


External examiner policy and procedures		
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## External examiner policy and procedures

### Revision history

Revision	Date	Revision description DCRT#	Originator
01	01 September 03	Conversion of OP162 and updating of fees for 2003-2004	Registrar
02	15 March 2005	Update for 2004-2005	Registrar
03	25 May 2006	Reference to 3AS15 and general update	Registrar
04	19 April 2013	Update to reflect QQI (formerly HETAC) guidelines on external examiners	IR working group & QA Officer
05	25 Feb 2019	Amend Logo and title (TU Dublin – Blanchardstown Campus formerly ITB)	Registrar
06	22 March 2019	Under Duties and Responsibilities: Notification of good practice in response to external examiner feedback from review of Draft Examination Papers.	Academic Quality Manager

## Purpose

The purpose of this document is to record University policy and procedures with regard to the nomination, appointment, duties and responsibilities of external examiners.

## Scope

This document is relevant to all academic staff, students, school administrators and external examiners appointed to the University.

## Appendices

Appendix A	4FAS09	External examiner nomination form
Appendix B	4FAS17	External examiner acceptance form
Appendix C	4FAS08	External examiner report template
Appendix D		Induction and training resources for extern examiners

## Reference

3AS02	Examination paper authoring
3AS03	Continuous assessment policy
3AS04	Examinations student information
3AS05	Examination regulations
3AS06	Academic programme assessment policy and procedure
3AS15	Operating procedures for examination boards
4FAS07	Internal or external examiners report on thesis for degree of Masters or Doctor of Philosophy by research
HETAC (now QQI)	Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining. March 2010
HETAC (now QQI)	Assessment and Standards. December 2009
3CD07	Operational details for registered postgraduate students (Postgraduate student handbook)

## External examiner

An external examiner is an independent expert who is a member of the broader community of practice within the programme's field of learning and whose accomplishments attest to his/her likelihood of having the authority necessary to fulfil the responsibilities of the role.<sup>1</sup> External examining is a specific learner assessment quality assurance mechanism employed by the University to support public confidence. The external examiners' function may be carried out by an individual or a team of examiners where it is deemed appropriate given the needs of the programme(s).

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<sup>1</sup> Effective practice guideline for external examining – HETAC March 2010

## Qualities and competencies

It is expected that external examiners shall be:

- Independent experts with academic and/or professional experience and authority necessary to objectively judge the appropriateness and compliance of programme standards with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), National standards, and International standards.
- Drawn from the higher education community or communities of practice from business, industry and the professional environment.
- Suitably qualified in the appropriate discipline with a minimum qualification of an award at or above the level being examined. For all undergraduate programmes, that would generally be an honours degree or equivalent having both current and relevant experience in the areas of industry, education or research. For postgraduate degrees, that would be a level 9 or 10 award, as appropriate for the examination.
- Where the needs of the programme require specialised skills a person or persons possessing a range of appropriate skills may be appointed.

## Duties and responsibilities

The principal duty of external examiners is to ensure that the University is compliant with National and International standards and the NFQ in its assessment of learners, thus ensuring public confidence in the academic qualifications of the University.

The main duties and responsibilities of the external examiner(s) are:

- Reviewing the appropriateness of the minimum intended programme learning outcomes and other programme objectives (see <http://courses.itb.ie/>).
- Reviewing the appropriateness of the programme and module assessment strategies and assessment procedures.
- Compare and contrast both the minimum intended programme learning outcomes and the actual attainment of learners with the relevant awards standards, with the National Framework of Qualifications, and with corresponding data from other programmes in the same discipline in other higher education institutions in Ireland and abroad.
- Examine the actual attainment of learners (actual programme learning outcomes).
- Upholding appropriate standards with regard to pass, merit and distinction/honours grading.
- Reviewing a representative sample of assessment tasks and other material presented for assessment including examination scripts, projects, and other key assessment tasks.
  - Samples should include sufficient material to enable the external examiner to form a judgement of the appropriateness of the marking at all levels of classification.
  - To enable consistency, the standard feedback process to be used during the tenure will be communicated to the examiner on appointment.
- Reviewing drafts of all examination papers after the internal review process is completed, having the right to make suggestions as to deletions, additions or amendments as appropriate. The Head of School/Department shall ensure that such material is provided to the external examiner in good time.
  - It is the primary responsibility of internal examiners to identify typographical, grammar and other procedural issues in examination papers.
  - It is good practice that an academic will consider and record their response against each comment/recommendation by the external examiner on the appropriate feedback template provided (See Appendix E). While recognising that such response may/may not take on board the external examiner's recommendation(s); for closure, it is good practice to record how each will have been considered and to resubmit the same to the School for record.
- Visiting the University at least once in each academic year normally at the time of determination of final results in Summer. During a visit the external examiner's duties include:
  - Reviewing borderline cases, prior to and during examination board meetings.
  - Attending appropriate examination board meeting(s). For operating procedures at examination board meetings see the University policy document 3AS15.
  - Participating in the determination of final marks and results of each candidate at the examination board meeting.
  - Determining whether or not the applied procedures for assessment are valid, reliable, fair and consistent.

- Signing the relevant broadsheet of results confirming their participation as a member of the examination board.
- Report findings and recommendations by means of a written report, see Appendix C (4FAS08), for each examination for which they are involved returning same to the Registrar by the following October 15th for each academic year.
- Acknowledging receipt of examination material received from the University and ensuring that the integrity of the examinations process is maintained
- Reviewing annually, the examination marks and standards document, see University policy document 3AS06, which sets out the guidelines for the assessment of learners.

In addition to submitting yearly reports on the examinations process the external examiner may, on completion of his/her term of office, submit a general report to the Registrar or nominee on his/her opinion of the standards of the programme/subject area and student performance.

## **Proposals for Extern Examiners**

Suggestions of extern examiners should be communicated using the nomination form, see Appendix A (4FAS09). This is to be completed by the relevant Head of School/Department and forwarded to the Registrar before September 25th of the academic year of initial appointment. Due cognisance of the desirability of gender balance and complementary skills to other current and previous examiners, should be taken when nominating external examiners.

## **Appointment**

External examiners are appointed by the Registrar and should not normally exceed more than one appointment period (3 years) and never more than two consecutive appointment periods. External examiners who have served for two appointment periods or more should not be considered for re-nomination until a minimum of three years has elapsed. An acceptance form, must be completed by the external examiner and returned with a detailed curriculum vitae to the Registrar (see Appendix B; 4FAS17). Appropriate induction and training resources for extern examiners are listed in Appendix D.

## **External examiners for postgraduate students**

Procedures for appointment and engagement of extern examiners for individual postgraduate programmes by research are covered in University policy Operational details for registered postgraduate students (Postgraduate student handbook) (3CD07).

## **Reporting arrangements**

In the case of external examiner reports for postgraduate theses, these reports are unique to that programme and are used as part of the degree awarding process. They are not circulated further.

In the case of extern examiner reports for undergraduate programmes, the following applies:

- The Registrar shall provide a copy of the external examiners report to the relevant Head of School.
- The Head of School should ensure that the reports are distributed to each Head of Department and each of the relevant course board co-ordinators.
- The course board will consider reports as appropriate and report accordingly through minutes of course board meetings.

## Appendix A

### External examiner nomination form (4FAS09)

Technological University Dublin – Blanchardstown Campus

The purpose of this form is to suggest nominations of new external examiners for the present (and subsequent) academic years. Completed forms are to be forwarded by the Head of School to the Registrar.

Name of nominee	
Academic/professional qualifications	
Areas of specialisation :	
Programmes / subject area :	
Current post description:	
Contact address:	
Contact phone number:	
E-mail address:	
Summary of relevant experience	
Nominated by:	
Date of nomination:	
Nomination supported:	Yes / No
Signed:	
Date:	

## Appendix B



### External examiner acceptance form (4FAS17)

Technological University Dublin – Blanchardstown Campus

Salutation	
Name	
Academic/professional qualification(s)	
Job title	
Work address	
Home address	
Phone	
Fax	
E-mail	
Mobile number	

Please indicate which address should be used for correspondence

Work  Home

I agree to accept the appointment of external examiner at the Technological University Dublin – Blanchardstown Campus in accordance with the procedures duties and responsibilities laid down in this document.

I understand that the duration of appointment will be from October  to September

I note that this period may be extended by one term (3 years) by mutual consent.

An honorarium is paid annually to external examiners as a gesture to acknowledge the importance and effort involved in acting as an external examiner. Payments are based on an annual appointment fee and a programme fee per year of course examined or if subject specific the number of subjects examined. Travel and subsistence costs incurred by external examiners will be reimbursed at local government rates on receipt of vouched claims.

Signature ..... Date: .....

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Please return this form to The Registrar, Technological University Dublin – Blanchardstown Campus, Blanchardstown Road North, Dublin 15.

Phone (01)8851080. Fax: (01)8851001. E-mail larry.mcnutt@itb.ie



## Appendix C

### External examiner report (4FAS08)

Technological University Dublin – Blanchardstown Campus

This form is to be completed by appointed external examiners of the University. It is part of the quality assurance procedures of the University and is required as part of approved Academic Council procedures. The form should be returned to the Registrar, Technological University Dublin – Blanchardstown Campus, before **15<sup>th</sup> October** of the following academic year which the examination being reported on took place. Thank you.

Name of external examiner	
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Academic year	
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#### Programmes examined

Programme code / title	NFQ level

#### Modules examined (Subject specific examiners)

e.g. Languages, IT subjects within business programmes etc.

NFQ level	Module code	Module title

Examinations considered as part of this report

Semester 1	
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Semester 2	
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Autumn repeats	
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**Evidence considered**

Were you provided with adequate information with regard to University regulations, the programme, methods of assessment and duties and responsibilities of external examiners?

Yes	
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No	
----	--

N/A	
-----	--

If no please comment:

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Please indicate any visits, meetings including exam boards and interviews with learners and academic staff.

--

Did you receive the examination papers, marking schemes and worked solutions in reasonable time?

Yes	
-----	--

No	
----	--

N/A	
-----	--

If no please comment:

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**Learning outcomes**

Please consider and comment as appropriate on the educational objectives including their explicitness, appropriateness and consistency standards with the relevant awards standards and the National Framework of Qualifications.

**Attainment of learners**

Please consider and comment as appropriate on your perception of the actual attainment of learners (knowledge, skill and competence) taking the following into consideration:

- The University's assessment tasks (e.g. assessment strategies, examination papers, marking schemes etc.)
- Representative samples of learner responses to assessment tasks (e.g. examination scripts, coursework etc.)

**Assessment procedures**

Please consider and comment as appropriate on your perception of the following:

**Examination paper structure** Is the structure, organisation and marking of the examination, including level and range of questions set appropriate?

**Range of assessment** What extent did the examination and other assessments cover the course material and module stated aims and objectives?

**Examination process** Are the assessment processes rigorous?  
Do they ensure equity of treatment for students?  
Have they been fairly conducted within Institutional regulations?

**Learner performance**

Are the standards of student performance appropriate?

**Comparability of standards**

Are the standards and learner achievement comparable with peers in other Higher Education Institutions, nationally and internationally?

**Examination board meeting** Please indicate date and time of examination board(s) attended. Please indicate “did not attend” if appropriate.

Was the examination board meeting conducted in a professional manner with evidence of fairness and consistency for learners?

**Aspects of the programme**

Please consider and comment as appropriate on your perception of any aspect(s) of the programme to be commended.

Please consider and comment as appropriate on your perception of any aspect(s) of the programme that require attention.

**Progress on previous reports** Evidence of response to feedback provided?

**Conclusions and recommendations**

**Signature of external examiner**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Checklist to be considered by external examiners when completing 4FAS08**

### Resources and support

- The quality of the briefing provided by the University
- The arrangements for your involvement in the assessment process
- The adequacy of assistance provided to enable you to fulfil your role

### Extern examining arrangements

- The adequacy of the physical arrangements for performance of duties
- The fairness of the examination process
- The effectiveness of the assessment strategy in the modules you have examined (balance between coursework and examinations and the student workload)
- The coverage of the syllabus and achievement of learning outcomes across programmes examined
- In project based modules the appropriateness of the topics and the standard and consistency of marking across projects
- The quality of examination papers

### Academic standard

- The standard attained by students in relation to comparable courses elsewhere
- The standard attained by students compared with that of previous years
- The standard of students project work

### Overall comments on the course

- The curriculum design and structure
- The appropriateness and relevance of the syllabus and overall programme

## Appendix D: Induction and training resources for extern examiners.

3AS02	Examination paper authoring
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3AS15	Operating procedures for examination boards
4FAS07	Internal or external examiners report on thesis for degree of Masters or Doctor of Philosophy by research
HETAC (now QQI)	Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining. March 2010 <a href="http://www.hetac.ie/docs/External%20Examining%20New.pdf">http://www.hetac.ie/docs/External%20Examining%20New.pdf</a>
HETAC (now QQI)	Assessment and Standards. December 2009 <a href="http://www.hetac.ie/docs/Fina%20English%20Assessment%20and%20Standards%202009.pdf">http://www.hetac.ie/docs/Fina%20English%20Assessment%20and%20Standards%202009.pdf</a>
3CD07	Operational details for registered postgraduate students (Postgraduate student handbook)
HETAC (now QQI)	<a href="http://www.reviewertraining.ie/">http://www.reviewertraining.ie/</a>

**Appendix E:  
External Examiner Feedback Form**

School:.....

Academic Year: 20-- to 20--

Semester 1/2: January/May/Autumn (Repeat) Examinations\*

Programme:.....

Module: .....

External Examiner:.....

Internal Examiner(s):.....

Question No.	Comments and/or Recommendations	Internal Examiner Response	For Administration Use Only
Main Paper			Date Received:
Repeat Paper			Additional Comments:

\*Select or delete as appropriate

//end