UNIVERSITY of BRADFORD

Regulation 8

Regulations for External Examiners for Award-bearing Taught Programmes

2025-2026

This document can only be considered valid when viewed via the University website. If this document is printed into hard copy or saved to another location, you must check that the version number on your copy matches that of the one on the University website. Approved documents are valid for use after their approval date and remain in force beyond any expiry of their review date until a new version is available.

Contents

Regulations for External Examiners for Award-bearing Taught Programmes 1

Summary of updates for 2025-2026 2

1. Appointment of External Examiners 2

2. Duties of External Examiners 5

3. Confidential reports and Office for Students Notification Scheme 7

Summary of updates for 2025-2026

Revision of ‘Duties of External Examiner’ to align with new academic regulations for undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes (Regulation 2 and 9) and new Assessment, Marking and Feedback Policy.

1. Appointment of External Examiners

1.1. There shall be at least one External Examiner for each taught module on an award-bearing programme at all Levels, including Level 3 and Level 8.

1.2. There shall be at least one External Examiner for each named award of the University, irrespective of the academic level of the award, including Partnership Provision.

1.3. An External Examiner for a programme of study shall also be an External Examiner for a reasonable proportion of the modules which comprise that programme of study.

1.4. External Examiners are nominated in the first instance by the Faculty concerned. Successful appointments are reported to the appropriate Faculty Board.

1.5. The University will appoint external examiners who can demonstrate evidence of the following:

- Knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality.
- Competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study or parts thereof.
- Relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate.

- Competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures.
- 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.
- Familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is being assessed.
- Meeting applicable criteria set out by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies
- Awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula.
- Competence and experience in the enhancement of the student learning experience.

1.6. Where a nominee has not previously served as an External Examiner, the appointment should be made, wherever practical, with agreement that a more experienced External Examiner will act as a mentor.

1.7. In those cases where an application does not demonstrate evidence of the candidate meeting all the criteria, the Faculty/Department may make an exceptional case to the Head of Academic Quality and Portfolio Management for the appointment to be approved.

1.8. The following criteria will ensure that all potential conflicts of interest are identified and resolved prior to appointment or as soon as they arise. The University will not normally appoint as its External Examiners anyone in the following categories or circumstances:

- Member of a governing body or committee of the University or one of its collaborative partners, or a current employee of the University or one of its collaborative partners.
- Anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme of study
- Anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study.
- Anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study.
- 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
- Former staff or students of the institution unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the external examiner have completed their programme(s).
- A reciprocal arrangement involving related programmes at another institution.
- The succession of an external examiner from an institution by a colleague from the same department in the same institution.

- The concurrent appointment of more than one external examiner from the same department of the same institution examining within the same Department at the University of Bradford.
- Deemed to have other conflict of interest in relation to commercial sensitivity.

1.9. It is the responsibility of the External Examiner to inform the University of any change in circumstances since their appointment which might compromise that appointment.

1.10. External Examiners should normally hold no more than two external examiner appointments for taught programmes/modules at any point in time, including the University of Bradford appointment.

1.11. The period of appointment of an External Examiner for a module and/or a programme of study shall be four years, with the exceptional possibility of an extension for one further year.

1.12. A second period of appointment for an External Examiner shall be permissible, in exceptional circumstances, provided that a minimum of five years has elapsed between the two periods of appointment.

1.13. An External Examiner shall not undertake more than two periods of office, except where in the view of the Head of Academic Quality and Portfolio Management there exist exceptional circumstances.

1.14. The early termination of an External Examiner's appointment will be based on the following criteria:

- Failure to attend required meetings without making alternative arrangements.
- Failure to submit reports, or the provision of incomplete reports.
- Failure to fulfil the role of External Examiner in contributing to the University's management of academic standards and quality.
- Failure to declare a conflict of interest.
- Failure to maintain professional body membership or registration where this is a requirement to examine the programme.
- On programmes with a professional element, disbarment from being able to practice.

1.15. The decision to terminate prematurely an appointment must be made by the appropriate Faculty Board and approved by the Head of Academic Quality and Portfolio Management.

1.16. If a conflict of interest arises during the External Examiner's appointment period which cannot be satisfactorily resolved by either party it is in the best interest of the University for the External Examiner to resign his/her appointment with immediate effect.

2. Duties of External Examiners

2.1. An External Examiner shall be responsible, jointly with the Dean of the Faculty which provides the module or programme, for assuring the academic standards of assessment and contributing to quality assurance and enhancement. This includes both module-level and programme-level responsibilities, and applies to all provision, including Partnership Provision.

2.2. An External Examiner shall moderate and approve a representative sample of assessment tasks, briefs, rubrics and associated materials, including any supplementary tasks. They shall confirm alignment with intended learning outcomes, level of study, sector expectations and inclusive assessment design.

2.3. Programme Teams will provide External Examiners with the following information:

- Module and programme specifications or handbooks, reading lists, and other relevant materials.
- Marking schemes and grading criteria.
- Indicative or model answers, where used.
- Assessment briefs and guidance issued to students.
- Internal examiners' comments on student work and cohort performance.
- Module evaluation reports, where applicable.
- Relevant professional or regulatory information, where applicable.
- Dates of Programme Team and/or Continuation and Award Board meetings, which should be arranged in consultation with External Examiners.

2.4. External Examiners are expected to review a representative sample of assessed work from the modules and/or programmes they examine. This moderation sample should normally include:

- All levels of study relevant to the External Examiner's appointment.
- All components in new modules.
- Revised or new assessments in existing modules.
- Components over 20 credits (e.g. dissertations).
- Varied assessment types and contributions from different markers.

2.5. All formally assessed work must be made available to the External Examiner on request.

2.6. External Examiners are not responsible for marking individual student work and should not undertake marking as would be expected of an internal examiner.

2.7. External Examiners may propose mark revisions where there are concerns about consistency or accuracy, following discussion with internal examiners and in accordance with the University's Assessment, Marking and Feedback Policy.

2.8. Following moderation, External Examiners should ensure their comments on marking standards are made available to the Programme Team in preparation for Continuation and Award Boards.

2.9. External Examiners are expected to attend at least one Continuation and Award Board per academic year. Attendance at Boards of Examiners is essential for contributing to discussions on continuation, award, and academic standards. Where not attending, External Examiners must fulfil their responsibilities by reviewing outcomes and commenting in writing.

2.10. External Examiners are expected to be familiar with institutional regulations and to comment on their application, although not on the content of the regulations themselves.

2.11. Each External Examiner must submit an annual report addressing the modules and/or programmes for which they are responsible. This report must be submitted to the Academic Quality and Portfolio Management team and should comment on standards, marking consistency, fairness, assessment processes, good practice and areas for development.

2.12. Further details regarding the University's approach to externality, including the External Examiners Guide, and its assessment and award framework for assuring standards and quality, is available on the Learning, Teaching and Quality Enhancement website at https://www.bradford.ac.uk/teaching-quality/.

3. Confidential reports and Office for Students Notification Scheme

3.1. In addition to the arrangements for reporting and feedback, an External Examiner may also submit a separate, confidential, report to the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience) on matters of particular sensitivity. This may be, for example, if the External Examiner finds it necessary to name a member of staff and/or has serious concerns about academic standards.

3.2. The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience) should arrange to inform the Faculty/Department concerned of any confidential report that has been submitted by an External Examiner so that they are aware of the situation.

3.3. Should it be deemed necessary for the External Examiner to submit a confidential report to the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience) the staff and/or student representatives must be informed of any implications arising from the confidential report and/or any actions where these have implications for them.

3.4. The University will provide a considered response to the External Examiner about the serious concerns raised in the confidential report and outlining the proposed action to be taken to address the issues as appropriate.

3.5. The University will make it clear to its External Examiners that any recourse to the Office for Students Notification Scheme they may wish to invoke should only take place in cases where all our University internal mechanisms for following up concerns, including a confidential report to the Pro-Vice Chancellor have been exhausted.