Appointment and role of External Examiners and External Members
Revised November 2018

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Appointment and role of External Examiners and External Members

Purpose
The purpose of this procedure is:

- to ensure that Queen Mary’s degrees are comparable in standard to those awarded by other UK universities;
- to ensure fairness and consistency in assessment procedures and student classification;
- to scrutinise the effectiveness and appropriateness of the assessment system;
- to assure the wider community of the standard of Queen Mary's degrees, and of the fairness of its assessment procedures.

This procedure takes in to account the precepts and guidance in Chapter B7 of the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

Scope
This guidance covers the appointment and role of External Examiners and External Members for all undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes of study. It does not cover external examiners appointed for research degrees or non-award-bearing continuing education.

Associated documents
Associated documents including the following can be found on the External Examiners for staff web page: http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/quality-assurance/external-examiners/external-examiners-info-for-staff/

- External Examiner nomination form
- External Member nomination form
- External Examiner extension of appointment form (for exceptional 5th year extensions)

Associated documents including the following can be found on the External Examiners’ Resources web page: http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/quality-assurance/external-examiners/external-examiners-resources/

- Assessment Handbook
- Academic Regulations
- External Examiner guidance
- External Member duties.
- Examiners report templates (undergraduate, undergraduate medicine and dentistry, postgraduate)

Accountability of External Examiners and External Members
The formal responsibility of External Examiners and External Members is to the Principal
and their annual reports are addressed to the Principal (although sent to the Assistant Academic Registrar Assessment Governance). Externals have the right to make a confidential report to the Principal at any time.

External Examiners and External Members have a crucial role in quality assurance:

- External Member/Examiners' primary duty is to ensure that the standard of the programme(s) are consistent with those awarded across the UK university system.
- External Examiners and External Members have a key responsibility to ensure that all candidates are treated fairly, and that decisions in relation to individual students are taken after due deliberation;
- External Examiners and External Members are asked to review the examination process, and to comment on its operation. The reports of External Examiners are also a key source of information in the monitoring of modules and programmes of study;
- because of their experience of assessment procedures at other institutions, External Examiners and External Members are in a position to offer valuable advice and counsel to examination boards and programme / module organisers.

Procedure for the appointment of External Examiners

Nominations for the appointment of new External Examiners should be presented on the External Examiner nomination form and should be forwarded to the Academic Secretariat by the Chair/Secretary of the relevant Subject Examination Boards along with a copy of the nominees short CV. This should be done after consultation with the programme / module organiser and the Head of School.

The nomination is reviewed for approval against the appointment criteria below by the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance) and approved against the same criteria by the relevant Faculty Dean for Education. Where the nominee does not strictly meet the appointment criteria (and a sound case justifying the appointment has been made on the form) the nomination will also require approval of the Vice-Principal (Education).

An External Examiner is appointed for a period of four years, from September 1st to December 31st four years later. This is to ensure ample opportunity for briefing by the school/institute before draft examination question papers have to be considered in February/March.

Appointment criteria

External Examiners do not operate in isolation, but (except in cases where there is only one External Examiner) as a panel, with collective responsibility for ensuring the standard of the qualification. Therefore, any new appointment should be considered in the context of the whole panel of External Examiners for the programme / award.

Appointment criteria (from Chapter B7 of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education)

**Person Specification**

Institutions appoint external examiners who can show appropriate evidence of the following:

i. knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality
ii. competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study, or parts thereof

iii. relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate

iv. competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures

v. sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command the respect of academic peers and, where appropriate, professional peers

vi. familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed

vii. fluency in English, and where programmes are delivered and assessed in languages other than English, fluency in the relevant language(s) (unless other secure arrangements are in place to ensure that external examiners are provided with the information to make their judgements)

viii. meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies

ix. awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula

x. competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

Conflicts of interest

Institutions do not appoint as external examiners anyone in the following categories or circumstances:

i. member of a governing body or committee of the appointing institution or one of its collaborative partners, or a current employee of the appointing institution or one of its collaborative partners

ii. anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme of study

iii. anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study

iv. anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study

v. 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

vi. former staff or students of the institution unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the external examiner have completed their programme(s)

vii. a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another institution
viii. the succession of an external examiner from an institution by a colleague from the same department in the same institution.

ix. the appointment of more than one external examiner from the same department of the same institution.

Terms of office

An external examiner's appointment will normally be for four years, with the possibility of an exceptional one-year extension to ensure continuity.

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.

External examiners should normally hold no more than two external examiner appointments for taught programmes/modules at any point in time.

Procedure for the appointment of External Members

External Members are appointed to Degree Examination Boards only. Normally one External Member is appointed jointly to the Undergraduate Humanities and Social Sciences and Undergraduate Science and Engineering Degree Examination Boards. The External Member is not appointed to the Undergraduate Dentistry, Medicine, or Law Degree Examination Boards as External Examiners are present at these meetings.

Nominations for the appointment of new External Members should be presented on the External Member nomination form and should be forwarded to the Academic Secretariat by the Academic Registrar & Council Secretary along with a copy of the nominees short CV.

The nomination is reviewed for approval against the appointment criteria listed below by the Chairs of the relevant Degree Examination Boards, and by the Vice-Principal (Education).

Appointment criteria

External Members should satisfy the following criteria:

They should be people of seniority and experience who are able to command authority. They should normally be employed either at the level of Senior Lecturer or Deputy Academic Registrar or above;

- They should not normally hold more than two simultaneous external examinerships at first degree level;
- They should not normally be appointed to a Degree Examination Board from which a member of the Board is an examiner at the External’s institution;
- Former members of staff should not be appointed as an External Member for at least five years after they have left Queen Mary;
- External Members should normally be serving senior academics or administrators to ensure that they are fully conversant with standard policies and practices across the sector. An External Member who retires from his/her permanent post will continue as an External member until the expiry of the period of office, but a retired person should not normally be appointed as an External Member. A person who is not currently the holder of a senior administrative appointment or a senior lecturer post or above will not be eligible for nomination as an External Member;
- An External Member should not normally be drawn from the same institution.
as his/her predecessor;

- An External Member who has completed a term of office may not be re-appointed until five years has elapsed;
- An External Member should not be employed in any other capacity by the College.

In the event that the nominee does not meet one of the criteria indicated above, a letter of justification must be included with the nomination. The term ‘normally’ should be removed from the appointment criteria to determine whether a letter of justification is required.

**Period of appointment**

The period of appointment will normally be from 1 September to 31 December four years later, with the possibility of extension by mutual agreement for a fifth year only in exceptional circumstances. This will enable the External Examiner/Member to be involved in assessments from the start of the academic year, and to continue in office to deal with reviews, further assessment, resits etc.

Requests to extend the appointment of an Examiner/Member must be made by the end of June in their fourth year on the extension request form. The extension will be considered using the same procedures as those used for the appointment of a new External Examiner/Member. Extensions should only be made in exceptional circumstances, such as where a programme is coming to an end. The extension of appointment of an External Examiner/Member who has regularly failed to attend examination boards and submit annual reports will not be approved.

An External Examiner/Member who wishes to resign before the expiry of their normal period of office is required to write formally to the Principal (sent to the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance)), giving sufficient notice for the appointment of a replacement, this is usually 3 months.

In the event that a programme ceases to be offered by Queen Mary or does not recruit students in a particular year and the services of an External Examiner/Member are no longer required, prior to the completion of the External Examiner’s/External Member’s period of appointment, it is the responsibility of the Chair of the Subject Examination Board to inform the External Examiner/Member of this matter. The Academic Secretariat must also be informed to enable accurate central record keeping.

The termination of an External Examiner or External Member’s appointment by Queen Mary, before the expiry of their normal period of office, should be made by a formal recommendation to the Vice-Principal (Education) from the Chair of the Examination Board or the Academic Registrar & Council Secretary. This recommendation must be supported by the Dean for Education, or the Head of Quality in the case of the School of Medicine and Dentistry; the Vice-Principal (Education) will then make the final decision. Reasons for termination of an External Examiner’s or External Member’s appointment by Queen Mary include failure to perform their duties (including regular non-attendance at examination boards and non-submission of annual reports) and/or a breakdown in the relationship with Queen Mary.

**Briefing**

Upon appointment, the Academic Secretariat will send an External Examiner / Member a letter of appointment together with the following documentation:

- two copies of the External Examiner’s/Member’s Agreement;
- a Personal Details form (required for payment purposes);
• the last report of the previous External Examiner/Member and the response written by the College where applicable.

The letter will include the url of the web page where External Examiners/Members can download (http://www.acs.qmul.ac.uk/quality-assurance/external-examiners/external-examiners-resources/) the following:

• Queen Mary’s External Examiner/Member Guidelines;
• a report template for the External Examiner’s/Member’s first report;
• the Academic Regulations;
• the Assessment Handbook;
• an expenses claim form.

External Examiners and Members are encouraged to use a web page to access guidelines, regulations and templates as this will ensure that they always use the most up-to-date version of each. The Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance) will ensure that the External Examiners and External Members’ dedicated web page always provides the most recent version of every document available for downloading and/or viewing.

Queen Mary’s letter of appointment gives a general outline of the responsibilities of External Examiners/Members but the detailed role of each External will vary according to the discipline, the custom and practices of the Examination Board, and the distribution of responsibilities among the panel of External Examiners. It is therefore essential that a new External Examiner is carefully briefed by the Chair of the Subject Examination Board as soon as possible after their appointment has been confirmed. The responsibility for briefing a new External Member rests with the Academic Registrar & Council Secretary.

The briefing by the Chair of the Examination Board to the External Examiner should cover the following:

• general information on the School/subject area, including information provided to students, such as the Student Handbook and the regulations for the programme/s of study to be examined;

• the names of other External Examiners on the Subject Examination Board, and the modules/programmes of study for which they will be responsible, together with the options for which each external will be solely responsible;

• the relevant programme specification(s), together with module syllabuses and the means by which they will be assessed;

• the relevant marking criteria, used by the Subject Examination Board in assessing individual pieces of work (whether scripts, projects, coursework, etc) – for example, late work policy, process for marking and moderation and where seen exams/or module answers are provided.;

• the ‘calendar’ of events over the coming year, including the deadlines for submission of work to External Examiners, and for its return, the dates of meetings of the Subject Exam Board, and dates on which External Examiners are required to attend meetings (for example, to examine projects, to hear presentations or to conduct vivas).

The briefing by the Academic Registrar & Council Secretary to the External Member should cover the following:
• general information on practices and procedures at Queen Mary;
• the conventions used by the Degree Examination Boards;
• the ‘calendar’ of events, including the dates on which External Members are required at Queen Mary for Degree Examination Boards.

On an annual basis, the Academic Secretariat will post on the External Examiners’ dedicated web page details of any major changes to Queen Mary’s regulations and procedures.

Duties of External Examiners

External Examiners have the following ‘core’ duties:

**General**

• to comment on the assessments for each module for which they are responsible, the extent to which the assessments cover the syllabus, and whether they enable candidates to demonstrate their achievement of the learning outcomes;
• to consider, comment upon and approve all examination question papers and to comment on marking schemes for individual papers, assessment criteria and model answers;
• to confirm whether or not the standard of marking is satisfactory by scrutinising a sample of assessed work for each module;
• to comment on the standards of achievement of candidates and the comparability of this achievement to standards elsewhere;
• to comment on the standards of proposed awards and their comparability to similar awards elsewhere;
• to make known any causes for concern in relation to academic standards achieved by candidates, the standards of modules and the standards of awards to be made, should such cause arise;
• exceptionally upon written request to provide independent opinion where there is a significant unresolved difference between the marks awarded by the internal markers on any script or piece of work;
• to advise the Subject Examination Board on appropriate action where the marks for any module are significantly outside the normal pattern;
• to attend, or conduct, oral examinations, where applicable;
• to attend meetings of the Subject Examination Board, and participate fully in decision making;
• to endorse results and progression decisions, and recommendations for award;
• to attend meetings of the Degree Examination Board, where they choose;
• to submit a full report, including an optional confidential report to the Principal;
• to perform any other duties requested by the Taught Programmes Board, Education Quality and Standards Board, Senate, or Degree Examination Board, following appropriate consultation over the nature of those duties.

By agreement with the Subject Examination Board and in consultation with the relevant school(s), External Examiners may also carry out other duties including:
- the approval of project topics and essay titles,
- interviewing students about their programme of study and experience of it,
- comment on proposed changes to the curriculum,
- comment on proposed changes in assessment methods.

External Examiners also have a less tangible role in encouraging good practice, and advising the Examination Board on dealing with difficult problems.

Where the method of programme delivery is both campus based and, distance learning, the External Examiners may wish to discuss with the internal examiners the arrangements for sampling work and moderating the internal marking, to satisfy themselves that the standards are appropriate and that individual candidates are being treated fairly. This discussion should take place at a very early stage in the session and both internal and External Examiners should collaborate in monitoring the effectiveness of the arrangements throughout the session. External Examiners are particularly requested to comment on the effectiveness of the sampling and moderation procedures in their annual reports.

Moderating examination question papers

The Subject Examination Board is responsible for overseeing the production and agreement of examination papers; this is often delegated to a small sub-committee of examiners (scrutiny committees). Examination papers (including marking schemes, assessment criteria and model answers) are prepared by internal examiners in accordance with the approved minimum standards and template. These are then reviewed by a scrutiny committee before being sent to the appropriate External Examiner for review and approval. Examination papers for all sittings of examinations must be set, scrutinised and approved according to the approved procedure. External Examiners must review and approve all examination papers, including resit papers, even when individual questions may have been agreed separately in the past.

The External Examiner must satisfy themselves that the question paper:

- is appropriate to the level of the module;
- is an appropriate means of testing whether candidates’ have achieved the stated outcomes of the module;
- covers the full range of the syllabus;
- is fair – i.e. that some candidates will not be at an advantage other than by virtue of their academic ability and commitment.

Any comments or amendments suggested by the External Examiner must be responded to or acted upon. The External Examiner must be informed of action taken in response to their comments.

In the event that an External Examiner refuses to agree an examination paper, for whatever reason, this is reported to the Chair of the Degree Examination Board and the Academic Registrar & Council Secretary, or nominee. The Chair of the Degree Examination Board makes a decision on whether or not the paper should be approved or if amendments are needed. This decision is based on consideration of the objections detailed by the External Examiner and the viewpoint brought forward by the school setting the paper.

Moderating coursework tasks

There is not the same requirement for coursework tasks to be approved by the External Examiner as there is for examination papers. It is however good practice for schools to seek the External Examiners views on the nature of the proposed assessment. Details
of coursework questions should be supplied with examination papers to avoid overlap. Where modules that are assessed solely by coursework and Subject Examination Boards are encouraged to engage the External Examiner over the design of the assessment of these modules.

**Moderating examination scripts and other assessed coursework**

External Examiners have the right to examine any script or other assessed material. In the case of assessed coursework, External Examiners would normally only request to see any items of significant assessed coursework produced by a student. The definition of ‘significant’ will vary between disciplines, but Subject Examination Boards should ensure that individual items of coursework which count for more than 25% of the overall mark are available to the external for scrutiny if required. Where coursework has been returned to students, the Subject Examination Board must have a means of having these available to External Examiners if requested.

The role of the External Examiner is to moderate the marking of internal examiners. The selection of scripts/assessed work to be sent to the External Examiner is a matter for determination between the External Examiner and the Chair of the Subject Examination Board. The External Examiner must have sufficient evidence to determine that internal marking and award recommendations are of an appropriate standard and are consistent. Sampling arrangements will therefore normally provide for an External Examiner to see the following:

- a sample of scripts / assessed work from the top, middle and bottom of the range;
- scripts / assessed work of borderline candidates;
- scripts / assessed work marked internally as first class or failures;
- exceptionally and by agreement only: scripts / assessed work where the internal examiners differ buy more than ten percent of the total marks available.

The scripts/assessed work must be accompanied by the marking trails and comments of the internal examiners. Evidence of double marking (where required by the College’s Code of Practice on double marking) must be clear and the marks of the two internal examiners must be easily distinguishable. If there has been a discrepancy between the two internal markers, the final agreed internal mark must be clearly identified for the External Examiner. Every effort must be made internally to finalise an internal mark prior to External Examiner review. If the two internal markers significantly disagree on the mark and the differences cannot be resolved by discussion, then a third marker must be introduced. The assessment shall be marked for a third time and that mark shall stand. The third marker shall review the marking trails of the first two markers. The third marker shall be an independent and experienced internal marker with appropriate subject experience and may be an external examiner by specific agreement.

Where moderation by the External Examiner indicates the need for a significant alteration to the mark for a script/assessed work, the relevant internal and external examiners should consider whether the change relates to that piece of assessed work alone, or whether the marks for the whole cohort should be reviewed. If the latter appears necessary, the examiners have discretion on whether to remark all scripts, or to scale marks in accordance with Queen Mary Policy as outlined in the Assessment Handbook. Such re-scaling should be reported to, and endorsed by, the assessing Subject Examination Board.

External Examiners must not be asked to undertake any of the following:
• first or second marking:
• revise the marks awarded for the script / assessed work of an individual student other than through giving an opinion in specific exceptional cases at the request of the internal examiners where it has not been possible to resolve the matter internally. Where such exceptional cases involve changing the mark of an individual (rather than a cohort) they must be carefully documented in the Subject Examination Board minutes.

Examination Boards
Queen Mary has a two tier system of Examination Boards: Subject Examination Boards (SEBs) consider marks, progression and any circumstances that may have impacted on these, and make recommendations for award. Degree Examination Boards (DEBs) are award boards and approve awards and classifications as well as ratify other results achieved and progression decisions.

All External Examiners are required to attend the Subject Examination Board for the programme to which they have been appointed and may attend the Degree Examination Board should they wish to do so. Exceptionally where an External Examiner is unable to attend a Subject Examination Board, the meeting may proceed in their absence provided that they provide comments on the candidates’ performance prior to the meeting. These will be reported to the meeting and the External Examiner will be asked to endorse all recommendations and decisions. At least one External Examiner must be present at a Subject Examination Board meeting, either in person or remotely (i.e. via Skype).

It should not be necessary for External Examiners to undertake more than three visits to Queen Mary each year. Exceptions may be made where an External has to be present at a re-sit board, a Queen Mary Exam Board meeting or for the late viva of a borderline candidate.

Subject Examination Boards expect to receive marks that have already been moderated by External Examiners, except in the rare occasion where the performance of a candidate, or of candidates, raises an issue of policy on which the whole board must decide. The Chair of the Subject Examination Board therefore has the responsibility of ensuring that the marks and other information put before the Board incorporates the comments of Externals. Some Boards ask External Examiners to send their comments in writing a week before the board meeting; others organise a ‘pre-meeting’ at which all outstanding issues are resolved.

Debtors and alleged offenders
Students who are flagged as having academic debts Queen Mary should be considered by the Subject Examination Board, but their results must be withheld until confirmation has been received that the debt has been settled.

Students who are alleged to have committed any assessment offence cannot be considered until an offence outcome is known. The Board should agree arrangements for determining their performance when the question of the alleged offence has been resolved. The normal procedure is for the Examination Board to authorise its Chair to act on behalf of the Board.

Vivas
Viva voce examinations are oral examinations. Vivas shall normally only be used where they form part of the formal, approved assessment for modules, and shall not be used in discretionary cases.
Classification for Honours

Degrees are classified based on a College mark which is calculated by using the appropriate method as outlined in the Academic Regulations. A Subject Examination Board does have discretion to take into account other factors when determining the class of degree. For example it can raise a candidate meets the criteria under Queen Mary’s Borderline Policy (See section 6.74-6.82 of the Assessment Handbook.) The opinions of External Examiners will be especially influential in such cases and the agreement of the External Examiner must be recorded in the minutes of the Subject Examination Board.

Opinions of External Examiners

Chairs of Examination Boards must ensure that Externals are invited to express their opinions, particularly on difficult and contentious cases, and these opinions will always carry a particular weight. In routine cases where there are disagreements within the Board, the final decision will normally be reached by the majority vote (the Chair having a second and casting vote in the case of a tie). Where, however, an External Examiner expresses grave concern that a particular decision would be improper (for example, as being unfair to a candidate or a violation of appropriate standards), the Chair must seek the views of all of the External Examiners on that issue. If the majority of External Examiners are in agreement, the Examination Board must defer to their views, and the substance of the discussion must be recorded in the minutes or report of the meeting.

Where the External Examiners, or the Examination Board, recommend a course of action which contravenes the Regulations, or the Assessment Handbook, the Assistant Academic Registrar, Assessment Governance must be consulted without delay, and the discussion of the Examination Board on that item deferred until advice has been sought.

Duties of External Members

External Members have the following ‘core’ duties:

**General**

- to comment on the standards of achievement, as represented by Queen Mary’s mean marks and degree classifications, and the comparability of this achievement to standards elsewhere;
- to make known any cases for concern in relation to academic standards;
- to provide an external perspective on the interpretation of regulations and on recommendations for the suspension of regulations;
- to provide advice on the use of discretion, within the permitted scope of any Queen Mary policy, in order to agree results, progression and award;
- to attend the meetings of the Degree Examination Board, and participate fully in decision making;
- to endorse the awards, degree classifications and progression decisions made by the Degree Examination Board and to sign the relevant documentation;
- to submit a full report, including an optional confidential report to the Principal;
- to perform any other duties requested by Academic Board or the Degree Examination Board, following appropriate consultation over the nature of those duties.

External Members also have a less tangible role in encouraging good practice, and advising the examination board on dealing with difficult problems.
Examination Boards
External Members are required to attend all of the Degree Examination Boards for which they have been appointed. Exceptionally where an External Member is unable to attend the Degree Examination Board, the meeting may go ahead in their absence.

It should not be necessary for an External Member to undertake more than three visits each year to the College.

Opinions of External Members
Chairs of Degree Examination Boards must ensure that External Members are invited to express their opinions, particularly on difficult and contentious cases, and these opinions will always carry a particular weight.

External Examiners / Members Reports
After the Examination Board has completed its deliberation on candidates, the External Examiners/Members will each be invited to give a brief oral report.

External Examiners oral reports should cover:

- their opinion of the assessment process, including its fairness, accuracy and efficiency;
- their opinion of the academic quality of the cohort(s) that they have just examined;
- their opinion of the quality of the teaching, as judged by their examination of the students;
- any recommendations to the Examination Board for improvements in the teaching or examination process;
- their opinion as to whether recommendations made in previous years have been properly followed up.

External Members oral reports should cover:

- their comments on the examination board proceedings;
- any recommendations for improvements in regulatory and procedural arrangements;
- their opinion as to whether recommendations made in previous years have been properly followed up.

Examination Boards are normally very willing to respond to External Examiners’/Members’ comments. If, however, the chairman of an Examination Board fails to respond to critical comments in a positive manner, the External should contact the Assistant Academic Registrar, Assessment Governance as a matter of urgency.

External Examiners will be informed that they can make representations to the Chairs of the Degree Examination Board if they are dissatisfied with a decision.

The report from a Subject Examination Board to the Degree Examination Board must detail any case where the majority of External Examiners disagreed with a decision concerning the classification of a particular candidate.

External Examiners / Members are also required to make a formal annual report to the Principal (though addressed and sent to the Assistant Academic Registrar Assessment
Governance following the principal examination board meeting each year. This is an essential part of the College’s quality assurance framework. External Examiners reports form a major source of information in the annual review of the College’s teaching programmes and in internal periodic reviews.

External Examiner reports are also made available to student representatives via Student-Staff Liaison Committees; hence references to individual students in reports should be avoided. A confidential report may be attached as an appendix to an External Examiner’s report in the event that an External Examiner wishes to report a matter relating to an individual student.

The Assistant Academic Registrar Assessment Governance will read all External Examiner/Member reports and highlight comments that require a formal response. Chairs of Examination Boards are required to respond to the points made by External Examiners, both directly (within a month after the submission of the report) and through the documentation produced for the reviews mentioned above.

The Chair of the Examination Board sends a written response to the External Examiner, with a copy to the Assistant Academic Registrar Assessment Governance. Where the External Examiner raises an issue of principle which has not already been addressed by the school (or equivalent), it should first be discussed at a staff meeting, or the examiners’ next meeting, or at a meeting of the responsible curriculum/teaching committee, as appropriate to the circumstances.

The Assistant Academic Registrar, Assessment Governance is responsible for responding to the reports of External Members. Normally the report is considered by the Senate prior to the issue of a formal response to the External Member.

Externals’ comments and the responses from Chairs of Examination Boards are considered by the Assistant Academic Registrar Assessment Governance. An annual summary report is then written, focusing on good practice and issues that would potentially benefit from further consideration at College level, and presented to the Education Quality and Standards Board.

In cases where an External Examiner’s report contains particularly sensitive comments, the Vice Principal (Education) will contact the appropriate Chair of Examiners or Head of School immediately when the report is received. The Vice-Principal (Education) will normally require a written response to serious criticism.

Report templates are reviewed yearly by the Academic Secretariat. External Examiners and External Members are asked to download the template from a dedicated web page (http://www.arsc.QueenMary.ac.uk/quality-assurance/external-examiners/external-examiners-resources/) and completed reports should be returned to the Academic Secretariat, by post or to the email address on the report pro-forma. Reports should be submitted within one month of an Examination Board, and in any case within six months. The Academic Secretariat pursues the non-submission of an External’s report and reports the non-submission to the relevant Deans for Taught Programmes Advisory Group and Education Quality and Standards Board. An External’s fee is released only on the submission of a report, and Queen Mary reserves the right to refuse to pay for late reports.

Queen Mary aims to establish and maintain constructive and effective relationships with its External Examiners and External Members. However any problems experienced either by an External Examiner, an External Member or an Examination Board should be reported immediately to the Assistant Academic Registrar, Assessment Governance or to the Vice-Principal (Education).
Payment

External Members are paid their fees directly by the Academic Secretariat, while External Examiners are paid their fees by the Academic Secretariat upon submission of a fee payment form by the Chair/Secretary of the Subject Examination Board. The fee payable is at the discretion of the School, but should take into account the fee payment formula, which is reviewed periodically by the Academic Secretariat. Fees are paid only on receipt of an annual report, which should be submitted within one month of the Examination Board; QUEEN MARY reserves the right to refuse to pay for reports that are received more than six months after the Examination Board.

Expenses are reimbursed immediately on receipt of a signed expenses claim form with all receipts attached, provided that the expenses claim form is submitted within three months of incurring the expenses. All expenses claims should be sent direct to the Exam Board Secretary.