

University of East London External Examiners' Manual – September 2021

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Part 1 - Introduction

If you are reading this manual because you have been appointed as an external examiner for the University of East of London, the first thing we would like to do is to say thank you. The changing nature of higher education means that there are growing demands on everybody, not least the external examiner - we do not underestimate the commitment you have shown by agreeing to take on this role and we will do everything we can to support you.

We would like you to know that our university considers that external examiners play a vital role in the maintenance of academic standards, ensuring that assessment processes are conducted fairly, in accordance with our academic framework and without prejudice to any student. We will take all comments that you make extremely seriously and make sure that you receive a response to any issues that you raise.

The Purpose of this Manual

The purpose of this manual is to provide you with all the information on university level policies and regulations that you need in one user friendly document. This should reduce the amount of material that we have to send to you and, hopefully, make it easier for you to find relevant information as and when you need it. You will of course also receive material directly from the school relating to the requirements of the modules or courses for which you have been appointed.

The manual also defines the role that we at the University of East London expect of our external examiners. We feel that it is important to define this clearly as we are aware that the roles that external examiners are expected to fulfil in different institutions are not necessarily always the same.

During the current Covid19 health emergency it may be necessary for the university to put in place alternative arrangements for assessment or for conducting assessment boards. We will keep you up to date with any changes we need to make.

Part 2 – Assessment Board Structures

From 2019 the University of East London approved revised Assessment Regulations. You will find the regulations contained in Appendix 2 (Part 3 – Academic Regulations) of this manual, and a summary in Section 3 of this manual. The framework provides a clear and consistent set of regulations applicable to the majority of courses at UEL. New students will study under the new regulations, whilst existing students will be taught out under the previous regulations. Under the framework, it is possible that students studying the same module may be enrolled on different courses.

2.1 Undergraduate Assessment Board Structure

School Assessment Boards at undergraduate level consider both student progression and awards. Boards are held after each period in which modules are offered and, where necessary, to review reassessments that fall outside board cycles or where local factors necessitate. Each Board will consider the student outcomes at both course and module level for all courses and modules within the remit of the board (see Manual of General Regulations, Appendix 2 Undergraduate Assessment Board Terms of Reference).

School Assessment Boards

School Assessment Boards are responsible for reviewing the progress of all students on their course of study. The result will be a decision on student's academic standing. School Assessment Boards are responsible for:

- Considering the performance of students on modules and courses;
- making recommendations to enhance the quality of delivery in subsequent years;
- Confirming the marks awarded to each student in respect of all modules which comprise the School and its courses;
- Assuring the appropriate standards on modules;
- Noting pass compensation, where applicable;
- Noting the decisions made by the University extenuating circumstances panel,
- Noting breaches of the academic misconduct regulations.
- Making progression decisions for students, where relevant;
- Recommending the termination of the registration of students who have ceased to engage with their studies;

Additionally, for students eligible for an award, School assessment boards are responsible for:

- Ensuring eligibility for awards on the basis of accumulated credit;
- Awarding qualifications to students for successful completion of courses of study;
- Agreeing the award classification, where relevant;
- Ensuring any award-specific requirements have been met.

2.2 Postgraduate Assessment Board Structure

School Assessment Board

School Assessment Boards are responsible for reviewing the progress of all students on their course of study. The result will be a decision on student's academic standing. School Assessment Boards are responsible for:

- Considering the performance of students on modules and courses;
- making recommendations to enhance the quality of delivery in subsequent years;
- Confirming the marks awarded to each student in respect of all modules which comprise the School and its courses;
- Assuring the appropriate standards on modules;
- Noting pass compensation, where applicable;
- Noting the decisions made by the University extenuating circumstances panel,
- Noting breaches of the academic misconduct regulations.
- Recommending the termination of the registration of students who have ceased to engage with their studies;

Additionally, for students eligible for an award, School assessment boards are responsible for:

- Ensuring eligibility for awards on the basis of accumulated credit;
- Awarding qualifications to students for successful completion of courses of study;
- Agreeing the award classification, where relevant;
- Ensuring any award-specific requirements have been met.

The School Board considers all and only modules within the school. The School Board meets according to the schedule set out in the Academic Calendar (normally three times per year at the end of each term).

2.3 Collaborative Partners

A number of our courses are offered in collaboration with partners. UEL's approach is to ensure, wherever possible and within the constraints of the external examiner workload, that external examiners are appointed to review modules/courses at all locations of delivery in order to properly ensure comparability of standards. In some cases, your appointment will cover modules offered both on-campus at UEL and at one or more of our partner sites; in others you will be appointed to modules/courses delivered by more than one partner.

If you are appointed to examine modules at a Franchise partner solely you will be given access to a sample of UEL on campus materials in order to examine their comparability.

(Franchise: where UEL have licenced other institutions to deliver whole courses or stages of courses that also run on the UEL campus.)

In such cases, the school will advise you of the arrangements for the moderation of assessment tasks and work, and for the operation of assessments boards.

2.4 The External Examiner's Role

You will be appointed to modules at all levels, in most cases across a course however your modules may span several courses. Your role will encompass responsibilities at all the relevant assessment boards to the level you are examining (PG/UG or both).

Full details of the role and responsibilities of the external examiner at assessment boards are set out in part 5 of this document. However, the following is a summary of your main roles and responsibilities.

School Assessment Board

As a department examiner, your role will encompass:

- Participating in relevant Board meetings.
- Assuring that the appropriate standard is set for modules.
- Considering and comparing the performance of students on modules to that of peers on comparable module/courses in higher education elsewhere.
- Approving the form and content of proposed assessment tasks to confirm appropriate level and credit tariff for modules.
- Confirming that students are assessed fairly in relation to the module specification and regulations and able to reach the required standard.
- Meeting students and mentors within placements and review practice assessment documentation (where professional body requirements stipulate).
- Confirming the marks awarded to students in respect of all modules which comprise the Department and its courses.

- Confirming the award of credit for the achievement of students on modules and progression decisions for students.
- Confirming the award of credit for certificated and experiential learning.
- Ensuring that the decisions of the Extenuation Panel are formally implemented; having the right to see samples of the work of students for each category in the module marking scheme (including failure) to ensure that each student is fairly placed in relation to the rest of the cohort, with the right to access all assessed work if required.
- Having the right to moderate the marks awarded by internal examiners.
- Noting and reporting any breach of assessment regulations.
- Contributing to decisions on progression and ensure that those decisions have been reached by means according with UEL's requirements and standard practice in higher education.
- Participating as required in any reviews of decisions about individual students taken during the period of office.
- Making an annual report on the effectiveness and conduct of the assessments and any lessons to be drawn from them.

If you are a Lead Examiner, your role will encompass:

- Participating in the relevant Board meetings.
- Confirming student eligibility for awards on the basis of accumulated credit.
- Confirming the award of credit to students on modules passed by compensation.
- Confirming qualifications for students for successful completion of courses of study.
- Participating in the review of withdrawn students and awarding the highest qualification to which they are entitled.
- Agreeing the award classification, where relevant.
- Ensuring any award specific requirements have been met.
- Noting and reporting any breach of assessment regulations.
- Making an annual report on the conduct of the Board and its processes.

Part 3 – Academic Regulations

This section provides a summary to key elements of the regulations.

Undergraduate courses consist of standard modules whose value is 20 credits (equivalent to 200 student study hours), or multiples thereof up to a maximum of 60 credits. Modules of 40 or more credits may extend across two terms. 20 credit modules will be delivered within a single term.

Where you are examiner to a course operating outside the Academic Framework, the school will advise you of the applicable regulations.

3.1 Undergraduate

A course leading to an Honours degree consists of 360 credits at Level 4 and higher including:

- at least 240 credits at Level 5 and Higher;
- at least 120 credits at Level 6 and Higher.

Up to half the credits for an award may be achieved through accreditation of prior experiential learning, and up to two thirds of the credits for an award may be achieved through accreditation of prior certificated learning. The remaining volumes must be achieved through the award of UEL Credit. Where a student is awarded both experiential and certificated credit the total combined volume may not exceed two thirds of the volume of the intended award with no more than half the volume as experiential credit. Credit for study other than covered by UEL Academic Regulations will result in the award of credit without marks.

In order to pass a module, a student must both achieve an aggregate mark of 40% and meet the component threshold marks (normally 30%). Where a student does not achieve an aggregate of 40% on a module, or does not achieve the component threshold marks, the student is reassessed in all the failed components of the module unless compensation for the module has been awarded. Details of the re-assessment will be provided at a module level in accordance with the Assessment and Feedback Policy and will apply in all and only those components achieving a mark of less than 40%. Component marks of 40% or over are carried forward to reassessment.

In order to pass a module on reassessment a student must both achieve an aggregate mark of 40% and achieve the component threshold marks. Unless extenuation has been granted for all previous components, the module mark of a module passed through reassessment is capped at 40% for the purposes of calculating the degree classification.

Where a module mark has been capped a student's transcript will additionally supply information about the uncapped level of performance.

Compensation

A student is awarded a compensated pass in a module and awarded credit provided that:

- The credit rating of the module is no more than 20 credits;
- the student has been awarded at least 100 UEL credits at the level of the compensated module.
- the student has both attained at least 35% in the module to be compensated and attained the threshold in all components;
- the module is not specified as non-compensatable in the course specification as an award-specific requirement (for example due to a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirement);
- there is no assessment breach recorded against the module.

If eligible, the student will be awarded a compensated pass for a maximum of 20 credits at each level on a course and this will occur at the earliest point at which the student is eligible for compensation. Modules which have already been taken into account in deciding a student's eligibility for compensation cannot subsequently be taken into account for the further compensation of another module.

Honours degree – classification

The regulations for the classification of honours degrees apply only to students who join courses after the introduction of the revised Academic Framework in 2019-20. Since the framework is rolled out level by level the first point Bachelors awards will be conferred under these regulations is summer 2022.

Where a student is eligible for an Honours degree by passing a valid combination of modules to comprise an award and has gained a minimum of 240 UEL credits at level 5 or level 6 on the current enrolment for the course, including a minimum of 120 UEL credits at level 6, the award classification is determined by calculating:

The credit-weighted arithmetic mean of the best 100 credits at level 6	x	0.8	+	The credit-weighted arithmetic mean of the next best 80 credits at levels 5 and/or 6	x	0.2
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and applying the mark obtained as a percentage, with all decimal points rounded up to the nearest whole number, to the following classification

70% - 100%	First Class Honours
60% - 69%	Second Class Honours, First Division
50% - 59%	Second Class Honours, Second Division
40% - 49%	Third Class Honours

3.2 Postgraduate

In order to pass a module, a student must both achieve an aggregate mark of 50% and also meet the component threshold marks. For the purposes of passing a module each component has a threshold mark of 40%. (The threshold may be higher where there are Professional Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements; this will be specified in the module specification and/or course handbook).

Where a student does not achieve an aggregate of 50%, or does not achieve component threshold marks, the student is reassessed in the module at the next reassessment point in all and only those components achieving a mark of less than 50%. Component marks of 50% or over are carried forward to reassessment.

Details of reassessment will appear in module and course related information. The reassessment point for all modules occurs during the subsequent term in accordance with the Academic Calendar.

Compensation

A student is awarded a compensated pass in a module by an Award Board and awarded credit provided that:

- the module is a 30 credit core or option module;
- the student has been awarded 150 UEL credits at the level (or higher) of the compensated module;
- the student has both attained at least 45% in the module to be compensated and attained the threshold in all components;
- the module is not specified as non-compensatable in the course specification as an award-specific requirement.

If eligible the student will be awarded a compensated pass on one module on a course and this will occur at the earliest point at which the student is eligible for compensation.

Classification

Where a student is eligible for an Masters award then the award classification is determined by calculating the credit-weighted arithmetic mean of all marks and applying the mark obtained as a percentage, with all decimal points rounded up to the nearest whole number, to the following classification

70% - 100%	Distinction
60%- 69%	Merit
50% - 59%	Pass

Part 4 - Induction

Our university-wide induction is available via Moodle. Upon appointment you will receive an email with your login details for the UEL IT system and access to the induction module on Moodle. The module consists of a series of briefings on the main elements of your role. In addition to this training, you will receive a briefing from staff in the school as an introduction to the modules you will be examining.

On appointment you should receive the following documentation:

- A contract.
- The External Examiner's Manual *accessible via our web pages:*
[External Examiner System | University of East London \(uel.ac.uk\)](https://www.uel.ac.uk/external-examiners/)

Once your appointment is confirmed, we will send a copy of the contract to the Head of Department and Dean of School responsible for the modules or courses that you are examining, in order that they can start the induction process. The school briefing should cover the following areas: the dates of examiners' meetings; the examiner's role in relation to the examining team as a whole; module specifications and teaching methods; the methods of assessment and marking scheme for each module. You should be provided with documentation such as course handbooks; module specifications and module guides that set out the details of curriculum content, learning outcomes etc; any relevant forms and school procedures and assessment policies; marking criteria. You may request additional information that you think will help you in carrying out your role.

Ideally you will be invited to our university and have the opportunity to meet staff in the School and, if you wish, students. This will be an opportunity for you to get to know all the key players and make sure that you fully understand the modules prior to attendance at our university to undertake your general duties. It is probably a good idea to use this meeting to agree with the school how you intend to fulfil your responsibilities and establish a schedule for receipt of relevant documentation etc. For example, you may want to discuss the date of assessment board meetings, a deadline for receipt of draft examination papers for comment or agree criteria for selecting a sample of examination scripts/assignments for your consideration.

4.1 Checking External Examiners Right to Work in the UK

The Home Office requires that all organisations obtain proof of the right to work in the UK for all individuals who carry out work for them. You will be asked to provide this documentation as part of your contractual agreement with UEL.

You will be asked to present your documentation in person at UEL prior to your role commencing; you may present your documentation at the Quality Assurance & Enhancement (QAE) office, by appointment.

Where it is not possible for an external examiner to present their documentation in person, the external examiner should send their document(s) (via Royal Mail Special Delivery Guaranteed by 1pm) to the QAE office to be verified. The examiner should notify the QAE office of their wish to submit their documentation, so this can be tracked appropriately and a video conference call arranged with the examiner to verify the documentation. The documentation will then be returned to the examiner via Royal Mail Special Delivery Guaranteed by 1pm.

This documentation will be kept on the external examiners file in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Please note that UEL will follow Government guidance on arrangements for the Right to Work check during the pandemic. You will be contacted by the External Examiners Administrator as part of the nomination process prior to your appointment.

Part 5 - Your Rights and Responsibilities

External examining provides one of the principal means for maintaining nationally comparable standards within autonomous higher education institutions. External examiners help to:

- Verify that academic standards are appropriate for the award or part thereof which the external examiner has been appointed to examine.
- Support/advise our university to assure and maintain academic standards across higher education awards.
- Support/advise our university to ensure that the assessment processes are sound, fairly operated and in line with our policies and regulations.

Nationally, the external examining function should help institutions to ensure that:

- The academic standard of each award and its component parts is set and maintained by the awarding institution at the appropriate level, and that the standards of student performance are properly judged against this.
- The assessment process measures student achievement appropriately against the intended outcomes of the course, and is rigorous, fairly operated and in line with the institution's policies and regulations.
- Institutions are able to compare the standards of their awards with those of other higher education institutions.

In this section we explore in detail what we expect of you, but also what you should expect of us in helping you to do your job effectively and efficiently.

5.1 Ensuring Comparability of Standards

You should compare the performance of students at UEL with that of their peers on comparable courses of higher education elsewhere.

This is one of your key roles and our university is anxious to ensure that the standards of its modules and courses are comparable with those of similar courses of higher education elsewhere.

We ask you to look at this in two ways and comment on your findings in your external examiner report.

First and foremost, we want you to assure us that the output standard of our modules and courses are comparable with similar courses elsewhere. If this is not the case, then urgent action will be taken by our university to put matters right. Universities have very different visions. Some, such as our university, concentrate on increasing access to higher education for those traditionally underrepresented in higher education. Given the starting point of many of our undergraduate students, it is possible that, in percentage terms, fewer of them will achieve high level passes even though the distance that they have travelled in educational terms may be very considerable. Our university accepts this as an inevitable outcome of its vision.

However, it is absolutely essential that our output standards are comparable with those deployed elsewhere i.e. that students achieving an upper second at UEL are achieving the same standard as those achieving it at any other university in the United Kingdom. If we do not assure this then we are devaluing our degrees and that is not in the best interests of the students or our university.

We also ask you to compare how well students from our university are performing in comparison with students from elsewhere. Here the vision of our university in respect of students at undergraduate level is again relevant. At undergraduate level we cannot expect our students always to perform in comparison with students with conventional 'A' level qualifications, but we would expect them to perform comparably with those students with similar entry profiles. In this respect any experience that you have of examining at institutions with similar visions to ours will be particularly relevant. If our students are not performing comparably with their peers in similar institutions then, again, we will need to ask ourselves why.

At postgraduate level we would expect standards to be comparable both in terms of the output level for the classification and in terms of the average number of students achieving pass and distinction level. If this is not the case, we ask you to draw this to our attention in your external examiner report.

5.2 Approving Assessment Tasks Before Students Take Them

You should approve the form and content of proposed assessment tasks which are prescribed as counting towards the relevant award(s) in order to ensure that all students will be assessed fairly in relation to the module specification and regulations and in such a way that you will be able to judge whether they have fulfilled the objectives of the module and reached the required standard.

Every component of assessment that leads to an award, at all levels, is subject to external examiner moderation.

External examiners should expect to evaluate the full range of assessment activities which contribute to judgements about the performance of students and not just examination papers. This may include a range of assessment tasks, for example coursework assignments, providing students with the opportunity to demonstrate a variety of appropriate skills. These should reach you for approval prior to the term commencing. In some cases, this will not be possible, however you should check with the school if you have not received these by the end of November. Please note that if you are a new external examiner, the assessment tasks may have been passed to your predecessor for approval; the school can confirm this.

Each assessment task should be accompanied by:

- A copy of the relevant module specification.
- The published assessment criteria which ensure achievement of the learning outcomes and are appropriate to the demands of the level of assessment undertaken. The assessment criteria should comprise both the marking criteria and the grading criteria appropriate to the level being assessed.

- Clear guidance notes i.e. expectations of the assessment task.

In discharging this responsibility, we are asking you to ensure:

- That the tasks provide the students with the opportunity to perform at a standard comparable with students elsewhere. If a paper is too easy or too hard then this opportunity will have been denied to a cohort of students and we want to avoid that at all costs.
- That the assessment tasks enable the students to meet the intended learning outcomes identified in the module specification and are appropriate to the curriculum content.
- That the examination paper/assignment is presented in a way which all students will have an equal chance of understanding.

5.3 Evaluating Assessed Work

You have the right to access all assessed work. In particular, you should see samples of the work of students proposed for each category of award, including fails, in order to ensure that each student is fairly placed in relation to other students.

As external examiner you are entitled to review *all* the assessed work of students, regardless of what form this takes. However, in the majority of cases it will be impractical for you to look at all the assessed work. The Assessment and Feedback Policy (Appendix 1) provides that a minimum of 10% or 10 individual pieces of each assessment task (whichever is the greater) should be made available to you for moderation. This sample should be taken from the full range of performance.

In order to ensure that you have the tools to complete the moderation task, you should receive, together with the sample of scripts:

- A sample which permits you to match the work to the marksheet.
- The record of marks and comments from examiners clearly indicated.
- The schedule of all marks agreed for all candidates on the module following internal moderation.
- Module Development Plan (MDeP) from the module leader providing data analysis about module outcomes, and general comments on the outcomes of the assessment process, e.g. trends in questions answered by candidates, common errors, questions generally answered well/poorly etc.

You should aim to review the full range of assessment modes. For example, if students are assessed by examinations and assignments, then you should evaluate both of these. Increasingly, forms of assessment are being adopted which are less easy to record on paper e.g. an oral presentation or a group activity. On these occasions it is up to you to discuss with the module leader the methods to be adopted to enable you to review what has taken place. Video recordings could be used, or you may wish to review, instead, the process by which a judgement is reached e.g. the criteria to be deployed or examples of feedback pro- forma.

In some cases, it may be necessary for you to attend our university to evaluate a practical assessment as it is taking place because it is not possible to make a record of that process for later review. For example, in teacher education, examiners are regularly involved in reviewing teaching practice. Obviously, if you have to make a special trip to our university (or elsewhere) we will meet your travelling costs. (Please refer to the guidance in Part 11 regarding expenses.)

It is up to you and the school to work out how you will undertake this responsibility.

Normally, where the method of assessment allows, submission of coursework is via e-submission. The preferred method of e-submission is via Turnitin Grademark. Where assessment is submitted by students via e-submission, it should be marked and second marked online. The preferred approach for supporting you with your role within e-submission is to provide you with direct access to the relevant Moodle sites, enabling moderation directly via Turnitin Grademark. You may wish to access samples via Turnitin Grademark off campus. You may alternatively wish to access samples via Turnitin Grademark on campus by coming to our university the day or morning before the assessment board. Further guidance regarding this matter can be found in Appendix 8 e-Submission of Coursework – Guidance for external examiners.

You should not be requested to act as a second or third marker, or to adjudicate on disagreements between internal markers - this is the role of the internal examiners and the internal moderation process. It is your task to determine whether the marking process is accurate, fair and of the right standard.

5.4 Moderating Marks

You have the right to moderate the marks awarded by internal examiners, in accordance with UEL's policies regarding assessment.

If, having moderated the sample of assessed work provided, you believe that the marks for the assessment component or element are not consonant with the standard expected, are unduly high or low or do not appear to be an accurate reflection of the general ability of the students, then you may recommend to the assessment board that *all* marks for a particular assessment are raised or lowered. This should not be done by moving the pass mark or classification points, as this may inappropriately affect the overall average mark for each student.

You may also, as part of your general sampling of assessed work, find inconsistencies in the marking of a particular component of assessment, or procedural errors such as incorrect addition of marks on an examination paper. In this event you should notify the module leader and/or Dean of School/Head of Department of your concerns and request that the whole component is remarked. This should happen only rarely, but it is the only fair way to resolve the problem.

You should always seek the support of the assessment board for any moderation of marks you are proposing. This support will not be withheld unduly, but remember it is your *right* to moderate marks if you are of the view that the standard of the award or justice to students may otherwise be compromised.

5.5 Participation in Assessment Boards

You should participate in relevant assessment board meetings. You should contribute to assessment board decisions and ensure that those decisions have been reached by means according with UEL's requirements and standard practice in higher education.

The assessment board is a very important part of your role. It is essential that external examiners participate in the assessment boards that consider results contributing to an award, whether at module (department) or award level.

We appreciate that in most cases you will be invited to participate in several boards over the year, and that this makes very significant demands on your time. You should however expect to be consulted about the date of the board early in the year, or at least notified of the date at an early stage, in order to give you maximum advance notice of this commitment.

If it proves impossible for you to participate in a board, it is essential that you are involved in the process by email and/or phone in order for you to fulfil your responsibilities to the best of your capability. You will be asked to complete a form confirming that you have been involved and that you support the final assessment decision.

The results of an assessment board cannot be published until they have been endorsed by at least one external examiner. You will be required to sign a pro-forma to this effect if you were present at a board.

5.6 Ensuring Assessment Regulations are Observed

You should ensure that the assessments are conducted in accordance with the approved regulations.

This manual contains the Academic Regulations applicable to assessment.

Another key role of examiners is to ensure that the assessment regulations appropriate to the board are followed. We appreciate that this is sometimes a very complex technical task. However, you will be supported by the servicing officer of the assessment board who is also responsible for ensuring the regulations are observed. If you are in any doubt, please consult with the servicing officer of the assessment board in the first instance.

Assessment boards are also responsible for the award of credit under our accreditation of Experiential Learning procedures - further guidance may be found in Appendix 10.

You should bear in mind that one of the grounds for appeal against a decision of the assessment board is failure of the assessment process to follow the published assessment regulations.

5.7 Writing a Report

You are required to report back to UEL annually or as may otherwise be prescribed, on the effectiveness of the assessments and any lessons to be drawn from them.

The external examiner system is a key part of the quality assurance process at our university. Your comments help us to ensure that our modules and awards are of an appropriate standard and that students are treated fairly. As such all external examiner contracts with our university include the requirement to produce an annual report, normally submitted after the summer assessment boards, and you will not be paid until we have received this report. Our university places great importance on the contribution made by external examiners to the maintenance of academic standards. External Examiners' reports are therefore considered during our university's Continual Monitoring Process (CMP). Without a written report it is difficult to demonstrate publicly that this important component of our quality assurance process has been conducted effectively, or to ensure that appropriate action is taken in response to the comments that you have made.

More information about the format of your report and what happens to it can be found in Part 10.

5.8 Course/Module Development

You have the right to comment on the overall development of the modules or course. External examiners can consult on modifications up to 25% of the course design, however in order to protect your independence you should not concurrently be used as an external adviser for course validation, revalidation or review.

We know that you will make recommendations in discussion with the department or course team, or in your report, that will help us in developing the quality of our courses. The course or module team will discuss with you the impact of any of these recommendations, and let you know the outcome.

Occasionally, there may be changes to our university's academic regulations. These will have been considered and approved by our university's Academic Board. In these circumstances, we will write to you as soon as possible afterwards to provide you with details of the changes that are being introduced.

5.9 Contributing to any Review of an Assessment Board Decision

You should participate as required in any reviews of decisions about individual students' awards taken during your period of office.

The university has a separate process for students to make an academic appeal against their assessment board outcome.

An academic appeal relates to the outcome of an assessment or examination, or a student's progression.

There are limited grounds on which an appeal will be considered, which are any of the following:

- a) If there had been a material and significant administrative error in the information received and considered by the Extenuating Circumstances Officer, the Assessment Board and/or the Board of Examiners.
- b) If the assessments had not been conducted in accordance with the approved regulations for the course of study.
- c) If some other material irregularity had occurred in the procedures of the Extenuating Circumstances Officer, the Assessment Board and/or the Board of Examiners.
- d) If the student had been prevented from attending or submitting an assessment artefact by illness or other good cause that related to the student's personal circumstances, that she or he had been unable, for a sound and acceptable reason related to the circumstances themselves, to divulge before the deadline for extenuating circumstances.
Please note: The ground for appeal described at d) might be a situation when an Extenuating Circumstances Form could be submitted.
- e) For a student with a disability or additional need, the initial needs assessment was not correctly carried out, or the support identified was not provided, or the agreed assessment procedures for that student were not implemented.

Our university will determine whether or not an appeal is valid - you will not be asked to take part in this process.

5.10 Remaining Impartial

You should be able to judge each student impartially on the basis of work submitted for assessment, without being influenced by previous association with the department or course, the staff, or any of the students.

Your impartiality has already been established by our selection procedure. During the last five years you should not have been:

- A member of staff, a governor, a student, or a near relative of a member of staff associated with the department or award.
- An examiner on a cognate department or award in the institution.

- Involved as external examiner for the modules or associated awards when they were approved by another validating body.

While you are an examiner at our university you should not be:

- Personally associated with the sponsorship of students.
- Currently a member of a governing body or committee of UEL or one of its collaborative partners, or a current employee or teacher on a course leading to a UEL award at a collaborative partner institution.
- In a close personal, professional or contractual relationship with a member of staff or student in the area associated with the Board.
- Required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students in the area associated with the Board.
- In a position to influence significantly the future employment of students in the area associated with the Board.
- Significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment in the area associated with the Board.
- Likely to be involved with student placements or training of UEL students in the examiner's organisation.

If, at any stage, you feel that your impartiality has or may become compromised in respect of any of the above, it is your duty to let us know, so that we can assess the situation and if necessary, find a suitable replacement.

Part 6 - Policy on Second and Anonymous Marking

6.1 Second Marking

Second (also known as double) marking is a process undertaken to ensure that the marking scheme has been applied fairly and uniformly. Although several types of second marking have been identified across the sector the preferred method at UEL is moderation of a sample across the full range of marks, for both written and practical assessments. Where other methods are preferable, such as in the case of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body exemption, a justification will be provided to the Dean of School.

Every component of summative assessment that contributes towards an award, at all levels, will be subject to moderation in order to ensure the maintenance of standards.

A sample of at least 10% or 10 individual pieces of each assessment task (whichever is the greater) will be moderated. The sample should be taken from the full range of student performance, having sight of the full range of marks.

Where the first marking of any module is undertaken by more than one marker, the sample will include a minimum of 10% of the work marked by each individual marker, again relating to a range of performance.

Where e-Submission has been used for first marking, it will be used for second marking.

(For further details, please refer to the Assessment and Feedback Policy, appendix 1.)

6.2 Anonymous Marking

Anonymous marking is a process undertaken to avoid the possibility of unconscious bias entering the marking process. To this end, wherever possible, the identity of students will be masked from markers and work only identified by student number.

Where the method of assessment does not allow anonymous marking (e.g. dissertations, oral presentations, oral examinations, practical examinations, laboratory tests, performance etc.) all work will be second marked (see The Assessment and Feedback Policy (Appendix 1)).

For some types of assessment it may be impractical either to second mark or to mark anonymously. On rare occasions where neither anonymous, nor second marking is practicable (normally this would only occur in settings such as the workplace), methods by which students may be protected from unfair or biased assessments in these situations, will be made explicit by the course leader. These could include for example, bringing in a visiting tutor from UEL to the workplace.

Part 7 - Chair's Action

In some circumstances incomplete information will be available at an assessment board. This may mean that a decision cannot be reached or that the wrong decision is made. We hope that this will happen only rarely, but on those occasions when it does happen, Chair's action is required in the interests of speed and efficiency. It is university policy that Chair's action should only be taken following consultation with the external examiner(s), and we ask the Chair to sign a form confirming that consultation has taken place. The only exception to this rule is in relation to decisions concerning progression following diagnostic assessment (i.e. when the result does not contribute towards the degree classification).

Once again this practice is observed in the interests of fairness and justice - no decision about a student should be taken by one individual alone, or without the involvement of someone who is external and impartial.

Part 8 – Extenuating Circumstances

What are Extenuating Circumstances?

Extenuating Circumstances are circumstances which

- impair the performance of a student in assessment or reassessment
- prevent a student from attending for assessment or reassessment
- prevent a student from submitting assessed or reassessed work by the scheduled date

Such circumstances would normally be

- unforeseeable - in that the student could have no prior knowledge of the event concerned
- unpreventable - in that the student could do nothing reasonably in their power to prevent such an event
- expected to have a serious impact

Students are expected to make reasonable plans to take into account commonly occurring circumstances, even those which, on occasion, may have been unforeseeable and unpreventable.

Full details of the UEL regulations governing extenuating circumstances may be found in Appendix 2 (Part 6– Extenuating Circumstances).

Part 9 – Module Monitoring

Module Development Plans (MDeP)

Module Development Plans are prepared for each module by the module leader at the end of each term or academic year, as appropriate.

Module Development Plans are an opportunity for Module Leaders to review the data and their own reflections about their modules, and feed into other processes such as the Continual Monitoring Process at Course Level.

You should receive the MDeP for each of your modules, the MDeP will outline pass rates, mean marks, and the non-submission rate, as well as discussing issues such as student satisfaction and engagement.

Part 10 - Your Report

As part of your contractual responsibilities you are required to write an annual report. Reports should normally be submitted within a month of the main assessment board each session. If you would like to submit an interim report please do so and, should you have a major concern at any time during your term of office, please feel free to write directly to the Head of Quality Assurance & Enhancement or the Vice-Chancellor.

In order to help you prepare this report our university provides a standard online proforma which outlines the areas that we would like you to cover (a copy of this can be found as appendix 4 to this manual). You will be sent an email prior to the main boards which will provide you with a unique link to your personalised report.

Where your appointment covers modules/courses taught in more than one location (on-campus and at a collaborative partner, or at more than one partner/location) we ask that your report ensures that comments applicable to student performance and assessment processes at each point of delivery are clearly identified. We have included questions on the report template to enable you to undertake this. This will assist UEL to address any issues with the respective partner.

The report form is in three parts and consists of a series of questions, followed by several narrative sections to comment further. The first part provides an overview of the quality and standard of courses. Part Two of the form is for a more detailed response on the areas specified. Part Three of report is completed by the Lead Examiner only (the examiner that participates in the Award Board).

The report will be read widely and we will use the information that you provide to help us improve the courses that we offer. You should not identify students or staff within your annual report. You can expect a written response from the school.

10.1 Guidelines on Content

At the beginning of the form we have included a section for you to advise UEL whether you have had any change in circumstance that could impact on your ability to act impartially as an external examiner. *(Please refer to the previous section, Part 5.10 Remaining Impartial for further information.)*

Part 1 requires the external examiner to confirm that:

- The standards set within the department, (as evidenced by the modules reviewed) are appropriate at the level, in the department.
- The marks awarded for student assessments are appropriate
- The marks awarded for student assessments are appropriate and comparable with marks that would have been attained at other institutions with which the examiner is familiar.
- The processes for assessment, examination and the determination of credit for modules are sound and fairly conducted, in line with university

regulations and relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body requirements.

- The students have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level
- The students have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level and that this is comparable with other institutions with which the examiner is familiar.

Part 2 of the report gives a series of statements which the examiner then indicates the extent to which they agree with statements:

The standards attained by the students:

- The standards of the students meet threshold benchmarks, internal, and external, including professional body requirements/standards
- The subject knowledge of our students is comparable to their peers
- The standard of academic skills of our students is comparable to their peers
- The failure rates of our students are comparable to their peers
- These comparisons above extend similarly to modules delivered at our collaborative partners.

The design and structure of the assessment:

- All learning outcomes are assessed appropriately
- The assessment methods are fair
- The assessment methods are inclusive
- There is an appropriate range of assessments
- Assessment methods stretch students to perform above thresholds levels
- These statements above apply similarly to assessments provided by our collaborative partners.

The general conduct of assessment:

- I received all of the draft assessment tasks (for the modules in my allocation that ran in the current academic year)
- The nature and level of the assessment tasks was appropriate
- Suitable arrangements were made to consider my comments
- *If required by a professional/ statutory/ regulatory body.* I was involved with meeting/observing students and/or meeting work placed mentors
- *If you examine modules at a 'Franchise' partner.* I was given access to a sample of UEL on campus materials in order to examine their comparability
- Appropriate procedures are in place for the moderation of papers
- Assessment boards are conducted appropriately

- It is easy to distinguish between students at each centre of delivery
- Progression decisions were made fairly and consistently, in adherence to the regulations

Marking:

- I received examples of assessment for all modules
- I received an appropriate range of examples of work
- Suitable arrangements were made to consider my comments
- Internal marking is accurate
- Internal marking is consistent
- Appropriate procedures are followed for marking
- There is implementation of UEL's policy on Second and Anonymous Marking
- There are clear marking criteria
- There is appropriate use of the full range of marks
- Feedback is appropriate
- Feedback is consistent
- These statements apply similarly to marking at our collaborative partners.

The modules:

- The standards of modules meet internal and external threshold benchmarks, including professional body requirements
- The content of modules is appropriate
- The structure of modules is appropriate
- Modules are up to date with current thinking in the discipline
- Modules consistently demonstrate high quality teaching standards
- The modules prepare students for employment
- The modules prepare students for further study

Module Development Plans:

- I received a Module Development Plan for the modules I examine
- I found the Module Development Plan(s) helpful

Learning Environment:

- Students are engaged at UEL
- Students who are underrepresented in Higher Education can succeed at UEL
- Appropriate resources are in place to help students succeed
- The learning environment is stimulating for students, providing the right level of challenge
- Opportunities exist for students to engage in activities that benefit their personal development

- Opportunities exist for students to engage in activities that benefit society

Execution of the examiner role:

- I have a productive relationship with the academics responsible for modules in my remit
- Administrative arrangements are in place to help me succeed in my role
- I received all the information I needed to answer the questions in this report
- I am a new examiner and I received all the support I needed to undertake my role

Previous Report:

- Were there matters arising from previous examiner report that required a response?
- Were these matters adequately addressed
- Overall, things have improved since last year?

Further comments:

- The examiner is asked to comment on areas of good practice that they would like to highlight.
- The examiner is asked to comment on areas that could be improved.
- There is a final comment section for general comments and may be completed if this is the examiner's final report to provide a summary of their findings over the term of their appointment.

Part 3 of the report is completed by the Lead Examiner only (the examiner that participates in the Department Award Board) and is asked to comment on the following:

The first section requires the external examiner to confirm that:

- The standards set for the award are appropriate for the qualifications at the level.
- The standards of attainment and completion are comparable with similar courses or subjects in other UK institutions with which the examiner is familiar.
- The processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards are sound and fairly conducted in line with university regulations and relevant Professional, Statutory Body requirements.

Then there are a series of statements which the examiner then indicates the extent to which they agree with statements:

- The standards of student attainment is equivalent to peers on comparable courses elsewhere
- The standard of the courses on which awards have been made are appropriate for the awards to which they lead
- Appropriate procedures are in place for operation of the assessment board
- Matters arising from previous examiner reports were adequately addressed

Further comments:

- The examiner is asked to comment on areas of good practice that they would like to highlight.
- The examiner is asked to comment on areas that could be improved.
- There is a final comment section for general comments and may be completed if this is the examiner's final report to provide a summary of their findings over the term of their appointment.

School response:

- There is a section at the end of the report for the school response.
- There is also a section for additional responses, where a UEL service/department may be asked to respond to a particular point.

10.2 What Happens to Your Report?

Quality Assurance and Enhancement download your report which has been submitted online and will send you an email to confirm receipt. Receipt of your report triggers the payment of your fees. Fees payments are paid by our Payroll Office which only makes one payment run a month so there may be a delay in receiving your payment - we apologise for this delay.

Your report plays a vital part in our quality assurance and enhancement procedures. The Quality Manager (Validation & Review) reads all reports and will ask the school to respond to the points you have raised within your report. The report is circulated to:

- The Head of Department.
- The Dean of School.
- The School Leader for Quality Assurance.
- Pro Vice Chancellor Education & Experience *Once a response is received.*

Your report (for UEL on-campus modules only) together with the school's formal response to you will be uploaded on to the individual school notice boards on Moodle, so that students can have full access to your report. For this reason, it is important that individual staff and students are not named or easily identifiable within your report.

We expect you to then receive a formal response from the school, which is also copied to Quality Assurance and Enhancement. This should detail the action being taken in response to any issues that you raise or form the basis of a dialogue with you. If you raise university-wide issues you may also receive a separate response from the relevant department or service.

Your report, together with details of the action that has been taken in response to issues that you have raised, also forms a significant component of our annual review mechanism, the Continual Monitoring Process (CMP).

Part 11 - Fees and Expenses

11.1 Fees

You will be notified of the fee that you will be paid when your contract is issued.

Your fee is determined by the school in which the boards on which you sit are based. The fee will depend on the number of modules that you examine and follows general university guidelines. If you are both a Department and Lead External Examiner, you will receive a fee for both elements, reflecting the extra work that you are required to undertake in participating in and reporting on additional assessment boards at our university.

In order to receive your fee, you must complete and submit your report online.

11.2 Expenses and Travel

In each school there are Designated Bookers for travel who are available to assist in the booking of your travel arrangements for UEL visits. Please complete the Travel Request Form for External Examiners (please see appendix 5) and submit the form to your school. Please see below for contact mailboxes:

School	Travel Mailbox for School
School of Business & Law	rdsbltravel@uel.ac.uk
School of Education & Communities	educomschooloffice@uel.ac.uk
School of Health, Sport and Bioscience	hsbexecutive@uel.ac.uk
School of Psychology	psychologyexecutive@uel.ac.uk
School of Arts and Digital Industries	aditravel@uel.ac.uk
School of Architecture, Computing and Engineering	acetravel@uel.ac.uk

UEL would prefer to arrange your travel and accommodation where required, however we do understand that there may be times when you may need to make your own arrangements and claim expenses back. *Please check with the school prior to making your own arrangements.* All reasonable expenses that you incur in fulfilling your duties will be met provided that you follow the guidelines set out in the Travel, Subsistence and Expenses Policy (please see appendix 6).

Please send your expenses claim form to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement office. Your claim will then be forwarded to the relevant Finance Officer for the school to process and authorise the payment.

An example of the expenses claim form is provided as Appendix 7 to this manual however this can also be accessed via our web pages:

<https://www.uel.ac.uk/Discover/External-Examiner-System>

An expense claim must be submitted within three months of the date of when the expense was incurred. Claims received after this deadline may not be paid.

The university would encourage external examiners to contact the UEL Designated Booker of travel for your school as early as possible to book your travel requirements; if possible at least 4 weeks' notice should be given for any journey to ensure availability.

Part 12 - Who to Contact

Who to Contact

<i>For Enquiries About:</i>	<i>Service</i>
Assessment Board Meetings Arrangements	Assessment Unit
Draft Assessments Script Samples/Moderation/Moodle	Relevant Module Leader or School point of contact
Travel Arrangements	School Designated Bookers – please refer to point 11.2
Contract Terms of Reference Fee/Expenses Annual Report Proforma	Caroline Quirk (QAE)
General Queries	Module Leader or School contact Mentor Caroline Quirk (QAE)
IT Access Issues	IT Help Desk 020 8223 2468 servicedesk@uel.ac.uk

School	Contact for School	Assessment Unit
School of Business & Law	buslaw@uel.ac.uk	assess.bl@uel.ac.uk
School of Education & Communities	Early Childhood and Education - edu.eceadmin@uel.ac.uk Teacher Education - edu.teadmin@uel.ac.uk Social Work - edu.swadmin@uel.ac.uk Social Sciences - edu.socsciadmin@uel.ac.uk	assess.educom@uel.ac.uk
School of Architecture, Computing and Engineering	Architecture - architecture@uel.ac.uk Computer Science & Informatics - computing@uel.ac.uk Engineering, Construction & Built Environment - Eng-Cbe@uel.ac.uk Visual Arts - visualarts@uel.ac.uk	assess.ace@uel.ac.uk
School of Arts and Digital Industries	Fashion - aci.fashion@uel.ac.uk Media & Comms - aci.mediaComms@uel.ac.uk Music Writing & Performance - aci.musicwritingperformance@uel.ac.uk	assess.adi@uel.ac.uk
School of Health, Sport and Bioscience	Applied Sport & Exercise Science – hsbsports@uel.ac.uk Bioscience incl. Bioscience & Health Foundation Level – hsbbioscience@uel.ac.uk Health & PHS - hsbhealth@uel.ac.uk Nursing - registrynursing@uel.ac.uk	assess.hsb@uel.ac.uk assess.nursing@uel.ac.uk
School of Psychology	Psychological Sciences – psychologicalSciences@uel.ac.uk Professional Psychology - professionalPsychology@uel.ac.uk	assess.psy@uel.ac.uk
Tavistock & Portman NHS Foundation Trust	Academic Quality Officer academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk	
Quality Assurance & Enhancement	Caroline Quirk 020 8223 2011 c.t.quirk@uel.ac.uk	gae@uel.ac.uk

If you have a major concern that has not been adequately dealt with by others please contact one of the following in the order provided, depending on the seriousness of the problem.

Dean of School responsible for the department for which you are the examiner

or

QA Manager (Validation & Review)

Tel: 020-8223-2373

or

Head of Quality Assurance & Enhancement

Tel: 020-8223-2341

or

Vice-Chancellor

Tel: 020-8223-4001