



External Examiner Guide for Students

Q. Who are External Examiners?

A. An External Examiner is normally a senior academic from another university whose role is to assist in monitoring the quality of the education we provide to our students. They help to ensure that the awards you receive at UCB are comparable to similar awards at other UK universities.

Sometimes, a team of External Examiners may be appointed to your programme of study, with each member assigned to specific modules. In some cases there may also be an External Examiner with a professional background if your programme has professional requirements.

Q. Will I know who the External Examiner is for my programme?

A. Yes. The name, home institution and post held of the External Examiner(s) appointed for your programme of study will be available in your programme documentation on Canvas.

Q. What do they do?

A. External Examiners are asked to scrutinise the assessment and marking processes on your programme of study. This is to ensure they are fair, rigorous and conducted in accordance with University procedures and regulations. They do this through a number of important roles.

For example External Examiners will:

- read and approve all draft assessment set in each module (coursework and examination papers);
- read samples of student work to ensure the marking is fair and accurate
- provide feedback on the consistency and accuracy of marks awarded;
- attend Board of Examiners meetings to endorse marks and awards;
- provide an annual written report to the University on their findings.

Q. Do they determine the outcome of my results or final award?

A. No. The confirmation of marks and award decisions at Board of Examiners meetings are agreed by the Board collectively. External Examiners have no direct influence in determining an individual student's marks or award. They are asked to ensure that our marking and awards are in line with national standards and comparable with other Universities.

Q. Will I meet my External Examiner?

A. In most cases no you probably will not meet your External Examiner. However, External Examiners are provided with the opportunity to meet representative groups of students from the relevant programme of study. So you might be asked to meet an External Examiner, together with other students, to discuss your experience of the programme. If this happens, your School should provide you with more detailed guidance about the purpose of that meeting and its limitations.

Q. Can I contact my External Examiner?

A. No. External Examiners are required to remain impartial at all times and they do not participate in determining marks for individual students. Students should not attempt to contact any External Examiner, and External Examiners are not permitted to respond to contacts made by students or anyone on behalf of a student.

If a student is found to have contacted an external examiner they may be subject to University disciplinary procedures as set out in the General Student Regulations. If you need clarification with regard to a mark you have been awarded for a piece of assessment, you should contact your personal tutor or programme/module leader in the first instance.

Q. What do Schools do with the feedback provided by External Examiners?

A. External Examiners are required to submit an annual written report on their views of the academic standards of the programme of study, based on the evidence they have seen. Schools are required to provide a response to the External Examiner which addresses any issues raised in their report. This helps University staff reflect on their programmes and modules which can, in turn, lead to developments or improvements to a programme of study.

All External Examiner reports are scrutinised by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum, Teaching & Learning) and discussed at relevant School and University level committees. The report and the School's response are also discussed with Student Reps as part of the normal business of subject boards and boards of study. The minutes of such meetings are normally made available to all students by the School via Canvas.

Q. Can I see an External Examiner's report and the School's response?

A. Yes. Reports are available on Canvas for each programme of study. You will be able to view these and, ideally have the opportunity to talk through the report and the response with a member of staff.

You can expect to be able to have access to the previous session's external examiner report and School response from around November on Canvas within the programme site. This allows time for the report to be carefully considered by the University and your School, and for the response to be written giving you the full picture of any issues that have been raised about your programme of study.

You can also obtain your external examiner's report by contacting Curriculum & Quality Department directly at j.reid@ucb.ac.uk

Q. Where can I find additional information about External Examiners?

A. Further information can be found at:

- General Information on the University's External Examiner system and a copy of the University Code of Practice on External Examining
<https://www.ucb.ac.uk/about-us/external-examiners/>
- The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) webpage on External Examining
www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/quality-code-B7.aspx

If you have any specific questions about External Examiners you should contact Curriculum & Quality Department at j.reid@ucb.ac.uk

Q. Are External Examiners the only mechanism for the quality assurance of my programme of study?

A. No. The External Examiner System is just one of the ways in which the quality of higher education is maintained. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is responsible for safeguarding standards and working to improve the quality of UK Higher Education.

Their website (www.qaa.ac.uk) contains further information about the systems in place for ensuring academic standards in Universities. They have recently produced some resources aimed specifically at students, for which the links are listed below.

Prezi Presentation – <http://prezi.com/h-zy5epxz12f/what-is-quality-assurance/>

QAA Video (1) www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/Films/Pages/What-is-quality-assurance.aspx

QAA Video (2) www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/Films/Pages/How-is-quality-assured.aspx