

## 5. External Examining Taught Schemes

- [5.1 Introduction](#)

1. The role of an External Examiner is an integral and essential part of the University's quality assurance. Section 5 of the Academic Quality Handbook (AQH) has been developed taking into account, and should be read in conjunction with, the [QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) (2018 and May 2023 updates), especially [UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: External Expertise](#) (published November 2018), [The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#) (February 2024), [External Examining Principles](#) (published August 2022), [External Examining: Putting Principles into Practice](#), [External Examining Principles: Reflective Questions](#) (both published November 2022) and [Advance HE Fundamentals of External Examining](#) (published February 2019).

2. In this section of the AQH the term 'External Examiners' refers to External Examiners for Taught Degrees; initial degrees, undergraduate and postgraduate diplomas and certificates (including the Cert HE), taught postgraduate Master's schemes (Master's degrees by examination and dissertation) and integrated undergraduate Master's schemes. The Senate External Reviewer refers to an External who attends the final Senate Examining Boards at which all taught scheme results are confirmed. The ARCHE External refers to an External who attends the two annual ARCHE panels at which candidates get awarded a HEA fellowship. Associate External Examiners have responsibility for small numbers of modules in specialist areas and may be required to report to the main External Examiner for the scheme/subject area. All External Examiners are ultimately responsible to the Senate, which is responsible for the conduct of all examinations at Aberystwyth University (AU).

3. Please refer to [Section 7: Research Degrees](#) for guidance on the University's external examining arrangements for Postgraduate Research Degrees.

- [5.2 Criteria for Appointment](#)

1. The attention of all prospective External Examiners is drawn to the QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education during the appointment process. In particular, prospective External Examiners are asked to report any conflicts of interest in addition to those listed below.

2. External Examiners should normally hold no more than two external examiner appointments for taught schemes at any point in time.

3. Only persons of sufficient seniority and experience to be able to command authority should be appointed as External Examiners. All External Examiners should be familiar with the standard expected of students in the relevant awards and with sector agreed reference points and any appropriate professional body requirements. Academic appointments should have had extensive involvement in the relevant field of study, and in assessment, curriculum design, and the enhancement of the student experience.

4. The appointment of internal and external examiners who are linguistically and academically competent to make judgements on the original Welsh language text should be regarded as a first principle. If it is not possible to appoint an external examiner to act through the medium of Welsh, the option of translating must be considered, noting that this carries a higher risk. For further guidance, please refer to the QAA guidance on effective practice in examining and

assessing through the medium of Welsh [guidelines-for-higher-education-providers-on-effective-practice-in-examining-and-assessing-in-welsh-within-wales.pdf](#)

5. External Examiners from outside the University system are appropriate where professional expertise is required. Such Examiners must demonstrate familiarity with the required academic standards or must work in tandem with other External Examiners who do work within the University system.

6. Former students or members of staff at Aberystwyth University who have joined the staff of another University may not be invited to become External Examiners before a lapse of at least five years, and sufficient time for students taught by or with that External Examiner to have passed through the system, whichever is the longer. Former members of staff at Aberystwyth University who have retired will not normally be nominated as External Examiners.

7. External Examiners' appointments will be monitored to ensure that Aberystwyth University External Examiners continue to represent a range of UK institutions and to prevent over-reliance on Examiners from particular universities.

8. An External Examiner shall not be re-appointed to examine a scheme offered within the same department before a lapse of at least five years and shall only be re-appointed in exceptional circumstances.

9. The making of reciprocal arrangements for external examining with staff teaching similar schemes of study at other universities is not permissible.

10. An External Examiner for a particular programme or programmes shall not be succeeded by another from the same department of the same University. It is not permissible for a department to engage more than one External Examiner from the same department at any institution.

11. Senate External Reviewers will be senior administrative staff from other Universities who have substantial experience of operating examination and assessment practices and procedures. Their role will be to confirm that AU has operated its approved procedures correctly and to identify possible enhancements based on good practice elsewhere.

12. Associate Examiners may be appointed in specialist subject areas which the main External Examiner for the study scheme or subject area is unable to cover. As they may be required to report to the main External Examiner and may not need to comment on a study scheme as a whole, they will require only specialist knowledge of the relevant subject area of the module(s) they are asked to moderate.

- [5.3 Period of Appointment](#)

1. External Examiners shall normally be appointed for a period of four years, with the possibility of re-appointment for a fifth year to ensure continuity.

2. Where an external examiner has agreed to extend their remit (e.g. from UG programmes only to UG and PG programmes) after the start of their original appointment, the extension shall run concurrently with the original appointment.

- [5.4 Appointment Procedures](#)

1. All nominations for new External Examiners or extensions to current appointments should be submitted to the Academic Registry for consideration by the relevant committee no later than the end of February in the session before the appointment is to commence. All nomination

forms should be accompanied by further documentation as specified in the nomination form (e.g. the nominee's academic CV). Departments should approach the proposed Examiners informally to ask whether they are willing to accept the appointment before submitting formal nominations.

2. Once the Academic Registrar (or their nominee) has approved the appointment, a formal offer letter will be sent to the Examiner along with details of the fee and of appropriate University Regulations and procedures.

- [5.5 Preliminary Arrangements and Right to Work in the UK](#)

1. External Examiners who have accepted appointments shall be provided with a link to the relevant chapter of the Academic Quality Handbook by the Academic Registry to ensure that they understand and can fulfil their responsibilities. The Academic Registry will provide briefing materials and presentations online on AberLearn (Blackboard) each session for new Examiners on undergraduate and taught postgraduate schemes. In addition to the briefing day materials provided by the Academic Registry, the [Advance HE](#) handbook [Fundamentals of External Examining](#) (published February 2019) offers a comprehensive general introduction to external examining of taught schemes for new external examiners, and can be used as a reference source for both new and existing External Examiners. As part of [Degree Standards project](#), Advance HE developed, in partnership with [Office for Students](#), practical approaches for reinforcing UK standards of external examining in the form of a Professional development course for external examiners, which may be of interest to both new and existing External Examiners. For more information, please see: [Professional development course for external examiners | Advance HE \(advance-he.ac.uk\)](#) and [Subject Specific Calibration Course](#).

2. Each External Examiner shall be supplied by the relevant academic department with copies of the syllabuses and schedules of assessment for the scheme(s) of study concerned, together with notification of the dates set for the meeting of the relevant Examining Boards.

3. In accordance with the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, External Examiners names, roles and institutions will be published in a .pdf document in section 5.14 of this chapter, and may be published on departmental staff webpages and against individual modules/schemes on the module/scheme database.

4. In accordance with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, the University has an obligation to ensure that all those engaged in work with the University are legally eligible to work in the UK. At the time of publication of this chapter, the Right to Work checks will be undertaken by the Human Resources Department, and they will get in touch with each External Examiner to explain the process, the necessary documentation and arrange the details. A copy of the Right to Work documentation will be held by the University in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation. **It will not be possible to grant external examiners access to modules and materials on Blackboard, or process expenses or fee claims without successful completion of the Right to Work check.**

- [5.6 Guidelines on the Role of External Examiners](#)

1. External Examiners are appointed to undertake the tasks listed below. Having completed those tasks, they will report, in relation to the schemes/modules for which they have a responsibility, on whether:

- (i) The standards set are appropriate for the programme's awards, or award elements, by reference to national subject benchmarks, AU programme specifications and any other relevant points of reference
- (ii) The standards of student performance in the programme(s), or parts of programme(s), are comparable to the standards of similar programmes in other UK higher education institutions
- (iii) The processes for assessment, examination and determination of awards are sound and fairly conducted in accordance with AU examination conventions and procedures.

In order to fulfil these roles, External Examiners should have access to relevant information on the schemes/modules for which they have responsibility, to the work of students following the schemes/modules concerned and on the University's examination conventions and procedures. External Examiners should also ensure that they are familiar with relevant aspects of the [QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#), and in particular the sections on External Examining and Assessment, relevant [subject benchmarks](#) and the [Qualifications Framework](#).

It is expected that **all modules that contribute to an award, or accreditation by an external accrediting body, will be externally examined.**

2. External Examiners are expected to attend meetings of the relevant Departmental Examining Boards. Please note that **all** Departmental and Senate Examination Boards are now conducted virtually using MS Teams, unless a case has been successfully made by the department to the Academic Registrar for a board to be held in person. This includes all taught boards, including the research training board. Departments can make a case for any in-person visits by External Examiners to the Academic Registrar by emailing [qaestaff@aber.ac.uk](mailto:qaestaff@aber.ac.uk). Should an External Examiner be unable to attend an Examining Board meeting, alternative arrangements will be made to ensure that they are able to undertake the tasks listed below.

3. The primary role of External Examiners is to undertake the following tasks:

- (i) Satisfy themselves that the assessment procedures accord with the programme specification(s)
- (ii) Approve examination question papers and any other forms of assessment which are normally subject to prior approval by an External Examiner, for semesters one and two and the supplementary examination period.
- (iii) Agree with the relevant departmental staff on an appropriate basis for the sampling of students' assessed work
- (iv) Audit evidence to indicate the basis on which marks have been awarded
- (v) Satisfy themselves that appropriate provision has been made for the second marking and/or internal moderation of assessed work
- (vi) Monitor, in consultation with the Departmental Examining Board, the consistency of standards across comparable scheme components/modules and approve, where necessary, adjustments to sets of marks, i.e. having reviewed all marks awarded for a particular module (or modules), make appropriate adjustments across the mark range
- (vii) At the request of the relevant departmental staff, assist in the determination of individual cases which internal Examiners may have been unable to resolve

(viii) Contribute to the recommendations made by the Departmental Examining Board to the Senate Examining Board as to the degree classifications for single honours students, on whether taught postgraduate students should pass the degree with or without Distinction or Merit, and on exit awards for candidates unable or unwilling to proceed

(ix) Contribute to recommendations made by the Departmental Examining Board to the Senate Examining Board about undergraduate and postgraduate students whose overall performance falls within the 'window of opportunity'

(x) Report to the University on the standards of student performance, on the standards of the awards and on the processes for assessment, examination and determination of awards

(xi) Comment on any proposal for a new or revised study scheme in a related field.

4. External Examiners on taught postgraduate schemes should in addition carry out the following tasks involving the dissertation element:

(i) Agree with the relevant departmental staff on the basis for sampling dissertations (see [Section 3.2](#) of the AQH). The normal expectation would be that examiners on schemes with large cohorts would sample a number of dissertations rather than see every one

(ii) Monitor, in consultation with the Departmental Examining Board, the consistency of standards in the assessment of dissertations.

(iii) PGT External Examiners' term of appointment (with possible exception of Distance Learning provision) is expected to run concurrent with the full-time student cohort of any academic year and is to include the cohort's dissertations (normally submitted in September and considered at the November/December Examining Boards). It is considered usual practice for PGT external examiners to see a cohort of students through, with the exception of Distance Learning programmes or programmes lasting more than a standard PGT academic year.

5. External Examiners may also, by agreement with the relevant departmental staff, undertake these additional tasks:

(i) Undertake oral examinations (for example for modern language students)

(ii) Meet (virtually, via MS Teams) with a representative sample of students as an aid to the audit of standards

(iii) Meet (virtually, via MS Teams) a representative group of students to obtain a student viewpoint on matters within the External Examiner's remit

(iv) Advise on course structures, and on proposals for new schemes, and new and restructured modules.

(v) Undertake other in person engagements/visits as necessary as agreed in advance with the Head of Department, for example for schemes with a practical element or professional body requirement (these include, but are not limited to, practice placement visits, art exhibitions, live performances where these are not recorded).

6. It is **NOT** the practice at Aberystwyth University for External Examiners to:

(i) Act as second markers of course assignments or examination scripts

(ii) Make selective adjustments to the marks of individual students whose work was included in the review sample

(iii) Use vivas for the purpose of grading the performance of an individual student or group of students, unless they have been approved as a formal part of the assessment process for a particular module.

7. External Examiners who, either in the course of the marking period or subsequently, consider that a candidate has engaged in an unfair assessment practice shall immediately report the circumstances in writing to the Chair of the Examining Board concerned.

8. The Senate External Reviewers shall oversee the operation of the Senate Examining Boards at which all results for taught schemes are confirmed. Their role is to ensure that the common systems governing undergraduate and taught postgraduate awards are operated fairly and consistently across the institution. They are asked in particular to carry out the following tasks:

(i) to attend the final Senate Undergraduate Examination Boards in June/July each session, and to attend the final Senate Postgraduate Exam Board in December. In addition, to be available for consultation at the time of the semester one and supplementary examination boards

(ii) to sign the Notification of Results Forms confirming that the degree classes and postgraduate results awarded to students have been awarded in a fair and consistent manner and according to AU's rules, regulations and examination conventions

(iii) to offer comments and advice to the Senate Examination Boards on the handling of decisions affecting the degree classifications or postgraduate results of individual students

(iv) to write a report on the operation of the Board, commenting on whether it was operated fairly and consistently and in line with AU procedures, whether the standards of awards made were in line with other institutions with which the examiners are familiar, and to offer any comments on how the system might be improved.

9. Where at very short notice the External Reviewer is unable to attend, the Academic Registrar would seek to approach an existing External to participate.

10. Associate Examiners will normally be asked only to confirm that the standards on the module(s) they have moderated are appropriate.

- [5.7 The role of External Examiners at Examination Boards](#)

1. Each academic department shall establish a final Examining Board or Boards to consider results and make recommendations on candidates pursuing schemes leading to the award of undergraduate and taught postgraduate qualifications. Departmental and Senate Examination Boards are now conducted virtually (online) using MS Teams. This includes all taught boards, including the research training board. Aberystwyth University recognizes that there might be some cases where External Examiners might still need to travel to Aberystwyth, e.g. to review samples of work that could not easily be accessed online, observe live performances or art exhibitions, or limited marking and moderation time preventing samples of examination scripts being sent to an External Examiner ahead of an Examining Board meeting. In such cases, provided that there is good reason, in-person attendance at Examining Boards would be possible provided permission is obtained ahead of the Examining Board from the Academic Registrar as specified in 5.6.2 above.

2. For each Departmental Examining Board there shall be:

(i) a Chair who will be a senior member of staff of the relevant department, nominated by the Head of Department

(ii) an External Examiner (or Examiners) appointed as prescribed

(iii) internal Examiners and/or representative(s) of relevant modules

(iv) appropriate persons who may attend at the Chair's invitation in an advisory capacity. Such persons shall possess no voting rights.

3. All results on taught schemes will be confirmed by the relevant Senate Examining Board comprising:

(i) a Chair who will be the Pro Vice-Chancellor responsible for academic standards unless the PVC delegates this responsibility to a member of Academic Board

(ii) a Senate External Reviewer who will be a senior administrator from another university with substantial experience of operating examination and assessment practices and procedures. Their role would be to confirm that AU had operated its approved procedures correctly and to identify possible enhancements based on good practice elsewhere. The appointee would be required to attend Senate Examination Boards to oversee the proceedings

(iii) internal Examiners who will be representatives of all departments teaching modules for which results are being considered

(iv) appropriate persons who may attend at the Chair's invitation in an advisory capacity. Such persons shall possess no voting rights.

4. External Examiners are regarded as members of Examining Boards, giving an external perspective and offering advice and guidance. They do not have a right of veto on the decisions taken by the Board. On completion of a cycle of examining, an External Examiner's signature on the relevant pass list(s) is taken to indicate that the decisions recorded were those taken by the Examining Board. It is not to be interpreted as necessarily implying an endorsement of the standards of the examination or of the conduct of the assessment; these are matters for consideration in External Examiners' reports to the University.

5. During semester one, External Examiners shall perform all the tasks normally associated with examining such as the approval of assessments, and providing feedback on the schemes/modules that they are responsible for at semester one Examining Boards. Consultation shall take place by correspondence or other appropriate means; academic departments must ensure that all External Examiners engage with the necessary tasks and/or procedures before Semester 1 Examining Boards. Any concerns about Semester 1 modules shall be brought to the attention of the relevant academic department before Semester one Examining Board. External Examiners will not be formally required to attend semester one Examining Board meetings but may do so if they wish. A formal report following semester one Examining Boards is not required, but the external examiners should include their comments relating to semester 1 modules in the annual report that they submit after semester 2 Examining Boards. In exceptional circumstances, an External Examiner may be asked for an interim report after Semester 1.

6. External Examiners on undergraduate schemes are formally required by the University to be present at the main, semester two meeting of the Examining Boards in June at which the examination results in the subjects in which they have been involved are determined.

7. External Examiners on taught postgraduate schemes are formally required by the University to be present at the semester two meeting of the Examining Boards in June. There should be at least one External Examiner present at the final degree awarding board in November/December; this will be determined by the department on a pro-rata basis. Departments may invite other External Examiners to attend the final degree awarding Examining Board in November/December, in addition to the nominated External.

8. The ARCHE External Examiner is formally required to attend two annual panels at which candidates are awarded a HEA fellowship (usually around November and May). The purpose of the panel is to confirm the award of Associate Fellow, Fellow, and Senior Fellow status in the Higher Education Academy through direct application through ARCHE and to recognise the award of Associate Fellow and Fellow status through participation in the PGCTHE and TPAU schemes.

9. The PGCTHE external examiner is formally required to attend the main PGCTHE Examining Board in February and submit an annual report within 4 weeks of that board unless requested to do otherwise by the Chair of the Examining Board.

10. The Health Education External Examiners are formally required to attend the main Semester 3 Examining Board, unless requested to do otherwise by the Chair of the Examining Board.

11. If External Examiners exceptionally cannot attend a meeting where their presence is formally required, they should be available for consultation with the Chair of the Board by telephone or other suitable means and shall dispatch all documents necessary for the due performance of the business of the meeting.

- [5.8 Reports](#)

1. External Examiners are required by AU to submit written reports both annually and at the end of their period of office. External Examiners' comments on the examining process are invited, including observations on the structure and content of the scheme of study and its teaching.

(i) External Examiners on undergraduate schemes are required to complete an annual report which should be submitted by email within 4 weeks of the meeting of the final Examining Board in June.

(ii) External Examiners on taught postgraduate schemes are required to complete two reports; an annual report which should be submitted by email within 4 weeks of the meeting of the semester two Examining Board in June, and a short report submitted at the end of the dissertation component of the degree scheme (November/December)

(iii) where an External Examiner is appointed to both undergraduate and postgraduate schemes, the University will require separate reports to be completed following the relevant Examining Boards. The University cannot accept joint UG and PGT reports.

(iv) the ARCHE External Examiner is required to complete a report after each ARCHE panel. The report should be submitted by email within 4 weeks of the ARCHE panel meeting.



(v) The PGCTHE external examiner is required to submit an annual report after the main PGCTHE Examining Board in February, unless requested to do otherwise by the Chair of the Examining Board.

vi) the Senate External Examiner is required to complete a report after eachj Senate Examining Board. The report should be submitted by email within 4 weeks of the Senate Examining Board.

2. The content of the annual report should include full and constructive comments which will help to maintain and enhance provision. Where content is considered incomplete or insufficient the department may ask External Examiners to add further commentary. Please note that External Examiners who are responsible for UK or overseas collaborative provision are required to complete a separate collaborative provision report in addition to the standard annual report relating to AU programmes.

3. Annual Reports should be completed using the online report form, except where the online form is not suitable (e.g. Senate External Reviewer, ARCHE). The Academic Registry will provide the links to the relevant forms, along with indicative questions, via email to all external examiners. Upon successful submission of a report, the online form would display a message confirming that the report has been submitted. The Academic Registry will disseminate the reports received to the relevant departments. The University attaches considerable importance to the External Examiner's report and payment of the fee and expenses is conditional upon its receipt. In the event of an Examiner not submitting a report, the Vice-Chancellor shall be empowered to take such steps as appropriate to the circumstances to obtain it, and/or may choose to issue a letter of premature termination as a result.

4. The Academic Registry will arrange the payment of fees and expenses unless the report has not been satisfactorily completed, in which case the External Examiner will be invited to revise it. Departments are asked to respond to their Examiners after they have given the report due consideration and to address any concerns about departmental systems and processes.

5. Annual reports, with departmental responses, will be published on the University's AberLearn Blackboard site and will be available to registered students at the University. **It is therefore important that reference is not made to individual any candidates and/or individual members of staff by name.**

6. Faculties will compile summary reports listing all issues raised by their External Examiners, and confirming the action taken in response. The faculty will ensure that each Examiner receives a response to the issues raised. The summary reports will be considered at faculty level and forwarded to the Academic Board which will address concerns at University level. Each Examiner shall receive a copy of the relevant minute of the committee, which may ask the Pro Vice-Chancellor to respond directly to Examiners on specific concerns.

7. The University will give careful consideration to issues raised by its External Examiners and will inform the Examiners of steps taken in response to comments, or explain why recommended action has not been taken. It will not always be possible or desirable for the University to undertake action recommended by individual Examiners. This must be considered along with the comments of all other Examiners and other relevant performance indicators.

8. An External Examiner who considers it appropriate may send a separate, confidential report directly to the Vice-Chancellor to draw attention to any matters of acute concern. External Examiners should also note that if they have exhausted internal procedures and still have

significant concerns, they may contact the QAA. Information is available at: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/>

9. The process and timeline for receiving and responding to undergraduate and taught postgraduate External Examiner reports can be found in [Chapter 5.14 Template Forms](#).

- [5.9 Collaborative Provision](#)

1. External Examiners are appointed by the University and collaborative partner organisations and are required to follow external examining procedures, which are the same as those in operation for the University.

2. For franchise arrangements, where possible, the same External Examiner who examines the programme at Aberystwyth University should be appointed to examine the franchise programme. Departments are requested to clearly communicate to a prospective external examiner that their role will include examining the franchise programme.

3. External Examiners should ensure that they complete any additional parts of the annual report for collaborative provision.

4. The collaborative partner will be sent the relevant report to comment on before returning it to the department. The annual report, with departmental and collaborative partner responses, will be made available to the collaborative provision students via the Partner Blackboard site.

5. External Examiners would be expected to consider and advise on the comparability of standards where schemes and modules are delivered at more than one location, including those delivered in collaboration with a university-approved partner organisation.

- [5.10 Fees and Expenses](#)

1. Annual fees are detailed in the appointment letter and are settled by bank transfer and subject to PAYE.

2. Expenses will be paid (subject to submission of supporting receipts) by bank transfer. Subsistence expenses must be in line with the University policy as detailed in <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/finance/information-for-staff/expenses/#travel-&-subsistence-rates>. Please note that departments must liaise with the QA team ([qaestaff@aber.ac.uk](mailto:qaestaff@aber.ac.uk)) about any in-person visits from External Examiners in advance of the visit.

3. Payment of the fee, and expenses, is dependent upon receipt of the annual report (or reports where applicable) and a completed Expenses Claim Form where appropriate; External Examiners should submit an Expenses Claim Form by email to [extstaff@aber.ac.uk](mailto:extstaff@aber.ac.uk).

4. External Examiners on taught postgraduate schemes should maintain a record of the names of the dissertation candidates examined; a claim form may be submitted at the time a dissertation is examined, or a complete list submitted on the annual claim form.

5. It will not be possible to process expenses or fee claims if the right to work verification process has not been completed.

- [5.11 Termination of Appointment](#)

1. Whilst it is hoped that such a situation will not arise, an External Examiner whose performance or general conduct is unsatisfactory or for whom a conflict of interest arises may

be warned informally in the first instance and, if necessary, be advised on appropriate remedial action(s), which must be taken. In exceptional circumstances, the Pro Vice-Chancellor may recommend that a letter of premature termination be sent to the External Examiner concerned without prior warning. This will have the effect of terminating the appointment immediately. A letter of premature termination may also be sent in respect of a less serious incident where an External Examiner has received previously an informal warning.

2. The appointment of an External Examiner may be terminated in the following instances:

(i) Non-fulfilment of external examiner duties including non-submission or submission of an incomplete/inadequate annual report and/or failure to attend an Examination Board (where attendance is required) without reason or explanation from the External Examiner

(ii) Changes in scheme provision which render the appointment no longer applicable

(iii) Unprofessional conduct

(iv) Conflict of interest that arises during the appointment.

In any of the instances above, you will be notified, in writing, of the termination of appointment.

3. External Examiners are required to give the University 3 months' notice, in writing, of resignation from the appointment should they feel that they are unable to continue their duties as an External Examiner.

- [5.12 Examination Conventions](#)

1. Aberystwyth University Examination Conventions are published as: [Examination Conventions](#)

Chapter 5 reviewed: July 2024

- [5.13 FAQs for External Examiners](#)

1. External Examiner Reports and Attendance at Exam Boards – what is the expectation?

External Examiners are required attend an Examining Board at least once a year and submit written reports both annually and at the end of their period of office. All Departmental and Senate Examination Boards are now conducted virtually (online) using MS Teams, unless a case has been successfully made by the department to the Academic Registrar for a board to be held in person. This includes all taught boards, including the research training board. Aberystwyth University recognizes that there might be some cases where External Examiners might still need to travel to Aberystwyth, e.g. to review samples of work that could not easily be accessed online, conduct placement visits, observe live performances or art exhibitions, or limited marking and moderation time preventing samples of examination scripts being sent to an external examiner ahead of an Examining Board meeting. In such cases, provided that there is good reason, in-person attendance at Examining Boards would be possible.

Undergraduate schemes

External Examiners on undergraduate schemes are required to complete an annual report which should be submitted via one form within 4 weeks of the meeting of the final Examining Board in June; attendance at the final degree awarding board in June is expected.

Health Education External Examiners are expected to submit their annual reports within 4 weeks of the date of the exam board, normally Semester 3 Examining Board. They should liaise with the department to confirm which Examining Board they are required to attend.

#### Taught Postgraduate schemes

External Examiners on taught postgraduate schemes are required to complete two reports; an annual report which should be submitted by email within 4 weeks of the meeting of the semester two Examining Board in June, and a short report submitted at the end of the dissertation component of the degree scheme (November/December).

All External Examiners on taught postgraduate schemes are formally required by the University to be present at the semester two meeting of the Examining Boards in June. There should be at least one External Examiner present at the final degree awarding board in November/December; this will be determined by the department on a rota basis. Departments may invite other External Examiners to attend the final degree awarding Examining Board in November/December, in addition to the nominated External.

Where an External Examiner on taught postgraduate schemes is required to attend (on a rota basis) the final Examining Board in November/December, in addition to the semester two Examining Board at which attendance is expected, they are required to complete the appropriate sections in the dissertation report pertaining to the Examining Board.

#### ARCHE Scheme

The External Examiner on the ARCHE scheme is required to complete a report after each of the two ARCHE panels; each report should be submitted by email within 4 weeks of the meeting of the ARCHE panel. The online form is not suitable for the ARCHE reports, so the ARCHE scheme External Examiner is requested to submit the form as a .pdf document. Attendance is required at both panels.

#### PGCTHE Scheme

The PGCTHE external examiner is required to submit an annual report within 4 weeks of the main PGCTHE Examining Board in February, unless requested to do otherwise by the Chair of the Examining Board.

#### Senate Reviewer

The Senate Reviewer is required to complete a report after each of the Senate Examining Board meetings. The reports should be submitted by email within 4 weeks of the Examining Board meetings, as a .pdf document.

#### 2. Content of annual report

The content of the annual report should include sufficient commentary to enable departments to implement recommendations, or support the answers that have been provided in the report. Where content is considered incomplete or insufficient the department may ask you to add further commentary.

#### 3. Are the annual reports published?

Annual reports, with departmental responses, will be published on the University's AberLearn Blackboard site and will be available to registered students at the University. It is therefore

important that reference is not made to individual candidates and individual members of staff by name.

#### 4. How is the annual report considered?

On receipt of the annual report the Academic Registry will forward the report to:

- Departments, who should respond to you after their Departmental Board has considered the report;
- Reports and departmental responses are forwarded to Associate Deans who compile a faculty summary;
- Associate Dean summaries are considered by the appropriate faculty committee;
- Faculty minutes are considered by Academic Board.

External Examiners receive a copy of the extract of Faculty and Academic Board minutes relating to the reports. External Examiners may also receive a direct response for the Chair of the Committee should it be necessary.

#### 5. Fees and expenses – how and when are they paid?

Annual fees are detailed in the appointment letter and are settled by bank transfer and subject to PAYE.

Expenses will be paid (subject to submission of supporting receipts) by bank transfer. All expenses claims must be accompanied by receipts and must be in line with the University policy as detailed in <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/finance/information-for-staff/expenses/#travel-&-subsistence-rates>.

Payment of the annual fee (and per capita FTE for appointments that commenced prior to 2021/22 only) and expenses are dependent upon receipt of your annual report (at the end of Semester Two) and a completed Expenses Claim Form where appropriate; you should submit an Expenses Claim Form when you submit your annual report.

For taught postgraduate External Examiners, keep a record of the names of the dissertation candidates examined; a claim form may be submitted at the time a dissertation is examined, or a complete list submitted on a claim form when you submit the short dissertation component report (Nov/Dec).

It will not be possible to process expenses or fee claims if the right to work verification process has not been completed.

Annual fees include attendance at the examining board (online or otherwise) and the tasks described in Section 5.6 paragraph 3.

Additional fees for attendances for examining where external examiner's presence in Aberystwyth is necessary are paid on a half-day basis for the actual time that is taken up for activities such as attending live performances, exhibitions, school visits or visits to placements. Please note that you will not be compensated for any travel time or time not taken up by the aforementioned activities.

#### 6. Is there an induction / training event?

External Examiners are no longer required to come to Aberystwyth to attend an induction/training event. The Academic Registry will provide briefing materials and online presentations on AberLearn (Blackboard) each session for new Examiners on undergraduate and taught postgraduate schemes. New External Examiners will receive an email notifying them when the materials are ready and where to find them. In addition to the briefing day materials provided by the Academic Registry, the [Advance HE](#) handbook [Fundamentals of External Examining](#) (published February 2019) offers a comprehensive general introduction to external examining of taught schemes for new External Examiners, and can be used as a reference source for both new and existing External Examiners. As part of [Degree Standards project](#), Advance HE developed, in partnership with [Office for Students](#), practical approaches for reinforcing UK standards of external examining in the form of a Professional development course for external examiners, which may be of interest to both new and existing External Examiners. For more information, please see: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/programmes-events/external-examiners/professional-development-course-external-examiners> and <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/programmes-events/external-examiners/subject-specific-calibration-course#attend>.

#### 7. Is my right to work in the UK checked?

All External Examiners are checked for their right to work in the UK. External Examiners are asked to scan and email a copy of the approved documentation (this is usually a passport or full birth certificate) as part of the nomination process. At the time of publication of this chapter, the Right to Work checks will be undertaken by the Human Resources department. Without completing the Right to Work check, you will not be able to gain access to modules and materials on BlackBoard, and the University will not be able to pay any fees or expenses.

#### 8. How am I granted access to E-Learning resources?

A New Starter Form will be sent with the appointment letter which the External Examiner is asked to complete and return. Upon receipt of the completed New Starter Form, the External Examiner will be requested to complete the Right to Work check with the HR department. Following a successful completion of the Right to Work check, the External Examiner will be added to the University Finance and Information Services systems. An Aber user id will be generated which will allow departments to add External Examiners to the relevant modules on AberLearn Blackboard, the portal through which e-submission is undertaken. Departments should use the Module Management system to add External Examiners to BlackBoard. The Aber user id is not a University email account; it is a means of granting the correct levels of access to the Information Services systems.

External Examiners are strongly encouraged to complete the security questions once the account has been activated; this enables you to manage your password yourself 24/7 in the event that you forget it or that your account has been locked. This can be done here: <https://myaccount.aber.ac.uk/>

#### 9. What information do I receive, and from whom, to enable me to undertake the role?

The Academic Registry provides a link to all appropriate central documentation on Rules and Regulations and Examination Conventions (published within the Academic Quality Handbook) in the appointment letter (we do not post out hard copies, although these can be requested).

The Academic Registry provides a copy of the previous external examiner's annual report (where applicable) electronically in Semester 1 after they have been approved by the Faculties. If it is not available at that time it will be forwarded as soon as it becomes available.

Departments provide subject/departmental/faculty specific information, including exam board dates.

10. Are the names of external examiners published?

The names of External Examiners will be published in a .pdf document at the end of this chapter, and may be published on departmental staff webpages, and/or against module/scheme details on the module/scheme database; contact details are not published and students are advised that direct contact with an external examiner is not permitted.

11. Useful links and contact information

Guidance on QA Procedures: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/handbook/qa-aber/>

Examination Conventions: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-quality-records-office/exams/exam---conventions/>

Completion of security questions - IS account: <https://myaccount.aber.ac.uk/>

Information Services: [is@aber.ac.uk](mailto:is@aber.ac.uk), 01970 622400

Blackboard and E-learning Support: [bbbstaff@aber.ac.uk](mailto:bbbstaff@aber.ac.uk), 01970 622472

Academic Registry: [extstaf@aber.ac.uk](mailto:extstaf@aber.ac.uk), 01970 622527

Anka Furlan, Quality Assurance Manager: [extstaf@aber.ac.uk](mailto:extstaf@aber.ac.uk), 01970 622072

- [5.14 Template Forms](#)
  - [Travel & Subsistence Details](#)
  - [Fees & Expenses Claim Form](#)
  - [PGT External Examiner Report Form \(dissertation component\)](#) - Dissertation component
  - [Nomination Form for new External Examiner](#)
  - [New Starter Form](#)
  - [Request form for an extension of appointment of external examiner](#)
  - [Faculty summary of external examiners' reports](#)
  - [Timeline for Receiving and Responding to EE reports](#)
  - [Template Faculty summary of EE PGT Dissertation Reports](#)