

Undergraduate External Examiner Reports Overview Analysis for 2017/18

SECTION 1: SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF UNDERGRADUATE EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORTS 2017/18

Overall 89% reports were received by the Academic Development and Quality Enhancement Office and distributed widely throughout the institution in line with agreed procedures (74/83 reports received). This compared to a 91.4% response rate in 2016/17. This excludes BSMS reports which JARB receives on behalf of the University of Sussex and the University of Brighton.

Actions plans in response to School level issues will be considered by the School TLCs and responses sent directly by the Chair of the Progression and Award Board (PAB) to External Examiners. The reports and the action plans will be reviewed at the Annual Course Review event. A proposed response to institutional issues that have been raised in External Examiner Reports have been set out below in italics.

Sections 2-4 provide a summary of data extracted from the External Examiner reports 2017/18 and areas of good practice amongst Schools.

Institutional Issues for 2017/18 (refer to relevant section for more detail)

- Concerns related to the timeframe for moderation and the lack of opportunity to reject a moderation sample and ask for a remark (time constraints prior to the PAB do not allow a remark of entire cohort) – *where the concern relates to a marking band or a particular examination question, the External can specify that a band or question is remarked for the cohort. ADQE can work with Schools to produce a short guide for Schools to send with the sample. The guide would include reference to the FAQs for External Examiners.*
- Preference to prescribe the moderation sample, for example, to see scripts of highest and lowest marks given, instead of a random sample – *for e-submission assessments, the sample is automatically selected in accordance with the criteria (10% of the assessments (minimum 7 maximum 25), all fails, scripts from all classification bands). These criteria should also be used for moderation samples provided in hard copy. The FAQs for External Examiners include a check list of the materials to be sent with the sample for moderation. ADQE can work with Schools to produce a short guide for Schools to send with a hard copy sample.*
- Feedback varies greatly, within module, and is sometimes too generic - *Schools to continue to review feedback practices with a view to implementing some standardisation to ensure consistency and support feed-forward to future assessments.*
- A minority of external examiners have expressed disagreement with aspects of the University's regulations – *The University will continue to provide briefings for External Examiners with PVC before PABs, to provide an opportunity to discuss regulatory issues. It is important to note that regulations vary between institutions and that Sussex's have been approved as appropriate to maintain standards through normal committee processes.*

Update on Institutional issues from 2016/17

- Variation in the volume and quality of feedback to students, with some examples of excellent practice but some lack of consistency – *Schools to review feedback practices. University to consider asking Liz Sage Teaching Fellow in Teaching, Learning and Assessment in Higher Education to offer further feedback workshops to Schools.*
- Time pressure on external examiners as a result of the present structure of the academic year – *New academic year structure in 2019/20 will enable some efficiencies.*
- A minority of external examiners have expressed disagreement with aspects of the University's regulations including the approach to moderation and discussion of borderline cases - *Briefings for External Examiners were held as usual with PVC before PABs, providing an opportunity for regulatory issues to be raised. In addition, the annual induction event for new External Examiners provides an opportunity for discussion. It is important to note that regulations vary between institutions and that Sussex's have been approved as appropriate to maintain standards through normal committee processes.*