



CITY UNIVERSITY
LONDON

External Examiner's Guide for Taught Programmes



Introduction and Thanks

Thank you for agreeing to undertake the role of being an External Examiner here at City University London.

Your external examining role will play an important part in providing one of the principal means for maintaining nationally comparable standards within independent higher education institutions. It will contribute to enhancement and development of our programmes, and provide an external process for monitoring fair practice in the assessment of students' academic performance.

This guide should provide assistance in your role and responsibilities as an External Examiner, and it supplements the University's policies on external examining for taught programmes.

Contact for queries about the External Examiner system at City University London:

Academic Services is a team that plays a central role in supporting the University's management and development of its educational offering.

Academic Services
City University London
Northampton Square
London
EC1V 0HB

External Examiner Policies

Tim Hudson
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External Examiner Administration

Natalie Shepherd
Development Support Officer
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External Examiner website –

<http://www.city.ac.uk/about/education/academic-services/academic-policies-and-regulation/external-examining>

Appointment and Reappointment

Appointments are made by Senate, which has delegated authority from Council the supreme Governing Body of the University, for the enhancement of academic quality and assurance of academic standards, following nomination by the relevant School Boards of Studies or (for validated provision) Course Boards. Senate has delegated this function to Academic Practice, Programmes and Standards Committee (APPSC). External Examiners are drawn from such institutions, industry and professions as befit the particular programme content in order to provide for appropriate scrutiny.

Once your nomination has been approved on behalf of the University, you will receive within one week an External Examiner appointment pack.

The pack contains a formal contract letter, acceptance/bank details form, expenses claim form, External Examiner's Guide, External Examiner programme team checklist, and Assessment and Feedback Policy.

The contract letter will include:

- details about the academic year that your appointment is due to commence;
- the length of your appointment, the programme you have been assigned to, in that particular School or validated institution;
- information on how you can access the University's policies, a brief outline of the External Examiner role;
- your fee, and payment details.

Please check that all information is correct, and if so, complete and return the acceptance/bank details form. If you have in queries regarding your letter, please contact Academic Services.

Usually the University initially appoints for duration of three years, with the option to reappoint for another two. Reappointment is conditional on the receipt of the reports from the previous years. External Examiner appointments do not normally exceed five years in total unless an exceptional case has been made by the School/Course Board and approved by APPSC.

Schools ensure the timely nomination of externals for both new and continuing programmes. Nominations are made before the end of one session for appointments (and reappointments) commencing the following session. Schools are expected to arrange for a hand over from the outgoing External Examiner to the incoming examiner.

Your contact details

Please keep us informed of changes to address by email, so we can keep in contact and pay you.

Briefing, Induction and Support

All new External Examiners will be invited to a briefing provided by the programme director that provides detail about the programme and school to ensure that you:

- understand and are fully equipped for your roles(s);
- are familiar with the programme(s) and modules for which you are appointed;
- understand external examining, assessment and award processes and associated administrative procedures, at both University and School/programme level;
- have knowledge and understanding of City University London's assessment regulations; and
- develop effective working relationships with, relevant staff within the programme, School and University.

Additionally, you will receive a letter inviting you for a group induction to the role of external examining.

Duties of an External Examiner

As part of our emphasis on externality, we consider External Examiners play a critical role in supporting the maintenance of the academic standards of awards made in our name and, through their reports, contributing to the on-going development of our educational provision.

Your role will require you to undertake the following duties:

- Approve the assessments compiled by the Internal Examiners, including coursework, exam papers and resit papers.
- Review assessment material agreed with the School in advance. External Examiners have a right to see all assessment material if they wish.
- Review the assessed work according to a scope agreed at the briefing meeting.
- Attend meetings of the Assessment Board(s).
- Approve recommendations of the Assessment Board(s) for submission to Senate; or, if they are unwilling to approve any one or more of them, make independent representation to Senate via the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic Services.
- Contribute to enhancement and development of the programme through discussion with and feedback to the programme team.
- Report on the standard of the award, the standard of student performance and the soundness and fairness of processes for the assessment and determination of awards through:
 - Initial comments to be considered at meetings of Assessment Boards;
 - Report to the University submitted within two weeks of the final meeting of the Assessment Board each year. This should incorporate the initial comments made at Assessment Board meetings.
- Be able to exercise discretion in a consistent manner in the following areas:
 - The right to submit comments on any aspects of the assessment(s) to the Vice Chancellor.
 - By arrangement, attend any oral and practical assessment or interview in addition to those at which their attendance is agreed.
- Perform such other special duties as may be agreed.

University Regulations

The university regulations which set the framework in which the University operates can be found here –
www.city.ac.uk/about/education/academic-services/senate-regulations.

You should also familiarise yourself with the academic policy which governs external examining at City University London which can be found here - www.city.ac.uk/about/education/academic-services/academic-policies-and-regulation

Other relevant procedures and key documents are:

- Assessment and Feedback Policy
- Assessment Regulations
- Academic year structure
- Validation and Institutional Partnerships Handbook for validated programmes.

Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Expectations of an External Examiner

The QAA has primary responsibility for academic standards and quality in UK higher education. Their expectations of an External Examiner are:

- to verify that academic standards are appropriate for the award or part thereof which the External Examiner has been appointed to examine;
- to help institutions to assure and maintain academic standards across higher education awards;
- to help institutions to ensure that their assessment processes are sound, fairly operated and in line with the institution's policies and regulations.

Related links

- QAA Code of Practice on External Examining updated September 2004
www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/Code-of-practice-Section-4.aspx
- QAA Code of Practice on Assessment updated September 2006
www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/Code-of-practice-Section-6.aspx

External Examiner's Annual Report

Within two weeks of the Final Assessment Board(s) meeting within each academic year of your appointment, you are required to complete an annual report using our online form. The Annual Report form can be found here www.city.ac.uk/about/education/academic-services/academic-policies-and-regulation/external-examining. Receipt of your report is acknowledged by Academic Services, and triggers payment of the annual fee.

If you are unable to submit an online form, a Word version can be provided.

Your report will be available for discussion within the University, and may be requested by certain external organisations, including the Quality Assurance Agency, and professional and statutory bodies. It may also be supplied to an incoming External Examiner. It will be published on a password protected web page with personal details removed.

The report seeks comments on undertaking your role (Section A), programme structure and standards (Section B), and teaching, learning and assessment practices (Section C). The purpose of the report is to obtain feedback from you to confirm or otherwise the standards of programmes that lead to an award of City University London and to receive further comment on potential ways in which we can further develop the student learning experience. To support us in this, Section C provides a particular opportunity to reflect on practices operated by the programme, including the identification of good practice and areas for development. In addition, we very much encourage reflective comments to be provided in Sections A and B, but also provide Examiners with the opportunity to give a 'yes' answer where they reserve such reflection for later in the report. Where a 'no' answer is provided, you will be required to provide further context to enable us to undertake appropriate development.

You may, should you consider it appropriate, send a separate, additional report confidential to the Vice-Chancellor, concerning matters of significance and/or sensitivity.

If we have not received your report by the specific deadline, Academic Services will automatically generate an email reminder. If you are having trouble submitting your report, please notify us.

Consideration and Response to External Examiner Reports

All External Examiners' reports are read by a member of Academic Services when they arrive in the University to identify issues as well as areas of good practice or strengths within the programmes, before they are passed to Schools for full consideration of the issues and preparation of a response. A response will be sent directly to you from the school.

External Examiner reports provide valuable feedback that is fed into the annual monitoring of the programme (called Annual Programme Evaluation).

If at any point you feel that issues in your report have not been considered appropriately by the School or University please contact Academic Services.

External Examiner Fees and Expenses Payments

You will receive an annual fee. The amount is notified in your letter of appointment. Arrangements to pay your fee are put in hand on receipt of your annual report. Claims for travelling and incidental expenses are processed as they are received. They should be made on the Expenses and/or Fee Form EE3 which can be downloaded from the External Examiner website - www.city.ac.uk/about/education/academic-services/academic-policies-and-regulation/external-examining. Receipts must be provided; we are unable to process expenses claims without them.

External Examiners are paid through the University's Payroll system by electronic transfer into their nominated bank accounts. Payment is credited on the last working day of the month. As the payroll deadline is the 10th of the month, payment may be credited on the last working day of the same or following month depending when a report or expenses claim arrives.

The University is required by the Inland Revenue to deduct the basic rate of income tax from all fee payments to External Examiners of taught programmes. External Examiner fees are excluded from National Insurance deductions. Travelling and subsistence expenses reimbursed are not subject to income tax. A payslip is sent by post in the month of payment detailing fee and expenses payments and deductions made, and a P60 at the end of the financial year.

Termination, interruption of appointment, and premature termination

If you wish to interrupt your appointment for a defined period of time or are unable to fulfill your duties as an External Examiner, we ask that you put this in writing to the appropriate programme contact and copy it to Academic Services. Interim arrangements can then be made, or alternatively temporary appointments may be established.

If termination is instigated by the University, a recommendation will be made, and approved by APPSC. The University can terminate appointments of any of the following grounds:

- Discontinuation of the provision for which the External Examiner was appointed.
- Irretrievable breakdown in the relationship between the External Examiner and the School or Validated Institution.
- Persistent unavailability/inability to perform duties (e.g. non-submission of reports within a reasonable timescale and/or failure to attend an Assessment Board without good reason).
- New conflict of interest following a change of role of the Examiner.
- Other grounds, as applicable, put forward by the School.

City University London acknowledges the importance of this role and would like to thank you again for undertaking your duties as an External Examiner for our University.

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