



A Guide to External Examiner Report Writing

As an External Examiner it is your job to offer an independent assessment of the quality of academic and practice assessment standards for the programme at University College Birmingham.

It is an opportunity to be a critical friend to us and identify our strengths, weaknesses, areas of good practice and opportunities for improvement. Through your written report you will provide feedback to the teaching team and institution on the overall judgement of student performance and the quality and standards of the programme in terms of theory and practice and student progression.

Given that the reports are the heart of quality assurance it is very important they are robust and strongly evidence-based. Short and sketchy reports are unhelpful to everyone as there will be a lack of evidence to support claims for high quality and standards, and in programmes where there are issues to be addressed, these will be allowed to continue to the detriment of students. Please also bear in mind that reports will be shared with student representatives and more generally with students on the programme on request. The wording of reports must be carefully chosen in the light of the multiple audiences: staff, students, UCB senior staff and relevant external bodies.

The UK Quality Code, has indicators that set out the core content of the External Examiner's report:

- The comparability of threshold academic standards between modules within a course and between different courses in different institutions. (If this is your first external examiner role you would compare these with your own institution).
- The alignment of outcomes, how coherent the programme is and whether it achieves the standards appropriate to the programme;
- The fairness and rigour of the assessment process;
- Possibilities for enhancement

In addition to the above we seek comment and opinion from you on student performance and achievement and the quality of the programme. Consequently, your report should also provide detailed comment on:

- Review draft assessment briefs and examination papers at the beginning of each academic year and comment on the appropriateness, clarity and rigour of assessment design for theory and practice assessments.
- Review the admissions process in line with Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).
- Attend twice a year for student meetings, academic staff meetings, meetings with practice partners, examination boards and viewing student work.
- Provide judgement and recommendations on subject content and whether assessment of practice measures student achievement against learning outcomes and standards of proficiency in the context of the relevant regulations, Subject Benchmarks and sector norms.
- Submit an annual report to help ensure academic standards and student achievement are comparable with other UK Higher Education Institutions of which the Examiner has experience.
- Provide guidance and expertise to the programme team as required.

Should you wish to make comment on individual modules, please could you ensure that you have indicated the module by using the full title and/or module code. Please use Question 3a or 3b on the report template.

If External Examiners submit an inadequate report we may politely request a more comprehensive report in future. Those that persist in submitting poor reports or no report at all, may have their contract terminated.

We hope that you enjoy your time at UCB as External Examiner.

Joanne Reid
Assessment & External Examinations Officer
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