University of Reading

SECTION 4: NOMINATION AND APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

Please refer to the full policy in relation to External Examining published in the University's Code of Practice on the External Examining of Taught Programmes.

Contents

4.1 RESPONSIBILITY FOR NOMINATING AND APPOINTING INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

4.1.1   Heads of School are responsible for nominating Internal and External Examiners for programmes and modules which lie within their purview.

4.1.2   In the Summer, all Heads of School are sent Forms 2U/P on which to nominate Internal and External Examiners for the forthcoming Session. The completed forms should be returned by a specified deadline (normally in mid-September).

4.1.3   The relevant Board of Studies and Student Experience is responsible for approving the nominations of Internal and External Examiners and for submitting recommendations in

respect of External Examiners to the University Board for Teaching, Learning and Student Experience (UBTLSE).

4.1.4   UBTLSE is responsible for confirming the appointment of External Examiners.

4.2 INTERNAL EXAMINERS

4.2.1   The University requires that an Internal Examiner is appointed for every programme. The Internal Examiners will be the Programme Directors, the School Director of Teaching and Learning, the School Director of Academic Tutoring and the School/Departmental Examinations Representative. The Internal Examiners for a programme are formally responsible for scrutinising and approving internally papers for University Examinations, for attending the Programme Examiners' Meeting and, together with the External Examiners, collectively agreeing recommended results for candidates on the programme, and for attending the relevant University Progression or Awarding Board.

4.3 POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

4.3.1   Academic staff (including sessional staff) are required to declare any interest which potentially conflicts with their responsibilities as an Examiner or marker. The Head of School and Examinations, Student Records and Graduation Office should be informed at the earliest opportunity where a potential conflict of interest exists.

4.3.2   The University does not permit any member of staff who is in an intimate relationship with or closely related to a student to be directly professionally involved in assessing or examining that student. The Head of School or the appropriate Teaching and Learning Dean must be informed so that appropriate arrangements can be made; these will, of course, seek to ensure that the student concerned is neither advantaged nor disadvantaged. A declaration of this kind will be treated in complete confidence.

4.3.3   In practice, the member of staff should not be involved with setting examination papers which the student will be taking, marking the papers of the student, and should not be present at any Examiners' Meeting or Board when the student's performance is considered. It is, however, important that the member of staff provides in writing any information which is relevant to the Examiners' Meeting or Board and is available to the Examiners during the meeting. Exceptionally the Examiners may consider that there is benefit in the member of staff attending the Examiners' Meeting or Board specifically to answer questions relating to other candidates on the programme.

4.4 PROGRAMMES REQUIRING EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

4.4.1   The University requires that an External Examiner is appointed for every programme which leads to an award of the University (including franchised or validated programmes). An External Examiner is not required for any provision which does not contribute to an award. The number of External Examiners appointed to a programme should be determined in the light of the range of expertise required and the workload involved.

4.4.2   For each combined or multi-disciplinary programme, the relevant Schools are required to ensure that one or more of the External Examiners consider the overall coherence of the programme.

4.4.3   Each module will be assigned to an External Examiner, as determined by the Head of School/Department. Part 1 modules are subject to External Examiners' scrutiny since Part 1 may lead to the award of the Certificate of Higher Education. Where appropriate, an External Examiner may be appointed to examine modules only, without responsibility for a programme or an award.

4.4.4   Taught modules which contribute to the award of a higher degree by research are subject to the normal provisions for external examining of taught modules. Where such a module is not associated with a taught programme, an External Examiner must be appointed for the module.

4.5 PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

4.5.1   External Examiners will normally be appointed annually with a normal maximum period of tenure of four years.

4.5.2   Exceptionally, an External Examiner may be re-appointed for a further year where there is shown to be good reason, for example, to provide continuity where a programme is being withdrawn. A case explaining the rationale for an extension beyond the normal maximum period of tenure must be submitted by the Board of Studies and Student Experience responsible for scrutinising the appointment to UBTLSE.

4.5.3   An External Examiner may be reappointed in exceptional circumstances but only after a period of five years or more has elapsed since their last appointment.

4.5.4   The appointment of an External Examiner may be terminated where there is good cause, such as unsatisfactory performance of duties. A termination of appointment must be approved by the Chair of UBTLSE.

4.6 CRITERIA FOR NOMINATION AND APPOINTMENT OF PROGRAMME EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

4.6.1   A detailed person specification is provided in the Code of Practice, page 3: www.reading.ac.uk/exams/-/media/project/functions/exams/documents/cpee.pdf.

4.6.2   A list of potential conflicts of interest that would normally exclude an examiner from being appointed is provided on page 4 of the Code of Practice.

4.7 NOMINATION OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

4.7.1   Heads of School are responsible for identifying appropriate External Examiners and for ensuring that prospective External Examiners are advised of the scope and nature of the responsibilities, including the likely number of candidates to be examined.

4.7.2   If the prospective nominee is willing to accept the appointment, the Head of School should complete Part A of the Nomination Form for New External Examiners for Taught Courses and then ask the nominee to complete and sign Part B, which requires the nominee inter alia to provide information on their qualifications, declare any potential conflicts of interest and to confirm their willingness to undertake the duties. At this stage the Head of School should draw

the attention of the External Examiner to the items specified in the Code of Practice on External Examining of Taught Programmes, section 9.

4.7.3 Heads of School are required to confirm on the Nomination Form that no Internal Examiner or other member of academic staff associated with the programme currently holds an external examinership at the same level in the same or a closely cognate discipline in the nominee's institution. Heads of School are required to maintain a register of institutions in which members of the School hold external examinerships.

4.7.4 Where the School wishes to re-appoint an External Examiner for a further Session, this should be indicated on the 2U/P form circulated by the Examinations, Student Records and Graduation Office each August.

4.8 EXTERNAL EXAMINER FEES

4.8.1 Each External Examiner will be allocated one of five fee bands. The fees for each band are agreed annually by UBTLSE and published on the Exams Office website here: www.reading.ac.uk/exams/-/media/project/functions/exams/documents/ee-payment-bands-2022-23.pdf.

4.9 INFORMATION PROVIDED TO EXTERNAL EXAMINERS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

4.9.1 Following approval by UBTLSE, the Examinations, Student Records and Graduation Office sends the External Examiner a letter of appointment which specifies the programmes to be examined and the fee, and includes a statement that the appointment is for one year but may be renewed to a maximum period of four years. External Examiners are asked to confirm their acceptance of the appointment on a pro forma provided with the letter of appointment.

4.9.2 The Examinations, Student Records and Graduation Office includes an information pack with the letter, which is also available online here: www.reading.ac.uk/exams/information-for-staff/external-examiners/information-for-external-examiners.

4.9.3 The relevant School is asked to provide the External Examiner with the following information:

- Programme/Course Handbook(s);

- Programme specification(s)/detailed information about the content and assessment of the programme(s);

- examination schedule, dates of meetings and other detailed arrangements;

- Guidelines for assessment and classification applicable to the degree being examined;

- relevant previous External Examiners' Reports (for new External Examiners).

4.10 PREPARATION OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

4.10.1 The Centre for Quality Support and Development (CQSD) offers a session on external examining to which External Examiners and members of academic staff who are serving as External Examiners at other institutions are invited. Schools are required to offer new External Examiners an opportunity to discuss their responsibilities at a meeting with members of the

School before they undertake examining. It is strongly recommended that External Examiners drawn from outside higher education attend the CQSD session and a meeting with the School.

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