THE NOMINATION, APPOINTMENT, RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS AND THE CONSIDERATION OF THEIR REPORTS

(including procedures for responding to external examiner reports and their contribution to annual monitoring and quality enhancement planning and reporting)

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The Nomination and Appointment of External Examiners

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The Chief External Examiner’s Report form is located at: http://www.bolton.ac.uk/Quality/EEE/ExternalExaminers/Documents/ChiefReportForm.doc
1. The Nomination and Consideration of Proposed External Examiners

Procedures

1.1 All External Examiners proposed for appointment to University courses/programmes (even in those cases where the Validating Body reserves the right of final approval) will require the formal approval of Senate. Until such approval is obtained a proposed Examiner must not undertake any external examining duties for the University and the relevant Assessment Board is not authorised to assess students for the relevant award nor to recommend the conferment of the award upon a student.

1.2 Heads of Schools/Divisions (henceforth referred to as Schools), or their nominees/Programme Leaders will be responsible for submitting proposals to the Standards and Enhancement Administrator (Examinations and External Examiners). In making such nominations they will be required to take account of the criteria specified in paragraph 1.6 below. Advice on the interpretation of the criteria will be provided upon request by the Standards and Enhancement Office.

1.3 The Education Committee’s External Examiners Nominations Sub-committee will scrutinise and consider all external examiner nominations. The Sub-committee will recommend approval of new External Examiners to Senate, refer nominations back to the School, or reject them (giving reasons in both instances). Exceptionally, the Chair of the Sub-committee may take external advice on specific nominations. Chair's action may be taken in individual cases on behalf of the Sub-committee or Senate.

1.4 Proposals for the nomination of External Examiners for newly approved University programmes and for the nomination of replacement Examiners for those Examiners whose terms of office are due to expire, should be made as soon as possible in the academic year prior to that which contains the first examinations/assessments with which the proposed Examiner is to be involved. Ideally, this will be twelve months before the date of the first examinations/assessments with which the External Examiner will be involved. Proposal forms, which must be submitted with a complete academic CV from the nominee, should be completed in full by the School concerned according to the procedures described in:

Proposal forms are available at:
http://www.bolton.ac.uk/Quality/EEE/ExternalExaminers/Documents/EE1.doc

1.5 External Examiners will normally be approved for four calendar years or four successive cohorts of students, whichever is longer. Normally, where assessments take place in the summer term, appointments will run from the October before the first assessment to the September after the last assessment. In certain exceptional circumstances (e.g. to provide continuity during a period of course review and/or modification, or following the introduction of a related new course, or to act as mentor to a new examiner), appointments may be extended for a further 12 months upon consideration by the External Examiners Nominations Subcommittee of a completed application for extension or reallocation of duties http://www.bolton.ac.uk/Quality/EEE/ExternalExaminers/Documents/EE2.doc submitted via the Standards and Enhancement Administrator (Examinations and External Examiners). It will be the responsibility of the Standards and Enhancement Administrator (Examinations & External Examiners) to maintain an up-to-date register of approved External Examiners and to publish this annually to Programme Leaders together with a reminder, at least twelve months before they fall due, of the expiry dates of the terms of office of External Examiners. It will then be the responsibility of Schools to propose new external examiner nominations in accordance with the timescale noted in paragraph 1.4.

Criteria for Appointment

1.6 In approving the appointment of External Examiners, Senate will be seeking to ensure that they are competent and impartial and that Assessment Boards maintain the overall balance and diversity necessary to ensure that students are fairly assessed.

Person Specification

Proposers of external examiner nominations should ensure that there is appropriate evidence of the following:

1. knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality
2. competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study, or parts thereof
3. relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate
4. competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures
5. 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
6. familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed
7. 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)
8. meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies
9. awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula
10. current and recent active involvement in research/scholarly/professional activities in the field of study concerned
11. competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

Conflicts of Interest

External Examiners should be drawn from a wide variety of institutional/professional contexts and traditions in order that the course/programme benefits from wide-ranging external scrutiny. Proposers of External Examiner nominations should however bear in mind that anyone in the following categories or circumstances would not normally be approved:

1. a 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
2. anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme of study
3. anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study
4. anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study
5. 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
6. former staff or students of the University unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the proposed external examiner have completed their programme(s)
7. a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another institution
8. the succession of an external examiner by a colleague from the outgoing examiner’s home department and institution
9. the appointment of more than one external examiner from the same department of an institution
10. an external member of a related Programme Approval/Internal
Subject Review panel, external adviser for the programme, etc (if in any doubt check with the Quality Enhancement Manager).

Terms of Office

1. The duration of an external examiner’s appointment will normally be for four years/outputs, with an exceptional extension of one year, as described in 1.5 above.
2. 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.
3. External examiners normally hold no more than two external examiner appointments for taught programmes/modules at any point in time.
4. There should be an appropriate balance of expertise in the team of External Examiners:
   * The proposed examiner should complement the external examining team in terms of expertise and examining experience.
   * Where appropriate, there should be an appropriate balance between academic and professional practitioners.
   * The range of academic perspectives necessary to the course/programme should be represented in the external examining team.
   * If the course/programme is associated with or may lead to a professional award, at least one practitioner with appropriate experience should be in the team.
   * The external examining experience in the team as a whole must be sufficient and wide-ranging.
   * The phasing of appointments to the team should be structured to ensure continuity.

Chief External Examiners

Chief External Examiners are required for all Final Awards Boards to which are appointed more than one subject module/award external examiner. The approval of the appointment of an External Examiner who is to act in this capacity will be subject to the normal criteria as set out above. They will normally be expected to hold subject module and award external examining duties in addition to their Chief External Examiner duties.

A Chief External Examiner will be responsible for: establishing common conventions for external examiners involved in different subject areas; considering and approving general changes to programme-specific examination regulations and procedures; co-ordinating the views of relevant external examiners on matters of examination and assessment; attending interim, resit and final Assessment Boards as appropriate and approving their proceedings. The University requires each off-campus collaborative partnership centre to be visited by at least one External
Examiner (with responsibilities encompassing the relevant centre) at least once every four years. The Chief External Examiner would normally be asked, if applicable, to help meet this requirement.

1.7 **Appointment of Mentors for External Examiners new to external examining**

The University’s criteria for appointment of External Examiners allow for examiners to be drawn from a wide variety of institutional, professional/industrial contexts and from PSRBs so that, where appropriate, there is an appropriate balance between academic and professional practitioners. In approving the appointment of External Examiners, Senate will be seeking to ensure that they are competent to undertake their duties and have enough recent external examining or comparable related experience to indicate competence in assessing students in the subject area.

The Quality Assurance Agency Quality Code (Chapter B7 - External Examining, published in December 2011) indicates that where an inexperienced External Examiner is appointed institutions may wish to consider appointing an experienced External Examiner as a mentor to provide advice and guidance.

**Appointment of Inexperienced External Examiners**

Where possible, an inexperienced External Examiner should be appointed to a team of experienced examiners within a subject area, with a suitable mentor, normally the Chief External Examiner for the subject area, being identified within the team. If this is not possible an appropriate mentor should be identified from a different subject area.

Guidance on the nomination of mentors is given below.

**Nomination of mentors**

When nominating inexperienced External Examiners, Schools should give due consideration to the identification of satisfactory mentoring arrangements, including the nomination of an appropriate mentor.

A mentor, will normally be a Chief External Examiner within the same School as the proposed new External Examiner, and should:

- currently be an examiner at the University;
- have produced satisfactory External Examiner reports (one or more) for the University;
- have recent experience of working in Higher Education in the UK.

Experienced External Examiners who have agreed to be mentors should be nominated through completion of the form EE2 which, following signature by the proposed mentor, should be submitted via the Standards
and Enhancement Administrator (Examinations and External Examiners) to the External Examiners Nomination Sub-Committee for consideration.

**Duties of mentors**

While the precise details of what will be covered during the mentoring period may differ depending on individual circumstances the provision of advice and guidance is the general role of the mentor. The list of key topics given below should not be regarded as exhaustive but discussions may centre around:

- the role of external examiners
- assessment board processes
- the approaches to moderation
- requirements for annual reporting and approaches to this
- sharing of previous reports/drafts for current academic year
- current issues in HE and/or in the subject area which may be relevant
- common scenarios.

There is no requirement for face-to-face meetings of the mentor and the mentee, other than at the time of visits to the University for the assessment board(s) and it is envisaged that most contact will be via e-mail, telephone etc.

On successful completion of the mentoring period (usually 12 months) the mentor should sign Form EEM1 to indicate that she/he is satisfied that there is no further need for mentoring, and return the form to the Standards and Enhancement Administrator (Examinations and External Examiners).

A fee of £50 is payable on completion of the mentoring duties and should be claimed on the External Examiners’ claim form.

2. **Notification of Approval and Conditions of Appointment**

2.1 Once external examiner nominations have been formally approved by Senate, the Standards and Enhancement Administrator (Examinations & External Examiners) will be responsible for notifying individual Examiners of their periods of approval and their terms of appointment. Heads of Schools, Academic Group Co-ordinator (Standards, Enhancement & Learner Experience), Programme Leader and Academic Administration Manager will be notified simultaneously of the appointment so that working relationships can be established quickly and smoothly and Programme Teams will be reminded of their responsibilities in dealing with External Examiners, as outlined in the following paragraphs.

2.2 Each External Examiner will be issued with a letter of appointment, specifying the University’s requirements and expectations and providing information on matters relating to fees, expenses and administrative arrangements. In order to comply with UK Visas and Immigration legislation Senate-approved external examiners must return a signed Acceptance of Appointment form together with a photocopy of their
evidence of legal entitlement to live and work in the UK (eg passport). BEFORE the newly appointed external examiner undertakes any external examining duties they must attend an induction event at which their original identification document will be verified by a member of the Standards & Enhancement team. Guidance on the format of reports and good practice in terms of relationships with Programme Teams and with the University will be provided in accordance with Section 3 of this document.

2.3 In the case of undergraduate and postgraduate modular programmes the relevant assessment regulations, constitution and terms of reference of examination boards, roles of external examiners and operation of assessment boards will be sent to new examiners on appointment by the Standards and Enhancement Administrator (Examinations & External Examiners).

2.4 The letter of appointment and conditions of appointment will embody the following:

2.4.1 Communication between External Examiners and the University

i. External Examiners will be expected to report formally to the University's Senate via the Vice Chancellor, c/o the Quality Enhancement Manager. External Examiner reports are to be completed using the on-line Qualtrack reporting system. A guide to the use of Qualtrack is located at: [http://www.bolton.ac.uk/Quality/EEE/ExternalExaminers/Documents/EEuserGuideFinal.pdf](http://www.bolton.ac.uk/Quality/EEE/ExternalExaminers/Documents/EEuserGuideFinal.pdf)

ii. All fees and expenses claims will be dealt with by the Standards and Enhancement Administrator (Examinations & External Examiners).

2.4.2 Fees and Expenses

The standard annual fee and any supplements to be paid in respect of any additional duties or significant extra workload will be as agreed between the Examiner and the relevant Schools and are detailed in the letter of appointment. All claims and correspondence concerning fees and expenses should be addressed to the Standards and Enhancement Administrator (Examinations & External Examiners), Standards and Enhancement Unit.

i. Hotel and overnight accommodation and subsistence expenses in connection with external examining business will be paid for by the relevant School. The Programme Leader will make the necessary practical arrangements.
ii. Car travel expenses will be paid by the relevant School on the basis of a mileage allowance in accordance with the current rates. Rail travel (standard class rail fare) and other travel expenses will be met on an individual basis as itemised on the claim form.

2.4.3 **Fulfilment of Conditions of Appointment**

All External Examiners will be expected to agree with programme teams an appropriate set of practices for monitoring the standards of student achievement on the Programme for which they are responsible. The practices established between programme teams and External Examiners will be subject to the guidelines laid down in sections 3 and 4 of this document. These practices should include the sampling of student work, attendance at assessment boards and the production of a report for the University on the performance of students and the overall standard of the Programme.

An External Examiner may report directly and confidentially to the Chair of Senate on any matter of serious concern arising from assessments.

If, in the judgement of the Head of School or nominee, it is felt that an External Examiner is failing to discharge her/his duties properly, has demonstrated inappropriate behaviour or a conflict of interest arises which cannot be satisfactorily resolved, then the Head of School or nominee (having first discussed the matter with the Programme Team and the External Examiner) may request that Senate terminate the appointment of an External Examiner before the approved period of office has expired. Such a decision would be taken only in the most exceptional circumstances and would not be related to the academic judgements made by an External Examiner about the standards of assessment on a course/programme.

3. **Notes for Guidance on External Examiners Reports and Relationships with Programme Teams**

**Rights and Responsibilities of External Examiners**

3.1 The rights and responsibilities of Subject Module/Award External Examiners and Chief External Examiners are described in full in section 10 of the Regulations for the Organisation and Conduct of Assessment Boards.

**Responsibilities of Programme Teams with respect to External Examiners**

3.2 Programme Leaders/Heads of Schools or their nominees (as appropriate), will be required to brief External Examiners on the nature of
the programme, examination and assessment arrangements and regulations together with the procedures for ensuring full involvement of the External Examiner in the examination and assessment process. It is the responsibility of the Programme Leader to ensure that this briefing provides as much information as is necessary for the Examiner to function effectively, including where applicable, provision of the previous year's reports to facilitate year-on-year comparability. The Quality Enhancement Manager (or nominee) is to be invited to attend all such briefing meetings to provide information on institutional policies and procedures relating to the External Examiner's role and to verify that the external examiner is eligible to work in the UK. The Standards and Enhancement Administrator (Examinations & External Examiners) will be responsible for monitoring the arrangements for induction meetings made by Schools and for reminding them that the Quality Enhancement Manager (or nominee) must be invited to attend.

Specifically, the following matters should be covered during the initial briefing meeting:

i. the dates of assessment board meetings at which attendance will be required;

ii. the objectives of the Course/Programme, its syllabuses and teaching methods;

iii. the methods of assessment and marking scheme;

iv. the regulations for the scheme including those concerned with compensation for failure and opportunities for reassessment;

v. the possibility of the Examiner being asked, if applicable, to help meet the University’s requirement that each off-campus collaborative partnership centre is visited by at least one External Examiner (with responsibilities encompassing the relevant centre) at least once every four years.

3.3 In addition, programme teams and External Examiners should agree upon the procedures to be used for sampling student work, on the extent of involvement of the External Examiner in the moderation of coursework, formal examinations and other forms of assessment, and on how the Examiner is to be involved if required in consideration of student appeals, mitigating circumstances and academic misconduct. Programme Leaders are responsible for ensuring that External Examiners receive work for appraisal in good time for moderation before a Board.

**External Examiner Reports**

3.4 The purpose of an External Examiner's report is to enable the University to judge whether a programme is meeting its stated objectives and to draw the attention of the programme team and the University to matters
of good practice or issues which might require further attention. Reports are published to current students and staff on the University’s intranet site to help disseminate findings to relevant parties. External Examiners are free to comment on any issues affecting student performance on which they see fit. **THEY SHOULD HOWEVER, NEVER MENTION INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS OR STAFF BY NAME IN PUBLISHED REPORTS.** If they feel it necessary, an External Examiner may send a separate confidential report on a student or member of staff to the Chair of the Assessment Board. The University asks its External Examiners to make use of a standard, proforma online report form for their reports. Reports should cover at least the points included on the proforma, as follows:

(i) whether the University is maintaining the threshold academic standards set for its awards in accordance with the frameworks for higher education qualifications, applicable subject benchmark statements and institutional programme specifications;

(ii) whether the University’s assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the programme(s) and is conducted in line with the University’s policies and regulations;

(iii) whether the academic standards and the achievements of students, in programmes delivered at the University or through collaborative arrangements, are comparable with those in other UK higher education institutions, of which the External Examiner has experience;

(iv) the External Examiner’s views on whether the assessments are set at the appropriate level and are in-line with the relevant learning outcomes

(v) the External Examiner’s views on the quality of the students’ learning experience (including provision of student support and guidance as well as teaching and learning resources) is appropriate and satisfactory;

(vi) the levels of student achievement are appropriate and satisfactory;

(vii) with regards to the quality of provision and student learning experience, comments on good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessments observed;

(viii) with regards to the quality of provision and student learning experience, comments on opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students;

(ix) whether the External Examiner received a suitable response to the comments made in their previous report (where applicable);
(x) whether any issues specifically required by the relevant professional body (where applicable) had been addressed;

(xi) an overview of the External Examiner’s term of office if this is their final report.

Chief External Examiners are also asked to comment from their particular perspective on the following:

(i) whether the University is maintaining the threshold academic standards set for its awards in accordance with the frameworks for higher education qualifications and applicable subject benchmark statements;

(ii) whether the academic standards and the achievements of students are comparable with those in other UK higher education institutions with which the Examiner is familiar;

(iii) whether the University’s assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the programme(s) and is conducted in line with University’s policies and regulations;

(iv) whether the standards set are appropriate for the awards or award elements assigned to the Board, by reference to published national subject benchmarks, the national Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and the University’s programme specifications;

(v) the Chief External Examiner’s view on whether the standards of student performance in the programmes examined are comparable with the standards of similar programmes or parts of programmes in other UK higher education institutions with which they are familiar;

(vi) the appropriateness of the assessments in assessing the learning outcomes of the units, the reliability of internal marking procedures and the effectiveness of the moderation processes;

(vii) whether the Chief External Examiner was satisfied that any previous comments had been noted and responded to;

(viii) whether any issues specifically required by the relevant professional body (where applicable) had been addressed;

(ix) an overview of the Chief External Examiner's term of office if this is their final report.
3.5 All External Examiners’ reports should be submitted on-line via the Qualtrack system so that a central record can be maintained of their receipt and any issues can be referred as appropriate. Following scrutiny of all reports by the Quality Enhancement Manager reports will be made available to the appropriate University, School and other relevant personnel so that any action can be taken on the report’s recommendations. Senate expects to receive assurance that the reports of External Examiners have been scrutinised and items which require action by members of the Programme team, Heads of Schools or the University's senior management and others are being actioned as necessary. This task will be carried out at a detailed level by School Boards (or equivalent) and associated post-holders. School Boards send their minutes to Education Committee. Urgent matters raised by External Examiners are the subject of separate correspondence amongst relevant University officers, as described below, whilst a summative report on the issues raised is produced by the Standards and Enhancement Unit for consideration by Education Committee and Senate.

4. Consideration of External Examiners’ Reports and Follow-Up Action

Introduction

4.1 The following statement provides details of the agreed procedures for dealing with External Examiner reports once they are received by the University and for incorporating the consideration of reports and follow-up action within the University’s general academic quality assurance mechanisms.

4.2 Circulation of Reports

Reports are received in the Standards and Enhancement Unit and made available, via Qualtrack, as follows:

- Assistant Vice Chancellor (Academic)
- Assistant Vice Chancellor (Quality)
- Head of School
- Academic Group Co-ordinators (SELE) and (Student Recruitment and Retention),
- Programme Leader
- Other University post-holders, as deemed appropriate by the Quality Enhancement Manager
- Principal/Head of organisation for collaborative provision.

4.3 Identification of issues to be addressed and items of Good Practice

Reports are considered by the Programme Leader and/or the Academic Group Co-ordinator (SELE). Issues to be addressed and/or items of good practice, which are raised within reports, are inputted by the Programme Leader and/or the Academic Group Co-ordinator (SELE) as
appropriate on the University’s Qualtrack system, which generates Programme Quality Enhancement Plan items.

**Urgent Action/Vice Chancellor’s Office Involvement**

4.4 Aspects in reports which give rise to serious concern and demand immediate attention will be raised by the Quality Enhancement Manager as urgent items on the University’s Qualtrack system. Such items will be the subject of a note from the Quality Enhancement Manager. The note will identify responsibility for making a response and this individual will normally write to the External Examiner concerned, giving assurances that action is being taken. Copies of this correspondence must be sent to the Quality Enhancement Manager for approval before being sent to the External Examiner, the Standards and Enhancement Administrator (Examinations and External Examiners) and to all other post-holders in receipt of the report, as identified by the proforma circulation list. University Senior Managers may also ask independently for a response to these and/or other concerns which in their view require immediate action.

4.5 The action necessary to deal with such reports must be initiated immediately. There may be unavoidable delays in making a full response due to the need to consult others and undertake investigative work. However, an indication of the action being taken must be provided in a prompt reply from the recipient, as indicated on the Qualtrack PQEP report. The Standards and Enhancement Administrator (Examinations & External Examiners) will maintain a record of the correspondence relating to 'urgent action' and will issue reminders as appropriate where responses have not been forthcoming.

4.6 University Senior Managers may discuss the issues and responses arising from such reports with relevant School post-holders and the Quality Enhancement Manager. They may require additional evidence that the issues and concerns raised by the External Examiner are being/have been satisfactorily addressed.

**Routine Actions**

**School Management and Committees (Heads of Schools, Academic Coordinators (SELE), School Boards, or equivalent)**

4.7 Programme Leaders will use their judgement to solicit further action in response to External Examiner reports. Any actions will also be added to the Qualtrack system.

**Quality Enhancement Manager**

4.8 The role of the Quality Enhancement Manager in monitoring issues of serious concern raised in External Examiner reports has been outlined above (see 'Urgent Action'). The Quality Enhancement Manager or
nominee will also have read and routinely commented upon all External Examiner reports and will arrange for the production by the end of December each year of an Annual Overview Report on External Examiner reports for Education Committee and Senate. This report and agreed actions arising will help to inform quality assurance and enhancement planning, professional development for staff and changes to procedures and practices at Programme, School and University levels as appropriate.

**Education Committee**

4.9 Education Committee will receive and consider the minutes of School Boards or equivalent and any separate School reports on their external examiner reports, which will identify the significant and/or common enhancement issues arising within each School.

4.10 The Committee will receive and consider the Annual Overview Report on External Examiner Reports, which provides a more analytical account of the evidence from External Examiners’ reports relevant to the maintenance and enhancement of standards and quality. This report will summarise matters which have been raised in External Examiner reports, thus ensuring that appropriate synthesis occurs at University level. It will also identify appropriate enhancement activity.

4.11 The role of Education Committee is to contribute to discussion and agreement of action in response to the major issues raised in external examiner reports across the University, through consideration of the various School and University reports. It also takes account of a range of other inputs, both internal and external, to gain an overview of the main academic standards and quality enhancement issues which the University needs to address, placed in the context of the year’s achievements.

**Senate**

4.12 Senate receives and considers the Annual Overview Report on External Examiner reports, as well as the minutes of Education Committee and School Boards. Senate will determine what action needs to be taken to reinforce and/or supplement that identified in the Annual Report and by Education Committee and School Boards.

**Programme Leaders and Committees**

4.13 Programme Leaders will be required to respond to urgent issues of concern requiring immediate attention brought to their notice by the Quality Enhancement Manager and/or Assistant Vice Chancellors.

4.14 Programme Leaders will also be required to respond to any other routine issues brought to their notice by the Quality Enhancement Manager and others.
4.15 Any significant action points will be included in the Programme Plan which is first reviewed and discussed at a Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC). Plans are also scrutinised by the School Quality Standing Panel which reports to the School Board.

4.16 Programme Plans feed into the relevant Subject Annual Self-Evaluation Report (SASER), as well as School Quality Enhancement Plan. School Plans, in turn, inform the University Quality Enhancement Plan.

4.17 To ensure that External Examiners appreciate that their reports are treated seriously and dealt with appropriately, **Programme Leaders should correspond with their External Examiner to inform them of the action taken in response to matters raised within their report**, including clear reasons for not accepting any recommendations or suggestions. As an effective means of meeting this requirement, Programme Leaders should provide their External Examiner(s) with a copy of relevant Qualtrack action items together with a covering letter. There should also, be a continuing dialogue between Programme Teams and their External Examiner(s) about progress in relation to matters raised in reports.
Summary of Procedures for the Consideration of External Examiner Reports and Follow-up Action

1. **(within 4 weeks of the Assessment Board)** reports are submitted to Qualtack and accepted by the Standards and Enhancement Office (SEO).

2. **The Quality Enhancement Manager or nominee notes any matters of serious concern and any University-wide issues** which require urgent action by identified post-holders.

3. The Standards and Enhancement Administrator (Examinations & External Examiners) copies all reports on collaborative provision to the Principal/Head of Institution for collaborative partners.

4. The Quality Enhancement Manager inputs aspects of serious/urgent concern to the Qualtrack system, and requests that urgent action be taken by the Subject/Programme Leader. Such requests are copied to the Assistant Vice Chancellor (Quality), Heads of Schools, Academic Group Co-ordinators, Programme Leaders, as well as the Principal/Head of Institution for collaborative partners and others as appropriate.

5. **A response** indicating what action has been taken to address any matters of serious concern and what further action is intended, is sent to the Quality Enhancement Manager for approval before being sent to the External Examiner by the identified post-holder and copied to the Quality Enhancement Manager and the other post-holders listed in 4 above. Response may include statements made by others inside or outside the School with particular responsibilities encompassing the provision. All correspondence relating to matters of serious concern is monitored and logged in the SEO by the Standards and Enhancement Administrator (Examinations & External Examiners).

6. **(by mid/end October)** Programme Leaders input routine and good practice aspects to the Qualtrack system with progress made. Any serious and routine items, which are considered “Significant Action Points” are added to the Programme Plan, alongside any other evidence and actions.

7. **(by the end of November)** External Examiners Reports are considered by SSLCs, alongside Programme Plans.

8. **(by end of November)** the Standards and Enhancement Administrator (Examinations and External Examiners) publishes External Examiners’ reports to the University’s intranet.

9. **(by end of November)** Programme Leaders correspond with the External Examiners informing them of the action taken in response to matters raised within their report, including clear reasons for not accepting any recommendations or suggestions.
10. (by the end of November) External Examiners Reports (alongside Programme Plans) are scrutinised by **School Quality Standing Panels** which report to the relevant School Boards. Where points raised by External Examiners are disputed, or it is otherwise determined that action is not required, these must be discussed in the Standing Panel. Any urgent action points should also be discussed and strategies evaluated.

11. (by the end of November) **Designated post-holders produce Subject Annual Self Evaluation Reports** (SASERs) drawing on a range of inputs, including External Examiner reports and Programme Plans. SASERs are then scrutinised by School Quality Standing Panels which report to the relevant School Boards. SASERs inform School Quality Enhancement Plans which in turn inform the University Enhancement Plan.

12. (by the end of December) **Standards and Enhancement Office produces Annual Overview Report on External Examiner reports**. Annual Overview Report is considered by Education Committee (whose minutes are received by Senate) and by Senate itself. Both of these bodies will determine what action needs to be taken to reinforce and/or supplement that identified in the Annual Overview Report, also bearing in mind their continual monitoring of issues raised and actions taken and/or intended through their consideration of minutes and reports received from their sub-committees and boards and elsewhere.