



Academic excellence for
business and the professions

Guide for External Examiners

Taught programmes



Introduction and thanks

Thank you for agreeing to undertake the role of being an External Examiner here at City, University of 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 the 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. It supplements City's policies on external examining for taught programmes.

Contact information

Student and Academic Services plays a central role in supporting City's management and development of its educational offering. We will provide you with details of key contacts during your appointment process.

Student and Academic Services
City, University of London
Northampton Square
London
EC1V 0HB



Telephone enquiries
+44 (0)20 7040 8932



Email enquiries
exexadmin@city.ac.uk



For further information on external examining at City, University of London, visit
www.city.ac.uk/external-examining

Appointment and reappointment

City, University of London's External Examiner appointment policy aligns with the national guidance published in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Chapter B7.

Appointments will take account of any potential conflicts of interest which might affect, or may be perceived to affect, the requirements for independent and impartial judgement. Former staff and students should not take up external examining appointments within five years of leaving City and External Examiners should not have any close links with the institution. If you identify that a conflict of interest exists or has arisen during your appointment, please notify us and we will advise on any action that needs to be taken.

Appointments are made by Senate following nomination by the relevant School Boards of Studies or (for validated provision) Course Boards. Senate has delegated authority from Council (City's governing body) for the enhancement of academic quality and assurance of academic standards. Senate has delegated this function to the Deputy President and Provost. External Examiners are drawn from institutions, industries and professions that align with the particular programme content to enable appropriate scrutiny to be undertaken.

Once your nomination has been approved on behalf of City, you will be sent an External Examiner appointment pack. The pack contains a formal contract letter, an acceptance/bank details form, an expenses claim form, an External Examiner Programme Team checklist, the Assessment and Feedback policy and this External Examiner's Guide.

The contract letter will include:

- Confirmation of the academic year from which your appointment is due to commence
- The length of your appointment, the programme(s) you have been assigned to and name of the relevant School or Validated Institution
- Information on how you can access City's policies and a brief outline of the External Examiner role
- Your fee and payment detail.

Please check that all information is correct before completing and returning the acceptance/ bank details form. Please ensure that you return this form to confirm your agreement to the appointment as this enables fees to be paid to you in due course. Your appointment at City, University of London is subject to us receiving evidence of your Right to Work in the UK and we request that you provide this evidence for our records and to ensure future compliance with the legal requirements.

If you have any queries regarding your contract letter, please contact Student and Academic Services.

In line with national guidance, External Examiners are normally appointed for a period of four years, with an exceptional extension of one year if necessary to ensure continuity. Reappointment may occur in exceptional circumstances but only after a period of five years or more has elapsed since the last appointment.

Schools are responsible for the timely nomination of External Examiners for both new and continuing programmes. Nominations should be made before the end of one academic session for appointments (and reappointments) commencing the following session. The Programme team are expected to arrange for a handover 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

You will receive an invitation to attend an induction to the role of External Examiner at City, University of London. This session is designed as a briefing to provide you with knowledge and understanding of City's assessment regulations and other key contextual information to support you in your role.

In addition, all newly appointed 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 role(s)
- Are familiar with the programme(s) and module(s) to which you have been appointed
- Understand the external examining, assessment and award processes and the associated administrative procedures at School and programme level
- Develop effective working relationships with relevant staff within the programme, School and City.

We strongly recommend that External Examiners attend the City and School induction sessions. The City induction event usually consists of a morning session with key academic and professional staff which provides you with institutional and assessment-related information, followed by an opportunity to meet the Programme Director for your briefing on the programme and/or module(s) you will be examining, if you have not already received this.

Duties of an External Examiner

External Examiners play a critical role in supporting the maintenance of the academic standards of awards made in City's name. Through their reports, External Examiners contribute to the continuing development of our educational provision.

Your role will require you to undertake the following duties:

- To review, approve and comment on the assessments compiled by the Internal Examiners including coursework, examination papers and resit papers that contribute to the final Award. External Examiners have a right to see all assessment material if they wish
- To review appropriately-sized samples of assessed work as agreed with the School in advance during your induction process
- To attend meetings of the Assessment Board(s) as a voting member where award or progression are being considered and participate in the decision-making process. You may attend other Assessment Boards if you wish but would not have voting rights at those Boards
- To approve the decisions made by the Assessment Board. If you are unwilling to approve any one of them, you may make independent representation to the President via Student and Academic Services
- To contribute to the enhancement and development of the programme through discussion with and feedback to the Programme team
- To 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 the Assessment Boards
 - An annual report to City 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.
- To exercise discretion in a consistent manner should you wish to submit comments on any aspects of the assessment(s) to the President
- To perform such other special duties as may be agreed, such as attendance at any oral or specific practical assessment where applicable.

The External Examiner role does not include:

- Changing individual marks of a sample, but an External Examiner can advise Programme teams and raise concerns about the quality of moderation or second marking
- Conducting a viva if that is not in the assessment strategy for the programme
- Attending periodic reviews (a comprehensive review of programmes held every five years).

City, University of London regulations

Details of the academic policy which governs external examining at City, University of London can be found in the External Examining section of City's Quality Manual, available at www.city.ac.uk/about/education/quality-manual.

Other relevant key documents include the following:

- 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

National guidance developed by the QAA is designed to safeguard academic standards and quality in UK higher education. Their expectations of an External Examiner are that they will:

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

The QAA Quality Code chapter for External Examining was developed in 2011 following extensive consultation with higher education providers and their representative bodies, the National Union of Students, professional and statutory bodies and others.

The chapter was last updated in 2015 and is available at www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance (QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B7 - External examining).

External Examiner's annual report

Timely submission of an annual report is important in ensuring that your feedback is properly recorded and responded to. We therefore ask that you submit an annual report within two weeks of the Final Assessment Board(s) meeting in each academic year of your appointment.

An online form (EE2) is available at www.city.ac.uk/external-examining.

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

Receipt of your report will be acknowledged by Student and Academic Services and it will trigger payment of your annual fee.

Your report will be available for discussion within City (including the relevant Student-Staff Liaison Committees) 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. Your report will be published on a password-protected web page with personal details removed.

The report requests 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 on the standards of programmes that lead to an award from City, University of London and to receive your thoughts on ways in which we can further develop and enhance the student learning experience. To support us in this, Section C provides you with an opportunity to reflect on practices in the programme and to identify aspects of good practice and areas for development. We encourage the inclusion of reflective comments in Sections A and B as well as your 'yes' or 'no' answer and Examiners can reflect in more detail at a later stage of the report. Where you feel that a 'no' answer is justified, you will be asked to provide further context to enable us to address the issue and undertake appropriate development.

A reminder will be sent if we do not receive your report on time and the relevant programme team will be notified. Please let us know as soon as possible if you are having difficulties with submitting your report.

If you wish to raise matters of significance and/or sensitivity, you may send a separate additional report directly to the President.

In cases of serious systemic or procedural problems that have not been resolved through City's internal procedures (including submission of a comment or report to the President), the QAA operates a Concerns procedure. Details are available at www.qaa.ac.uk/concerns

Consideration and response to External Examiner reports

All External Examiners' reports are considered by a senior member of Student and Academic Services to identify issues which require a response, as well as areas of good practice or strengths within the programmes. They are then 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 informs the annual monitoring of the programme (our Annual Programme Evaluation process) and plans for enhancement of the programme.

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

External Examiner fees and expenses payments

You will receive an annual fee. The amount is indicated in your letter of appointment, which also asks you to return the Acceptance/Bank Details form to indicate your acceptance of the contract. Arrangements to pay your fee are made 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 at www.city.ac.uk/about/education/quality-manual/7-external-examining. Receipts must be provided, as we are unable to process expenses claims without them.

External Examiners are paid through City'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 each month, payment may be credited on the last working day of the same or following month depending when a report or expenses claim arrives.

City 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 is sent 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 you are unable to fulfil your duties as an External Examiner, we ask that you put this in writing to the appropriate Programme contact and copy your correspondence to Student and Academic Services. Interim arrangements can then be made or alternatively temporary appointments may be established.

If you wish to resign from your External Examining post prior to the completion of your contracted term of engagement, please provide us with reasonable notice (at least three months) and, if possible, complete your duties for the current year of appointment.

If termination is instigated by City, a recommendation will be made and approved by our Education and Student Committee. City can terminate appointments on 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 of London acknowledges the importance of this role and would like to thank you again for undertaking your duties as an External Examiner.

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