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Procedure 3.7 External examiners

1 Introduction

Awarding organisations nominate at least one external examiner for every higher education programme. (The term external verifier may also be used and this procedure applies equally to external verifiers) External examiners play an important role in assuring the Academy and the AO that:

- the assessment processes at the Academy are fair and operating in a fair manner through the implementation of the Academy's Academic Management Policy
- the academic standards of the provision are appropriate and consistent with similar provision elsewhere; and good practice is identified and shared.

External examiners are normally senior academics and professionals drawn from higher education, appointed by the awarding organisations. External examiners are expected to attend meetings relating to assessment, to sample and review examination scripts and other assessed work and to moderate borderline marks/grades. They must also submit a report at least once a year to the Academy and the awarding organisation on the operation of the programme, highlighting good practice and making recommendations for any necessary improvements in assessment.

External examiners operate according to the requirements of the appropriate awarding body and in line with the guidance set out in UK Quality Code Chapter B7 *External examining*.

External examiners, by means of sampling assignment briefs and marked/graded work, establish whether:

- the assessments are fit for purpose in the context of the programme
- the assessment of students' work is consistent with national standard.

A sample of student work should normally be selected upon the following criteria:

2 Sampling size

<i>Total number of students</i>	<i>Number of assessments to be reviewed</i>
1-20	At least 50% and not fewer than 10
21-60	At least 33% and not fewer than 15
61-100	At least 25% and not fewer than 20
>100	At least 20% and not fewer than 25

The sample should be chosen across the classification range, or, where there are only pass and fail classifications, from across the mark/grade range.

- assignments, scripts or practical work should be chosen near to each grade boundary
- some at least must be from near the middle of a grade range.

3 External examiners may recommend changes as follows:

Authority of External examiners to require an alteration to marks/grades	
Marks/grades are in the correct rank order, but are inconsistent with national standards.	A scaling of marks/grades up or down from across all or part of the range to make them consistent with national standards.
The rank order is largely inaccurate	Team to re-mark/grade those sections of the assignments/scripts that are out of order; where the problem is at all levels of the listing, then the team is to re-mark all assignments/scripts.

Authority of External Examiners to require an alteration to marks/grades	
Students awarded fails within 10% of the lower pass boundary are adjudged as passing by the external examiners, but at other levels the rank order is accurate and the marking is consistent with national standards.	Team to reassess the assignments/scripts identified.

4 Role of Assessment Committee

- implement the Academy's examination and assessment regulations that contribute to the offer of named awards
- ensure that proper standards are maintained for the approval of awards
- ensure that each student is fairly assessed, within the programme regulations, as an individual and in relation to his or her peers

The Committee is responsible for:

- student progression across levels
- approving student pass lists for resubmitted and retaken assignments and examinations
- consideration of all candidates who fail a module or formal assessment and determining the terms for the retrieval of failure
- considering recommendations on mitigating circumstances
- considering recommendations on intermission
- formal notification of failure to any candidates who fails a module
- termination of studies on the basis of academic failure
- considering and applying compensation as set out in the Academy's regulations

Assessment Committee decisions must be conveyed to external examiners which originated the judgement of 'fail' on the work of those candidates whose resubmitted, re-sat or retaken work the Committee has assessed. This must be done within one week of the meeting of the Committee.

The Committee is responsible for reviewing all external examiner reports and taking appropriate steps to ensure that their recommendations for any changes or improvements in assessment relating to specific programmes are followed through in an effective and timely manner.