

## Guidance IG(vi)

### Rights and Responsibilities of Higher and Degree Apprenticeship (HDA) External Examiner

#### Contents

Role of the Higher and Degree Apprenticeship (HDA) External Examiner .....	1
Apprenticeship Monitoring Committee (AMC).....	1
Verification of the recommendations made at AMC meetings .....	2
Visits to apprentices at employer organisations.....	2
External examiners' annual reports .....	2
Data protection, freedom of information and copyright .....	3

### Role of the Higher and Degree Apprenticeship (HDA) External Examiner

The University appoints HDA external examiners to ensure that the University's higher and degree apprenticeship provision adheres to UK sector agreed apprenticeship standards and frameworks, and that they are delivered in accordance with the University's academic policies and regulations, ensuring there is equity of treatment of all apprentices.

HDA external examiners monitor the academic and workplace alignment of the University's higher and degree apprenticeships and endorse progression to and from gateways leading to End Point Assessments (EPA).

The role requires the HDA external examiners to attend meetings of the University's Apprenticeship Monitoring Committee (AMC), moderate a sample of tripartite forms and visit a sample of employer institutions that employ KU apprentices.

For integrated degree apprenticeship provision, the EPA is conducted as an integrated part of the Kingston University degree award. Subject external examiners allocated to modules delivered on an integrated HDA will require experience of teaching and assessing on integrated higher and degree apprenticeship provision.

For non-integrated apprenticeship provision, the role of lead end point assessor of the apprenticeship is fulfilled by an external organization chosen by the employer. Subject External Examiners allocated to modules delivered on a non-integrated HDA will have oversight of the academic award of the apprenticeship but will not play a direct role in the EPA process.

### Apprenticeship Monitoring Committee (AMC)

The AMC monitors apprentices' progression towards meeting gateway requirements

and progress through the EPAs. The terms of reference and composition of the AMC can be found in the Introduction section of the Academic Quality & Standards Handbook (G(v)).

HDA external examiners are full members of the University's AMC. The AMC is deemed quorate if all designated internal members and at least one HDA external examiner is present.

## **Verification of the recommendations made at AMC meetings**

The agreed final recommendations of an AMC meeting is the collective, consensus views of the Committee members, including the HDA external examiner. It is expected that the Chair of the Committee will review all outcomes to ensure that they are approved by the Committee and can be accurately recorded by the Clerk. The University does not additionally require the formality of the signature of the HDA external examiner at this stage. By receipt of minutes, including a full record of outcomes, HDA external examiners are in a position to audit the accuracy of the procedures and, if it ever became necessary, to audit any aspect of the process in more detail.

## **Moderation of tripartite forms**

HDA external examiners will be asked to moderate a sample of tripartite forms to review the quality and range of information provided by apprentices, employers and the University, evidencing learner progression throughout the apprenticeship and engagement with the core topics.

## **Visits to apprentices at employer organisations**

HDA external examiners will visit apprentices at a sample of employer organisations. The employer visits can be onsite or online, but are typically held remotely. The nature and frequency of external examiner visits to apprentices and their employers will be agreed annually with the external examiner and confirmed by the QAE team. Visits will provide an opportunity for the external examiner to review the circumstances and quality of workplace learning provided by the organisation to meet apprenticeship standards and to ensure consistency of practice by meeting with the learner and employer.

## **External examiners' annual reports**

All HDA external examiners, as part of their contract with the University, are required to submit an annual report. The University has adopted a standard report format which must be used. In addition to responses to key questions about standards, processes and procedures, external examiners are also asked to detail any areas of good practice and/or recommendations for enhancement.

The University regards the external examiner's annual report as a critical part of its quality assurance procedures. It is part of the contract with external examiners that the required annual report is produced annually. If an external examiner, following a reminder, does not submit a report within one month of the last AMC of the academic year that they attended, or the report is considered to be too cursory to be of value

and requests for amplification are not responded to, the contract may be terminated forthwith. The report will be regarded as a public document within the University and will form part of the documentation for review and monitoring purposes. If necessary, external examiners can submit a separate confidential letter to the Vice-Chancellor. The confidential letter should be submitted in addition to the annual report but the latter can refer to the fact that a confidential letter is also being sent without disclosing the details. An acknowledgement letter will be sent to the external examiner from the VC within one week of receipt of the letter. The external examiner will receive a formal response, following a detailed investigation into the matter, within four weeks of receipt of the letter.

## **Feedback to External Examiners**

The University requires that external examiners should be provided with feedback following discussion of their report by the Quality Assurance & Enhancement team and the Degree Apprenticeships team. This feedback should consist of an itemised response to the report using the University's response template.

## **Data protection, freedom of information and copyright**

The University will use personal data submitted by the external examiner for the payment of fees and expenses, and for other necessary communication in connection with the external examiner's contract. Where required for these purposes, this data will be shared with other departments of the University. In accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy which is based upon the Data Protection Act 2018, staff members must not disclose external examiners' personal data, including contact details, to any person or body outside the University without the consent of the external examiner.

External examiner reports will be made available to University staff, students and/or collaborative programme partners as part of the quality assurance/annual monitoring processes. External examiners' reports may be circulated as part of an internal or external audit.

Comments and opinions expressed by an external examiner about individual students during the assessment process may be disclosed to the student concerned, if the student makes a Subject Access Request under the Data Protection Act.

An external examiner is entitled to make a Subject Access Request under the Data Protection Act to see memoranda, emails and other communications relating to their appointment, including opinions expressed in a professional capacity about their appointment.

Under the Freedom of Information Act, the University will provide copies of external examiners' reports to third parties who make a lawful request for these. Reports will normally retain examiners' names. The University will consider any reasonable request from external examiners to anonymise their reports. Such a request should be made in writing and submitted with the report.

Copyright in all external examiners' reports will be owned by the University. Examiners will not be permitted to retain their moral rights (under the Copyright Act) in the reports as the University may choose to anonymise the reports, as appropriate.