

External Examining Policy and Procedures

Purpose

This document sets out the policy and procedures relating to external examining at AECC University College, including the appointment and induction of external examiners and their role and responsibilities. The policy and procedures are designed to ensure that the external examiners we appoint:

- are appropriately qualified and are in a position to provide impartial and independent advice and informative comment on our academic standards and student achievement in relation to those standards
- are in a position to comment on those standards in comparison with national standards/frameworks and standards achieved at other UK providers with which they are familiar
- are able to confirm that the integrity and rigour of our assessment policies, procedures and processes
- are able to comment on good practice and make recommendations for improvement and enhancement.

Separate arrangements apply where an external examiner is appointed in respect of a short course leading to a certificate of completion (without the award of HE credit), as a requirement of professional body accreditation. However, such external examiners will be appointed in line with the criteria set out in this document.

1 Background

- 1.1 The system of external examining is one of the key mechanisms through which AECC University College ensures that its academic standards, assessment processes and practices are appropriate and are comparable and consistent with national standards and with higher education institutions elsewhere in the sector. The main purposes of external examining are:
 - to provide independent verification to help ensure that the academic standards of our awards are appropriately set and maintained, aligned with national qualification frameworks, relevant benchmark statements and PSRB requirements where applicable
 - to provide independent verification that the performance of our students is comparable with that on similar courses elsewhere in the sector
 - to help us verify that our assessment process measures student achievement appropriately against the intended learning outcomes of the course, and that our assessment processes and classification arrangements are rigorous, fair, reliable and transparent
 - to verify that we are operating in line with our own assessment regulations and policies
 - to help us ensure that the quality of learning opportunities is maintained and enhanced.
- 1.2 External examiners submit an annual report, using a template provided by the Institution, to provide a judgement and commentary in respect of the above
- 1.3 External examiners may also act as 'critical friends', offering informed comment and advice to Course Teams – for example regarding course development. Care must be taken however to ensure that this does not compromise the external examiner's independence with respect to commenting on academic standards.
- 1.4 AECC University College recognises the importance of the role of external examiners for higher education institutions and encourages its own staff to actively engage with and seek external examining opportunities within the sector. The Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance) maintains a record of all staff holding external examinerships, to avoid reciprocal

appointments. An annual check of appointments is made; between checks it is the responsibility of an individual member of staff to inform the Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance) if they are appointed to such a role.

- 1.5 External examiners are responsible through the Academic Development and Quality Committee (ASQC) to Academic Board.
- 1.6 No degree, diploma or certificate of the institution may be awarded without participation in the assessment process by at least one external examiner, who is a full member of the relevant Assessment Board. Separate arrangements may apply where a certificate of completion (without the award of HE credit) is made.
- 1.7 Where courses leading to AECC University College awards are delivered in partnership with another institution, the selection and engagement of external examiners must remain the responsibility of the University College.
- 1.8 The number of External Examiners for each framework/course must be sufficient to cover the full range of studies and professional requirements. External examiners are appointed to maintain sole or joint responsibility for at least one named course and an agreed number of named unit(s). These are allocated according to the external examiners' subject expertise, any relevant PSRB and other external requirements, the size and complexity of the provision, and associated workloads.
- 1.9 On the basis of the requirements set out above, the number of external examiners for each course should be determined by the Framework/Course Leader, in discussion with the Head of School, and taking into account the views of any other external examiners serving for the course.

Part 1 Nomination and Appointment of External examiners

2 Selection and criteria for appointment, including conflicts of interest

- 2.1 The selection of nominees for appointment as an external examiner must be made in accordance with the following criteria:
 - i) good knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality
 - ii) a high degree of competence and experience in the fields covered by the course, and awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula
 - iii) relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate
 - iv) competence and experience in course design and assessment appropriate to the subject and at the level of the award, sufficient experience in quality assurance to enable them to discharge their role effectively
 - v) sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to assess standards in an effective manner, identify good practice and recommend enhancements to enable informed course development and to the enhancement of the student learning experience
 - vi) familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed
 - vii) 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)
 - viii) meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies.

It is the Framework/Course Leader's responsibility to ensure that these requirements are met.

- 2.2 In order to avoid **conflicts of interest**, external examiners may not be appointed if:
- (i) they are a member of the University College's governing body or a committee of the governing body or serve on the governing body or a committee of the governing body of one of our collaborative partners
 - (ii) they are a current employee of the University College or one of our collaborative partners
 - (iii) they have a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the course
 - (iv) they may be required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the course;
 - (v) they would personally benefit from any student outcomes, or if they have any connection to any student being assessed
 - (vi) they are 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 course; (normally a period of five years should have passed since the nominee's engagement with the University College although depending on the nature of the previous interaction, a shorter period may be considered)
 - (vii) they are a former staff member or student of the University College unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the external examiner have completed their courses)
 - (viii) there is a reciprocal arrangement within the School involving cognate courses at another institution
 - (ix) the previous external examiner for that course came from the same department and institution
 - (x) the appointment would mean there was more than one external examiner within a School from the same department of the same institution.
- 2.3 Where nominees have had less significant prior involvement with the institution, for instance through involvement in a course consideration panel, the institution will consider the extent of this carefully to ascertain whether the nomination would compromise future independence.
- 2.4 In order to have sufficient time for the proper performance of the role individuals would normally be expected to hold no more than two external examinerships for taught courses at any one time.
- 2.1 Nominees should normally have previous experience acting as an external examiner for taught courses within the UK. If the proposed nominee has no such experience it must be clearly specified by the Course Team as part of the nomination process how they will receive any additional induction and/or support they may require.
- 2.2 External examiners from outside the higher education system, for example, from relevant professions, who may not necessarily fulfil all the criteria above may be appointed where their knowledge and/or experience is appropriate to the course to be examined. Such appointees should not normally be the sole external examiner for the award.
- 2.3 Exceptionally, it may be appropriate to make an appointment that does not fulfil all the criteria. The rationale for any such appointment will be recorded on the nomination form and considered by ASQC.
- 2.4 All external examiners must confirm their eligibility to work in the UK. This will be verified by sight of applicable documentation prior formal appointment. This verification process will be managed through Human Resources.

3 Period of Service

- 3.1 The duration of an external examiner's appointment will normally be for four years, with an

exceptional extension of one year to ensure continuity. External examiners may be appointed for shorter periods.

- 3.2 External examiners should remain available after the last assessments with which they are to be associated in order to deal with any subsequent reviews of decisions.
- 3.3 An external examiner may be reappointed in exceptional circumstances but only after a period of five years or more has elapsed since their last appointment.

4 Process for Approval of Nominations

- 4.1 The approval process for the external examiner/s of new courses should normally take place in the academic year prior to the start of the course. For existing courses it should ideally take place in the year prior to the current external examiner completing his/her term of office, to enable a period of observation/shadowing to take place if required. External examiners must normally be in post for the annual start of the courses for which they are responsible.
- 4.2 The Framework Leader or Course Leader (where a course is outside a Framework) is responsible for the initial identification of a preferred nominee to act as external examiner, in discussion with relevant colleagues.
- 4.3 The Framework/Course Leader should outline to the prospective external examiner the role, duties and responsibilities of an external examiner for this institution, with reference to this document and confirm the prospective external examiner's willingness to be nominated.
- 4.4 At this stage the Framework/Course Leader should check for potential conflicts of interest and should check with the Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance) that no reciprocal external examination relationship will result from the appointment (i.e. no members of the School currently act as external examiners in the nominee's own disciplinary area).
- 4.5 If no conflicts or reciprocal arrangements exist the Framework/Course Leader should then ask the prospective external examiner to complete Part I of the nomination form.
- 4.6 The external examiner may submit a curriculum vitae (CV) in lieu of completion of the form but the CV must cover all the relevant information and relevant sections of the CV should be cross-referenced on the form. Information on conflicts of interest and on the right to work in the UK must be completed on the form and signed by the nominee. The prospective External Examiner should then return the form to the Framework/Course Leader.
- 4.7 The Framework/Course Leader should, if the nominee has submitted a CV rather than completing all sections of Part I, ensure that the CV contains all the required information and is appropriately cross-referenced on the form, and should follow up any queries with the prospective external examiner so that all the required information is available for ASQC. This should include a further check that there are no conflicts of interest.
- 4.8 The Framework/Course Leader must complete Part II of the nomination form. Should the Framework/Course Leader wish to nominate an individual who may not fully meet the selection criteria they must set out clearly on the nomination form the rationale for doing so. Where experience and expertise is regarded as a replacement for academic qualifications this should be clearly explained.
- 4.9 The Framework/Course Leader should forward the nomination form to the Head of School, for consideration and signature, on behalf of the School, to confirm that the appointment may proceed for consideration. Any queries at this stage should be dealt with within the School, and if the Head of School does not consider the appointment to be appropriate, bearing in mind the criteria for appointment it is the responsibility of the Head of School to arrange for the nominee to be so advised.
- 4.10 If agreed within the School, the Head of School will submit the nomination form to the Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance) who will review the nomination in relation to the selection criteria listed above; any queries will be discussed with the Course/ Framework Leader and the Head of School. If required the Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance)

may highlight comments/propose conditions to the nomination for consideration by ASQC, in discussion with the Framework/Course Leader.

- 4.11 The Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance) will submit the nomination to ASQC for consideration. If timing requires, nominations may be considered on Chair's action or in circulation.
- 4.12 Approval is given by ASQC and reported to Academic Board.
- 4.13 Should ASQC decline to approve a nomination the Vice Principal as Chair of the Committee will convey this decision to the nominee, with an explanation. The Framework/Course Leader should then identify a further nominee as soon as possible.
- 4.14 The University has a responsibility to prevent illegal working in the UK, as required under the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act. Under this Act, the University College is required to check the right to work documentation of all external examiners, including those who are already working for another UK employer. Right to Work checks are conducted through the HR department.

5 Appointment

- 5.1 Once the appointed has been approved the Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance) will issue an appointment letter on behalf of the institution. The appointment letter outlines the details and terms and conditions of the appointment and is signed by the Principal.
- 5.2 Together with the appointment letter new external examiners will receive from the Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance) the following documentation:
 - Policy and Procedures regarding the role and responsibilities of External Examiners
 - Policy and Procedures for Assessment Boards – Membership, Responsibilities and Operation
 - AECC University College Assessment regulations
 - the relevant course specification(s) and unit specifications
 - Marking and Moderating Policy for all Higher Education courses and units
 - the current external examiner's most recent report
 - the most recent Framework/course annual monitoring report and Continuous Action Plan
 - Dignity, Diversity and Equality policy
- 5.3 The external examiner is asked to return a signed copy of the letter of appointment. This forms the basis of the contract for the external examiner's role.
- 5.4 On receipt of the signed letter the Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance) will advise the E-Learning Developer and IT Department, who will arrange for the new external examiners to be provided with access to the relevant sections of the VLE and/or other IT systems as required, with advice on its use and navigation.
- 5.5 The Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance) retains a central list of approved external examiners, which is presented annually to ASQC and available on the Staff Information Portal.
- 5.6 The Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance) will ensure that the name, position and institution of the external examiner is made available to students via the VLE.
- 5.7 A flowchart setting out the appointment and approval process is attached as **appendix 1**.

6 Revision, Extension, Resignation or Termination of Appointment

- 6.1 When an External Examiner's term expires at the end of the normal appointment period the Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance) will arrange for him/her to be sent a letter of thanks.
- 6.2 If a revision of an existing external examiner appointment is necessary (for example to add new responsibilities to an external examiner's portfolio) then the Framework/ Course

Leader should complete the relevant template for submission to ASQC. If approved, the Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance) will send to the external examiner an amended letter of appointment on behalf of the institution. The letter will be signed by the Principal.

- 6.3 If the external examiner resigns before the end of his or her term of office, the Framework/ Course Leader should take immediate steps, in discussion with relevant colleagues, to identify a replacement, in accordance with the policy and criteria in this document.
- 6.4 An appointment cannot be made or continued where such an appointment would give rise to a conflict of interest between the role of external examiner at this institution and any other position held by the External Examiner. Should such a conflict arise during the period of appointment, the external examiner must draw this to the attention of the Head of School immediately. The Head of School will discuss with the Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance) the most appropriate way to handle the conflict.
- 6.5 The external examiner is required to discharge satisfactorily his or her responsibilities and duties. The appointment of an external examiner may be terminated at any time in the following circumstances:
- a) by either party upon giving the other one month's written notice; or
 - b) by the University College, by giving written notice with immediate effect
 - (i) in the event of a breach by the external examiner of the terms of the appointment, such as -
 - failure to attend Assessment Board meetings without the prior agreement of the Chair and without arranging an alternative means to input to the meetings
 - failure to submit an annual report within the specified time
 - submission of more than one inadequate annual report
 - failure to carry out other duties outlined in Section 2 of this document.
 - (ii) in the event of a conflict of interest arising during the term of office which cannot be resolved or addressed by other means.
- 6.6 The submission of a confidential report to the Principal, and/or the raising of an issue with the QAA (see para 13.6) will not be regarded as valid reason for termination of appointment.
- 6.7 Recommendations for termination of contract for non-performance of duties in line with paragraph 6.5 above must be made by the Head of School, using the termination form, and approved by the Principal. Upon approval, the Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance) will arrange for a termination of appointment letter to be sent to the external examiner, signed by the Principal. Terminations of appointment will be reported to ASQC. If an external examiner wishes to discuss the reason for termination, they should be directed to the Head of School in the first instance.

7 Induction

- 7.1 It is the responsibility of the relevant Course Administrator working with the Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance) to arrange for the induction of newly appointed external examiners to ensure that they are suitably prepared to fulfil the requirements of the role and have access to the information they require for this purpose.
- 7.2 The induction will normally include:
- reminders about the relevant national frameworks and the external examiner's role in assuring comparability with national frameworks and standards (particularly for inexperienced examiners)
 - background information about the institution, its values and culture
 - a meeting with the Framework/Course Leader (and where appropriate other members of the course team) to outline the context, philosophy, and assessment criteria/procedures of

the course(s). This should include a review of the course and unit specifications, marking criteria and assessment briefs. Criteria relating to the requirements of relevant professional bodies should be addressed where appropriate

- the individual examiner's role and the extent of their discretion, making clear that it is not the role of external examiners to determine marks or degree classifications for individual candidates
- review of the Assessment regulations, Academic Appeals, FTP, disciplinary and academic offences procedures and relevant assessment policies and procedures
- review of the reporting structure, timelines, format, procedures and institution's responses, including the annual report template
- information and documentation relating to claims procedures and expenses allowances.
- information about the timetable/schedule of the examining process for the course including dates of relevant meetings.
- Information/advice on the use of the VLE or equivalent electronic systems.

At induction there should also be an opportunity for the external examiner to request any additional materials or information to assist them in the performance of their role.

- 7.3 Where an inexperienced external examiner is appointed the Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance), working with the Framework/Course Leader will ensure that the external examiner is provided with any additional support he/she requires in order to be fully informed about what the role entails, and about the academic standards and quality expected of courses at the relevant level in UK higher education. The external examiner should be encouraged to take advantage of national training opportunities available.

Part 2: Role and responsibilities of External Examiners

8 Information to support the role

- 8.1 The Deputy Academic Registrar must ensure that the following documents are supplied or made available electronically to all external examiners annually:
- Marking criteria for the course(s) to be examined.
 - Assessment briefs for the units concerned
 - A timetable/schedule of the examining process for the Framework/course, including when work will be available for scrutiny and the dates of practical assessments when external examiners are expected/invited to attend
 - Assessment marks
 - Moderation reports, as applicable
 - Details of procedures for claiming expenses and fees.
 - Information about completing the external examiner's report, and a copy of the report form template.
 - Any other quality assurance materials that the external may request.

The Deputy Academic Registrar should also ensure on an annual basis that the External Examiners have the required access to the VLE or equivalent systems for accessing student work, and understand how to access the relevant material.

9 Responsibilities of External Examiners

- 9.1 In fulfilling their role, external examiners are expected:
- (i) to be given the opportunity to comment on the form and content of proposed examination papers and an agreed sample of coursework and other assessments that count towards the award, and the relevant marking criteria.

- (ii) to review samples of assessed work which have been moderated in order to comment whether the assessment processes are robust and the students have fulfilled the learning outcomes of the course and reached the required standard.
- (iii) to comment on whether the academic standards for the course(s) are set and maintained in line with the requirements of national frameworks and, where applicable, relevant Subject Benchmark Statements and/or professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements;
- (iv) to compare the standards of the award and performance of students with that of their peers on comparable courses of higher education elsewhere in the UK
- (v) to satisfy themselves and then confirm that the assessments have been conducted in accordance with the relevant assessment regulations
- (vi) based on moderation, to advise Assessment Boards on the adjustment of whole sets of marks awarded by internal markers subject to the agreement of the Assessment Board
- (vii) to participate in the meetings of the Assessment Board and ensure that the decisions accord with the University College's regulations, policies and procedures, including decisions relating to mitigation or academic offences
- (viii) to provide expert and impartial feedback to the Framework/Course Team on the effectiveness of the assessments, including comment on good practice and innovative practices to contribute to quality assurance and enhancement of the learning opportunities provided to students
- (ix) to submit an annual report using the approved University College report template, by the agreed deadline.

9.2 In addition to the above, whilst in office external examiners may be invited to offer an independent view regarding the provision to which their appointment relates in a number of ways:

- (i) to provide advice for use in Framework/Course review or have an advisory role to play in the development of additional provision, acting as a 'critical friend' to support such developments;
- (ii) to comment on proposed changes to the course structure or content, applying judgement in regard both to the assessment of the modified course(s)/unit(s) and to its appropriateness to the level of the award;
- (iii) to comment on the suitability of assessment policies, procedures, and regulations.

9.3 External examiners may be asked to mentor other examiners who are new or inexperienced in the role. There is no additional fee for mentoring as this is not likely to incur a significant amount of extra work and is therefore covered by the standard basic fee.

9.4 As a part of the process for monitoring standards of performance the external examiner will have a role in commenting on unit and course assessment data, including award data over time to contribute to providing assurances in respect of consistency of standards and avoiding grade inflation.

9.5 If a course is delivered in different locations and/or in partnership with other institutions, external examiners should highlight if they have any issues or concerns related to comparability of student performance or experience arising specifically from this delivery.

10 Review of assessment briefs and marking criteria

10.1 External Examiner review of assessment briefs, draft examination papers and marking criteria is to help ensure that all assessments are appropriate for the subject(s), the level(s) and in relation to the anticipated intended learning outcomes and that students will be assessed fairly in relation to the intended learning outcomes.

10.2 External examiners should be given opportunities to review the form and content of proposed

examination papers (including resit papers) and assessment briefs. Marking schemes, and any specific guidance associated with PSRBs should also be included where appropriate. Examination papers and assessment briefs should be provided in final draft form and in a timely fashion. External examiners should not be used as proof-readers.

- 10.3 As a minimum, external examiners should receive all assessment materials which contribute toward classification in order to have an opportunity to review them, therefore normally excluding Level 3 and 4 assessments (except in any cases where awards are designed to terminate at these levels). To include:
- all examination papers (including resit papers);
 - assessment briefs* (including reassessment where appropriate);
 - marking schemes for the above;
- * A sample of assessment briefs which are assessed by 100% coursework (including those assessed by one formal element worth 100% or those assessed by a number of sub-elements worth 100% in total) must be reviewed.
- 10.4 The Unit Leader must provide the External Examiner with feedback as to how their comments on draft assessment material have been taken into consideration and whether changes have been made as a result, by the deadline specified by Registry. Registry will have oversight of this process.
- 10.5 A copy of the assessment guidelines, and schedule and moderation plan should also be provided for information.

11 Arrangements for the review of assessed students' work and moderation

- 11.1 External examiners are required to review assessed students' work, once this has been moderated in accordance with the Marking and Moderating Policy for all Higher Education courses and units (AECC University College awards), to review internal consistency and external comparability of standards.
- 11.2 The Framework/Course Team and external examiner should agree the nature and sample size of assessed students' work to be provided for moderation during the academic year, and timescales for feedback. The Team should consult with the external examiner to take into account their wishes in respect of receiving assessment criteria, model answers, marking schemes and any statistical data required.
- 11.3 To facilitate external examiner moderation, the agreed sample must clearly identify the moderation audit trail and the first marker and moderator must be identifiable to the external examiner.
- 11.4 Where multiple choice questions, tests which utilise automated assessment packages, or live assessments (e.g. presentations) are the sole method of assessment for a unit, then external examiners must be provided with access to these. Where live assessments make up 100% of coursework, the Framework/Course Team must agree with the external examiner(s) an appropriate sample size and how the external examiner will be given access to relevant materials.
- 11.5 The external examiner should have access to the work of students proposed for the highest available category of the award and for failure, and samples of the work of students proposed for each category of the award
- 11.6 Examples of students' work can be made available for review by the external examiners during a visit if these have not been made available to the external examiner in advance of the Assessment Board. Where external examiners wish to view students' work before they arrive, Registry will arrange for the agreed documents to be made available. This may happen throughout the academic year or in advance of Assessment Boards. The sample provided to external examiners should be organised through Registry. Where external examiners choose to review students' work prior to the Board during their visit to the institution, sufficient time should be made available for this task.

- 11.7 External examiners must not be directly involved in assessing students or in marking. The Marking and Moderating Policy for all Higher Education courses and units (AECC University College awards) sets out the internal arrangements to be followed where markers disagree.
- 11.8 External examiners should not have any special role in individual student matters involving exceptional personal circumstances or academic offences; their role in such cases is to ensure that the institution's procedures are applied appropriately.

External Examiner recommendations for the adjustment of marks

- 11.9 If an external examiner disagrees with the standards of marking for assessed work within a sample he/she may, on the basis of moderation, make recommendations to the Assessment Board for the adjustment of whole sets of marks awarded by internal markers, if all students are considered to have been unduly advantaged or disadvantaged by errors in the marking or assessment process. The external examiner should have reviewed a sample of sufficient size to confirm the trend, but all work need not have been reviewed by the external to reach this judgement. The external examiner may request to see a larger sample size to facilitate making this decision.
- 11.10 Moderation by external examiners should not normally result in changes to the marks for individual candidates. Unless all the students work for that assessment has been reviewed by the external examiner before any such changes are made, to ensure no student will be unduly advantaged or disadvantaged. This may involve, for example, review of all assessments by a particular marker whose marking has raised a concern. Should an external examiner identify a specific marking error (rather than a trend) this should be drawn to the attention of the course team, to enable this to be rectified before the Assessment Board.

12 Assessment Boards

- 12.1 The policy relating to Assessment Boards is set out in the Policy and Procedures for Assessment Boards – Membership, Responsibilities and Operation.
- 12.2 It is the responsibility of Registry to arrange the date of the Assessment Boards. Arrangements will normally be made for external examiners and the Framework/Course team to meet prior to the Board.
- 12.3 An external examiner is a full member of the Assessment Board. External examiners are required to be present at all relevant Assessment Boards at which decisions on recommendations for awards are made in the subject/s in which they are involved.
- 12.4 If an external examiner exceptionally cannot attend a meeting of the Assessment Board this must be reported in advance to the Chair for approval of the alternative arrangements through which the external examiner will exercise his/her responsibilities at the Board for example by participation by Skype, consultation by telephone or some other effective way. In such cases the Assessment Board must receive, and record in the minutes clear evidence for the views of the external examiner and confirmation that the external examiner has been consulted on the recommendations made by the Assessment Board. Where this is the case, another member of the Framework/Course external examining team will be exceptionally asked to sign the Board Report and the external examiner in question must still signal their agreement to the recommendations in writing before the results can be published to students. See the Policy and Procedures for Assessment Boards – Membership, Responsibilities and Operation.
- 12.5 At the meeting of the Assessment Board the role of the external examiner is:
- to ensure that recommendations accord with the requirements and normal practice of the regulations for that course and the institution;
 - to ensure that decisions made are fair and consistent;
 - to sign the Assessment Board Report as confirmation that he/she is satisfied with the conduct of the assessment process.
 - to make general comments, where applicable, on the academic standards and quality of the course and the assessment process including good practice in learning, teaching and assessment and the enhancement of learning opportunities, and any other observations.

12.6 Should the external examiner, in exceptional circumstances, be unwilling to endorse the outcomes of the assessment processes following the Assessment Board, he/she should be asked to meet with the Chair of ASQC (or nominee if there is a perceived conflict of interest) and the Chair of the Assessment Board as a matter of urgency to seek to resolve the issues of concern. The external examiner should be asked to make clear whether his/her concerns are such that he/she is unable to confirm the outcomes for the students on the relevant courses; if this is not the case and the concerns are more general in nature the external examiner should be encouraged to sign off the outcomes and raise the concerns separately in a confidential letter to the Principal. Should it appear that investigation of the external examiner's concerns may delay release of marks to students the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Head of School will discuss with the Academic Registrar the most appropriate way to communicate with those affected, including determining the timescale by which results would be released.

13 External examiners' annual report

- 13.1 External examiners are required to make an annual written report, using the approved Template.
- 13.2 The report must be submitted electronically to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor via the Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance) no later than two weeks after the Assessment Board has taken place. Payment of fees will be conditional upon the receipt of these reports.
- 13.3 As external examiners' reports will be in the public domain, they should not refer to staff or students by name.
- 13.4 In his/her final report submitted at the end of his/her term of office the external examiner is asked to provide retrospective comments on his or her experience as an external examiner at the institution and to draw attention to any significant changes in standards or procedures observed during the period.
- 13.5 An external examiner may make a separate report directly and confidentially to the Principal on any matter of serious concern arising from the assessments that may put at risk the standard of the AECC University College's awards. Should an external examiner choose to make such a confidential report, the Principal will ask the Head of School (or nominee if there is a perceived conflict of interest) to follow up the issues raised and coordinate a response on his/her behalf. A report on the issues and response will be made to ASQC (anonymised as appropriate, if the issues relate to specific individuals).
- 13.6 If the external examiner believes that the serious concern is systemic and not a one-off case of ineffective practice they may, as a last resort, raise the issue with the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). Guidance on when and how to raise such a concern can be found on the QAA website. Alternatively or additionally, the external examiner may wish to raise a concern directly with the relevant professional body. These options are set out for the external examiner in their letter of appointment and will be drawn to the attention of the external examiner in the response letter from the Principal.

14 Consideration of External Examiners' reports

- 14.1 External examiners' reports are an important element in monitoring the standards and quality of provision.
- 14.2 Once received, the Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance) will review the report, to scan for concerns raised suggesting that standards are not being met. Any such issues will be drawn to the attention of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Head of School to consider appropriate action to discuss with the Framework/Course Leader.
- 14.3 The report will then be circulated to the Framework/Course Leader for consideration and formulation of an initial written response. The response should be a considered response from the course to issues raised, with details of any actions to be taken as a result, and should include a clear rationale for any decision not to take action in response to any recommendation

made in section 12 of the form. Where the team disagrees with a recommendation made by an external examiner in section 12, and the issue is deemed substantial, advice should be sought from the Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance) to progress the situation.

- 14.4 If the Framework/Course Leader has concerns that comments made by external examiners in their reports do not fall within the remit of external examiners, as outlined in this document (for example, commenting on detail on an individual student's work) the Framework/Course Leader should discuss this with the Head of School and the Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance) to determine the most appropriate way to respond.
- 14.5 Reports and initial responses will be considered at the earliest opportunity at Framework/Course Steering Groups, and addressed in the relevant annual monitoring report and action plan.
- 14.6 As part of the annual monitoring process external examiner reports and initial response will be presented to ASQC for consideration and discussion at institutional level. Particular attention will be drawn to any areas where the Course Team disagrees with the recommendation. As part of the consideration of reports and responses at ASQC the committee will identify any common themes or trends arising.
- 14.7 Where applicable, external examiners' reports, or relevant issues arising from them, will be made available to relevant PSRBs, and other external bodies as such Bodies may require.
- 14.8 External examiners' reports and course team response are made available to all staff via the Staff Information Portal (SIP).

15 Student engagement

- 15.1 Where possible, and particularly if the external examiner requests, Registry will make arrangements for external examiners to meet with students, to assist with the external examiner's understanding of a course and the way in which it operates from a student perspective; however this is not part of the assessment process. Such meetings may take place by Skype or similar, if necessary.
- 15.2 Where meetings with students are arranged, Registry will provide the students in advance with information about the scope and purpose of the meeting.
- 15.3 The name, position and institution of the relevant external examiner(s) are made available to students through inclusion of this information on the VLE. Students are advised that they must not contact external examiners directly. Should any external examiner be contacted by a student they are asked to forward the letter to the Framework/Course Leader for a response. Similarly if an external examiner is approached by a student or group of students in person with a request to discuss particular issues about a course or unit the External Examiner should refer to students to the Course Leader.
- 15.4 External examiners' reports will be made available in full to students via the VLE. Students will also be engaged through discussion of the reports and responses at Course Steering Groups and ASQC at which they are represented.

16 Practical arrangements

- 16.1 Fees are payable on receipt of the annual report.
- 16.2 The fee to be paid to an external examiner is set out in the letter of appointment.
- 16.3 External examiners are responsible for making their own travel arrangements. Registry will liaise with external examiners regarding these arrangements as required.
- 16.4 Details of costs and subsistence and other expenses should be submitted on the claim form provided: subsistence expenses will be reimbursed provided details are shown and receipts submitted.

16.5 Any hotel bookings required will normally be organised by Registry.

17 Associated documentation and forms

External Examiners for Taught Courses: Nomination Form

External Examiners for Taught Courses: Revisions to Appointment, including extensions

External Examiner Termination of Appointment Form

External Examiner annual report form

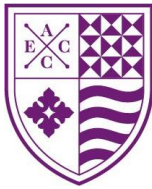
Marking and Moderating Policy for all Higher Education courses and units (AECC University College awards)

AECC University College Assessment Regulations for all Higher Education Courses

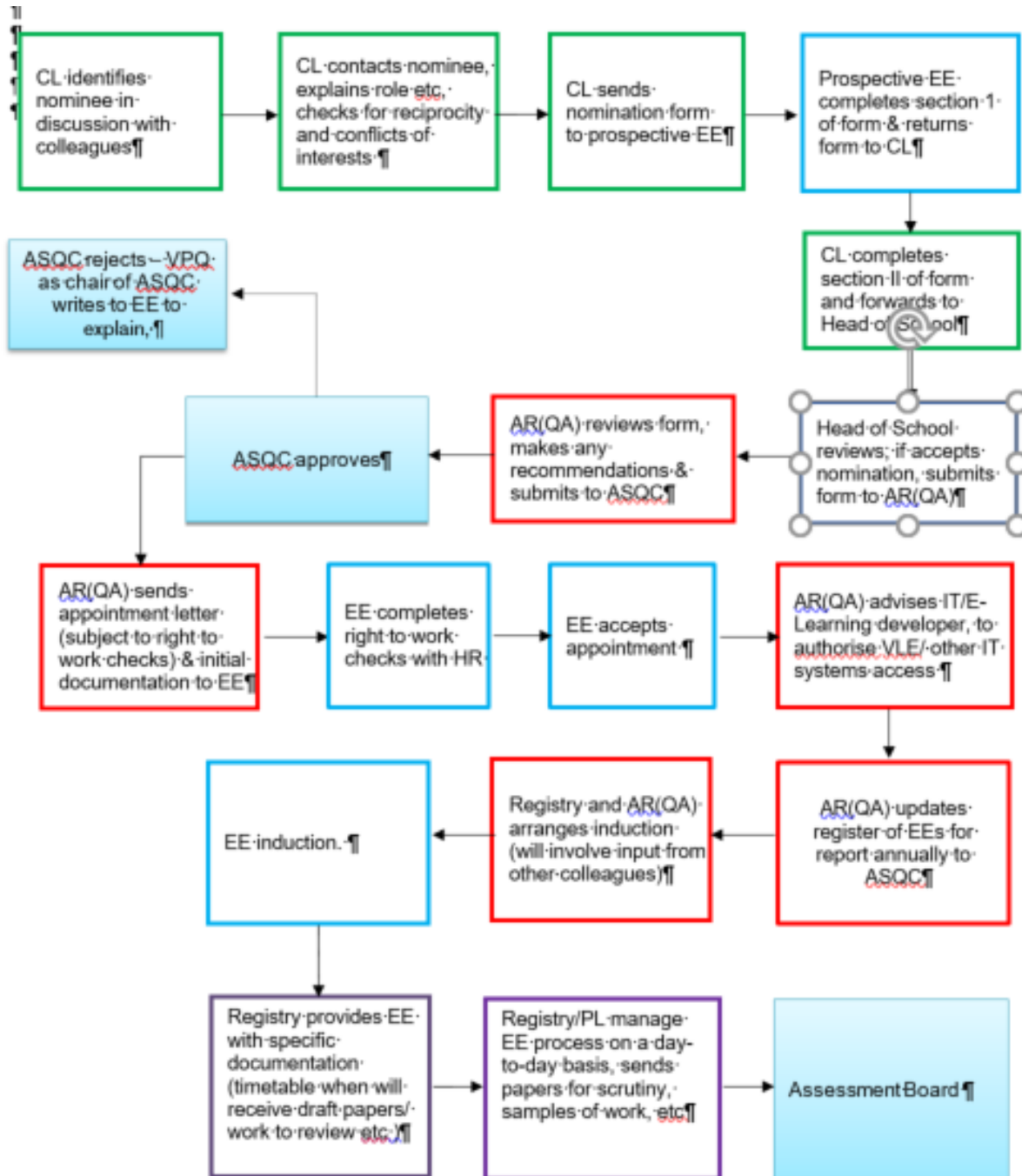
Assessment Board Conduct and Operations Policy

Rubric	
Version	2.0
Ratified by	Academic Audit and Policy Committee/Academic Board
Originator/Auth	Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance)
Owner	Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance)
Reference source	UK Quality Code 2018. UK Quality Code Advice and Guidance, particularly Externality; Assessment. Examples from other institutions used as source material (in particular Bournemouth University and University of Southampton)
Date approved	20 March 2019
Effective from	September 2019 for courses with no BU award students
Review date	Spring 2022
Target	External Examiners, Framework/Course Leaders, Registry,
Policy location	SIP, Quality Assurance webpage
Equality	No direct impact

Amended to update titles Jan 2021



External Examiner process flowchart



CL - Course Leader
 AR(QA) - Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance)
 EE - External Examiner