Office of Quality, Standards
and Partnerships
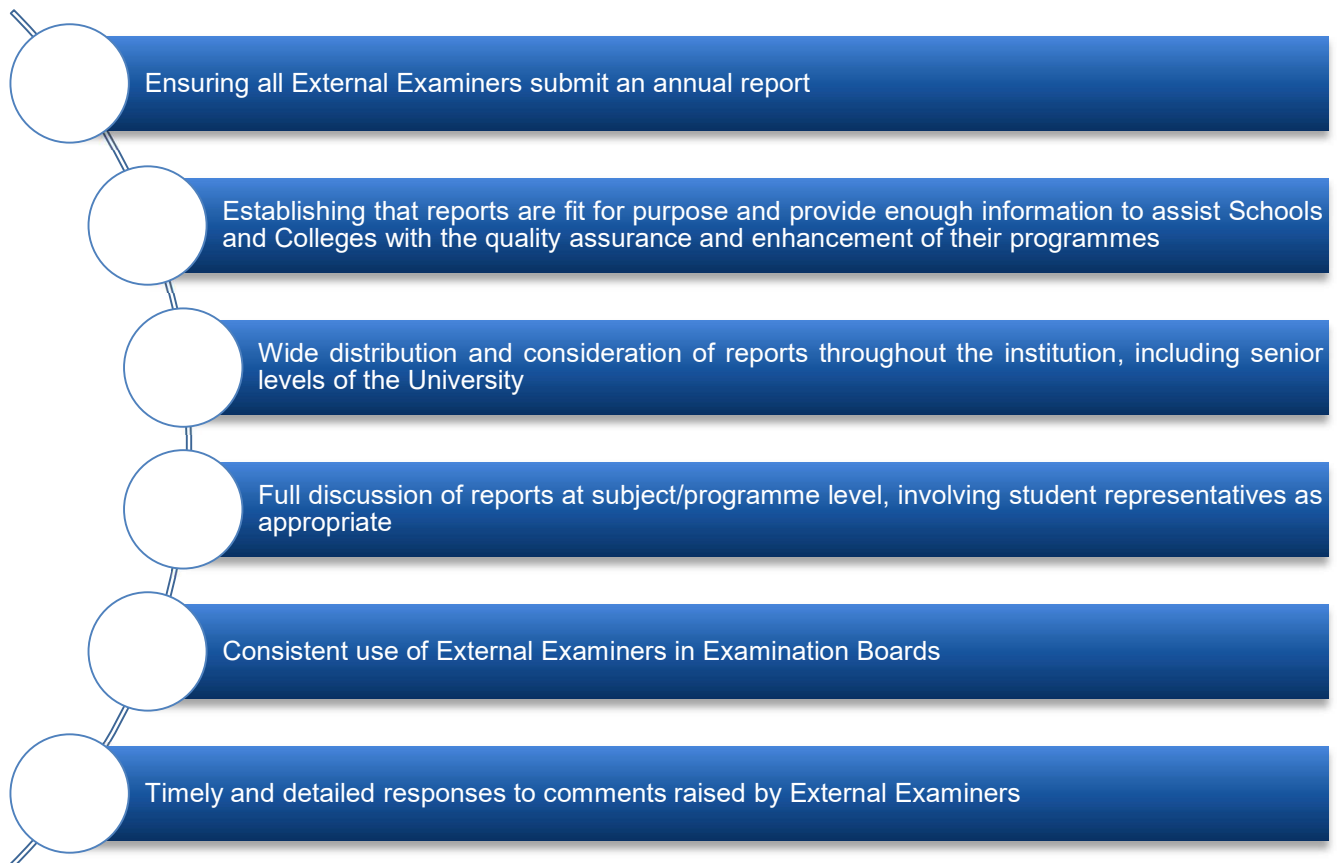
UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

QUALITY ASSURANCE MANUAL
External Examining

SECTION 04

Introduction

The University has a duty to ensure that its responsibility for the standards and quality of programmes are discharged through its effective and scrupulous use of External Examiners. It does this through:
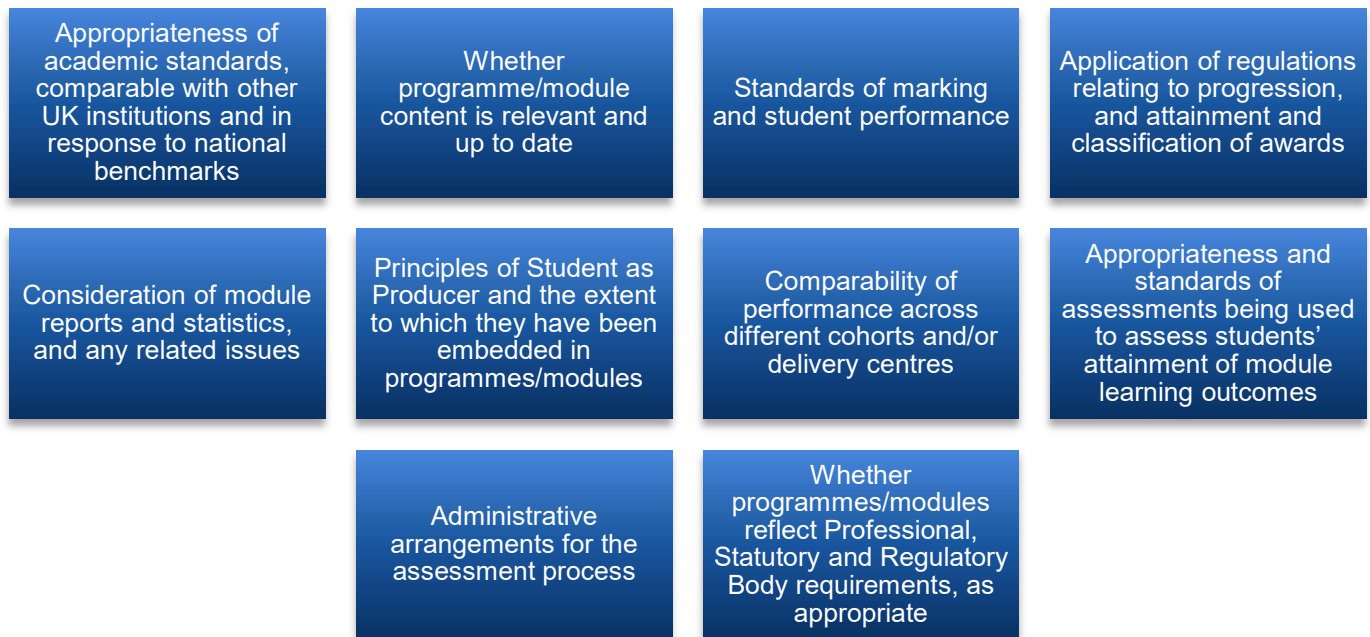
Ensuring all External Examiners submit an annual report

Establishing that reports are fit for purpose and provide enough information to assist Schools and Colleges with the quality assurance and enhancement of their programmes

Wide distribution and consideration of reports throughout the institution, including senior levels of the University

Full discussion of reports at subject/programme level, involving student representatives as appropriate

Consistent use of External Examiners in Examination Boards

Timely and detailed responses to comments raised by External Examiners

The approach to external examining at the University is guided by External Examining Principles developed by the UKSCQA and QAA.

The principles are aimed at supporting the two main stakeholders in the system: individuals performing the role, and the institutions that appoint them. They reiterate the value of appointing External Examiners to work alongside UK institutions, providing confidence for students and the public that the degrees being awarded are a reliable and consistent reflection of graduate attainment. By regularly referring back to this resource, we are able to successfully ensure we remain at all times compliant, and in line with the wider HE sector.

External Examiner Reports

External Examiner reports are the main formal mechanism for submitting feedback to the institution and all External Examiners are required to submit a report to the University on an annual basis. The University expects to receive these reports within one month of the final meeting of the relevant Board of Examiners, via the online reporting system APMS/Worktribe.

External Examiners should offer critical and constructive comment on (as appropriate to the individual External Examiner's remit):

Appropriateness of academic standards, comparable with other UK institutions and in response to national benchmarks	Whether programme/module content is relevant and up to date	Standards of marking and student performance	Application of regulations relating to progression, and attainment and classification of awards
Consideration of module reports and statistics, and any related issues	Principles of Student as Producer and the extent to which they have been embedded in programmes/modules	Comparability of performance across different cohorts and/or delivery centres	Appropriateness and standards of assessments being used to assess students' attainment of module learning outcomes
	Administrative arrangements for the assessment process	Whether programmes/modules reflect Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body requirements, as appropriate	

The content of the report should have been discussed with the Programme Team so that they are aware of any issues and have the opportunity to address them at the earliest opportunity.

Management of External Examiner Reports

The management of information contained in External Examiner reports is a shared responsibility across the University, so that maximum benefit can be gained from this important resource. The roles of the Office of Quality, Standards and Partnerships, Vice Chancellor's Office, Colleges, and the External Examiners' Committee are summarised below.

Office of Quality, Standards and Partnerships

- Manage the operational processes for External Examining
- Check each report, comment, and approve as fit for the purposes of quality assurance and enhancement
- Respond to Examiners where appropriate.
- Return inadequate reports to Examiners.
- Forward approved reports to Heads of School, Programme Leaders, College administrators and Partner institution contacts
- Require a response from Colleges where appropriate.
- Authorise payment of fees
- Identify issues requiring an early response, and contact the Head of School, following up College responses
- Provide an Annual Overview Report to the External Examiners' Committee
- Provide External Examiner briefing sessions, using these to advise Examiners on completion of their reports and their roles and responsibilities

Vice Chancellor's Office

- Respond to any matters of serious concern raised via confidential report by External Examiners where appropriate.

Colleges

- Circulate reports to relevant colleagues throughout the College, and to Partner institutions where applicable.
- Consider reports in detail at relevant Subject Committees
- Provide an External Examiner Response Report to all Examiners as a formal response to the comments made in the annual report. (Further information on this standardised process can be found here: EERR Guidance)
- Complete Continuous Programme Monitoring (CPM) reports that identify Examiner recommendations and concerns and develop action plans to address them. (Further information on completing CPM reports can be found here: EERR Guidance)
- Confirm that responses to Examiners have been made, through the Continuous Programme Monitoring process.

- Consider summaries of reports at College Academic Board (or delegated body)
- Consider verbal reports from Examiners on quality assurance and enhancement issues relating to individual modules at Boards of Examiners

External Examiners' Committee

- Appoint, on behalf of Academic Board, all External Examiners for the awards of the University
- Ensure that all External Examiner appointments are independent, of sufficient academic standing, and with appropriate expertise
- Ensure that appointed External Examiners are conducting their business appropriately, and to terminate their appointment in accordance with the nomination and appointment guidance
- Consider Annual Overview Reports of all External Examiner reports.
- Ensure that appropriate briefing, training and annual up-dating for appointed External Examiners is properly carried out
- Recommend policy and procedural changes to Academic Affairs Committee and fee changes to the Senior Leadership Team

For further information on the specific role of External Examiners please refer to the University's External Examiner Handbook.