

Guidance IG(ix)

Student Guide to the Role of the External Examiner

In the UK's system of higher education, Universities are responsible for the quality of the education they provide and for the academic standards of the awards that they offer. External examining provides a principal means of maintaining UK threshold standards and therefore the role of the external examiner is an essential part of the University's quality assurance processes. Kingston University appoints Subject external examiners, Higher & Degree Apprenticeship (HDA) external examiners and Programme Assessment Board (PAB) external examiners from other Universities, industry and/or the professions. They are external to, and therefore independent of, the University.

Subject external examiners are suitably qualified and experienced in the subject, or specialism within the subject, to which the appointment relates. Based on their qualifications and experience, they are able to provide carefully considered advice on the academic standards of the awards, programmes and/or modules to which they have been assigned, and can offer advice on good practice and opportunities to enhance the quality of those programmes/modules. They are also able to offer an informed view of how standards compare with the same or similar awards at other higher education institutions (primarily in the UK, and sometimes overseas as well) of which they have experience.

Programme Assessment Board external examiners are suitably qualified and experienced to ensure that assessment boards are conducted as per the University's guidelines on assessment board processes and ensure that there is equity of treatment to all students. Whilst Programme Assessment Board external examiners are full members of the assessment board(s) to which they are appointed, the decisions of the assessment board are the collective, consensus views of both the internal and external members of the board.

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

Another important feature of external examining in the UK, is the provision of annual written reports to the institution by each external examiner based on what they have observed of the institution's assessment processes and in the case of Subject external examiners, the sample of student work that they have seen. These reports provide invaluable independent feedback to the University.

In this respect, Kingston University recognises the importance of the role of students in contributing to the management of standards and quality. If you would like to request a copy of the Subject external examiners' reports relating to your programme, then please e-mail extexam@kingston.ac.uk stating your KU ID number, the full title of your programme and your current year/level.