

HE Taught Award Regulations: Part B

Section: 5: External Examiner Procedure

Version: 1.0

Author: Peter Greenall

Introduction: March 2014

Review: December 2015

REVISION HISTORY

Ver	Date	Author	Description
1.0	March 2014	Peter Greenall	Initial Approval of External Examiners Procedure

APPROVAL

Ver	Committee	Date Approved	Comments
1.0	HE Academic Standards & Development		

Contents

B5.1 Introduction	4
B5.2 External Examiners Approval Process	5
B5.3 The Appointment Procedure	6
B5.4 Inexperienced External Examiners	7
B5.5 Changes to the Appointment of an External Examiner	7
B5.6 External Examiner Reports	8
B5.7 Publication to Students	8
B5.8 Consideration of Reports.....	8
B5.9 Criteria for Teams of External Examiners.....	9
B5.10 Recognition of External Examiners' Work.....	9
Appendix B5 – A - Proposal Form for Appointing an External Examiner.....	11
Appendix B5 – B - External Examiners Report Form.....	13
Appendix B5 – C - External Examiner Programme Response Document	23
Appendix B5 – D – External Examiner Person Specification.....	26
Appendix B5 – E – Roles and Responsibilities of External Examiners	27

B5.1 INTRODUCTION

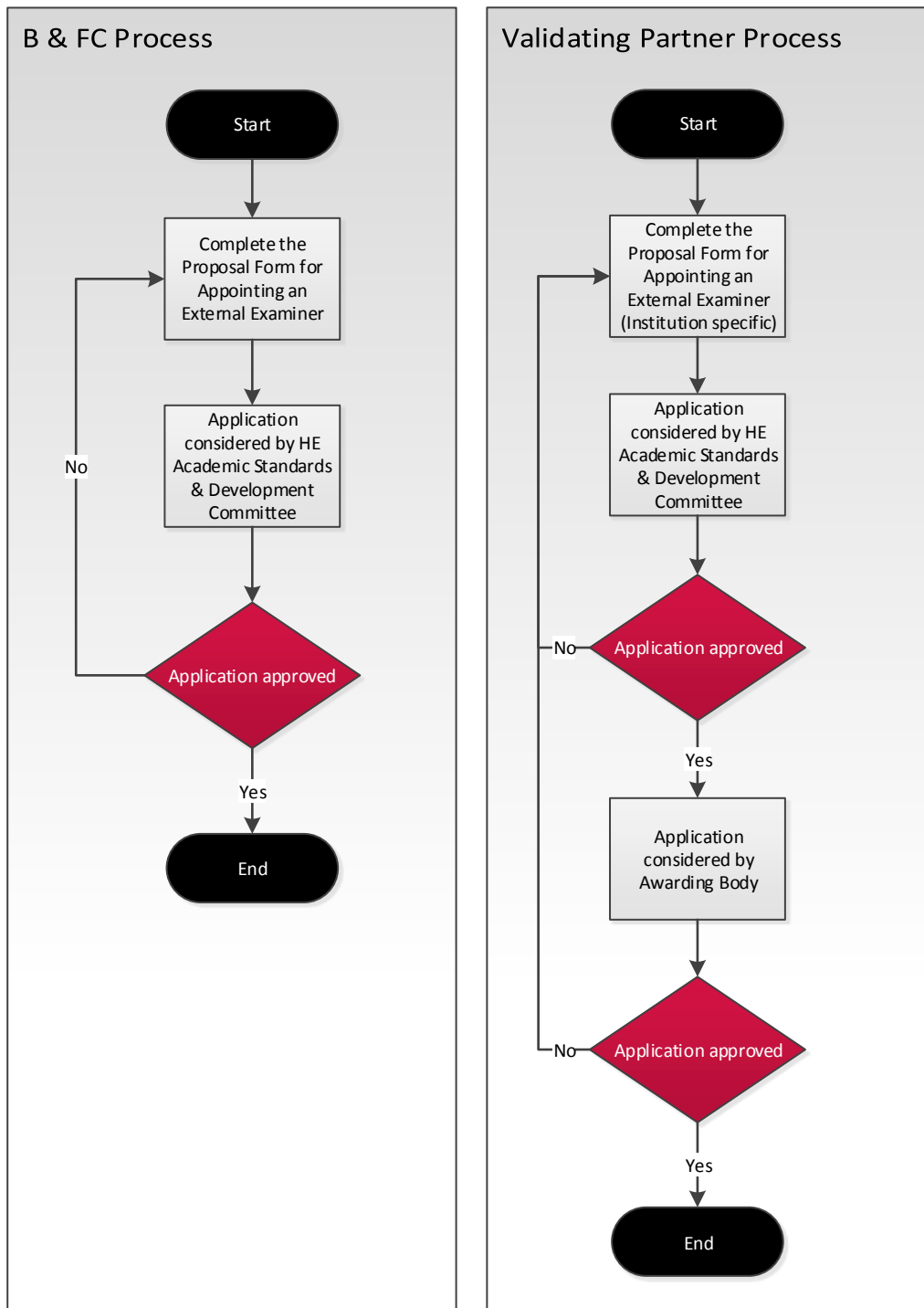
As set out in Part B7 Indicator 1 of the Quality Code all B&FC programmes require at least one external examiner(s) for each validated programme and as such, unless there is a specific and valid reason to justify an exception, no B&FC award shall be made without the scrutiny of an external examiner. External examiners are generally appointed to a programme in its entirety but may to a lesser extent be appointed to specific awards, streams and/or modules.

This document includes the various forms and operational practices which support the external examiner role.

Section A5 of the B&FC Academic Regulations for Taught Awards identifies the regulatory framework for External Examiners and outlines the function and criteria of an External Examiner and the terms associated with their appointment.

B5.2 EXTERNAL EXAMINERS APPROVAL PROCESS

The distinctions between the Colleges process and that of our validating partners in the approval of external examiners are illustrated by the flowchart below



B5.3 THE APPOINTMENT PROCEDURE

Where a new validation is under consideration, a proposal to appoint an external examiner(s) may proceed in parallel with the process.

It is the responsibility of the relevant programme leader to arrange for the completion of the Proposal Form for Appointing an External Examiner in full. The proposal should be endorsed by the Head of the relevant School and presented to the HE Academic Standards & Development Committee for consideration. The HE Directorate will maintain a register of external examiners' appointments and periods of tenure.

The name(s), position(s) and institution(s) of external examiners will be provided to students in their programme information and annual reports from external examiners will also be made available.

BRIEFING

Once a nomination has been approved by the Academic Standards and Development Committee, the HE Academic Registrar will arrange for a letter of appointment to be sent to the external examiner.

The letter of appointment and supporting documents will provide:

- A general outline of the responsibilities of all external examiners.
- Details of the modules, programmes and/or award(s) to which the external examiner is appointed
- Details of the roles, powers and responsibilities assigned to the external examiners, including the extent of their authority in examination boards and their right to raise matters of serious concern with the Principal and Chief Executive of B&FC.
- Details of the notice period required should an examiner wish to resign.

Copies of appointment letters will be provided to the Head of the relevant School for dissemination to staff.

In addition, external examiners will be provided with a briefing and induction meeting which will provide the following:

- B&FC's external examining and assessment guidelines.
- General information on B&FC and the School, including the relevant institutional and programme regulations for the awards to be examined.
- An overview of external examiners' responsibilities within two-tier board process.

- The names of any other external examiners in the team, and the awards for which they will be responsible, together with the modules that each external examiner will be solely responsible for.
- The award objectives (and, where relevant, those of individual modules), together with the curriculum and the means by which they will be assessed. Examiners should be provided with copies of definitive programme documents and programme & student handbooks for the programmes they are to examine.
- The learning, teaching and assessment strategies relevant to the programme to be examined.
- The arrangements made for examining any relevant flexible and/or distance provision.
- The calendar of events over the coming year, including the deadlines for submission of work to external examiners, and for its return, the dates of meeting of boards, the dates on which external examiners are required at B&FC and the timescales for examiners' reports and responses.

B5.4 INEXPERIENCED EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

Where an external examiner has no previous experience in that role they will normally either be appointed to a team of examiners or be provided with an experienced external examiner as a mentor.

B&FC will provide appropriate training for inexperienced external examiners and, on request, for experienced examiners who wish to refresh their practice and/or gain a better understanding of B&FC processes and regulations.

B5.5 CHANGES TO THE APPOINTMENT OF AN EXTERNAL EXAMINER

Where a School wishes to extend the tenure of an external examiner (within the limits set out above) or reallocate duties amongst an approved team the relevant School must first obtain the approval of the HE ASDC for the proposed changes.

Schools should note that the external examiner's agreement to such a proposal must be obtained prior to a request being made to the HE ASDC.

B5.6 EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORTS

Each external examiner will be required to produce an annual report to B&FC at a time determined by the HE ASDC. The report must provide clear and informative feedback to the institution on those areas defined for the role.

In addition, reports must:

- Confirm that sufficient evidence was received to enable the role to be fulfilled (where evidence was insufficient, they give details)
- State whether issues raised in the previous report(s) have been addressed to their satisfaction
- Address any issues as specifically required by any relevant professional body
- Provide an overview of their term of office (when concluded).
- Distinguish clearly, where necessary, between distinct cohorts of students, particularly where a programme is delivered in multiple modes and/or at more than one location or institution.
- Avoid naming individual students or members of staff within the report.

B5.7 PUBLICATION TO STUDENTS

External examiners' reports will be made available in full to current students of B&FC, with the sole exception of any confidential report made directly to the Principal and Chief Executive.

The versions of reports provided to students may be amended where the external examiner has contravened the requirement not to identify individual members of staff or students or in very exceptional cases where the external examiner has included content that may bring into disrepute B&FC.

Reports will be disclosed to students as confidential quality documents that may be freely discussed with staff and with other students on the programme(s) to which they relate, but are not to be disclosed more widely.

B5.8 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS

Each external examiner report will be considered by the programme team(s) for the programme(s) covered by the report. Programme leaders are required to provide examiners with timely feedback on actions taken as a result of reports, or the reasons for not taking action. Any instance in which a programme team decides not to act on a recommendation made by an external examiner must be explained fully in Section 6, External Examiner Programme Response Document ([link](#)), of the Annual Programme Review for that programme.

The HE Academic Standards & Development Committee will carry out an annual review of the general issues and themes arising from external examiners' reports

and will consider all cases where a recommendation of an external examiner has not been acted upon. Student representatives will be fully involved in this process and will be provided with further information to enable them to understand all the issues raised and B&FC's response.

To monitor all actions identified by external examiners reports the Quality & Standards Department will maintain and report on an Action Log that will include the actions of each B&FC validated programme.

B5.9 CRITERIA FOR TEAMS OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

If a programme has a team of examiners, one of the team will be asked to act as 'Lead External Examiner'. The Lead External Examiner does not need to be a subject expert in all areas for which the team is responsible. Appointments to a team should normally be staggered to ensure continuity.

Where a team of examiners is appointed to a programme or group of programmes, it is not necessary that each examiner individually meets all of the criteria in the person specification for a sole external examiner so long as the team as a whole is able to do so.

B5.10 RECOGNITION OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS' WORK

B&FC recognises the importance, and mutual benefit, of the work undertaken by members of its own staff as external examiners for other institutions and agree with staff the time they need to fulfil these duties.

B5.11 SERIOUS CONCERNS

Set out in the QAA's Quality Code Chapter B7:

Indicator 17

Institutions inform external examiners, in writing at the beginning of their term of office, that they have a right to raise any matter of serious concern with the head of the institution, if necessary by means of a separate confidential written report. Institutions provide a considered and timely response to any confidential report received, outlining any actions they will be taking as a result.

Indicator 18

Where an external examiner has a serious concern relating to systemic failings with the academic standards of a programme or programmes and has exhausted all published applicable internal procedures, including the submission of a confidential report to the head of the institution, he/she may invoke QAA's concerns scheme or inform the relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body.

All Blackpool and The Fylde College external examiners will receive as part of their appointment letter the relevant details concerning raising a serious concern regarding Blackpool and The Fylde College.

PROPOSAL FORM FOR APPOINTING AN EXTERNAL EXAMINER

Please send to the HE Directorate a signed copy of the completed proposal form, and the appointee’s CV which must include details of experience relevant to the external examiner role.

NAME AND ADDRESS OF PROPOSED APPOINTEE:

Title	
Surname	
Forename(s)	
Current position (or most recent if retired)	
Current employer (or most recent if retired)	
National Insurance Number (required)	
Address and postcode	
Email address (required)	
Telephone Number	
Mobile Telephone Number	

PROGRAMME OF STUDY & PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT:

Names of all programmes of study or components of programmes of study to examine.	
Is this a new appointment? (yes/no)	
Name and institution of external examiner to be replaced	
Start date (XX/XX/XXXX)	
End date (XX/XX/XXXX)	
First academic year of appointment	

EXAMINING EXPERIENCE:

For new appointments, have you attached the appointee's C.V. which must include details of experience relevant to the external examiner role?	
Experience of internal and external examining, institution(s) and dates	
Include details of current external examiner commitments with periods of appointment	
Include details of any other relevant current academic/industrial or professional roles	
Does any member of the department hold an external examining post at the appointee's home institution?	
Is any member of the appointee's home department an external examiner for some of your courses?	

AUTHORISATION:

Head of School (Signature)	
Programme Leader (Signature)	
Proposal Date	
Date approved at the Academic Standards & Development Committee	

This form must be:

- completed in full and signed by the Head of School
- accompanied by an up-to-date curriculum vitae which must include details of experience relevant to the external examiner role
- presented to the Academic Standards & Development Committee for consideration

Appendix B5 – B - External Examiners Report Form

EXTERNAL EXAMINERS REPORT FORM

All reports should be submitted by e-mail to: HEDirectorate@blackpool.ac.uk

Note:

- This report would normally be completed on the day of an external's visit to attend the meeting of the Programme Board of Examiners; where this is not possible reports should be submitted within two weeks of the final Programme Board of Examiners.
- If this report covers more than one programme, please make clear which programmes the statements refer to, or provide a separate report for each programme covered.
- Information may be disclosed in order to comply with Freedom of Information and other legislation. Reports and departmental responses to the reports (Section B only) are made available to students. Reports should therefore avoid direct references to individual staff or students of B&FC.

All Sections Must Be Completed In Full

SECTION A	
Name of Examiner:	
Correspondence Address:	
Email Address:	
Scope of External Examination: (please list all programmes separately and include full title (or modules, streams, levels if applicable))	
Named Award and Level:	
Year Report Applies to:	

Section B4: Academic Standards and Quality

		Yes	No	N/A
a	Were the standards of the award appropriately set with reference to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)?			
b	Were the standards of the award appropriately set with reference to national Subject Benchmark Statements (where they exist)?			
c	Were the standards of the award appropriately set with reference to Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Bodies requirements (Where applicable)?			
d	Were the stated aims of the programme(s)/module(s) appropriate?			
e	Did the assessment for individual modules adequately test the stated learning outcomes of the modules			
f	Were the programme(s)/module(s) current and valid?			
Were the following aspects appropriate and comparable to other colleges/universities of which you had experience?			Yes	No
g	Programme/module aims			
h	Programme/module structure and content in relation to the aims			
i	Programme/module intended learning outcomes			
j	Teaching methods			
k	Assessment methods			
l	Mechanisms for programme monitoring and review			
m	Profile of degree classifications or marks			
n	Please provide any additional comments:			

Section B5: Assessment

		Yes	No
a	Was the assessment workload for students appropriate?		
b	Did you receive draft examination papers/assessment briefs for comment (verification)?		
c	Was the time you were given for verification sufficient?		
d	Was the standard of internal marking appropriate i.e. consistent and in line with assessment criteria and grade descriptors?		
e	Was the quality and quantity of feedback provided to students satisfactory?		
f	Was there evidence of internal moderation in line with College policy?		
g	Did you receive a sample of work to moderate in line with College policy?		
h	Was the time you were given for moderation sufficient?		
i	Were any disability issues adequately addressed in the assessment process?		
j	Did you have an opportunity to attend any assessments or meet with students?		
k	Please provide any additional comments:		

Section B7: Aspects of Good Practice

a	Please comment on any particular aspects of good practice which should be shared with the College and/or external audiences and which you have not included above
---	---

Section B8: Recommendations

		Yes	No
a	Where applicable, do you feel that the School/programme team has made appropriate response to your comments or those made by previous External Examiners?		

b	Were there any issues that continue to raise concern?

c	Do you have any observations on any specific issues in relation to the programme(s) or module(s) which you have responsibility for?

d	Are there any suggestions for improvements that you wish to make about College's procedures?

Section B9: Overview of Term of Office (For External Examiners in their final year)

		Yes	No
a	Is this your final year of appointment?		
b	If YES , we would welcome a general evaluative overview of the programme(s)/module(s) with which you have been associated.		

SECTION C**CONFIDENTIAL REPORT TO THE PRINCIPAL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE (if appropriate)**

External examiners reports are considered by the Academic Standards & Development Committee. As the membership of these boards includes student representatives, external examiners should avoid reference by name to individual members of staff or candidates in their reports. If there are any matters of a personal or confidential nature these may be raised in a separate confidential report/letter which should be sent directly to the Principal and Chief Executive.

I have provided a confidential report to the Principal and Chief Executive

Please note: it will not be possible to release payment of any fees until the report has been submitted.

Signature:		Date:	
------------	--	-------	--

Appendix B5 – C - External Examiner Programme Response Document

EXTERNAL EXAMINER PROGRAMME RESPONSE DOCUMENT

This document is to be used as section 6 in your APR and as an independent text that will be returned (via the HE Directorate) to your external on receipt of the external examiner's comments.

NOTE: *Please remove all of the red guidance notes prior submitting the document to the HE Directorate.*

PROGRAMME DETAILS

EBS Programme Code:	
Programme Title:	
Occurrence(s):	
Programme Leader:	
Mode of Study: (FT/PT/Both)	
Response Author:	
Date:	

EXTERNAL EXAMINER(S) DETAILS

Title:	
Name:	
Institution:	
Position:	
Year of Tenure: (1st/2nd/3rd/Final/Extended Year)	

Guidance for the table below:

For each section of the examiner's report please record the comment itself, your response and a corresponding action (these will also form the basis of part of your QIP). Please add or delete table rows as appropriate.

SUMMARY RESPONSE TO THE EXTERNAL EXAMINER COMMENTS

Please use this section to provide a holistic narrative around the responses identified in the specific responses table; this section could include extracts from the External Examiner report noting particular strengths and good practice as well as reflecting on any issues raised by External Examiners in the report.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

It is a requirement of external examiners to demonstrate appropriate evidence concerning each 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 to be assessed
- 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)
- meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies
- awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula
- competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

Appendix B5 – E – Roles and Responsibilities of External Examiners

GENERAL

External examiners must be able to:

- Consider each student impartially on the basis of the work submitted for assessment without being influenced by previous association with the award, the staff, or any of the students.
- Approve the form and content of proposed examination papers and/or coursework as specified in the programme validation documents.
- Approve forms of alternative assessment.
- Be consulted about and agree to any proposed changes to the structure of the assessment which will directly affect students currently on the award.
- Attend external examiners' meetings, where appropriate, and have access to all assessed work, if so required.
- Advise Module and Programme Boards on appropriate action where marks for any module are significantly outside normal patterns.
- Agree principles for the selection of candidates for vivas (if any) and, as appropriate, to attend or conduct vivas or oral examinations.
- Participate, as required, in reviews of decisions about individual student's awards.
- Report to B&FC on the effectiveness of the assessments and any experiences to be drawn from them.
- Report to B&FC on any matters of concern and to support the programme team in the continuous enhancement of the curriculum and its delivery, organisation and management.
- Provide informative comment and recommendations upon:
 - Whether B&FC is maintaining the threshold academic standards for its awards in accordance with the frameworks for higher education qualifications and applicable subject benchmark statements
 - Whether or not B&FC's assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the programme(s) and is conducted in line with the institution's policies and regulations
 - Whether or not B&FC's academic standards and the achievements of students are comparable with those in other higher education institutions of which the external examiners have experience.
 - Good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment observed by the external examiner(s)
 - Opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students.
 - The conduct of Module and Programme Boards.

ASSESSMENT-RELATED

External examiners will have access to:

- Draft examination papers and coursework assessment briefs as specified by the programme validation documents.
- A sample of assessments (and the marks awarded) representative of the cohort of students' work and the spread of classification in the module.
- On request and at an appropriate time, a meeting with a representative group of students from the programme(s) they are examining for any purpose related to the examiner's duties.
- On request and at an appropriate time, a viva voce examination of any individual student about whom the examiner has serious concerns.

Note: B&FC encourages external examiners to meet with student groups in the course of their duties, particularly where the content of a programme includes significant assessment activity that has substantial elements of the assessment of practical or project work, assessed presentations by the students and/or exhibitions.

From this an external examiner should be able to:

- Comment on draft examination papers and/or coursework briefs and be satisfied that they are at the appropriate level (as detailed in Chapter B6 of the B&FC Academic Regulations (Assessment and Feedback)).
- Verify the standard of marking.
- Comment on the moderation of marks.