**UNIVERSITY of CUMBRIA ACADEMIC PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES**

**APPENDIX 4e**

**Reporting procedures for External Examiners**

**Reporting procedures for External Examiners**

### 1. External Examiner's Report

1.1 The University attaches great significance to and values greatly the annual reports of External Examiners as they form a vital part of the documentation used within its Quality Assurance Process as the attached flow chart shows. Relevant staff, including those at a senior level, read all reports carefully and give serious consideration to all issues raised. Reports are made available to students through programme Blackboard sites. The University seeks to ensure that appropriate action is taken and that the feedback/quality loop is closed. All External Examiners are advised of the action taken.

### 2. Completion and submission of the Annual Report

2.1 **Format and content of the Report**

2.1.1 External Examiners are asked to complete the annual report critically but fairly using the template and bearing in mind the points listed below. The report is for the University's use and consists of sections on the following with points to be commented on in each.

  i. The academic standards demonstrated by the students and where possible their performance in relation to students on comparable courses

  ii. The extent to which standards are appropriate for the award

  iii. Opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students

  iv. Good practice and innovation regarding teaching, learning and assessment observed by the External Examiner

  v. Organisation and arrangements in the assessment process

  vi. Other comments

2.1.2 External Examiners for franchised Collaborative Programmes are asked to comment on each collaborative partner within the context of their report.

2.1.3 In their final report (ie in the final year of appointment), External Examiners are asked to include in it an overview on the progress that has been made during their period of the office. This information will also serve to inform the incoming External Examiner about the developments during the previous period review. Points on which the External Examiner can base their report are listed on the template.

2.1.4 If an External Examiner has serious concerns arising from the assessment process which put at risk the standards of the University or any relevant external awarding body, these must be raised with the Chair of the Module Assessment Board (by Subject External Examiners) or the chair of the University Assessment Board (by Award External Examiners) in the first instance. Should an External Examiner wish to raise matters of particular importance or sensitivity, this can be done by way of a separate, confidential report addressed to the Vice Chancellor.

## 2.2 Submitting the Report

2.2.1 The fully completed reports must be returned via email to the Academic Quality and Development Service by 31 July or **within six weeks of the Assessment Board**. Payment of External Examiners fees will be conditional upon completion of the report.

## 2.3 Use within the University

2.3.1 As explained above, the External Examiner's report is an important part of the University's quality assurance process. In preparing their reports, External Examiners are protected by qualified privilege[1] so the views expressed are the Examiners and not those held by anyone else.

2.3.2 The Examiner retains the copyright of the report but the University is entitled to use the report by way of implied licence. This may include publishing in part or whole.

2.3.3 External examiners should be aware that under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2005 the University is required to publish all information (not covered by exemption) if requested. In view of this it is important that External Examiners do not include in their report any reference to individuals by name.

2.3.4 External Examiner reports will be shared with students (with the exception of confidential reports).

2.3.5 External Examiners will be made aware that under the requirements of the Data Protection Act students can request a copy of any comments made on their scripts, or any reports made by External Examiners on their work, and if requested the University will be required to provide this information.

## 3. Guidelines for completion

3.1 The following points should be borne in mind when completing the report

   i.    No individual student or member of staff should be identified by name

   ii.   The format of the report templates should not be altered in any way

   iii.  Joint reports from External Examiners are not acceptable as the University prefers independent views to be expressed

   iv.   In line with Section B7 of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, External Examiner reports will, with effect from September 2012, be shared with students through programme level Blackboard sites. The AQD service undertakes checks of all reports prior to publication to ensure that there are no inadvertent breaches of confidentiality.

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[1] **Explained in HEFCE 'Information on quality and standards in higher education: final guidance' (annex g) available at http://www.hefce.ac.uk/Pubs/hefce/2003/03_51/**

## 4. Responding to the Report

### 4.1 Subject Examiners

4.1.1 The Programme Leader shall be required to provide a full and considered formal response to the Subject External Examiner's report. Responses are required to provide detail of any actions resulting from reports, or reasons for not taking action. Responses are required to be shared with relevant staff.

4.1.2 In the case of franchised collaborative provision, the University Programme Leader shall be responsible for responding to the Subject Examiner's report, with input from the Partner Programme Leader. In the case of validated collaborative provision the Partner Programme Leader shall be responsible for responding to the report and this must be approved by the linked University Programme Leader.

4.1.3 All responses must be provided to the Academic Quality and Development Service who will ensure that the response is sent to the External Examiner in line with agreed protocols. The report and response will be shared by the Programme Leader with relevant staff and will feed in to the University's annual monitoring processes. Subject External Examiner's reports should be shared with students through Blackboard sites.

### 4.2 Award Examiners

The Director of AQD shall be required to respond formally to Award External Examiners reports. The Academic Quality and Development Service will ensure that responses are sent to External Examiners in line with agreed protocols. The reports and responses will feed in to the University's annual summary of External Examiner reports considered by SSQAC.

### 4.3 Confidential Reports to the Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor shall respond to any confidential reports submitted to the University.

## 5. Review of the process

5.1 This process will be reviewed regularly taking account of best practice and Sector policy.

**External Examiner Reports & University Quality Assurance and Enhancement Processes**

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│ version of EE    │◄│ Development Service      │►│ (if applicable) sent │
│ Report is posted │ │ University of Cumbria    │ │ to Vice Chancellor   │
│ on Programme     │ └─────────────────────────┘ └──────────────────────┘
│ level Blackboard │           │                                │
│ site (see        │           ▼                                │
│ 3.1(iv) above)   │ ┌─────────────────────────┐               │
└──────────────────┘ │ Programme Leader         │               │
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│ QA Manager       │◄│ Lecturer, QA Manager &   │               │
│ reviews all      │ │ CP Manager)              │               │
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│ of External      │ ┌─────────────────────────┐ ┌───────────┐ │
│ Examiners        │ │ Programme Leader's       │ │    AQD    │─┘
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│ Dean for Student │           │
│ Success and/or   │           ▼
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