

The External Examiner and Examinations Boards

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Description: Revision
Issued by: Quality Co-ordinator
Approved by: Quality Co-ordinator

1. **Subject** External Examiners and Examinations Boards

2. **Purpose** To specify the process by which due diligence is carried out in the appointment of External Examiner; conducting the business of the Examinations Boards and validating assignment results.

3. **Scope** This procedure forms an Integral part of the Academic Process

4. **References** Quality Assurance Guidelines and Criteria for Provider Access to initial Validation of Programmes for Higher Education and Training Leading to QQI Awards [2013] HET Core Validation Policy and Criteria [2013].
 QQI - Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining [Revised February 2015]
 QQI – Assessment and Standards [Revised 2013]
 Quality Manual, section 4.7
 Procedures Manual ref:
 AP/407.01 - Board of Governors
 AP/407.02 - Academic Council
 AP/407.07 - Student Assessment
 AP/407.08 - Evaluation of Programme
 AP/407.09 – Assessment of Module Assignment and Dissertations
 SA/411.01 - Control of Quality Records

5. **Documentation**
 - 5.1 External Examiner Nomination Form ref: AP/407.06 – 7.2.3.
 - 5.2 External Examiners Report ref: AP/407.06 – 7.8.2
 - 5.3 Explanatory Notes - External Examiners Report ref: AP/407.06 – 7.8.3
 - 5.4 External Examiners' Report Checklist ref: AP/407.06 - 7.8.4
 - 5.5 Agenda for Examinations Board. ref: AP/407.06 – 7.14.1
 - 5.6 Explanatory Notes - Examinations Board ref: AP/407.06 – 7.14.2

6. **Definitions** Nil
 - 6.1 **The Dir. Academic Admin.:** This term is used to refer to the Director of Academic Administration and Student Affairs

7. **PROCEDURES**
 - 7.1 **Responsibility**
 - 7.1.1 The Dir. Academic Admin. shall be responsible for the implementation of this procedure.

7.2 Nomination and Appointment of External Examiner

- 7.2.1 The External Examiner shall be appointed by the Academic Council, on behalf of Board of Governors, on the nomination of the Dir. Academic Admin.
- 7.2.2 The External Examiner shall have experience of external examining, and for combined Honours awards, examining at Honours degree level.
- 7.2.3 The criteria for nomination is set out in the external examiner nomination form ref: AP/407.06 – 7.2.3 [see attachment 5.1].
- 7.2.4 When appointing the External Examiner, the Academic Council shall be mindful of the Externality Principle, ensuring that the appointee is completely independent of the Institution.
- 7.2.5 Appointments are for a maximum period of four years. Only exceptionally will an External Examiner be considered for re-appointment, and only after a period of five years has elapsed.

7.3 Duties of External Examiner

- 7.3.1 The duties of External Examiner shall include:
- a) attendance at meetings of the Examinations Boards,
 - b) confirmation, by joint signature with the chair of the Examinations Board: progress decisions; marks awarded for course work; marks awarded for Dissertation *Vivae Voce*'s; the pass and classified lists of candidates including recommendations for the award of degrees and other academic distinctions,
 - c) submission, of an annual report to the Dir. of Academic Administration and Student Affairs.
 - d) such other duties as the Academic Council may specify from time to time.
- 7.3.2 The External Examiner shall fulfil this role through combining the duties outlined in section 16 of the 'Contract for Service' [see *procedure ref: MS/403.07 – Contract for Service – External Examiner*]
- 7.3.3 The External Examiner does not have responsibility for the approval and moderation of assessment within subjects nor for the determination of results of candidates in modules. This is the responsibility of the Academic Council.
- 7.3.4 The approval of the Dir. Academic Admin. shall be sought, for alternative arrangements, in the event that an External Examiner is unable to fulfil the attendance requirements.
- 7.3.5 Where there is disagreement over marks or classification between the External Examiner and the Internal Examiners, the view of the External Examiner will normally prevail.
- 7.3.6 Where asked to adjudicate on differing marks assigned by Internal Examiners, where double marking is practised, External Examiners should provide appropriate justification for the final mark awarded.
- 7.3.7 All marks awarded are subject to Examinations Board approval.

7.4 Data to be provided, prior to commencement of the academic year.

7.4.1 Prior to the commencement of the academic year [September] the External Examiner shall be provided with copies of the following:

- a) Course/subject handbook,
- b) Programme regulations,
- c) Module descriptions,
- d) Draft copies of module assignment briefs and marking criteria.

7.4.2 The External Examiner shall satisfy themselves that the module assignments and the marking criteria is of a desired standard, commensurate to the level of the award sought for the particular course of studies.

7.4.3 Should the External Examiner require further clarification on the topic[s] chosen for assignments or marking criteria, they shall make their request through the Director of Academic Administration who shall liaise with the associate lecturer to provide the required information.

7.5 Data to be provided, prior to the Examinations Board meetings

7.5.1 To enable the External Examiner fulfil their duties they shall, prior to the examinations boards, be provided with valid copies of the following:

- a) Copies of all Assignments Feedback Reports to students,
- b) Summary of marks awarded to students, per module attended,
- c) Selected assignment scripts per module, graded as: Distinction; Merits; Pass and Fails,

7.5.2 The Associate Lectures [module managers in charge of specific modules] shall be responsible for the marking of module assignments and production of feedback reports. [See procedure ref: AP/407.09 *Assessment of module assignment and dissertations.*]

7.5.3 The External Examiner shall satisfy themselves that:

- a) the general standard and consistency of marking is appropriate,
- b) the scripts were marked in such a way as to show the reasons for the award of given marks,
- c) the feedback reports to students are relevant and supportive of the learning process, in line with the principles of assessment and feedback for learning. [see procedure ref: AP/407.09 – section 7.2]

7.6 Reports on Dissertations and Vivae Voce's

7.6.1 The External Examiner Dissertations shall be provided with copies of Dissertations together with copies of:

- a) Dissertation Supervision - Meeting Log,
- b) Criteria for Assessment of M.Sc. Dissertation,
- c) Vivae Voce Marking Sheet,

7.7 Mark sheets for assignments and dissertations

7.7.1 The External Examiner shall sign the mark sheets for module assignments and Vivae Voce's.

7.8 Reports from External Examiner

- 7.8.1 The Institute shall provide the opportunity for the External Examiner to provide feedback, on their findings in verbal and written, informal and formal format.
- 7.8.2 The External Examiner shall prepare a formal written report for presentation to the Academic Council. [see attachment 5.2]
- 7.8.3 When formulating the report, the External Examiner shall make use of the suggested explanatory material produced by QQI. [see attachment 5.3].
- 7.8.4 The External Examiner shall also refer to the External Examiners Report Checklist. [see attachment 5.4]

7.9 Access to reports

- 7.9.1 The External Examiners report, and the programme committee's response, shall be made available in full to all students of the course, with the exception of any confidential report submitted by the extern.
- 7.9.2 While the name of the External Examiner and the institution shall be included, their contact details and signature shall be redacted from the report before it is uploaded.
- 7.9.3 Students shall not contact the External Examiner about their report. All such enquiries shall be referred to the Institute.
- 7.9.4 Some or all of the contents of a report may be released as a consequence of a request for access under the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

7.10 Examinations Boards

- 7.10.1 The Examinations Boards shall determine on behalf of the Academic Council of ISCE the academic progress of Honours Degree students, and make recommendations regarding their final awards.
- 7.10.2 Examinations Boards shall be appointed by the Academic Council.
- 7.10.3 The Academic Council shall appoint Chairpersons to chair meetings of the examination boards, who are independent of the academic process of the Institute.
- 7.10.4 The actions and governance of the Examinations Boards shall be subject to review by the Academic Council.
- 7.10.5 The following personnel shall be entitled to attend Examinations Boards meetings:
- External Examiner,
 - Dir. of Academic Admin.
 - Directors of the Board of Governors,
 - Administrator,
 - All Associate Lecturers,
 - All Academic Supervisors,
 - and any other person invited to attend a particular meeting.

7.10.6 A quorum for the meeting of the Examinations Board shall be: The Chairperson; the External Examiner; one member of the Board of Governors; two Associate Lecturers; two Academic Supervisors and any other person invited to attend a particular meeting.

7.11 Frequency of Examinations Boards meetings

7.11.1 An Examinations Board meeting shall be held in May and December of each year.

7.12 Duties of Examinations Boards

7.12.1 The duties of the Examinations Board are as follows:

- a) to receive module results from assignment examiners [Associate Lecturers]
- b) where such results lead directly to a degree and/or other academic distinction; to forward to the Academic Council and, where appropriate, to external bodies, lists of successful candidates, classified in accordance with the relevant course regulations, with recommendations for the award of degrees, and /or other academic distinctions,
- c) to determine on behalf of the Academic Council the academic progress of students on the basis of their performance in module and other forms of assessment,
- d) to ensure that the assessment of candidates is conducted in accordance with regulations and procedures prescribed by the Academic Council,
- e) to deal with such other matters as the Academic Council may refer to them from time to time.

7.13 Course Revisions

7.13.1 The External Examiner shall be consulted about proposals for changes to a module during its period of approval.

7.13.2 Modules are generally approved by the Academic Council. However, proposed revisions, such as: course title, location, mode of attendance, aims and objectives and, revisions which have implications for central resources, require consideration by the Institute's Programme Committee before final approval is given

7.13.3 Departure from Institute regulations and principles require consideration by the Academic Council.

7.13.4 When Programmes have been approved by the Academic Council they shall be submitted to QQI for validation.

7.14 Conduct of Business at the Examinations Board

7.14.1 A sample agenda for meetings of the board is detailed in the 'Agenda for Examinations Board' (see attachment 5.5).

- 7.14.2 Examinations boards shall be conducted in a manner consistent with the explanatory notes [see attachment 5.6]
- 7.14.3 The results of the module assignments, confirmed by Associate Lecturer Examiners, shall be forward to the Dir. Academic Admin. for presentation to the Examinations Board.
- 7.14.4 The meeting shall determine, in accordance with the generic combined Honours degree award regulations, the academic progress of each candidate using the following codes:

Grade	Percentage Value	
High Distinction (HD)	70% +	1st
Distinction (D)	60 – 69%	2.1
Credit (Cr)	50 - 59%	2.2
Pass (P)	40 - 49%	Pass
Fail (N)	< 39%	

- 7.14.4 The Chair of the Examinations Board, and all others present at the Board shall sign the results sheet to signify confirmation of the progress decisions and recommendations for awards.

7.15 Processing of academic quality assurance records:

- 7.15.1 The Dir. Academic Admin. shall be responsible for the processing of all academic quality assurance records arising from this procedure.
- 7.15.2 When scheduling Examination Board meetings, the Dir. Academic Admin. shall ensure that time on the Agenda has been allocated for evaluating the meeting.
- 7.15.3 In the event of issues arising from the above-mentioned evaluations the matter[s] shall be investigated as a Corrective Action[s], procedure ref: MS/409.01 – *Corrective and Preventative Actions*. See also attachment 5.3.

7.16 Management of academic quality assurance records

- 7.16.1 All documents generated from this procedure are deemed to be academic quality assurance records. When evaluated, they shall be filed by the Administrator in the appropriate filing cabinets which have been set aside for the purpose of storing all such documentation. They shall be managed in accordance with procedures ref: SA/410.01. *Control of Quality Records*.
- 7.16.2 The information generated at Examination Boards meetings shall be held in the strictest confidence and shall not be disclosed outside the Institute except in the instance of requiring inspection by the internal audit team or by an Audit Team from QCI.
- 7.16.3 Access to the quality records system shall be controlled by the Administrator.

SAMPLE

Attachment 5.1

External Examiner Nomination

Form ref: AP/407.06 – 7.2.3.

For Academic Years: _____

[To be presented by Dir. of Academic Admin. to Academic Council]

Part 1 Details of programme

Code and title: [year:] M.Sc in Supply Chain Management

Part 2 Details of External Examiner

Name:

Academic/professional qualifications:

.....

Current position:

.....

Place of work or home address:

.....

.....

Telephone no: Fax no.

Email:

Summary of relevant experience:

.....

.....

.....

[Replacement for:

Part 2 (continued)

Subject(s)/module(s) and years of programme to be examined:

.....
.....

Period for which External Examiner is to serve:

From: To:

Other details:

.....
.....
.....
.....

Is the nominee independent of the Institution? Yes No

Has the nominee national and international experience of the overall Programme content and subject[s] matter? Yes No

Is the nominee knowledgeable of the pedagogical principles and processes? Yes No

Has the nominee indicated her/his willingness to act? Yes No

Signature Date:
Dir. Academic Admin.

Signature Date
Chairman of Academic Council

SAMPLE

Attachment 5.2

External Examiners Report

Ref: AP/407.06 – 7.8.2

Cover Sheet

	External Examiners Report Year: Institute for Supply Chain Excellence				
Date					
Programme Details	Programme reference				
	Award Title	M.Sc. Supply Chain Management			
	Modes of Delivery	Modules and Dissertation			
	Stage	Level 9			
Classification, Distribution and Trends		Current year	Previous Year	Previous Year	Previous Year
	% Higher Distinction				
	% Distinction				
	% Credit				
	% Pass				
	% Fail				
Completion Rate Data	Number of students in the programme				
	Number of 'active' students				
	Number of students completing this semester				
External Examiner Details	Name				
	Main Employment				
	Email Address				
	Other contact details				

SAMPLE

Template for External Examiners Report *continued.../*

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External Examiners Report

1. The Evidence Considered:

2. Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes:

3. Actual Attainment of Learners:

4. The Programme:

5. Assessment Procedures:

6. Trends:

7. Conclusions and Recommendations:

External Examiner _____

Date: _____

SAMPLEAttachment 5.3

Explanatory Notes: External Examiners Report

form ref: AP/407.06. – 7.8.3

1. The Evidence Considered

The purpose of this section is to indicate how well the External Examiner is informed about the provider, the programme and its context. Summarise the documentary evidence considered (see Effective Practice Guideline for External Examining Revised 2015) and any visits, meetings and interviews with learners and academic staff and others.

2. Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes

The purpose of this section is to comment on the educational objectives including their explicitness, appropriateness and consistency standards with the relevant awards standards and the National Framework of Qualifications. If there are gaps these should be identified. If the standard is too low this must be stated explicitly so that it can be addressed.

3. Actual Attainment of Learners

This section should present External Examiner's informed perception of the actual attainment of learners (knowledge, skill and competence). This is the most important finding of the external examining process. This should be based on consideration of:

- The provider's assessment instruments (e.g. assessment strategies, examination papers, marking schemes), procedures and findings
- Representative samples of learner responses to assessment tasks (e.g. examination scripts, dissertations, etc.)
- Interviews with learners
- Benchmarking data prepared by the provider
- Any other appropriate evidence

In presenting those perceptions the External Examiner should make national and international comparisons. Opinions (e.g. satisfaction with the actual attainment) should be explained (e.g. by outlining the rationale and criteria).

4. The Programme

Often External Examiners' experience of the programme might lead to suggestions about particular aspects of the programme. This might involve the curriculum or the approach to teaching and learning. This section should identify some notable strengths and areas for improvement. It is not intended that the External Examiner would attempt to systematically review the programme.

5. Assessment Procedures

The External Examiner plays a vital role in the ongoing quality assurance and enhancement of assessment. This section should address:

The quality of the assessment instruments (programme and module strategies, examination papers, dissertation guidelines, etc.) and scoring rubrics/schemes etc.

The fairness, consistency and fitness for purpose (valid, reliable, authentic, robust) of assessment procedures.

The reliability of the provider's benchmarking of its assessment procedures.

6. Trends

Evidence concerning the extent to which teaching, learning and assessment arrangements have changed in response to the feedback provided by previous External Examiner reports, and

Progress on recommendations in recent External Examiner and other relevant reports on the programme.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations:

SAMPLE

Attachment 5.4

External Examiners' Report Checklist

ref: AP/407.06 – 7.8.4

Programme materials

Did you receive

	Yes	No	N/A
a. Course/subject handbook?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Programme regulations (these may be in the course/subject handbook)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Module descriptions (these may be in the programme handbook)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Assessment briefs/marketing criteria?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Draft assignment papers

a. (i) Did you receive all the draft assignments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(ii) If not, was this at your request?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. (i) Were the nature and level of the questions appropriate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(ii) If not, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Marking examination scripts

a. (i) Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(ii) If you did not receive all the scripts, was the method of selection satisfactory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Were the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Dissertations/project reports

a. Was the choice of subjects for dissertations appropriate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Were the method and standard of assessment appropriate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Coursework/continuously assessed work

a. Was sufficient coursework made available to you for assessment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Were the method and general standard of marking and consistency satisfactory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Orals/performances/recitals/appropriate professional placements

a. Were suitable arrangements made for you to conduct orals and/or moderate performances/recitals/appropriate professional placements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Examinations Board meeting

a. Were you able to attend the meeting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Was the meeting conducted to your satisfaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Board of Examiners?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signed:..... External Examiner

Date:

SAMPLE

Attachment 5.5

Sample Agenda - Examinations Board

Ref: AP/407.06 – 7.14.1.

Institute for Supply Chain Excellence

AGENDA for Examinations Board

Date:

Time:

Location:

Present:
.....
.....
.....

Apologies:
.....

In attendance:
.....

Agenda Item:
1. The meeting was chaired by:
2. Presentation of assignment results
3. Presentation of evidence of extenuating circumstances
4. Prizes and Awards to students arising from the results
5. Report for External Examiner
6. Signing of result sheets by all present
7. Evaluation of Exam board meeting
8. Date of next meeting:

SAMPLE

Attachment 5.6

Explanatory Notes: Examinations Board

ref: AP/407.06 – 7.14.2

1. Attendance:

- a) To note the attendance of Module Examiners and the External Examiners.

2. Regulations:

- a) To note the remit of the Examination Board and its responsibilities in accordance with the examination regulations.
- b) To receive generic award regulations in accordance with the template for the modular honours framework.
- c) To note that Associate Lecturers [Module Mangers] will report modules where the threshold standard must be achieved in each assessment element.

3. Evidence of Extenuating Circumstances:

- a) To receive evidence of extenuating circumstances submitted by or on behalf of examination candidates.

4. Receipt and consideration of candidates' results:

- a) To receive the assignment results from Associate Lecturers.
- b) To determine the academic progress of candidates.
- c) To forward to Academic Council recommendations for awards in respect of candidates who have successfully completed their courses of study and who have satisfied the conditions specified by the Institute concerning awards.

5. Publication of Results:

- a) To note the arrangements for:
 - (i) publication of progress and award decisions and marks,
and
 - (ii) the communication of decisions to unsuccessful candidates.

6. Appeals (based on submission of new information)

- b) To note the dates on which appeals shall be heard.
- c) To note that the Chairperson accompanied by the Dir. Academic Admin.; Associate Lecturer examiners; Academic Supervisor Examiners and or, exceptionally, their nominees shall comprise the appeals panel.
- d) To agree with the External Examiner, his/her involvement in the process.

7. Prizes and Awards

- a) To make recommendations to the Academic Council for prizes and awards.

8. External Examiners Report

- a) To receive comments from the External Examiner and other Associate Lecturer examiners; Academic Supervisor Examiners of the Board.