

Section I

External Examiners

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Forms and Templates

I1	Subject External Examiner Nomination Form
I2	Subject External Examiner Additional Duties or Extension Form
I3	Programme Assessment Board External Examiner Nomination Form
I4	Higher and Degree Apprenticeship External Examiner Nomination Form
I5	Programme Assessment Board/ Higher & Degree Apprenticeship External Examiner Response Letter Template
I6	Subject External Examiner Annual Report Form
I7	Programme Assessment Board External Examiner Annual Report Form
I8	Higher & Degree Apprenticeship External Examiner Annual Report Form

Guidance Documents

IG(i)	Responsibilities of Faculties and Central University Departments in the External Examining Process
IG(ii)	Checklist of documentation for new External Examiners
IG(iii)	Induction of new External Examiners and planning of audit of assessment
IG(iv)	Rights and responsibilities of Subject External Examiners
IG(v)	Rights and responsibilities of PAB External Examiners
IG(vi)	Rights and responsibilities of Higher and Degree Apprenticeship External Examiners
IG(vii)	External Examiner guide to accessing Kingston University systems
IG(viii)	Student guide to the role of the External Examiner
IG(ix)	External Examiner Module Materials – Guide for Kingston University Academic Staff

Abbreviations in this section

EC	Education Committee
EE	External Examiner
EERS	External Examiners' Reporting System
FHEQ	Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
HDA	Higher & Degree Apprenticeship
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IQA	Internal Quality Audit
KCEP	Kingston Continuous Enhancement Process (Substantive Review)
OfS	Office for Students
PAB	Programme Assessment Board
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QAE	Quality Assurance and Enhancement

RASC	Regulations, Assessment & Student Casework
RFC	Regulatory Framework Committee

Definition

1. External examiners are appointed by the University from UK HEIs, practice and industry to be independent auditors of the assessment system of the University, its academic standards, assessment regulations, processes and procedures.

Purpose

2. The University has defined the purpose of the external examiner system as follows:
 - i. To help ensure that all Kingston University awards meet the standards expected by the University and align to the standards of similar awards across the UK higher education sectorand,
 - ii. To provide an external evaluation of the effectiveness of academic regulations and the consistent and fair application of those regulations and associated processes and procedures.

Types of External Examiners

Subject External Examiners

3. The role of the subject external examiner is to advise the University on whether the academic standards of its modules are consistent with the standards defined by the University, the [Sector Recognised Standards](#), the standards of similar provision in the UK higher education sector and the standards required by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies. Please refer to the guidance document IG (iv) for the rights and responsibilities of subject external examiners.

Programme Assessment Board (PAB) External Examiners

4. The role of the PAB external examiner is to ensure that assessment boards are conducted as per the University's guidelines on assessment board processes and in particular that there is equity of treatment to all students. Please refer to the guidance document IG(v) for the rights and responsibilities of PAB external examiners.

Higher & Degree Apprenticeship (HDA) External Examiners

5. The role of the HDA external examiner is 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. Please refer to the guidance document IG (vi) for the rights and responsibilities of HDA external examiners.

Appointment of External Examiners

Period of Appointment, Extensions and Additional Duties

6. The Education Committee is responsible (on behalf of Academic Council) for the oversight of all external examiner appointments. Appointments will be for a period which allows the external examiner to assess five successive cohorts of students i.e., normally five years. Appointments should cover academic years and normally commence in August.
7. Where two or more subject external examiners are required for a subject area and to alleviate the issue of both examiners' tenures expiring at the same time, faculties may appoint a single (academic) subject external examiner in year one of the course and appoint the second subject external examiner in year two.
8. External examiners will not be allowed an extension except where a course is being closed and is in the process of teaching out. This request must be discussed with QAE before consultation with the external examiner. Approval can only be given by QAE.
9. Subject external examiners can be given additional duties, for example to cover additional modules. This clause will be included in their appointment letter.
10. The University pays a standard fee to all external examiners (see Introduction guidance (iii) for the current fee levels). Where an external examiner is asked to take on additional modules outside of their original remit and this takes their module load above the maximum recommended, an additional fee may be paid using the following additional fee payments:
 - a. 1 - 2 additional modules - £100 additional fee
 - b. 3+ additional modules - £200 additional fee
11. Once a nomination has been approved a letter of appointment together with links to supporting information (including the previous external examiner's annual report) are sent to the external examiner by QAE and confirmation passed to the faculty (for subject external examiners) and RASC (for PAB external examiners).

Subject external examiner – appointment criteria

12. The University will appoint subject external examiners who can show appropriate evidence of the following:
 - relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate.
 - knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of

- quality;
- competence and experience in the subject areas covered by the programme of study. This may be indicated by:
 - the present (or last, if retired) post and place of work;
 - the range and scope of experience across higher education/professions;
 - current and recent active involvement in research/scholarly/professional activities in the subject area concerned;
- experience and knowledge of UK Higher Education (teaching and assessing on UK HE awards). Familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed will be acceptable in the case of nominations from practice/industry, where the nominee will be working with an experienced academic external examiner;
- experience of teaching and assessing on integrated higher and degree apprenticeship provision (if allocated to modules delivered on an integrated higher and degree apprenticeship).
- recent UK HEI external examining or comparable related experience to indicate competence in assessing students in the subject area (external examiners from practice/ industry without this experience must work with an experienced academic external examiner);
- meeting the criteria set by the professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) where applicable e.g., where a PSRB stipulates that an external examiner on the course must be a member of the accrediting body;
- fluency in English and also (where applicable) in the language of tuition and assessment. Where an examiner is required to speak a foreign language, this must be stated in the nomination form;
- eligibility to work in the UK. All nominees will be required to provide original UKVI recognised documentation of their status, prior to appointment;
- UK residency. The University cannot permit staff to work from overseas due to potential legal implications;
- in the case of retired nominees, sufficient evidence of current involvement in the subject area e.g., consultancy/visiting lecturer.

Where a proposed subject external examiner has no UK HEI external examining experience

13. If the proposed examiner has no previous UK HEI external examiner experience at the appropriate level, the application should be supported by either:

- other examining experience (e.g., a PSRB examiner);
- extensive internal examining experience;
- other relevant and recent experience likely to support the external examiner role;
- other clear rationale for appointment (e.g., practitioner external examiner required due to PSRB requirements).

14. If approved, the new examiner will be reassured, via the appointment letter, that support will be available at local level by the course team and centrally by the Quality Assurance & Enhancement (QAE) team. New external examiners

will be advised to reach out to their key contact in the course team, the Head of Department (as noted in the appointment letter), or QAE team to raise any queries or concerns they may have. The new examiner will also be required to attend a University level induction event, involving an introduction to external examining at the University, roles and responsibilities, assessment regulations, reporting and administration, and a course level induction where they will meet the course team and agree the schedule of work.

Composition of a subject external examiner team where required for PSRB requirements.

15. There should be an appropriate balance and expertise in the team of subject external examiners to ensure that account is taken of the academic range of the course/subject area and the need, as appropriate, for professional, industrial, and other contributions.
16. The appropriate balance of academic and practitioner subject external examiners will be considered on an individual basis for each subject area.
17. The division of responsibilities within an external examiner team must be clearly communicated and agreed at the time of appointment and thereafter on an annual basis, by the course leader.
18. The main considerations should be:
 - the external examiner team should be able to audit the standards of achievement of students for all of the learning outcomes specified for their course/programme of study;
 - practitioner external examiners should have the experience to contribute to academic judgements on professional practice and related matters and on academic standards (eg. from knowledge of the abilities in practice of award holders from similar programmes) and be able to comment on the fairness of assessment schemes and regulations and their implementation. Normally a practitioner external examiner with no prior experience of external examining or working as an academic in an HEI will be appointed alongside an academic external examiner to ensure complementary expertise;
 - the external examiner team should have the breadth of experience to be able to audit procedures and processes as well as standards.

Appointing subject external examiners to franchised and validated provision

19. For franchised provision, the external examiner(s) will usually be the same as for the in-house provision and/or the other provision in the network, to enable comparability of standards across the provision. For validated provision, a dedicated external examiner should be appointed. The University Liaison Officer should liaise with the Partner Liaison Officer when proposing external examiner nominations.

Procedure for the appointment of subject external examiners

20. The Head of School (or nominee) is responsible for nominating new subject

external examiners and submitting the proposal for approval. QAE is responsible for the appointment process and the final consideration/approval of subject external examiner nominations.

21. QAE will notify faculties of outgoing subject external examiners that need to be replaced. For new courses, a standard condition of each validation will be the nomination of external examiner(s).
22. All new external examiner nominations for the next academic year must be submitted to QAE by the end of March in order that all appointments are confirmed by the end of July.
23. Subject external examiner nominations (or proposals for additional duties for existing examiners) should be produced by the Head of Department/School after discussion with the course leader. Confirmation that staff are not currently serving as examiners in the nominee's department should be determined at this early stage in order to avoid rejection of the nomination. For new/replacement nominations, the Head of Department/School should also make an informal approach to the individual concerned to ask for a CV and to ensure that they meet the criteria for appointment and understand the nature of the modules and course, timetable of assessments and likely workload. An informal approach should also be made if an exceptional extension or additional duties are proposed, following discussion with QAE.
24. Before Part 1 of the application form and CV are submitted to the Senior Co-ordinator (QAE), the Head of Department/School must check that the nominee meets all the appointment criteria and ensure all sections of Part 1 of the application form are completed. Failure to do this may result in the form being returned which will cause a delay in the appointment process.
25. Part 1 of the application form and CV should then be forwarded to the Senior Co-ordinator (QAE). The Senior Co-ordinator (QAE) will send the nominee a link to Part 2 of the application form which is completed online through the University's recruitment system. The Senior Co-ordinator (QAE) will check the completed application form against the University criteria for the appointment and then send it to the Associate Dean (Education), together with Part 3 to recommend/not recommend approval by QAE.
26. Once approved, QAE will inform the faculty and send the newly appointed external examiner an appointment letter. The external examiner will be registered on the External Examiners' Reporting System (EERS) and will be invited to a University level induction event.
27. Where a nomination is not approved by either the Associate Dean and/or QAE, the faculty will be notified of the reasons why the nomination was rejected and request that a replacement nomination is submitted. The new nomination will follow the process outlined above. Exceptionally, where circumstances warrant, faculties will be permitted to submit the same nomination with further supporting information relating to the criterion under which it was rejected.

28. Where required, professional body approval must not be sought until after the Associate Dean of Faculty and QAE have approved the nomination.

PAB external examiner – appointment criteria

29. The University will appoint PAB external examiners who can show appropriate evidence of the following:

- experience of working in a UK HEI in a senior position e.g., Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education), Associate Dean, School Director of Learning & Teaching, Head of School, Academic Registrar or Head of Quality Assurance;
- understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality;
- experience as a Chair or member of assessment boards or significant experience of the application of assessment regulations and understanding of assessment board processes in UK HEIs;
- fluency in English;
- eligibility to work in the UK. All nominees will be required to provide original UKVI recognised documentation of their status, prior to appointment;
- UK residency. The University cannot permit staff to work from overseas due to potential legal implications;
- in the case of retired nominees, evidence of recent involvement as Chair or member of assessment boards or evidence of the application of assessment regulations and understanding of assessment board processes in UK HEIs.

Procedure for the appointment of PAB external examiners

30. QAE is responsible for appointing new PAB external examiners in line with the appointment criteria above. Once appointed, QAE will send the newly appointed external examiner an appointment letter, a copy of which will be uploaded to the shared repository for information. The external examiner will be registered on the External Examiners' Reporting System (EERS) and will be invited to an induction event.

31. At the start of each academic year, the Regulations, Assessment and Student Casework team will assign PAB external examiners to Programme Assessment Boards for that year.

HDA external examiner – appointment criteria

32. The University will appoint Higher and Degree Apprenticeship (HDA) external examiners who can show appropriate evidence of the following:

- experience of working in a UK HEI in a senior position that oversees and manages higher and degree apprenticeships e.g. Head of Degree Apprenticeships, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Associate Dean, Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Academic Registrar, Head of School;
- operational experience of HDA provision;

- familiarity with apprenticeship standards and End Point Assessments;
- an understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality in relation to higher and degree apprenticeships;
- fluency in English;
- eligibility to work in the UK. All nominees will be required to provide original UKVI recognised documentation of their status, prior to appointment;
- UK residency. The University cannot permit staff to work from overseas due to potential legal implications;
- in the case of retired nominees, evidence of recent involvement in the management of higher and degree apprenticeships and experience of higher and degree apprenticeship workplace practice.

Procedure for the appointment of HDA external examiners

33. QAE is responsible for appointing new HDA external examiners in line with the appointment criteria above. Once appointed, QAE will send the newly appointed external examiner an appointment letter, a copy of which will be uploaded to the shared repository for information. The external examiner will be registered on the External Examiners' Reporting System (EERS) and will be invited to an induction event.

34. At the start of each academic year, the QAE and Course and Student Administration teams will assign Apprenticeship external examiners to Apprenticeship Monitoring Committee (AMC) meetings for that year.

Conflicts of Interest

35. All external examiners should be impartial in judgement and should not have previous close involvement with the University which might compromise objectivity.

36. Therefore, the University will not normally appoint as external examiners anyone in the following categories/circumstances:

- a member of the governing body at the University or one of its partners, delivery organisations or support providers, or a current employee of the University or one of its partners;
- anyone with a close contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme of study;
- anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study;
- anyone significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme(s) or modules in question (subject external examiners only);
- anyone significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff (PAB/ HDA external examiners only);
- former staff or student of the University unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the nominee have

- completed their programme(s);
- more than one subject external examiner from the same department of the same institution;
- a replacement subject external examiner from an institution that has been the source of subject external examiners for that subject area in the last six years;
- a replacement PAB/ Apprenticeship external examiner from an institution that has been the source of PAB/ Apprenticeship external examiners in the last five years;
- more than one PAB/ Apprenticeship external examiner from the same institution;
- reciprocal subject external examining of cognate programmes between KU and the nominee's employing organisation;
- reciprocal PAB/ HDA external examining between KU and the nominee's employing organisation;
- replacement of a subject external examiner by an individual from the same department and institution.
- replacement of a PAB/ HDA external examiner by an individual from the same institution within the last five years.

37. Exceptionally there may be occasions where all the above criteria cannot be met. Requests for any variations from the above criteria must be discussed with and approved by the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

38. An external examiner should not be over-extended by their external examining duties. Therefore, a subject external examiner should not hold more than two external examiner appointments (including their appointment at KU) at any point in time and a PAB/ HDA external examiner should not hold more than three appointments (including their appointment at KU) at any point in time. If the examiner appears to exceed this norm, the proposer must provide supporting information on the nomination form. For example, that the phasing of assessments alleviates the workload during an academic session.

39. External examiners may be used in an external panel member or external subject expert capacity for some 'low risk' validation activity, subject to approval by the Head of Quality Assurance & Enhancement. To remain independent and impartial, an external examiner should not undertake any other additional work for the University, which is not within the remit of their external examiner role. If an external examiner undertakes any additional work for the University that is outside of their remit without approval by the Head of QAE their appointment may be terminated.

40. An external examiner may be reappointed but only after a period of five years or more has elapsed since their last appointment.

Internal Publication of External Examiners' names and institution

41. A list of external examiners' names and institution will be published annually, for current students, on the internal 'My Kingston' site. Students are strictly prohibited from contacting external examiners regarding any aspect of their

programme of study. If an examiner is contacted by a student, for any reason, they are asked not to respond but to inform the University via extexam@kingston.ac.uk. Please see IG (ix) for student guidance on the role of the external examiner.

Termination of Appointment

42. The University has the right to terminate the appointment of an external examiner for failure to fulfil contractual duties, in the event of a course closure or where the examiner relocates abroad. Concerns about the effectiveness of an external examiner may arise from time to time and derive from a variety of sources: audit of annual reports by QAE, chairs of assessment boards and assessment board monitors. If alerted in this respect, the relevant Head of Department/School (for subject external examiners) or QAE (for PAB/ HDA external examiners) should discuss the issue(s) of concern with the external examiner. If concerns persist, a recommendation (with a clear rationale) for the early termination of the external examiner's appointment should be submitted to the Head of QAE. A termination of appointment may only be authorised by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education). Upon termination of the appointment, a new nominee should be sought, following the process outlined above.
43. External examiners are asked to notify the University of any change of circumstances as soon as possible e.g., change of institution, change of contact details, relocation etc. If an external examiner relocates outside of the UK during their term of office, the University cannot allow them to continue in their EE role due to potential legal implications and a new nominee must be sought as soon as possible following the processes outlined above.
44. It should be noted that the normal reasons for terminating an appointment are non-fulfilment of duties, course closures, non-submission of reports etc., and not academic disagreements with internal examiners or reasonable criticism of practices, procedures, and standards. Indeed, the University expects that external examiners will be encouraged to make their views known and that such views will be respected and carefully considered by the University.
45. An external examiner has the right to terminate their role as external examiner, if they are unable to complete their full term of office by giving not less than three months' notice in writing to the Head of Department/School (subject external examiners only) and QAE.

External Examiners' Induction

46. All new examiners are invited to attend a University external examiners' Induction event. The induction event does not replace local induction for subject external examiners by the Department/School.
47. The Head of Department/School (or equivalent) must arrange an induction meeting with the subject external examiner to agree a schedule of work for the first year of appointment which allows the external to carry out an audit of the particular assessment scheme in operation. Time should be allowed for

consultation with the examiner before assessments are due to take place, with a view to a clear understanding being reached on methods and procedures of assessment.

48. Please refer to IG (iii) for further details on the external examiners' induction.

External Examiner Annual Reports

49. All 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 completed on-line. 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.
50. The University regards the external examiner's annual report as a critical part of its quality assurance and enhancement procedures. The Head of QAE, on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor, is the formal recipient of external examiner annual reports and carries out an independent audit of all reports annually in order to provide an annual overview summary for the Education Committee. Feedback relating to operation of boards and regulations will be forwarded to the Regulatory Framework Committee. QAE is responsible for receipt and initial consideration of external examiners' annual reports.
51. Subject external examiners allocated to modules delivered by a collaborative partner, will be required to comment on each partner (as appropriate) that delivers the modules. This may take the form of particular questions within one report or separate reports. The precise format will depend upon the nature of the collaboration and external examiner arrangements. The reporting requirements will be made clear at appointment and in the induction by the relevant Head of School or nominee.
52. If a subject external examiner, following a reminder, does not submit the annual report within one month of submission of their last Confirmation of Audit form for that year/cohort, 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 (see Termination of Appointment).
53. If a PAB external examiner, following a reminder, does not submit the annual report within one month of the last PAB 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 (see Termination of Appointment).
54. If a HDA external examiner, following a reminder, does not submit the annual within one month of the last Apprenticeship Monitoring Committee meeting for that 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 (see Termination of Appointment).

55. Annual reports will be regarded as a public document within the University and form part of the documentation for Student Voice Committee meetings, Substantive Review panels and professional and/or regulatory bodies. Individual students can also make an email request to QAE for an external examiner's annual report and the corresponding response relating to their programme.
56. 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 examiner from the VC within one week of receipt of the letter. The 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

57. The key course contact should discuss any issues arising from the external examiner's audit of student work and the annual report appropriately during the academic year. This could be at the annual schedule of work meeting or at other designated points in the year through correspondence, meetings or calls. The key course contact should involve the University and/or Partner Liaison Officer as needed for franchised or validated provision.

Where a course is accredited and the professional, statutory and regulatory body requires a written response to external examiner annual reports, a response should be sent as required by the PSRB. This should be managed by the course team. QAE should be sent a copy of the response for storage and easy retrieval during reaccreditation process. For subject external examiner annual reports, the school/department must ensure that they are considered as part of the Kingston Continuous Enhancement Programme (KCEP).

58. If a subject external examiner's annual report highlights any issues of serious concern, QAE will alert the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) and write to the Faculty requesting an urgent response to the external examiner for approval by the Head of School, Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education). If necessary, a separate letter will also be sent to the external examiner from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education). The external examiner will be notified of this process. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) may instigate an IQA (see section F) if comments suggest that there are other related matters to investigate.
59. It is the responsibility of QAE to provide a response to PAB and HDA external examiners' annual reports within 6 weeks of receipt of the report. The response should be written in consultation with the RASC team for PAB external examiners.
60. If a PAB/HDA external examiner's annual report highlights any issues of serious concern, QAE will alert the Head of Quality Assurance and

Enhancement and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) and will draft a response in liaison with RASC for approval by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education). The external examiner will be notified of this process. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) may instigate an IQA (see section E) if comments suggest that there are other related matters to investigate.