

# External Examiners Handbook

Academic Quality and Development  
October 2023



## Introduction and Thanks

Thank you for agreeing to undertake the role of being an External Examiner here at the University of Cumbria.

Your external examining role will play an important part in providing one of the principal means for maintaining nationally comparable standards within independent higher education institutions. It will contribute to the enhancement and development of our programmes and provide an external process for monitoring fair practice in the assessment of students' academic performance.

This handbook should provide assistance in your role and responsibilities as an External Examiner, and it supplements the University's policies on external examining for taught programmes. It provides key information about:

- your main contacts
- the main aspects of your appointment, including your role and responsibilities
- operation of assessment boards
- how to book accommodation
- your annual report
- how to submit your claims

Other useful sources of information are as follows:

QAA Quality Code – [External Expertise](#)  
Advance HE '[Fundamentals of External Examining](#)' (Mar 2019)  
UoC On-line Student Handbook available [here](#)

Your contact details are held by the University in accordance with the Privacy Notice statement which can be found on our webpage [here](#).

If there are any changes to your contact details please inform [externalexaminers@cumbria.ac.uk](mailto:externalexaminers@cumbria.ac.uk) so that we can ensure the accuracy of information held.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Quality and Standards Office at: [externalexaminers@cumbria.ac.uk](mailto:externalexaminers@cumbria.ac.uk)

## Contact Information

Please contact us if you require further information or clarification about any aspect of your appointment

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**Address:** Quality and Standards, Academic Registry, University of Cumbria, Bowerham Road, Lancaster, LA1 3JD

**email:** General Enquiries (eg appointment, reports, fees, expenses)  
to: [externalexaminers@cumbria.ac.uk](mailto:externalexaminers@cumbria.ac.uk)

**For Assessment Board queries contact:** [assessment@cumbria.ac.uk](mailto:assessment@cumbria.ac.uk)

### Website

The University of Cumbria has an external examiners page on the University website to support its external examiners, which can be accessed via: [www.cumbria.ac.uk/externalexaminers](http://www.cumbria.ac.uk/externalexaminers)

Information includes on-line Induction presentations, links to [Academic Regulations](#) and Academic Procedures and Processes, report templates and fee and expenses claim forms.

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## SECTION 1

# Information about the University of Cumbria

### 1.1 The University

The University of Cumbria (UoC) was formed on 1 August 2007 formally, from an amalgamation of St Martin's College, Cumbria Institute of the Arts, and the Cumbrian campuses of the University of Central Lancashire. The University has campuses in Carlisle, Ambleside, Lancaster, Barrow and London. The University also has strong links and close partnership working with a variety of partners locally, nationally and internationally. In July 2017, the Lake District was awarded UNESCO World Heritage status in recognition of its unique location, landscape and heritage. This development gives UoC a unique selling point as being not only a university with a campus within a national park, but one with campuses in two World Heritage sites (Brampton Road being within the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site).

The University offers a very high-quality learning experience in a supportive environment which enables students to achieve their personal and professional potential wherever they study. It is committed to learning which is innovative, flexible and student centred, and which utilises the latest technology. The University also works closely with employers, schools, colleges and agencies in the region to offer research, scholarship and knowledge transfer excellence, which shapes and supports social, cultural and economic development in support of the inclusion of sustainable communities' agenda. In so doing, the University of Cumbria recognises that its students are a mix of full and part-time, young and mature, vocational and scholastic, who access Higher Education for a variety of reasons, yet it celebrates that its graduates will be creative, enterprising, resourceful, and equipped to lead in their fields and in their communities. External Examiners are encouraged to seek opportunities to meet with students as part of their engagement with the University. Opportunities for this may be coordinated alongside attendance for Assessment Boards, placement visits, introductory visits etc.

The University's [Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy](#) embeds the University's *Graduate Attributes* as a mechanism for ensuring that students completing a programme of study at the University are provided with the skills and knowledge relevant to the global workplace. As a result of their studies, University of Cumbria students will become:

- Enquiring and open to change
- Self-reliant, adaptable and flexible
- Confident in their discipline as it develops and changes over time
- Capable of working across disciplines and working well with others
- Confident in their digital capabilities
- Able to manage their own professional and personal development

- Global citizens, socially responsible and aware of the potential contribution of their work to the cultural and economic wellbeing of the community and its impact on the environment
- Leaders of people and of places
- Ambitious and proud

### **1.2 University's Academic Structure**

The University has four Institutes:

- Institute of Business, Industry and Leadership
- Institute of Education, Arts & Society
- Institute of Health
- Institute of Science & Environment
- Institute of Computing and Manufacturing

### **1.3 The Academic Registry**

- Admissions
- Assessment, Awards & Compliance
- Programme Administration
- Student Data & System Management
- Quality and Standards
- Apprenticeships

The Academic Registry was formed 2023 combining different services across the University. The Academic Registry provides professional, efficient and effective education and student administrative services from programme Initiation to Graduation.

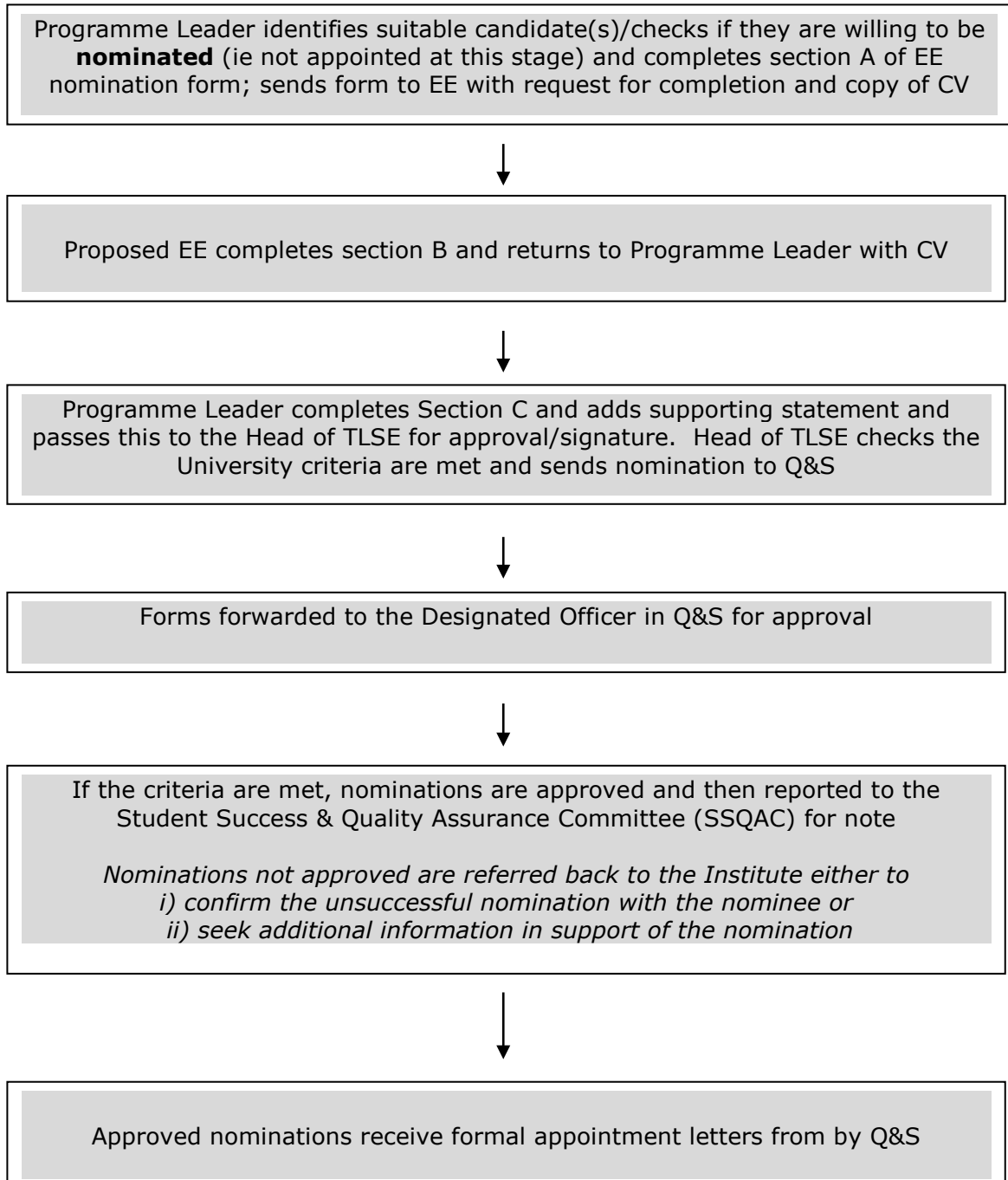
### **1.4 Academic Quality and Development Service**

The Quality and Standards team manage the University's quality assurance mechanisms. Whilst many QA processes are devolved to Institutes, Q&S maintains an overview and works with colleagues across the institution to ensure baseline standards are met, and that practice is enhanced.



## Section 2 - Selection, appointment and period of service

### Flow chart of the procedure for appointing External Examiners



## 2.1 Appointment

Following formal approval, External Examiners receive their letter of appointment from the Quality Assurance Manager to whom they confirm their acceptance of the appointment. This is normally for a four-year period of office, running from 1 October to 30 September (an External Examiner may be required to engage in the days prior to formal appointment e.g. for programme level induction purposes, or alternatively in the days following formal conclusion of appointment e.g. if there are outstanding elements of external moderation). In very exceptional circumstances, appointments can be extended for a further year.

**Please note:** In certain cases, (typically following validation), changes to your remit may become necessary at a future point to incorporate any new adopting programmes. In practice, this simply means recognising that some of the modules within your remit are also 'adopted' by other programmes. This is in line with University policy to maximise efficiency of resources and to ensure that modules are not unnecessarily duplicated. You will be notified about these changes should this become necessary.

As detailed in your appointment letter, it is essential that we are kept informed of any changes in your circumstances, such as those to name, position or institution and would ask that you inform us of these together with any changes to your contact details when they occur.

### Mentoring

Occasionally individuals with little (or no) previous external examining experience are appointed. They are often supported by a **mentor** who is normally from the team of External Examiners in a cognate subject area.

The duties of the mentor vary according to the needs of the appointee but could include:

- Establishing contact with the mentee External Examiner and acting as the first point of contact
- Providing information and advice about current issues in HE and the discipline (where appropriate) that are relevant to external examining
- Advising on approaches to moderation, including applying criteria, assessing consistency of marking, sampling across grade boundaries, dealing with borderlines/fails (particularly for External Examiners from non-HEI settings)
- Moderation across sites (and across collaborative partner delivery where necessary)
- Advising on dealing with draft examination papers, coursework titles, assessing the appropriateness of questions for coverage of learning outcomes/topics, rigour, ambiguity, level of challenge
- Advising on assessment processes within professional contexts
- Advising on the process for approving new or modified modules (minor change)
- Advising on the role and perspective of the External Examiner in Boards (in relation to moderation, extenuating circumstances, malpractice as appropriate), and common scenarios that arise at Assessment Boards
- Advising on the context and appropriate content of verbal and written reports
- Clarifying details, providing support, building confidence, reassuring



- Shadowing in an assessment board
- Mentors are required to submit a short report at the end of the mentoring period. The template is available on the website page

### Collaborative Provision

External Examiners may be appointed to a programme that is being delivered by a collaborative partner of the University, or alternatively a programme that is being run as a franchised delivery with a partner. The University will advise you that this is the case. It would be expected that you would visit the partner during your tenure and the Programme Leader will talk to you about any such arrangements. Assessment moderation will include samples from each delivery venue.

In addition, the annual report template asks you to identify, separately, any issues relating to delivery at specific collaborative provision partner sites. Please use this as an opportunity to comment on comparability of standards and the quality of learning opportunities between students studying at the University and at the partner(s).

### Apprenticeship Provision

If your remit includes an Apprenticeship programme, this will be made clear in your letter of appointment. If this is the case, additional information will be provided to you on what your responsibilities will cover (also see the [Summary Guide for External Examiners](#) on our website). In addition, there are specific questions in the annual report relating to Apprenticeship provision.

### Nursing & Midwifery Provision

If your appointment involves a programme that is accredited by the Nursing and Midwifery Council involving practice learning, the following additional elements will need to be reviewed as part of your tenure, and also commentary will be required in your annual report on:

- The quality of learning opportunities afforded by the student placement (where applicable)
- Feedback from practice partners
- Feedback from students on placement

## **2.2 Preliminary information**

The following information will be provided to all new External Examiners prior to the commencement of duties:

### [i] From the **Programme Leader**

- Programme handbook
- Programme specification
- Module guides (as relevant)
- Module descriptors (as relevant)
- Details of the assessment and moderation process
- Contact details of other members of the examining team
- Copy of the previous External Examiner Report
- Programme leader's annual monitoring report (AMR)

### [ii] From the **Assessment Team**

- Quality Enhancement Board invites.

### [iii] From **Quality and Standards**

- a letter of appointment (detailing relevant modules within remit)

- a link to a series of on-line induction presentations
- contact information
- a summary guide providing key University contacts and responsibilities is available on the website
- a summary guide of EE responsibilities
- [Academic Regulations](#) and Academic Procedures & Processes
- fees and subsistence claim information, including expenses form and detail on travelling to the University and campus maps
- information on the EEs Annual Report
- External Examiners Handbook
- [Student Handbook](#)
- information for continuing External Examiners at the beginning of each academic year concerning any changes made to academic regulations, procedures and processes
- the Annual Summary of External Examiner Reports (in Nov/Dec)

### 2.3 Induction

The University expects all newly appointed External Examiners to engage with the on-line series of induction presentations through which the regulations and University's assessment policy and practice, including familiarisation with the conduct of assessment boards and relevant documentation, are discussed. The **University induction** presentations will cover the following areas in detail:

- Introduction to the University of Cumbria's procedures for external examining
- Introduction to the University of Cumbria's award regulations
- Familiarisation with the procedures for extenuating circumstances
- Aspects relating to annual reports, fees/subsistence claims/hotel reservations etc
- Familiarisation with the system of assessment boards at the University of Cumbria including timing, documentation etc.

It is also essential that a programme-level induction is held between the External Examiner and Programme Leader. The Programme Leader will arrange this with you and the next section provides some detail on what areas should be covered in **programme-level induction**:

- The implications of any QAA subject benchmark statements for the subject to which the examiner is appointed
- The Programme team's approach to marking and moderation
- The number of UoC sites involved
- Clarification on which modules are running during the next academic period
- Clarification on modules which are run at different sites
- Module evaluation process
- Process for sampling of student work (wherever possible by electronic means)
- Guidance on how electronic materials can be accessed (eg programme documentation)
- Introduce Externals to procedures for on-line marking and moderation via Blackboard and Pebblepad
- Opportunities for meeting with students
- Discussion on any changes with regard to the validated programme
- Discussion of the out-going External Examiner Report

- Agreement on protocols for routine communication between the External Examiner and programme leader
- Any opportunities to meet other External Examiners (where relevant)
- Arrange a schedule of work for the External Examiner for the first year of appointment which allows the external to carry out a moderation and evaluation of the assessment scheme in operation

In addition, **for programmes with collaborative provision:**

- The number of UoC, and partner, sites involved
- Familiarisation with any collaborative partnerships (and clarification of University/Partner programme leads)
- Opportunities to visit partner sites
- Clarification on modules which are run at different sites, and/or by collaborative partners
- An induction presentation is available on our website for External Examiners involved in collaborative provision

In addition, **for programmes involving Apprenticeships:**

- Detail of the Apprenticeship and employers involved
- Detail relating to the Apprenticeship Standard, Assessment Plan a End Point Assessment (and whether this is integrated or non-integrated)
- Detail on how tripartite reviews (TPRs) will operate
- Detail on how knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) are addressed throughout the apprenticeship

The normal tenure of appointment is four years (1 October to 30 September). Where an External Examiner needs to resign from their appointment (eg for personal reasons), the resignation should preferably take place at the end of the academic year, but in any event, at least 3 months' notice is required (Regs Appendix 4).

## **SECTION 3 - Principles and procedures for the practice of external examining of taught undergraduate and postgraduate courses.**

### **3.1 Purpose**

The purposes of the external examining system are:

- to ensure that all awards of the University meet the standards expected by the University and the standards of similar awards elsewhere. Such verification of standards will require reference to national subject benchmarks, national qualifications framework as well as University programme specifications and marking criteria.
- to ensure the effectiveness of the University's academic regulations, assessment processes and procedures and their fair application to the cases of individual students.
- where appropriate to ensure that the accreditation requirements of any professional or statutory body are met.

### **3.2 Roles and Duties of External Examiners**

**Subject External Examiners** are appointed within a modular system to comment on assessment practices at Module level. Full detail on the role and responsibilities of External Examiners can be found in Appendix 4 of the Academic Regulations.

#### **3.2.1 Categories of External Examiners**

##### **a) Subject External Examiner**

All **Subject External Examiners** are responsible for a set of modules, which comprise **either**:

- a cognate subject area, eg English, **or**
- a pathway within a wider subject area, eg Practice Nursing Pathway in BSc (Hons) Specialist Practitioner, **or**
- a set of modules which may occur across more than one degree or award, eg Anatomy, Physiology, Pharmacology modules (which may be shared and accessed by a range of degrees).

##### **b) Chief External Examiner**

**Chief External Examiners** will have a role in helping the institution to ensure that the assessment processes are sound, fairly operated and in line with the institution's policies and procedures.

The Chief External Examiners role is **not** subject related and is to ensure that

- i. through the application of Regulations, standards are maintained at a level comparable with that achieved in similar awards elsewhere in the UK
- ii. procedures are followed in a fair and proper manner with consistency in application of the Regulations and comparability of treatment for students in their interpretation across the University

### 3.2.2 Quality Enhancement Board

External Examiners are required to attend the relevant subject Quality Enhancement Board (QEB). The QEB will provide a forum for the detailed discussion of modules/programmes performance and interrogation of data and trends with an emphasis on quality enhancement. The actual confirmation of module marks will take place prior to the QEB at a Module Confirmation Board. The Assessment Team [assessment@cumbria.ac.uk](mailto:assessment@cumbria.ac.uk) will advise on the dates of the QEBs.

#### **Role:**

The role of **External Examiners** at QEBs is to:

- Consider module/programme performance
- Identify and consider standards issues arising from the assessment exercise and giving particular consideration to failure rates, mean and standard deviation, and identify trends in module activity that may inform assessment practice
- Make appropriate consideration of cross-site parity and identify issues and actions for enhancement
- Refer to the University Progression & Award Board any issues specifically impacting on award or progression outcomes for cohorts of students

#### **Other Duties:**

- To receive and comment on the form and content of intended examination papers for modules as detailed in section 3.2, participating in moderation processes and ensuring that all students are assessed fairly.
- To strengthen quality assurance (programme staff may also discuss coursework assignment titles with External Examiners).
- To have access to all assessed work and to scrutinise samples of work in all assessment modes and at all levels of performance across the full range of marks.
- To receive module assessment marks for all modules before the meeting of the QEB and, on the basis of sampled work, to confirm or make recommendations to the Programme Team for moderation of the marks awarded for each module **on an overall basis.** ([Academic Regulations](#), Appx 3b: Marking and Moderating Procedures describes University procedures for marking and moderation.)
- To contribute to discussions with University staff on the design and operation of assessment and the appropriateness and effectiveness of internal moderation processes (and especially cross-site moderation) for the modules within the remit of the Quality Enhancement Board.
- To meet students, where possible, during visits to the University to gain an appreciation of the quality of the student learning experience.
- To hold oral tests and/or viva-voce examinations where appropriate
- To formally confirm that they are satisfied with the outcomes of Board deliberations (ie marks, recommendations of fails, malpractice)
- To submit an annual report to the AQD on the approved Subject EE report template form (found on the [website](#)), normally by **31**

**July** (or within 6 weeks of the Assessment Board for programmes operating on a non-standard calendar)

### **3.2.3 University Progression & Award Boards (UPABs)**

**Chief External Examiners** attend University Progression & Award Boards.

The **role** of the Chief External Examiner is to ensure that for a designated award

- through the application of regulations, standards are maintained at a level which is comparable with that achieved in similar awards elsewhere in the UK
- there is parity of treatment for students in the interpretation of regulations and with regard to precedents.

#### **Duties:**

- To be a member of the University Progression & Award Board and to attend meetings of the Boards as a requirement of the appointment.
- To ensure that the decisions of the University Progression & Award Board are made in accordance with the approved assessment regulations and that where discretion is applied or recommended that this is executed appropriately.
- To contribute to discussions with University staff on the appropriateness, consistency and effectiveness of
  - (a) internal moderation processes
  - (b) assessment processes and regulations
  - (c) advice on individual student cases where there is a clear role for academic discretion and judgement
- To submit an annual report to AQD on the approved Chief EE template (found on the [website](#)) by 31 July (or within 6 weeks following the Assessment Board for programmes which operate on a non-standard calendar).

For Apprenticeship programmes an End Point Assessment (EPA) External Examiner is also be required. They will attend UPABs to confirm (or otherwise) that all requirements for End Point Assessment have been met and thus fully meet the competencies of the Standard for the Apprenticeship.

### **3.3 Subject External Examiners' role in assessment**

**3.3.1 Academic regulations**, approved by the Academic Board, University of Cumbria apply for all awards of the University.

#### **3.3.2 Approval of draft examination papers**

All draft examination papers should be sent to the Subject External Examiner for approval of the form and content of the papers. Any special conditions (eg pre-release papers, additional reading time) will have been previously agreed.

#### **3.3.3 Moderation of examination scripts and coursework**

a) Subject External Examiners are asked to moderate both examination scripts and coursework. Normally, unless the number of assessment items is sufficiently small for all to be scrutinised, staff will



reach an agreement with the Subject External Examiner on the sample of work to be submitted for moderation. A representative sample equal to the square root of  $n$  ( $n$ ) where  $n$  is the number of students in the module delivery group to a minimum of five items, plus all failed pieces. Programme teams can also direct Examiners to review cases affected by extenuating circumstances and any cases the programme team believe to be of particular interest. The Examiner has the right to see the work of all students proposed for the highest category of the award and for failure.

Where collaborative provision is involved, the sample should also include a representative number of scripts from each partner site. This will be discussed and agreed with the University Principal Lecturer overseeing the collaborative provision. Full details on the University's policy on Marking and Moderation, including flowchart, can be found at the end of Appx 3b to the [Academic Regulations](#).

b) The programme team should send the following to the External Examiner:

- Examination paper/assignment title
- Marking scheme and assessment criteria
- Module Guide
- Record of provisional marks for each assessment item (internally marked)
- Provisional marks for review
- Mean and standard deviation marks for the module(s) for which an individual Subject External Examiner has responsibility.

c) The provisional marks sent to Subject External Examiners will be the agreed mark from internal markers. All work will have been moderated in line with University requirements (see Appx 3b of the Academic Regulations):

- **Blind double marking** will apply only when the assessment comprises a dissertation or thesis worth more than 20 credits. Each marker marks independently and without sight of the comments and mark of the other. Both markers have the Assessment Criteria, Marking Scheme and intended learning outcomes for the module.
- **Moderation** is of a representative sample, the square root of  $n$ , (number of scripts/assignments) plus all fails (minimum 5 scripts). Where the number of failed items exceeds 3, the moderator may limit moderation to a representative sample of at least 3 of the failed items. The moderator marks with sight of the first marker's comments and mark, and has access to the Assessment Criteria, Marking Scheme and intended learning outcomes for the module.
- **Intra-scheme moderation** occurs when a module has multiple offerings in a given academic session or across modules within the same Programme. An analysis and comparison of the provisional marks, and of the mean and standard deviation for each of the module offerings is required.
- **Cross-site marking moderation** should occur based on the sample.

d) Where there is significant difference between first marker and moderator, the matter is resolved internally via the use of a third marker before submission to the Subject External Examiner. In exceptional cases, the External Examiner may be called upon to adjudicate (across the whole of the cohort). The Programme Leader is responsible for ensuring that any differences between first markers and moderators are resolved.

e) All examination scripts and coursework contributing to the final assessment must be available to Subject External Examiners should they be required. In particular, the work of any candidates likely to be discussed at the final meeting of the Board should be made available to the Subject External Examiner prior to the meeting.

#### **3.3.4. Powers and Discretion of the Subject External Examiner**

The main concern of the Subject External Examiner should be the assessment of the module in its entirety rather than the correction of marks given to individual students. If an External Examiner is concerned about accuracy and consistency of marking and wishes to change marks, all work falling into the area of concern should be re-marked. The final decision on the mark(s) to be awarded in individual cases, or in the case of a whole cohort, lies with the Quality Enhancement Board.

#### **3.3.5 Viva-voce examinations/oral tests**

Where a viva-voce examination is compulsory this must be stated in the assessment scheme. Outwith the validated assessment such examinations are used in exceptional cases only and normally serve only to confirm or improve a result. Both internal and external examiners have discretion to hold such examinations to help them to decide upon an appropriate degree classification or, during the module, to check the authenticity of evidence derived from written coursework or to help fill gaps in a student's assessment record caused by for example, extenuating circumstances. An External Examiner may also be involved in approving a viva-voce examination arising from a suspected case of 'ghost writing' (ie academic malpractice) by a student (Regs Appx 3d, 7.6.3(xii)).

## SECTION 4 - Structures and procedures of Assessment Boards

### 4.1 A Two-Tier Assessment System

The University operates internally a two-tier system of Assessment Boards.

#### **Tier 1: Module Confirmation Board**

- Confirms module marks
- Receives outcomes from Extenuating Circumstances Panel

This is followed by the **Quality Enhancement Board** (QEB) at the end of each academic year which:

- Considers module/programme performance
- Identifies and considers standards issues arising from the assessment exercise and giving particular consideration to failure rates, mean and standard deviation, and identify trends in module activity that may inform assessment practice
- Makes appropriate consideration of cross-site parity and identifies issues and actions for enhancement
- Refers to the **University Progression & Award Board** any issues specifically impacting on award or progression outcomes for cohorts of students

#### **Tier 2: University Progression & Award Board (UPAB)**

The UPAB considers the profile of marks for each continuing and completing student and,

for continuing students, the UPAB:

- Confirms the results for each student in relation to progress through the programme
- Exercises compensation in accordance with the Regulations [Reg F14, F15]
- Resolves fails, deferred assessment, malpractice and other special cases

Full details of the functions, membership, operation, responsibility and management of the Boards are in the [Academic Regulations](#) : Section F11, and Appx 3f.

### 4.2 Consideration of Extenuating Circumstances

- a) Extenuating circumstances are exceptional and serious. They include incidents such as sudden, severe illness (confirmed by a medical certificate) or circumstances which prevent attendance at an examination, or which adversely affect performance at an examination, or prevent work being submitted by the set deadline.
- b) Avoidable circumstances, eg computer/printing difficulties, transport difficulties, work commitments, holidays and misreading

instructions/timetables are not regarded as extenuating circumstances.

- c) Students who have acute short-term incapacity should obtain a medical note, which indicates that they are unfit to attend/submit for assessment.
- d) Students requesting consideration of extenuating circumstances must do so on a "Claim for consideration of extenuating circumstances in assessment" form available from Programme Admin or the University website. Medical notes to support extenuating circumstances, which must be dated, must relate specifically to the date, duration and severity of the illness. This should be a medical opinion, not simply a statement of what the student has reported to the doctor. It is helpful for students to ask doctors if the illness is likely to affect performance significantly, moderately, a little, or hardly at all. Documentary evidence must be submitted with the EC claim. Only claims made using this form will be considered by the Board.
- e) Students should keep their Programme Leader or Tutor informed of adverse personal circumstances eg close family bereavement.
- f) Evidence to support extenuating circumstances of a non-medical nature could include a statement from a person who can verify the student's circumstances from a position of authority, and whose evidence is impartial and objective.
- g) Documentary evidence shall be provided in confidence to the Chair of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel, via the Director of the Student and Academic Administration Service.
- h) All evidence to support a claim for consideration of circumstances which may have adversely affected performance should be submitted, via the Student and Academic Administration Service, to the Chair **within FIVE days of the expected completion of the final assessment for the module** to enable full consideration to be given.
- i) Where additional or separate information in respect of individual students has been passed to a tutor directly, the tutor should advise that students must submit details only through the Student and Academic Administration Service in accordance with the procedures under (d) and (h) above.
- j) Evidence provided retrospectively about previously known medical conditions or extenuating circumstances will not normally be accepted as grounds for appeal unless there is good cause for the failure to disclose. Students will be required to state the reason for not making the evidence available at the correct time.

## SECTION 5 - Awards and Credit Values

### 5. Awards and Credit Values

#### 5.1 Awards Offered at the University of Cumbria

##### Principles

- 5.1.1 All awards offered at the University of Cumbria are consistent with the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ).
- 5.1.2 Awards are defined by a series of benchmarks relating to the general level of knowledge and skills required to register for the award, and the qualification, credit volume and study levels required to achieve the awards. (Qualification level descriptors are aligned to the FHEQ.)
- 5.1.3 The University's awards are generally streamed so that programmes incorporate intermediate awards with appropriate learning outcomes.
- 5.1.4 Qualifications can only be conferred or recommended where a student has registered for and successfully completed a programme of study leading to an approved award as listed in the [Academic Regulations](#) (B2.1 refers).

#### 5.2 University Credit Accumulation and Transfer Framework General

- 5.2.1 The University Credit Accumulation and Transfer Framework governs all taught awards offered by the University of Cumbria and is designed to facilitate transfer between full and part time modes of study, and particular combinations of programmes of study to include institutional transfer of credit.
- 5.2.2 Awards are defined in terms of the number and learning level of credits that must be attained to achieve the award (C1.3 Table of Credit Requirements in [Academic Regulations](#) refers). Learning is arranged in defined blocks called modules, which have credit values. Combinations of credit rated modules are approved by Academic Board to form programmes, which lead to awards or certificated learning.

#### 5.3 Learning Hours

- 5.3.1 In determining the number of credits required to achieve an award, the University of Cumbria recognises one credit as equivalent to ten hours of notional academic learning time.
- 5.3.2 A standard academic year for a full-time undergraduate student equates to 120 credits (1200 notional hours).

## SECTION 6 - External Examiners' Reports

Your annual report should be submitted to the Academic Quality and Development Office of the University of Cumbria. Reports should be submitted electronically to: [externalexaminers@cumbria.ac.uk](mailto:externalexaminers@cumbria.ac.uk)

**6.1** In the report (for which a standard template is used), comments are invited on the following themes:

- Comparability of standards
- Quality of programme
- Quality of assessment procedures
- Organisation and arrangements
- What can be learned from the assessment process
- Specific recommendations
- Extent to which issues raised previously have been addressed

[There is an opportunity to submit a separate confidential report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) if you have serious concerns relating to academic standards or the student experience].

**Note:** Please make sure that your report is sufficiently detailed to help the programme team develop and/or enhance the programme as necessary, paying particular attention to:

- Covering all points under each section
- Students and/or staff names should not be included
- Providing constructive and detailed commentary to aid enhancement
- Providing a subject discipline view, based on the FHEQ, subject benchmarking statements, professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements, industry requirements etc
- Specific commentary must be included for collaborative delivery (where relevant)

An end of the External Examiner tenure, a summary is required on completion of the term of office.

**6.2** The reports are an important part of the University's quality assurance and enhancement procedures enacted according to the following flowchart (over page). The University makes a formal response to the issues raised by the External Examiners in their annual reports.

**6.3** For programmes and modules delivered collaboratively with partners, please ensure that you make specific reference to each partner within your report, and link matters of good practice and/or areas identified for development to individual partners.

**6.4** The University makes External Examiner reports available to students through internal programme level Blackboard sites, in accordance with the QAA Quality Code on [External Expertise](#); likewise, students are provided with details of their programme/module External Examiner within Module Guides.

**6.5** Students are informed that they must not make direct contact with an external examiner and this message is reinforced through module guides [www.cumbria.ac.uk/externalexaminers](http://www.cumbria.ac.uk/externalexaminers)  
[externalexaminers@cumbria.ac.uk](mailto:externalexaminers@cumbria.ac.uk)



and student representative briefings. If a student does make contact, we would ask you not to engage in dialogue with the student but instead to forward the email/details of the contact made, to AQD via email ([externalexaminers@cumbria.ac.uk](mailto:externalexaminers@cumbria.ac.uk)). We will then, through Programme Leaders, remind the student that they should not make any further contact with you. If there are continued attempts to contact you the Student Code of Conduct procedures may be instigated but we hope this will not be necessary.

## SECTION 7 - Involvement of External Examiners in validation, review and approval of changes to courses

The Minor Modification process enables programme teams to make changes to validated programmes and modules. This enhancing process enables teams to ensure programmes and modules are up to date and fit for purpose. It is also the validating process for individual modules.

The advice and approval of the External Examiners are sought by the teaching team when proposing **minor modifications** to modules/programmes.

Minor modifications can include:

- Validation of a new stand-alone module
- Validation of a new module to be added to an existing programme
- Validation of a new module to replace a module in an existing programme
- Change to an existing module/programme title
- Change to an existing module level
- Change to an existing module code
- Change to an existing module credit weighting
- Change to an existing module content
- Change to an existing module/programme aims or LOs
- Change to possible module delivery sites (UoC only)
- Change to module type (core, compulsory, optional)
- Change to existing module indicative workload hours
- Change to an existing module assessment plan
- Changing a validated module to be available for stand-alone study
- Change to module 'additional notes'
- Change to module entry requirements for stand-alone delivery
- Change to module delivery pattern within a validated programme (short/long)
- Change to exit award(s) available
- Adoption of an existing validated module onto a programme
- Removal of an existing validated module from a programme
- Validation of a new named pathway through a validated programme
- Validation of a new pattern of delivery for a validated programme (eg to permit full or part-time delivery)
- Validation of an exit award as a target award, based on an existing programme
- Validation of a top-up degree as a target award, based on an existing Honours degree

## SECTION 8 - Hospitality arrangements

### 8.1 Arrangements for Boards

The Assessment Team ([assessment@cumbria.ac.uk](mailto:assessment@cumbria.ac.uk)) is responsible for arranging all Quality Enhancement Boards (QEBs) and University Progression & Award Board (UPABs) and will notify External Examiners of Board dates, convene the meetings, notify relevant staff and organise agendas and minutes.

### 8.2 External Examiners' Accommodation

If accommodation is required for a visit please contact the External Examiners inbox and we will arrange this for you.

Accommodation is booked at University approved hotels. Standard bookings are made based on single room, Bed and Breakfast. External Examiners are asked to pay for and reclaim the cost of their personal evening meals (up to the maximum allowance - [Fees & Expenses'](#)).

### 8.3 External Examiners' Travel

All travel arrangements should be made individually and claimed back via the expense claim form and returned to the address detailed on the form (see details on the website under '[Fees & Expenses'](#)).

## SECTION 9 - Payment of External Examiners

### 9.1 External Examiners of University of Cumbria Awards

9.1.1 The University only accepts original (or scanned) receipts, but please take copies of them before posting.

- The **annual fee** for the External Examiner Report is processed by the University's Resource Support Office. Please use the **claim form** available from the website [here](#).
- **fees and expenses** claims should be forwarded to: the External Examiners inbox for processing when submitting the annual report.. Receipts for expenses incurred should be attached or scanned in (eg train/taxi fares, accommodation, subsistence, postage). For expenses to be paid we require **itemised receipts**. Credit card receipts and handwritten sales vouchers **are not acceptable** and will not be reimbursed against. Please use the claim form available from the website [here](#).
- Allowances for Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner are not cumulative. You cannot have a more expensive dinner if you skipped breakfast.
- The allowances are solely for you and payment will not be made for bills, breakfasts and restaurant meals that are for more than one person and you cannot claim for alcohol.
- Meals will only be reimbursed for those who are staying away from home. If you are travelling home in the evening, we will not be able to reimburse towards dinner.
- Please refer to the information in the appointment letter for details of fees, expenses and making claims. Overnight accommodation of more than one night is not normally payable.

**Please note that an expense will not be paid if there is no corresponding receipt attached.**

**To ensure that you receive your expenses as soon as possible, please remember to fill in your bank account details, date of birth and National Insurance number at the bottom of the form.**

9.1.2 Examiners are paid a basic fee for time taken on external examining duties. This annual fee covers time spent on the following activities:

- Preliminary visits to the University to establish contact
- Time spent on moderating students' work
- Visits to placements for assessment purposes
- Time spent attending Assessment Boards

**UNIVERSITY OF CUMBRIA  
ACADEMIC QUALITY AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**

## EXPENSES FOR EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

1. The University has approved the following rates, which will be applicable to expense claims from External Examiners. These rates are in line with the dispensation obtained from the Inland Revenue on the payment of expenses to External Examiners. The University strictly adheres to the restrictions applied nationally by the Inland Revenue.

**PLEASE NOTE: The University will carry out Right to Work checks before any appointment can commence and your details will be added to our HR database 'Stonefish'. We will be unable to process any payments without completing this process. When completing your claim form, your National Insurance Number, Employee Number (which you will receive via email once details have been added to Stonefish) and Date of Birth fields are mandatory, if not completed you cannot be paid.**

2. **Accommodation** - Accommodation is booked on the basis of bed and breakfast only and any additional expenses incurred at the hotel must be settled personally with the hotel at the time of departure. EEs are not normally permitted more than one overnight stay per visit. All EE visits should aim to link in QEB attendance with other activities (eg meeting students, placement/school visits). Exceptional cases where an additional overnight stay may be warranted and approved by AQD might include:

- Where an EE is travelling from abroad (excluding N Ireland and Eire)
- Where an EE is required to complete professional placement revisits to work based settings (eg to assess QTS)  
*[for any exceptional cases as detailed above, a rationale would need to be presented and authorised by the Quality Assurance Manager and in any case, would be for a maximum of no more than 3 nights]*

Non-arrival for rooms booked will not be paid for by the University. For examiners choosing to book their own accommodation, the limits allowed are:

- **£120 – if staying in London**
- **£80 – if staying elsewhere in the UK**

3. **Rail Travel** - The cost of travel will be reimbursed at the standard rail fare.
4. **Mileage** - The current mileage rate for the University is 30p per mile.
5. **Subsistence** - The University will reimburse External Examiners for expenses, such as meals, that have been incurred whilst attending assessment boards on its behalf. Subsistence claims should not be made where the University has already made direct payment or provision for this type of cost and all claims for subsistence must be supported by **full detailed receipts** (scanned copies are acceptable).

**Credit card flimsies or statements are not acceptable as proof of purchase.**

The University's agreed rate for meals is as follows:

<b>Breakfast:</b>	<b>£5.00</b>
<b>Lunch:</b>	<b>£5.00</b>
<b>Dinner:</b>	<b>£15.00</b>

The above refers to food and non-alcoholic drinks. Alcohol and other incidentals, such as newspapers, films, wi-fi, etc cannot be claimed back from the University.

## SECTION 10 - Frequently Asked Questions

### **What will be the duration of my appointment?**

Normally four academic years, but this will be confirmed in your letter of appointment. In exceptional cases, you may be invited to serve an additional year.

### **How will I be briefed about the programme, units, assessment methods, teaching methods, regulations etc?**

The University's Quality and Standards Office will send you information about the [Academic Regulations](#) for External Examining together with your appointment letter. A series of University induction presentations is available on the website and you will also engage in programme level induction with the Programme Leader.

### **Will I be able to see examination question papers and coursework requirements prior to their use?**

Yes, Subject External Examiners will be involved in the moderation of both depending on the programme's assessment strategy and following consultation with the programme team.

### **Will I be required to view ALL the examination scripts and assignments for the units for which I have been appointed?**

No. This will not be a requirement, although you will have the right to see everything if you wish. Normally, you will be sent a representative sample across the range of performance.

### **May I request a revision of internal marks?**

Yes, internal marking is provisional, and you are entitled to be satisfied that marking is of an appropriate standard. If you disagree with the marks of the internal markers you may recommend the adjustment of marks. If this is the case, appropriate adjustment must be made to the marks of all students taking that assessment to ensure equity.

### **How often will I be required to attend?**

You will be required to attend the Quality Enhancement Board to which you have been assigned. This will normally be at the conclusion of the academic session in July, although it may be at an alternative time for some postgraduate or professional programmes. Some Examiners may be required to attend for the external moderation of some assessments eg orals; presentations; performance; display etc. Subject Examiners may also attend the Resit Assessment Boards, which normally meet in September. Chief Examiners are invited to attend resit University Progression & Award Board (UPABs).

### **What do I do if I can't access IT systems and/or Blackboard to access student work?**

If you experience difficulties in accessing the University's IT systems, it may be because you need to reset your password. If this does not resolve the problem, please contact our IT Service Desk on 01228 8888 or by email at [itservicedesk@cumbria.ac.uk](mailto:itservicedesk@cumbria.ac.uk). If you have trouble in accessing the programme Blackboard site, please contact your Programme Leader in the first instance so that they can check you are enrolled on the Blackboard site. Either of these options should help to resolve your



access difficulties, however, if you are still having difficulty, please contact Quality and Standards, Q&S@cumbria.ac.uk

### **To whom do I send my report?**

You are required to submit reports annually, by 31 July or within 6 weeks of your final assessment board, to the Academic Quality and Development Office. Reports should be submitted to [externalexaminers@cumbria.ac.uk](mailto:externalexaminers@cumbria.ac.uk). On receipt, reports will be circulated to the programme team for their response.

You can access the report template via the University's web site at <http://www.cumbria.ac.uk/externalexaminers> ('Templates for External Examiners').

### **To whom do I report in matters of particular importance and/or sensitivity?**

If you judge your concern to be a matter of particular importance and/or sensitivity you may report your concern to the Programme Leader, the Head of Institute (who is usually the Chair of the Assessment Board) or, if necessary, for more serious concerns, you may address these to the University's Deputy Vice-Chancellor using the template available on the website. If, having followed this process, you still have serious concerns about the University's academic standards, or the quality of the student learning experience, you may contact the Office for Students.

### **Will I be involved in student appeals?**

Not formally, but if a student requests a review of a decision taken by the Assessment Board of which you are part, you may be asked to be involved in this process.

### **What will be my involvement in programme review and modification?**

Subject External Examiners will be consulted at the point of review and modification and their comments will be considered as part of the panel or committee which meets to approve the proposed modification, including the introduction of new units.

### **How do I get paid?**

Following the Assessment Board meeting and production of your **annual report**, you can claim your annual fee by completing the claim form, which can be downloaded from the External Examiners' web site at: <http://www.cumbria.ac.uk/externalexaminers> and forward this to AQD at [externalexaminers@cumbria.ac.uk](mailto:externalexaminers@cumbria.ac.uk)

The fee for the annual report will only be processed on receipt of the completed annual report by AQD. Fees for annual reports are not paid automatically and must be claimed. A Mentor fee, (where applicable), will only be processed on receipt of the Mentor Report Form found [here](#) (under 'Templates for External Examiners').

**PLEASE NOTE, your fees will be paid directly into your bank account.**

## **CONTACT ADDRESS DETAILS**

### **Carlisle**

Brampton Road  
Carlisle  
Cumbria  
CA3 9AY

Tel: 01228 400300

### **Ambleside**

Rydal Road  
Ambleside  
Cumbria  
LA22 9BB

Tel: 015394 30274

### **Carlisle**

Fusehill Street  
Carlisle  
Cumbria  
CA1 2HH

Tel: 01228 616324

### **Barrow-in-Furness**

University of Cumbria  
Furness General Hospital  
Dalton Lane, Barrow-In-Furness  
Cumbria  
LA14 4LF

Tel: 01229 870870

### **Lancaster**

Bowerham Road  
Lancaster  
LA1 3JD

Tel: 01524 384384

### **London (East India Dock Rd)**

University of Cumbria  
56 East India Docks Road  
London  
E14 6JE

Tel: 0207 517 4800

## **ADDITIONAL NOTES**

You may wish to use this page to note specific names and contact details

Academic Contact \_\_\_\_\_  
(*Programme Leader*)

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Administrative Contact \_\_\_\_\_  
(*Programme Admin*)

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

A link to the University's External Examiner website can be found at the following URL:

[www.cumbria.ac.uk/externalexaminers](http://www.cumbria.ac.uk/externalexaminers)