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where evidenced through assessment or discussion with students, comment, insofar as possible, on the appropriateness of module delivery including teaching methods and arrangements for student guidance and support. • Evaluate the quality of feedback given to students on assessed work. • There is no formal De Montfort University requirement for external examiners to make an interim visit or to meet with students. External examiners should, however, be provided with the opportunity to engage with students where this is deemed appropriate by the board, for example to scrutinise project work or review performance work by students. 	
<p>The comments in this section apply to:</p>	
DMU only	<input type="checkbox"/>
DMU & the following collaborative partner(s):	
The following collaborative partner(s) only:	

If examiners meet with students, the comments should not be simply added verbatim to the report but examiners should interpret their views against their wider knowledge of the programme.

<h4>5 Programme management and development</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss issues relating to programme management and development. Particular attention should be focused on the contribution of modules to the generic attributes of a graduate within that programme (where relevant, please refer to the subject benchmark). 	
<p>The comments in this section apply to:</p>	
DMU only	<input type="checkbox"/>
DMU & the following collaborative partner(s):	
The following collaborative partner(s) only:	

If examiners have not attended an assessment board, they should make this explicit in this section of the report. If this is the case, examiners should discuss with the faculty their involvement with the assessment process as a whole.

<h4>6 Assessment board and administration</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment if the board has been conducted in a manner which allows and promotes full engagement from the examiner. This relates to the examiner's general involvement in the assessment process as defined in university regulations and to their involvement as a board member in the business of the meeting. 	
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- Discuss the operation of the board, specifically if it has been properly and well conducted.
- Confirm that sufficient evidence has been received to enable the role to be fulfilled.
- Confirm that the briefing material supplied was appropriate and that advice and guidance was made available about their role, responsibilities and expectations, including reporting protocols and response/feedback arrangements.
- If you have been mentored by one of our current external examiners, please comment on the effectiveness of this support. A mentor will only be appointed if the nominee has minimal experience as an external examiner. This information will be provided in the appointment letter.

The comments in this section apply to:		It is useful for examiners to comment about any mentoring arrangements that have been put in place and whether this type of support was appropriate and effective.
DMU only	<input type="checkbox"/>	
DMU & the following collaborative partner(s):		It is important for examiners to ensure that all issues raised in previous reports are addressed thoroughly. If comments have not been acted upon, this should be stated in this section
The following collaborative partner(s) only:		

- 7 Outstanding issues and other key observations**
- Identify any issues, raised in previous reports, which remain to be addressed.
 - Identify any issues that fall outside the categories given above.

The comments in this section apply to:		If this is the examiners first report, copies of the previous external examiners report should be provided to the examiner to enable completion of this section.
DMU only	<input type="checkbox"/>	
DMU & the following collaborative partner(s):		
The following collaborative partner(s) only:		

- 8 Collaborative provision**
- If the programmes or modules that you are associated with are linked to our collaborative provision and you **have not commented on this throughout the report, please comment here.**
 - Advise on the comparability of standards and the effectiveness of assessment arrangements across sites.
 - Be specific about the locations to which the comments refer.

The comments in this section apply to:	
The following collaborative partner(s) only:	

- 9 End of office comments (final year as DMU external examiner)**
- If you are in your final year as an external examiner at De Montfort University, please give an overview of your term of office.
 - Comment on the changes introduced during your term.
 - Comment on the extent to which you feel the university has been responsive to your suggestions.

The comments in this section apply to:	
DMU only	<input type="checkbox"/>
DMU & the following collaborative partner(s):	
The following collaborative partner(s) only:	

A member of DAQ will acknowledge receipt of the report within 3 working days of submission.

Date of completion:	
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Your report should be submitted electronically to the university within one month after the main assessment board. Your report should be emailed to Qaenquiries@dmu.ac.uk. If you have any queries, please contact [Louise Newell](#) in the Department of Academic Quality.

Postgraduate report

The postgraduate report proforma follows the same format as above but with one additional section focussing on the project, dissertation or design work.

Project/dissertation/design work	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the overall performance of students in relation to academic level, rigour, research/design, methodology, learning outcomes and assessment criteria in relation to project/dissertation/design work. Comment on the entirety of the project/dissertation/design work process. Evaluate student performance relative to peers on programmes delivered at comparable level. 	
The comments in this section apply to:	
DMU only	<input type="checkbox"/>
DMU & the following collaborative partner(s):	
The following collaborative partner(s) only:	

Process for dealing with late reports

One month after the main assessment board

External examiners reports should be submitted within one month after the main assessment board unless a prior agreement has been made with DAQ and the programme team. If the report has not been received within one month after the main assessment board, DAQ will contact the programme leader, head of school/department/board chair and faculty head of quality to ask if there are any known reasons why the report has not been submitted. If there is no known reason, DAQ will contact the examiner to remind them that the report is due.

Two months after the main assessment board

If the report has still not been received within two months after the board, DAQ will contact the faculty again to check if any communication has been received and to gauge the extent of the examiners engagement in the assessment process. A formal letter will then be sent from DAQ to the external

A guide to external examining at DMU – edition number 3 – academic session 2014/15

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examiner requesting submission of the report. At this stage, the programme leader is also encouraged to contact the external examiner.

Three months after the main assessment board

If the report has not been received within three months after the board, DAQ will ask the head of school/department/board chair to contact the examiner to request the report specifying a two week deadline for submission. If the external examiner's engagement with the assessment process has been minimal and/or they have not attended the board without giving good reason, the communication from the faculty must state that if report is not received by this date, the university will assume that the examiner wishes to resign. The programme leader should start preparing to find an alternative external examiner. All requests regarding the termination of an appointment should be agreed via the head of school/department/board chair, faculty head of quality, pro vice-chancellor (PVC)/dean and the External Examiner and Review Appointments Committee. A formal letter confirming termination of appointment will be sent to the external examiner from the chair of the External Examiner and Reviewer Appointments Committee.

How reports are processed

Receipt and circulation

Reports will be received centrally and circulated to faculties and relevant collaborative partners by DAQ within three working days of receipt.

Initial response from dean (or representative)

Upon receipt of the report, PVC/deans (or a representative) are required to send a letter/email to external examiners acknowledging receipt of the report. Ideally this should include the main issues that require a response and should give an indication of measures and timescales for further consideration. In the case of validation service programmes, this letter/email should be sent from a senior member of the collaborative partner for example the principal or head of school. The communication should be sent within 28 days of receipt of the report and copied to the board chair, faculty head of quality and DAQ. In practice this letter/email could be drafted by another person for the dean ie the head of quality. At the same time the head of quality will keep a record of the issues that require action and a response (see [Monitoring](#)).

By copying this letter/email to the board chair (who will also have a copy of the report), issues raised in the report can be noted for discussion at the next board meeting. Where external examiner reports are considered at any meetings these discussions must be minuted in full.

Full response from board chair/programme leader

The external examiners reports should be considered at the next board meeting and a formal response should be prepared in light of these discussions if issues have been identified. If no issues have been raised, a response from the board is not required. The formal response should be sent by the most appropriate person (board chair or programme leader) on behalf of the board to the external, and copied to the faculty head of quality and DAQ, within two weeks after the board. This response must indicate any action that will or has been taken, or if appropriate, reasons for not accepting recommendations or suggestions. The suggested circulation will allow the head of quality and DAQ to operate checks to ensure that external examiners are receiving appropriate responses.

Monitoring

Faculty heads of quality will keep a record of faculty issues and good practice raised by external examiners in their reports. These records or logs should be maintained for audit purposes however the records will not be requested by DAQ on a regular basis. Instead, a Faculty External Examiner Annual Report (FEEAR)

from each faculty head of quality should be submitted to DAQ for inclusion in the AQC External Examiner Overview Report. Faculties should use the standard report proforma which covers the following:

- The number of reports received and to be received
- The external examiners effectiveness within the assessment boards as defined in university regulations
- The operation of the board, compliance with the appropriate regulations and protocols, and anything exceptional which was discussed at the board.
- All responses have been made to external examiners
- The main themes that have arisen in external examiner reports
- Any good practice worthy of further investigation by the faculty and/or Academic Professional Development

The reports should be submitted to the Faculty Academic Committees (FACs) in the first instance with onward transmission to DAQ. The Quality Officer (External Examiners/Awarding Bodies) will contact faculty heads of quality to inform them of the report submission date on an annual basis.

Institutional issues ie relating to the regulatory framework, assessment procedures, sitting of examinations, central resources (library, IT provision, and student support services) will be highlighted by DAQ, who will continue to monitor all external examiner reports as they are received. For each of the institutional issues, an appropriate person will be identified and asked to make a response within one month on behalf of the university. The response will be sent to the external examiner and will also be copied to the PVC/dean, faculty head of quality, board chair and DAQ.

An overview report will be written by the Quality Officer (External Examiners/Awarding Bodies) to be presented to the Academic Quality Committee (AQC) and also the University Collaborative Provision Committee (UCPC). The annual report is based on the key findings from external examiner reports for a specific academic year and is compiled through consideration of undergraduate reports, postgraduate reports and the four Faculty External Examiner Annual Reports (FEEAR).

Reporting timetable

External examiners reports received within DAQ and circulated to faculty	Within three working days of receipt
Letter/email sent from the dean (or representative) to external examiner acknowledging receipt of report, referring to issues and copied to board chair, faculty head of quality and DAQ	Within 28 days of receipt of report
Faculty head of quality records issues raised and good practice to ensure all issues have been responded to.	Ongoing
Quality Officer (External Examiners/Awarding Bodies) identifies appropriate person to respond to external examiner on behalf of university for any institutional issues and contacts them with the dean, faculty head of quality and the board chair copied in.	Within 10 days of receipt of report
Board considers report and decides on action to be taken.	first board after receipt of report
Board chair (or other most appropriate person depending on nature of issue, i.e. Programme Leader) sends a full written response to the	Within 2 weeks of the board

external examiner. Again copied to faculty head of quality and DAQ.	
Faculty head of quality updates records with details of action taken and date of response.	Ongoing
Faculty External Examiner Annual Reports (FEEAR) presented to FACs for discussion and endorsement.	January/February
Faculty External Examiner Annual Reports to be submitted to DAQ to help inform the AQC External Examiner Annual Overview Report.	February/March
AQC External Examiner Overview Report to be presented to AQC for discussion and information.	April/May

Sharing external examiner details and reports with students

In line with the QAA UK Quality Code requirements, external examiners' reports should be made available, in full, to students, with the sole exception of any confidential report made directly, and separately, to the vice-chancellor. Faculties will only be required to make the most recent examiner reports available however students may ask for reports from previous years. It is also recommended by the QAA that responses to those reports are also made available to students. The use of the virtual learning environment (VLE) is suggested although teams may wish to use other appropriate methods. For collaborative provision, the partner should discuss with the DMU programme leader/link tutor, the best way to do this. If the programme is also taught at DMU, a link to the DMU Blackboard site in the handbooks may suffice.

Additionally, the name, position and institution (or other place of work) of all external examiners should be included in module or programme information provided to students. External examiner(s) contact details should not be included. We are also requested to indicate where an examiner has been appointed to fulfil a role on behalf of a professional body. Alongside publication of these details, there should be an explicit statement that it is inappropriate for students to make contact with external examiners, in particular regarding their individual performance in assessments, and that other appropriate appeal or complaints mechanisms are available. External examiners in receipt of any such contact from students are requested to refer these back to the faculty. All new external examiners are informed of this in their appointment letter.

Freedom of information and data protection

De Montfort University regards lawful and correct treatment of personal information as very important to successful operation and to maintaining the confidence of those with whom it deals. The organisation treats personal information lawfully and correctly. To this end, De Montfort University fully endorses and adheres to the principles of data protection as enumerated in the Data Protection Act 1998. The university will, through appropriate management, adopt the strict application of criteria and control, observe fully conditions regarding the fair collection and use of information.

Fee payment

This information covers taught programmes only. For information on research external examiner fees, please contact the Graduate School Office. Each faculty office has responsibility for paying all of the fees and expenses of its external examiners and should therefore be contacted with any queries about payments. External examiner fees and expenses should be claimed by completing and submitting a claim form.

External examiners are informed of their fees in their letter of appointment. Fee information is also available on the website, which details the current rates of payment for work carried-out by external

A guide to external examining at DMU – edition number 3 – academic session 2014/15

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examiners, including visits. The fee and expenses are not paid automatically but will be paid on receipt of an external examiners report and also on submission of the claim form. If an examiner has not incurred any expenses, a claim form will still need to be submitted for the annual fee. If examiners have also incurred expenses, one form will suffice to claim these expenses back and for the annual fee. However, if multiple visits have been made to the university, claim forms can be submitted with receipts throughout the year. All completed forms must be submitted within three months of the claim date. It is the responsibility of the external examiner to submit claim forms.

Examiners are required to use their home address on the form, the programme title (not just the programme code), the purpose of their visit along with dates (eg assessment board, to meet students, to view work) and their signature on the second page. If examiners are claiming for a fee only and have not made any visits to the university or partners, not applicable should be added in this box. Missing information on the form may result in a delay in payment. Examiners are advised to keep a copy of their claim form and receipts.

Once completed, the form should be sent to the faculty manager in the first instance. Payments are made on the 25th of each month (or the closest working day). In order for these to be processed in time, the form will need to be submitted to the faculty manager by the end of the previous month. Forms received after this date will be paid the following month. All completed forms must be submitted within three months of the claim date.

Provided the expenses are classed as a business expense, they are not subject to tax, however, for HMRC purposes the business reason for the expense must be stated and itemised VAT receipts must be provided where appropriate.

Points of contact and further information

Visits, board operation, subject expertise

The faculty academic contact (usually the programme or subject leader) should identify themselves to the external examiner at the beginning of the term of office. The appropriate faculty administrator should also introduce themselves.

Payment of expenses and fees

The faculty manager or nominee as identified in the letter of appointment.

Queries about roles and responsibilities and report submission

The Quality Officer (External Examiners/Awarding Bodies), Department of Academic Quality, on behalf of the chair of the AQC External Examiner and Reviewer Appointments Committee.

Additional information

[Learning Teaching and Assessment Policy](#)

[Assessment Policy](#)

[Higher Education Academy](#): External Examiner Handbook

[Quality Assurance Agency](#): UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B7: External Examining, October 2011.

Appendix 1

Lists of acceptable documents for right to work checks

The documents that are considered acceptable for demonstrating right to work in the UK are set out in two lists – **List A** and **List B**. These are shown in Tables 1 and 2 below.

List A contains the range of documents which may be accepted for checking purposes for a person who has a permanent right to work in the UK. If you follow the prescribed right to work checks you will establish a **continuous statutory excuse** for the duration of that person's employment with you.

List B contains the range of documents which may be accepted for checking purposes for a person who has a temporary right to work in the UK. If you follow the prescribed right to work checks, you will establish a **time-limited statutory excuse**. You will be required to carry out a follow-up check as set out below.

Table 1: List A – Acceptable documents to establish a continuous statutory excuse

List A	
1.	A passport showing the holder, or a person named in the passport as the child of the holder, is a British citizen or a citizen of the UK and Colonies having the right of abode in the UK.
2.	A passport or national identity card showing the holder, or a person named in the passport as the child of the holder, is a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland.
3.	A Registration Certificate or Document Certifying Permanent Residence issued by the Home Office to a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland.
4.	A Permanent Residence Card issued by the Home Office to the family member of a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland.
5.	A current Biometric Immigration Document (Biometric Residence Permit) issued by the Home Office to the holder indicating that the person named is allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK, or has no time limit on their stay in the UK.
6.	A current passport endorsed to show that the holder is exempt from immigration control, is allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK, has the right of abode in the UK, or has no time limit on their stay in the UK.
7.	A current Immigration Status Document issued by the Home Office to the holder with an endorsement indicating that the named person is allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK, or has no time limit on their stay in the UK, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer.
8.	A full birth or adoption certificate issued in the UK which includes the name(s) of at least one of the holder's parents or adoptive parents, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer.
9.	A birth or adoption certificate issued in the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or Ireland, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer.

10.	A certificate of registration or naturalisation as a British citizen, together with an official document giving the person’s permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer.
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Table 2: List B – Acceptable documents to establish a statutory excuse for a limited period of time

List B	
Group 1 – Documents where a time-limited statutory excuse lasts until the expiry date of leave	
1.	A current passport endorsed to show that the holder is allowed to stay in the UK and is currently allowed to do the type of work in question.
2.	A current Biometric Immigration Document (Biometric Residence Permit) issued by the Home Office to the holder which indicates that the named person can currently stay in the UK and is allowed to do the work in question.
3.	A current Residence Card (including an Accession Residence Card or a Derivative Residence Card) issued by the Home Office to a non-European Economic Area national who is a family member of a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland or who has a derivative right of residence.
4.	A current Immigration Status Document containing a photograph issued by the Home Office to the holder with a valid endorsement indicating that the named person may stay in the UK, and is allowed to do the type of work in question, together with an official document giving the person’s permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer.
Group 2 – Documents where a time-limited statutory excuse lasts for 6 months	
1.	A Certificate of Application issued by the Home Office under regulation 17(3) or 18A(2) of the Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2006 to a family member of a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland stating that the holder is permitted to take employment which is less than 6 months old together with a Positive Verification Notice from the Home Office Employer Checking Service.
2.	An Application Registration Card issued by the Home Office stating that the holder is permitted to take the employment in question, together with a Positive Verification Notice from the Home Office Employer Checking Service.
3.	A Positive Verification Notice issued by the Home Office Employer Checking Service to the employer or prospective employer which indicates that the named person may stay in the UK and is permitted to do the work in question.

For further advice please go to the government website: <https://www.gov.uk/check-job-applicant-right-to-work>

Appendix 2

Key responsibilities of the mentor

The mentor is responsible for providing advice and guidance to the mentee on putting the DMU external examiner requirements into practice. A mentor arrangement usually lasts for the first year of the mentee's appointment and ends after the first main assessment period. Once the mentor has made initial contact with the mentee, likely topics of discussion may include:

- The role of external examiners at DMU
- How to deal with draft examination papers, coursework titles, assessing the appropriateness of questions/titles in terms of coverage of topics/learning outcomes, level of challenge, rigour, ambiguity, fairness etc
- The approaches to moderation including sampling and consistency of marking between modules, programme and locations
- The assessment board process and the role of the examiner in this context
- Tips on writing the annual report. Mentors may wish to share their previous reports with the mentee or the mentee may send his/her draft report to the mentor for comment
- General discussions about external examining experiences and common scenarios that may arise

It is expected that communication should take place via email or telephone. Depending on the mentee's previous experience, the External Examiner and Reviewer Appointments Committee may request that the mentor and mentee meet (possibly before the assessment board) and in some cases the Committee may stipulate that job shadowing must take place.

Mentor criteria

A mentor must be:

- An experienced external examiner from the university's current pool of examiners
- They should preferably attend the same assessment board as the mentee or be from a similar subject area
- Have a strong academic background with recent experience of working in higher education
- They should have participated in a least one assessment period at the university. They should, therefore, have produced at least one good quality annual report and have submitted it in a timely manner

Setting up a mentor relationship

It is the responsibility of the faculty to nominate mentors. Faculties should approach potential mentors during the initial nomination stage of the new examiner. Details of the mentor and the type of support suggested should be indicated in the rationale on the nomination form. If approved, the mentee will be informed of the arrangement and the scope of the support available along with the contact details of the mentor via the appointment letter. The Department of Academic Quality will contact the mentor to confirm their involvement and provide details of suggested topics for discussion with the mentee and also the mentee's contact details. Due to the small amount of work involved, a fee is not usually given to a mentor, however, if the work is seen as significant, for example, involving job shadowing, the faculty may wish to offer a small fee.

After the final assessment board, all external examiners are required to submit annual reports to the Department of Academic Quality. Those examiners who have been mentored are asked to comment in their annual report on the effectiveness of this support.