



Guidance for External Examiners
(Revised September 2020)

Thank you for agreeing to serve as external examiner with us for this academic session, we are most grateful to you. This guide will inform you about the reporting process at the end of each year of your appointment.

In 2007 University College Birmingham was granted Taught Degree Awarding Powers and has continued to grow its portfolio of programmes since then. UCB also offer programmes under the Accreditation Agreement with the University of Birmingham. The external examining process for both sets of awards has been developed to ensure as much parity as possible.

The University places great value on external examiners and the expertise you bring to this role. The views of all external examiners are important to the University's quality assurance processes and the reports we obtain from you receive careful consideration at School and University level.

This guidance document supplements the University's Code of Practice on External Examining and should assist you to carry out your duties effectively. It includes contact details, information on how the external examiner system is managed at University College Birmingham, and provides links to relevant sections of University legislation.

We hope you will find your time as an external examiner a rewarding one and look forward to your contribution to the maintenance of our academic standards.

Best Wishes,

Elaine Penn, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum, Teaching and Learning)

Contact Details

The external examiner system is managed by Curriculum & Quality Department

Tel: 0121 604 1000 ext 2427

Email: j.reid@ucb.ac.uk

Web: www.ucb.ac.uk

Using this document

This guidance is designed to supplement the University Code of Practice on External Examining. Where a section refers to a part of the Code of Practice the relevant clause is listed in brackets. The term 'School' is used throughout this document with reference to your role and responsibilities but it is acknowledged that your main point of contact might be at Programme or University level. In a number of sections the guidance advises you to contact us should any queries arise during your appointment. Please use the contact details on page 2 for this purpose.

1. Your Appointment

Upon completion of the nomination form all proposed External Examiners are required to provide a clear scanned colour copy of their right to work documentation detailed in Appendix A of this guide. Once your nomination has been approved by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum, Teaching and Learning) on behalf of University College Birmingham you should receive an External Examiner Appointment Letter.

- This will include details regarding;
- The academic sessions you have been appointed for;
- The School you will be working with;
- The programme(s) you have been assigned to;
- The fee for each session.

Please check that all of this information is correct, and contact us if you have any queries. With the letter you will receive a reply form, asking you to confirm that you accept the appointment as external examiner on the terms stated. The University appoints its external examiners to a normal period of service of four years. In some cases external examiner appointments are extended into a fifth year but this is considered exceptional and a case has to be made by the School to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum, Teaching and Learning).

2. Contact Details

It is important that we are able to contact our external examiners throughout the year. Therefore, we ask that you keep us informed of any changes to your contact details (address, phone numbers, and email address) including changes to your place of employment. Please note we use email as our first and preferred method of communication with external examiners and a prompt response is much appreciated.

3. Induction (3.1-3.8)

When your appointment has been confirmed the relevant School is notified, and from this point on the University would expect a designated contact from Curriculum & Quality Department to work with you in ensuring you have all the information needed in order to fulfil your role as an external examiner. This should include;

- Programme handbooks;
- Student handbooks;
- Key dates for the year (e.g. Board of Examiners meetings);
- Specific modular information;
- Guidance on marking and moderation practices;
- A copy of the previous external examiner's report and actions arising as a result.

Each year the University holds an induction event, which all newly-appointed external examiners are encouraged to attend where possible. Should this take place after the commencement of their contract and online induction will be given and any queries will be dealt with upon their first visit to UCB. External Examiners are encouraged to attend this event and bring with them the original right to work documents for validating and copying. Failure to provide these documents at this event will result in a delay to the commencement of your duties. You may also be invited by Curriculum & Quality Department to visit the University to help familiarise yourself with the programme(s) you have been asked to examine, or to attend days when students' work is on display (e.g. Exhibitions). If you feel you have not received sufficient information from the School, or have not been made aware of key dates well in advance please

contact us.

4. Claiming Fees and Expenses (2.8, 7.10)

Fees for the session are determined by Curriculum & Quality Department, and should be agreed with the external examiner on appointment. The fee will be paid once your report form has been received and you have submitted your fees claim form. The claim form can be found on the external examiner homepage at <https://www.ucb.ac.uk/about-us/external-examiners/> for University College Birmingham Examiners however this form must be signed and sent back with any receipts for agreed travel and subsistence expenses either through the post or scanned to j.reid@ucb.ac.uk.

5. Code of Practice on External Examining (Taught Provision)

The Code of Practice on External Examining is central to the University's External Examiner System. All newly-appointed external examiners receive a copy of the Code of Practice and all external examiners are notified if any substantial changes are made to the Code for a new academic session. The Code is designed to map on to the Quality Assurance Agency's revised guidance on External Examining (Chapter B7 of the new UK Quality Code for Higher Education). It is suggested that on appointment you familiarise yourself with both the University's Code of Practice and the QAA guidance.

6. Draft Assessments (5.3)

The University expects Curriculum & Quality Department to provide external examiners with all draft assessments, and accompanying model answers / marking criteria, for comment and approval. This should be done in good time to provide you with ample opportunity to provide feedback on the assessments. In return the School should reply to you indicating how your comments have been taken into account, with a full explanation if any of your suggestions have not been acted upon.

7. Role in Marking/Moderation procedures

a) Approach (5.1, 5.4)

One of the main roles of the external examiner is to scrutinise the marking and moderation procedures of the University, in order to ensure high academic standards, which are comparable with other universities in the sector. We do not ask our external examiners to determine marks for individual students but to consider, and provide feedback on, the consistency and accuracy of marking across a cohort. This is achieved through reviewing the marking within each module, and between modules of the same level.

b) Work samples (5.5-5.7)

The University expects external examiners to be provided with samples of marked student work. This is usually done in one of three ways:

- i. The work sample is sent through the post to the external examiner for scrutiny, with an indication of the date the work needs to be returned to the University.
- ii. The external examiner is invited on to campus (often just prior to the Board of Examiners meeting) in order to view the work samples and for ease of access to the full set of work for each module;
- iii. For electronically submitted assessments an individual username and password will be provided with full instructions for accessing the sample from UCB online.

In all cases you should have been made aware of the timescales involved, in order for you to set aside sufficient time to scrutinise the work samples in question. The School should also have agreed with you the size and scope of the sample. The School should inform you of your role with respect to work samples but, as a general rule, the following list gives an idea of what you should be looking at:

- i. The work sample should be from across the full mark range;
- ii. There should be a clear indication of how a mark has been arrived at;

- iii. There should be evidence of the moderation process (e.g. markers' comments);
- iv. Markers' comments should map on to the relevant marking criteria and reflect the mark awarded.

c) Resolving Disagreements (5.8, 5.9)

There may, on occasion, be instances where you disagree with the marks awarded by the internal markers within a mark sample. If this occurs then you can request that the School undertakes an additional level of moderation or re-marking. However, this must apply to all students who have completed the assessment in question, not just those within the work sample.

The University does not permit external examiners to alter the mark of an individual student's work from the sample, as this would be inequitable for those whose work has not received the additional scrutiny you provide. The University would expect disagreements between internal markers to have been resolved before the work is seen by an external examiner (e.g. through the use of additional internal markers).

8. Board of Examiners Meetings

a) Attendance (6.1-6.5)

The University considers all external examiners to be full members of the relevant Board of Examiners (BoE) meetings. On appointment, Curriculum & Quality Department should inform you of the dates of the BoE meetings. The University expects all external examiners to attend BoE meetings as part of their duties. If you are unable to attend a BoE meeting this should be agreed well in advance with Curriculum & Quality Department, so that an alternative mechanism can be put in place to obtain your agreement on the results and decisions made.

b) Endorsement of Results/Awards (6.6, 6.7)

A key role for the external examiner at the BoE meeting is their endorsement of the results and

awards made and you should be requested to sign a mark/award list or similar to evidence your endorsement. If an external examiner does not endorse a decision taken at the BoE meeting this will be recorded and referred to the Academic Board. In such cases the School will subsequently inform the external examiner of the final decision of the Academic Board meeting.

9. Reporting procedures

a) Submitting your report (7.1-7.7)

The University requires all external examiners to submit an annual report using the template provided. This is in line with the QAA's guidance and the University's template has been developed to map to QAA requirements. The template can be found at our external examiner homepage. We ask that all report forms are completed electronically and sent via e-mail to j.reid@ucb.ac.uk for University College Birmingham Examiners as this assists us in the storage and communication of the reports.

Where programmes have a non-standard start date the deadline for the report is agreed with Curriculum & Quality Department on appointment. If an external examiner wishes to submit any further comments (e.g. following the supplementary examination period for UG programmes) they are free to do so, again using the report template. The deadlines are set to allow the University to consider the issues arising out of external examiners' reports, and Schools' responses, and determine any further action required. The deadlines are intended to give external examiners sufficient time to make their reports while allowing the reports to be considered in good time for any necessary follow-up action to be taken early in the following academic session. If we have not received your report by the specified deadline Curriculum & Quality Department will contact you either by phone, letter or e-mail. We would be grateful if you could notify us of any problems or circumstances which may prevent you from submitting your report by the deadlines stated. Please note, if you have been appointed to programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate level we do require two separate report forms to be completed for the academic session. All external examiner reports are reviewed by either the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum, Teaching and Learning) or nominee. The University reserves the right to request additional information from an external examiner if it is

felt there is insufficient detail in the original report. Therefore, we ask that all sections of the report are completed as fully as possible. We also request that no individual member of the University is identified in your report.

b) Responding to your report (8.1-8.8)

One receipt of your report Curriculum & Quality Department will send you an acknowledgement letter. After your report has been reviewed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum, Teaching and Learning) it is forwarded to the School. If your report raises developmental issues you have asked the School to consider you will receive a response to this directly from the School in due course. We ask that Schools respond to external examiner reports within 6 weeks of receipt within the School. However, this may take longer if issues area raised that the School needs to discuss at Committee-level before responding. In these cases the School may need to send you a further response letter later in the year to update you on actions arising from your comments.

If your report raises issues regarding University regulations or procedures Curriculum & Quality Department will, in conjunction with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum, Teaching and Learning) or nominee will respond to you directly. The time it will take to respond will depend on the complexity of the issue raised but again, as with School responses, we would aim to reply to you within 6 weeks. If you feel at any time that issues raised in your report have not been considered appropriately by the School or University please contact us. Feedback from external examiner reports is also considered by Quality Assurance committees at both School and University-level. If any common issues or themes arise out of these meetings information will be communicated to all external examiners, detailing the University's response to the issue and any subsequent changes to legislation or processes.

10. Working with Students

a) Programme Information (9.1, 9.4-9.5)

In line with the QAA's guidance the University is required to include the name, position and home institution of external examiners in programme information which is made available to

students. In most cases this will be the programme handbook, but in some instances Schools may put this information on the University Student Portal, which is password protected. All students registered on taught programmes will receive a guidance document to promote the role of external examiners. In this document the University will explain the 'do's and don'ts' of their interactions with external examiners, including an explicit instruction not to try and contact you directly under any circumstances. Please let us know if you are approached at any point during your appointment either by a student or by a third party on behalf of a student.

b) Meeting with Students (9.2-9.3)

The University does encourage external examiners to meet with representative groups of students in order to discuss their experiences of the programme of study, so you can provide useful feedback to the School. Your School should offer you this opportunity and please feel free to request such a meeting if one is not offered to you. Schools should inform students of the purpose of these meetings, and the limitations (e.g. not being able to discuss individual assessment outcomes).

c) Student Access to Reports (9.6-9.9)

External examiners reports are made available in full to Students via Canvas. In addition, our Guild Officers and Student representatives are present at School and University-level Quality Assurance committee meetings where discussion of the issues raised by external examiners takes place.

11. Resignation / Termination of Appointment (2.11, 2.12)

a) Resignation

During your 4-year tenure there may come a point where you feel that, because of a change in your own circumstances, you are unable to continue your duties as external examiner. If this should occur the University would be grateful if you would notify us in writing, giving a three-month notice period. Letters of resignation should be sent to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum,

Teaching and Learning) and Curriculum & Quality Department.

b) Termination of appointment

The University reserves the right to terminate an external examiner's appointment at any point during their term should the external fail to fulfil their roles and responsibilities as laid out in the University Code of Practice. This may include; unexplained absence from Board of Examiners meetings, the non-completion of scrutiny of work samples, failure to complete the annual report in a timely fashion. Termination of appointment is viewed as a 'last resort' and the University does actively work with its external examiners to ensure this action would be in exceptional circumstances. The University also reserves the rights to terminate any appointment that is not supported with the original right to work documents check as detailed in Point 3 – Induction.

c) Closure of Programmes

The integrity and security of the learning process is a fundamental tenet of the UCB approach to quality. Whenever possible, where programmes are replaced or discontinued UCB will seek to maintain the 'contract' with those students by seeking to give sufficient notice that the last cohort of students are able to complete the final phase of their programme. If for strategic reasons the final cohort of students are unable to complete their current programme due to early closure, UCB will transfer those students onto another suitable and similar programme for their benefit. In circumstances where programmes are brought to a close it will be necessary to end the contract of the External Examiner for this programme. Should the External Examiner only have this one programme responsibility, their contract will end before their 4-year term is completed.

12. Causes for concern (7.7, 11.1-11.3)

If at any time during your appointment you feel the need to raise confidential concerns, for example where it is necessary to identify an individual within the University, you may submit a separate confidential report (either by letter or email) to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum,

Teaching and Learning) e.penn@ucb.ac.uk. Section 11 of the Code of Practice details the steps you can take as external examiner if you feel a concern has not been fully addressed by the University.

13. Further University Information

a) Assessment Regulations

The University's assessment regulations can be found at the following web page.

<https://www.ucb.ac.uk/about-us/external-examiners/>

b) Codes of Practice

There are a number of other Codes of Practice which may be of use to you in your role.

<https://www.ucb.ac.uk/about-us/external-examiners/>

Curriculum & Quality Department
University College Birmingham

Appendix A - Eligibility to Work in the UK

Nationality	Right to work in the UK
United Kingdom*, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland.	If you are a national of one of these countries, you can live and work in the UK without restriction subject to you providing evidence of your nationality.
All other countries including Croatia	<p>You must provide the appropriate evidence from List A or List B below to confirm that you have the right to live and work in the UK.</p> <p>If you require sponsorship to carry out the work in question, as assessment will be made by the University to establish whether sponsorship can be offered for the role. If the University is able to offer sponsorship, your offer of employment is made on the condition that the University is granted permission by UKVI to employ you, that you are granted entry clearance/leave to remain in the UK on this basis and that you provide us with the appropriate evidence as set out in List B below prior to the commencement of work.</p>

* A British citizen or a citizen of the UK and Colonies having the right of abode in the UK has the automatic right to work in the UK. The following categories of persons do not have the automatic right to work in the UK: British Overseas Citizens; British National (Overseas); British Dependent Territories Citizen; British Overseas Territories Citizen; British subject and British protected person. Individuals falling into these categories must produce other documents as set out in List A or B to evidence their right to work in the UK.

Acceptable documents

The documents you may accept from a person to establish their right to work are set out in regulations. There are two lists – List A and List B which are detailed below. You must obtain an original document, or combination of documents, specified in one of these lists in order to comply.

List A contains the range of documents which you may accept for a person who has a permanent right to work in the UK. If you conduct the right to work checks correctly before employment begins, you will establish a continuous statutory excuse for the duration of that person’s employment with you. You do not have to conduct any further checks.

List B contains a range of documents which may be accepted for a person who has a temporary right to work in the UK. If you conduct the right to work checks correctly, you will establish a time-limited statutory excuse. You will be required to conduct a follow-up check in order to retain your statutory excuse. This will generally be when the permission to be in the UK comes to an end.

List A	
Acceptable documents to establish a continuous statutory excuse	
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 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.

List B	
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.