



Scope

These regulations are intended to provide a framework for the management of External Examiners and include:

- Nomination
- Responsibilities
- Contribution to Quality Assurance and Enhancement

During the transition away from UAL and to awarding Ravensbourne awards this policy should be read in conjunction with Appendix 1

Regulation: N/A

Aligned to: Revised UK Quality Code

Date approved/re-approved:

16 February 2017, minor amendment approved via Chair's action on 13 September 2019. To be re-approved in the 2020/21 academic year

Date for review To be reviewed every 5 years by Quality Development Committee

Approved by: Quality Development Committee

To be read in conjunction with:

- Assessment Regulations
- Annual Course Monitoring Policy
- Changes to Validated Courses

Document Owner: Quality

Ravensbourne External Examiner Policy

1) Introduction

External examiners are experienced academics from other institutions who offer an independent assessment of academic standards and the quality of assessment at Ravensbourne.

Ravensbourne University London makes scrupulous use of external examiners by appointing at least one external examiner to all higher education provision offered from a recognised academic institution. It is noted that given the industry focussed nature of Ravensbourne's provision it may be desirable to appoint external examiner from industry and this will always be in addition to an academic examiner.

Ravensbourne will have responsibility for appointing external examiners for any collaborative or partnership provision in line with this policy.

2) Responsibilities

Ravensbourne expects its external examiners to provide comment and recommendations upon whether or not:

- The degree-awarding body is maintaining the threshold academic standards set for its awards in accordance with the frameworks for higher education qualifications and applicable Subject Benchmark Statements
- The assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcome of the programme(s) and is conducted in line with the degree awarding body's policies and regulations
- The academic standards and the achievements of students are comparable with those in other UK degree-awarding bodies of which the external examiners have experience

This is achieved through the submission of an annual report on the relevant pro-forma which will offer comment on good practice and innovation relating to learning and teaching & assessment as observed and opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students. This report should be submitted at the end of the academic year and as soon as possible following the Assessment Board.

External examiners will be able to comment and provide recommendations on the above through their involvement in the following:

2.1) Assessment Approval

External examiners will be invited to comment on the assessments set for students that contribute towards an award, or higher level of study. This includes project briefs and any examination papers.

2.2) Engagement with students

It is expected that the external examiner will meet with groups of students at all levels to gain an understanding of whether the assessments set are appropriate for the students and also to allow comment on the student experience at Ravensbourne.

The names of the external examiner(s) appointed to each course will be available to students.

External examiners should not discuss an individual student's performance and should a student raise issues of this nature, the external examiner should refer them onto the relevant Course Leader.

2.3 Sampling of student work

The external examiner will usually sample all student work proposed to receive the highest qualification and those who are proposed to have failed, alongside samples of those suggested at all other levels. The amount of work to be sampled will be determined by the Course Leader.

External examiners do not have the right to intervene in the marks awarded to an individual student. However, should they have concerns about the internal marking, they should raise these with the Course Leader at the first relevant opportunity.

The external examiner reserves the right to sample all student work for the year, if appropriate, however, this should only occur in exceptional circumstances.

2.4) Attending the final Assessment Board

External examiners are expected to attend the final assessment board annually and at least one external examiner is required to attend the final Assessment Board in order for it to proceed.

In exceptional cases the external examiner may not attend the Assessment Board, however, they will be required to submit comments in advance of the board. Consistent absence from the Assessment Board can constitute a failure of the examiner to fulfil their duties.

This enables the external examiner to endorse the assessment outcomes for the relevant course, and this is achieved by the external examiner offering a verbal report at the Board and signing the Board Sheet to formally record their agreement.

For Retrieval Boards, normally, the external examiner delegates their responsibility to the Board, unless:

- in exceptional cases, in which case the Board's decision is provisional until the relevant external examiner has been consulted.
- When it is a requirement of a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) that the external examiner reviews all student retrieval work is of a standard meeting the criteria for prescription or accreditation and/or is expected to attend the Retrieval Boards.

Should the external examiner not endorse the assessment outcomes this should be noted in the verbal report and the examiner would not be required to sign the Board Sheet.

2.5) Changes to validated courses

Where there are modifications to validated courses, the Course Leader will request the external examiner to comment on the proposed changes. Their response will be recorded as noted at the relevant Board of Study.

Should an external examiner become aware of serious concerns in the fulfilment of their duties outlined above they should raise them with the Head of the Institution as soon as possible. Examiners are reminded that should their concerns persist after raising them with Ravensbourne, they have recourse to the QAA Concerns scheme.

- **Response to reports**

Ravensbourne's Quality Office will acknowledge receipt of the report and forward it into the relevant Course Leader(s) who will provide an initial response to the examiner.

External examiner reports feed into the Annual Course Monitoring process and each report will have an Action Plan generated by the course(s) which is monitored at the relevant Board of Study. This will be provided to the external examiner once the Action Plan has been completed, and this is usually by the end of the following academic year.

An overarching report is written by the Quality Office and is reported to Academic Board to share cross-departmental issues and good practice.

External examiner reports are available to staff and students via Ravensbourne's intranet.

3) **Nomination**

Ravensbourne's external examiners tenures last for four academic years. In the final year of appointment a replacement external examiner will be appointed to allow an element of continuity and to widen the pool of potential external examiners to include those without prior external examining experience. This is seen as beneficial to Ravensbourne given the specialist nature of its provision.

The ideal candidate for an external examiner vacancy should have evidence of the following:

- A high degree of competence and experience in the fields covered by the course of study, or parts thereof, and have a good understanding of the UK higher education sector;
- Appropriate experience in course design and student assessment at the level of the award;
- The necessary academic experience and subject knowledge to assess standards in an effective manner, identify good practice and recommend enhancements to enable informed course development;

- Experience in acting as an external examiner, or are supported by the provider in undertaking their duties, for example, through training and mentoring
- Impartiality of judgement and be wholly independent of the provider and its staff (including the governing body), and any relevant partners
- Do not personally benefit from any student outcomes, nor have any connection to any student being assessed
- Sufficient experience in quality assurance to enable them to discharge their role effectively

External examiners may not normally hold more than two concurrent external examiner appointments at one time.

Nominations should be submitted on the relevant pro-forma to the relevant Board of Studies. In exceptional cases, where the Board of Studies cannot agree on a nomination, it will refer the nomination to the next meeting of Academic Board for their approval. For collaborative provision the Board of Studies with relevant subject knowledge for the course will consider the nomination.

When a nomination is approved, the external examiner will be invited to participate in the relevant induction event.

Ravensbourne will monitor the diversity of the external examiners appointed with the expectation that examiners appointed will reflect the diversity of the communities served by Ravensbourne.

3.1) Change in circumstances

It is the responsibility of the external examiner to update the Quality Office with a change in details as soon as possible, such as their contact information, and particularly if the change in circumstances may result in a conflict of interest.

3.2) Conflict of interest

Ravensbourne will not appoint any external examiners who meet the following criteria, as this would constitute a conflict of interest:

- a member of a governing body or committee of the appointing body or one of its partners, delivery organisations or support providers, or a current employee of the appointing body or one of its partners, delivery organisations or support providers
- anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the course
- anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the course
- anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the course
- 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 units in question
- former staff or students of the higher education provider unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the external examiner have completed their programme(s)
- a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another higher education provider

- the succession of an external examiner by a colleague from the examiner's home department and provider
- the appointment of more than one external examiner from the same department of the same higher education provider.

If there are any queries regarding the nomination of an external examiner, advice should be sought from the Quality Office.

3.3) Extension/Re-approval

As stated above, external examiners are appointed for a term of 4 academic years. In exceptional cases their appointment may be extended to allow continuity or running out of a course (usually up to a maximum of two years). These extensions will be reported to the Board of Studies on the relevant proforma.

Following the end of their tenure, external examiners will not be reappointed to the same course or another offered by Ravensbourne until five years have elapsed.

3.4) Termination of appointment

During an external examiner's tenure their appointment can be terminated by either party – the external examiner can email to resign their appointment to the Quality Office.

Ravensbourne expects external examiners to fulfil their duties as laid out in this policy and in their contract of employment with the institution. Should an external examiner fail to fulfil their duties, Ravensbourne will take the following action depending on the extent of the failure:

- Minor - Ravensbourne will write to the examiner to remind them of their duties, and if necessary invite the external examiner to the relevant induction. Examples of minor failures include non-attendance at the Exam Board
- Major – Ravensbourne will consider the impact of the failure and where necessary, write to the external examiner to inform them of the termination of their contract. Examples of major failures include non-submission of the external examiner report.

Where a Course Leader is concerned about an external examiner fulfilling their duties, they should raise their concerns with a member of Quality Office.

4) **Remuneration**

External examiners will receive remuneration on completion of their duties for the academic year (that is on submission of their report).

The exact amount will be agreed with the external examiner on their appointment and will take into consideration:

- Number of other examiners for the course
- Cohort size
- Number of visits

Ravensbourne will also cover all reasonable expenses incurred by external examiners in the fulfilment of their duties.

Appendix 1: Transition Arrangements

Following the successful acquisition of Taught Degree Awarding Powers (TDAP) in August 2018 Ravensbourne is able to award its own degrees. All current Level 4 and 5 students have been consulted on whether they would like to remain on a UAL award, or transfer to a Ravensbourne award.

Following the results of this consultation where there are student remaining on a UAL award it has been agreed that examiners will be jointly appointed by UAL and Ravensbourne until these students graduate in 2019/20.

During this time examiners will follow both [UAL procedures](#) and Ravensbourne's procedures for external examiners (this policy). This impacts on the activities of external examiners in the following ways:

- New nominations during this period will be considered by both institutions
- Examiners will submit a report using the UAL template, and an addendum to consider students enrolled on a Ravensbourne award
- Payment and expenses claims should be submitted to UAL