



PRIFYSGOL
BANGOR
UNIVERSITY

EXTERNAL EXAMINERS' HANDBOOK

**For Taught Programmes
(Undergraduate & Postgraduate)**

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Welcome

On behalf of Bangor University, may I welcome you as an External Examiner, and thank you for undertaking this valuable role, which is a central part of our quality assurance processes. External Examiners work hard for a modest fee, and carry substantial responsibility. The University is very grateful, and appreciates your role enormously.

This Handbook provides information for External Examiners for all taught programmes at Bangor University, and has been produced primarily to assist you in your role. It contains information about our Regulations and Procedures, duties of External Examiners, and the ways in which the University will consider your reports. It supplements other documentation which you will receive from the School about the programme(s) for which you are acting as External Examiner.

In passing, I note that the Handbook has been produced in accordance with the University's Regulations and Codes of Practice, and has been informed by the UK Quality Code, Chapter B7: External Examining. It should also be fairly easy to find your way around. However, if there is any aspect which is unclear or has been omitted, please do not hesitate to contact us (see below for contact details).

My thanks, once again for your help. I hope you find your time associated with Bangor to be an engaging and helpful experience.

Professor Oliver Turnbull
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)

Contact Details

Your Contact details:

The University needs to maintain contact with you throughout the period of your appointment. Please let us know if there are any changes to your details by emailing qualityassurance@bangor.ac.uk

Our Contact details

External Examiners are appointed by the Quality Assurance and Validation Unit in Corporate Services, on behalf of the University Senate. The main contact for institutional matters, External Examiners' reports and fees and expenses claims is the Senior Quality Assurance Officer:

Dr Sarah Jackson, e-mail: qualityassurance@bangor.ac.uk or telephone 01248 382429
Postal address: Quality Assurance & Validation Unit, Bangor University, College Road, Bangor, LL57 2DG.

For day-to-day operational matters, your main contact will be in the relevant School. The School will provide you with the name and contact details of the appropriate person. It may be the Director of Teaching & Learning or the Examinations Officer or someone with similar responsibilities. School contact details can also be found on the University's web site:

www.bangor.ac.uk/corporate/informationabout/depts.php.

Information about external examining can be found on the University's website:

www.bangor.ac.uk/ar/main/quality/ext_exam.php.en

How to find us

Directions to the University in Bangor and a campus map can be found on the University's website: www.bangor.ac.uk/tour/location.php.en

1. Introduction

1.1. A Brief History

Founded in 1884, Bangor University has a long tradition of excellence, both for academic standards and student experience.

The University was founded as a direct result of a campaign in the late nineteenth century for higher education provision in Wales. Funds were raised by public subscription to establish a college of university rank in Bangor, for the sons and daughters of North Wales. An important feature of its foundation was the voluntary contributions made by local people, including farmers and quarrymen, from their weekly wages over a period of time.

The University College of North Wales opened its doors on 18 October 1884 in an old coaching inn (the Penrhyn Arms), with 58 students and 10 members of staff. The students received degrees from the University of London until 1893 when the University of Wales, Bangor became one of the three original constituent colleges of the federal University of Wales.

In 1903, the city of Bangor donated a 10-acre site overlooking the city at Penrallt for a new building, and substantial sums of money were raised by local people to help meet the cost. The foundation stone for this was laid in 1907, and four years later in 1911 the main building was opened, together with some arts and social science buildings and part of the Library. The Science Departments remained in the Penrhyn Arms for another fifteen years. In 1926 they moved to new purpose-built accommodation which had been constructed with the assistance of funds raised by the North Wales Heroes Memorial.

More recently the University has incorporated several other local specialist training colleges:

- St. Mary's College in 1976
- North Wales College of Nursing in 1992
- North Wales College of Radiography in 1993
- Coleg Normal in 1996

The University was granted degree awarding powers and 'University Title' by the Privy Council in 2007, becoming Bangor University. All new students entering the University since 2009 have received a Bangor University award; the University of Wales is no longer the degree awarding body.

1.2. The University's Mission

"Bangor University will be a leading research-led University with an international reputation for teaching and research, that fosters the intellectual and personal development of its students and staff, provides a supportive multicultural environment, promotes widening access and inclusiveness, and supports the economic, social and cultural well-being of Wales and the wider community it serves.

Bangor University will be recognised regionally, nationally and internationally as a centre of excellence for a varied portfolio of academic programmes and for the high quality of the experience it provides for its students and staff".

1.3. Bangor University Today

Bangor University remains committed to providing teaching of the highest quality, conducting research of the highest quality, taking good care of its students and playing a full role in the wider community of Wales. Today the University has over 11,000 students (around 9,500 full-time and 1,600 part-time) and around 2,100 staff, including 600 full-time academic/research staff. The University has an annual turnover of £145M, with research grants of £4M.

The student demographic can be broken down as follows:

- ~ 80% full-time
- ~ 25% postgraduate
- ~ 18% overseas
- ~ 95% state schools
- ~ 33% social classes NS-SEC classes 4,5,6,7
- ~ 10% Undergraduates in receipt of DSA (disabled students)

The University offers almost 600 undergraduate and 200 taught postgraduate degree programmes, in addition to over 150 postgraduate research courses. Bangor University offers the widest range of Welsh-medium degrees in Wales, with about 1400 students studying at least some modules through the medium of Welsh. There are also around 450 students studying on externally validated

programmes in Grwp Llandrillo Menai, a directly funded FE college based about 20 miles along the North Wales coast in Rhos on Sea. In addition, the University operates a small number of validated and franchised programmes with partners overseas.

The Quality Enhancement Review conducted by the UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in May 2018 resulted in the highest possible endorsement of the University's academic quality and standards:

Bangor University meets the requirements of the ESG Part 1 for internal quality assurance.

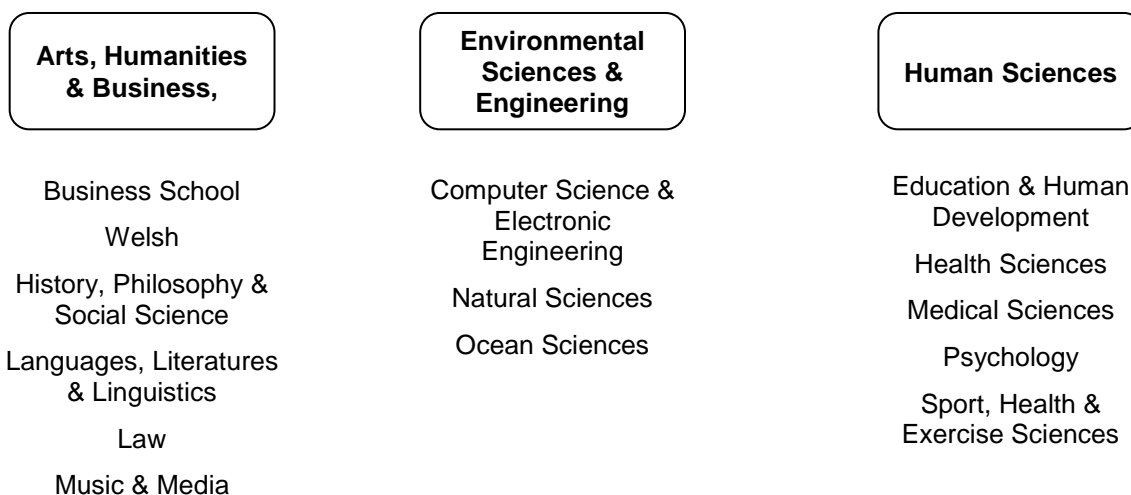
Bangor University meets the relevant baseline regulatory requirements of the Quality Assessment Framework for Wales.

This is a positive judgement, which means the University has robust arrangements for securing academic standards, managing academic quality and for enhancing the quality of the student experience. The QER Report also included three commendations, three affirmations but no recommendations.

The latest National Student Survey (NSS) results reflects the University's focus on overall student experience. The results – released August 2018– place Bangor amongst the UK's top 15 universities for student satisfaction (9th in the UK when excluding specialist institutions). The University is also 3rd in Wales for overall student satisfaction.

1.4. University Structure

The University now comprises [14 Academic Schools grouped into three Colleges](#), following restructuring over the summer of 2018.



2. Selection & Appointment Process

2.1. Criteria for Selection

In approving any nominations the Quality Assurance & Validation Task Group will take into account evidence of the following:

- knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality
- competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study, or parts thereof
- relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate
- competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures
- sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command the respect of academic peers and, where appropriate, professional peers
- familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed
- awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula
- competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

Normally, a nominee will be of Senior Lecturer status or above, or the equivalent. If a School can provide robust evidence of sufficient expertise, experience and seniority of their nomination, such criteria will take precedence over the formal job status and/or academic qualifications.

Nominees should have fluency in English or Welsh, and where programmes are delivered and assessed in languages other than English or Welsh, 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).

External Examiners must meet any applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies (e.g. HCPC). The External Examiners in such cases will be appointed as defined by this Code of Practice. The Quality Assurance and Validation Unit will be responsible for liaising with the Professional Body, or equivalent, where necessary.

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.

External Examiners should normally hold no more than two External Examiner appointments for taught programmes/modules at any point in time.

To avoid conflicts of interest, anyone in the following categories or circumstances cannot normally be appointed as an External Examiner:

- member of a governing body or committee of the University or one of its collaborative partners, or a current employee of the University or one of its collaborative partners
- anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme of study
- anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study
- anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study
- anyone 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 programme(s) or modules in question
- former staff or students of the University unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the External Examiner have completed their programme(s)
- a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another institution
- the succession of an External Examiner from an institution by a colleague from the same department in the same institution
- the appointment of more than one External Examiner from the same department of the same institution.

The number of External Examiners per programme of study is based on the requirements of a discipline and cohort numbers. For undergraduate programmes, the norm is 1 examiner to 200 students per subject of examination.

Where a part of a programme covers a specialist subject area, and student numbers would not justify the appointment of an additional Examiner, the School may consider appointing an Associate Examiner, using the normal nomination process.

2.2. Nomination Process

Nominations for External Examiners should be made in the school at the recommendation of the Head of School, and with the approval of the appropriate Teaching and Learning or other designated School Committee or Board of Studies.

Nomination forms for examiners for schemes of study beginning in September should be submitted to the Quality Assurance & Validation Unit, at the latest by the beginning of the preceding February.

In cases where a nominated External Examiner does not meet all the criteria for appointment a detailed explanation and a curriculum vitae is required from the nominating school at the time of the nomination.

In cases where the Quality Assurance & Validation Task Group rejects a nominated External Examiner for failing to meet the criteria for appointment, an alternative nomination will be required. Schools may appeal to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning) on the rejection of an External Examiner by the Task Group.

2.3. Appointment

The appointment period for an External Examiner to a School is 4 years. An extension of one year may be permitted in exceptional circumstances, to ensure continuity.

Following approval by the Quality Assurance & Validation Task Group, invitation letters are sent from the Quality Assurance & Validation Unit. Confirmation of the appointment is given to schools once nominees have accepted the position, and provided evidence of their eligibility to work in the UK. The Quality Assurance & Validation Unit will communicate clearly in writing to all concerned the modules, programmes or award(s) to which each External Examiner is appointed.

2.4. Eligibility to work in the UK

To comply with UK Border Agency requirements, all External Examiners must confirm their eligibility to work in the UK. All new External Examiners are required to provide the Quality Assurance and Validation Unit with appropriate documentation verifying their eligibility to work in the UK. No External Examiner appointment will be confirmed until the University has received evidence of the examiner's eligibility to work in the UK.

2.5. Induction

The Quality Assurance and Validation Unit holds an annual External Examiners' Induction Day, usually in November each year. All new External Examiners are invited to this event. During the morning session, senior officers of the University provide a range of general information about the University, its mission, processes and procedures.

After lunch, External Examiners visit the school with which they will be working, to meet key staff and receive a subject specific briefing.

Attendance at the Induction Day is not compulsory, but it is highly recommended. External Examiners will gain a useful insight into the University. Feedback from External Examiners who have attended the Induction Day indicates that it is a very helpful event.

2.6. Resignation and Termination

Should an External Examiner wish to terminate their appointment early, due to illness or other unforeseen circumstances, Examiners are asked to notify the Quality Assurance & Validation Unit in writing at the earliest opportunity.

External Examiner reports not received within the 3 months of the Board of Examiners meeting will be brought to the attention of the Teaching and Learning Task Group and could result in the termination of an appointment.

Whilst it is hoped that such a situation will not arise, an External Examiner whose performance or general conduct is deemed to be unsatisfactory by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning) may be warned in writing in the first instance and, if necessary, be advised on appropriate remedial action(s) which need to be taken.

In exceptional circumstances, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning) can authorise a letter of premature termination to be sent to the External Examiner concerned without prior warning. This will have the effect of terminating the contract immediately.

A letter of premature termination may also be sent in respect of a less serious incident where an External Examiner has received previously a warning of the type described above.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. Purpose

External examining provides one of the principal means for maintaining nationally comparable standards within autonomous higher education institutions in the UK.

The purpose of the external examining system is to help Bangor University to ensure that:

- it is maintaining the threshold academic standards set for its awards in accordance with the frameworks for higher education qualifications and applicable subject benchmark statements
- the assessment process measures student achievement appropriately against the intended outcomes of the programme, and is rigorous, fairly operated and in line with the University's policies, regulations and Codes of Practice;
- the academic standards and the achievements of students are comparable with those in other UK higher education institutions of which the External Examiners have experience.

The University expects External Examiners to provide informative comment and recommendations on:

- good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment observed by the External Examiners
- opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students.

The main function of the External Examiner is to report on the standards of student performance in those programmes or parts of programmes which they have been appointed to examine, and on the comparability of the standards with those of similar programmes or parts of programmes in other UK higher education institutions. External Examiners should determine whether the standards are appropriate for the awards, or award elements, by reference to published national subject benchmarks, national qualifications frameworks, institutional programme specifications and other relevant information.

3.2. Moderating the setting of assignments and exam papers

All draft examination papers which contribute to the final award should also be sent to the External Examiner for approval. External Examiners should also see all or a representative sample of draft assignments which contribute to the final award in good time to allow for comment. This is particularly important in programmes where the majority of the assessment is by continuous assessment rather than examination.

At the beginning of each academic session an agreed timetable for the dispatch of draft examination papers and scrutiny of marked assessment and examination scripts should be made between the school and the External Examiner.

3.3. Reviewing student work

External Examiners are expected to moderate all, or an agreed proportion of candidates' written work, which will normally include a sample of work from all levels of performance, including fails. Many External Examiners wish to see scripts from the top, the middle and the bottom of the range. The guiding principle is that External Examiners should have enough evidence to determine that internal marking and classifications are of an appropriate standard and are consistent. They should inspect a sufficient amount of the candidates' work to enable them to arrive at a judgement that can be applied to the examination as a whole.

Samples of all assessment that counts towards the final award (including Level 4 where appropriate) should be moderated by the External Examiner at the end of the academic year in which the module(s) has been delivered and assessed.

External Examiners are not third markers, the task is one of moderation. Schools should have documented procedures for resolving differences between first and second markers; the External Examiner should not be asked to adjudicate. External Examiners may make recommendations to the Board of Examiners about the appropriateness of the allocation of grades and the standards of marking for an assessment. **External Examiners may not change individual marks.** However, as a result of moderation, it may be appropriate to recommend a review of all the grades for a particular assessment.

Schools have varying practices regarding the timing of and location for reviewing of students' work. Many Schools will provide their External Examiners with access to the relevant modules on the University's VLE, Blackboard so that they can view assignments submitted via Blackboard. Some Schools will provide hard copies of marked assignments. Schools may send samples of Semester 1 work to you soon after it is marked, while others may operate a process of providing time and space to review work for the entire year on the day before the Board of Examiners meeting. The School should provide External Examiners with a clear procedure and schedule for the review of students' work at the start of the academic year.

For Masters' courses, External Examiners are also required to moderate dissertations. A system of sampling of dissertations is permissible, within the following guidelines:

- [a] that External Examiners see all dissertations which are (i) within the category of distinction, (ii) within +/- 5% of the minimum pass mark, (iii) within the failure band, (iv) resubmissions and (v) marked by persons other than members of the University's academic staff;
- [b] that External Examiners retain the right to select other dissertations at random;
- [c] that all dissertations not seen by the External Examiner should be independently double marked internally and
- [d] that at least 20% of dissertations or a minimum of 10 – whichever is the higher figure – be seen by External Examiners. (If the total number is less than 10, all dissertations should continue to be externally examined).

Each dissertation sent to the External Examiner for moderation will be accompanied by form TMD, on which the examiner will be asked to confirm the mark awarded by the internal examiner(s).

Undergraduate External Examiners may on occasion be asked to moderate a Master's dissertation, if the dissertation is outside the expertise of the External Examiner appointed to the Master's degree, and the undergraduate External Examiner has appropriate expertise.

3.4. Participation in the Board of Examiners meeting

The Board of Examiners is responsible for overseeing each student's academic performance on the relevant programmes and for making decisions on progression and award based on assessment results. The Board of Examiners has a duty to ensure that students are treated consistently and fairly and that appropriate academic standards are maintained.

Heads of School are responsible for deciding how Boards of Examiners are organised for their School and the programmes for which a particular Board is responsible. For example, in some Schools, the Board of Examiners meeting may cover all programmes at a particular level. In other Schools, a series of Board of Examiners meetings may be held to cover individual programmes or disciplines. Moreover, separate meetings may be held to consider award and progression decisions.

An internal examination board may held by the School within the week prior to the Board of Examiners meeting, to ensure that all assessment results are recorded correctly and make preliminary recommendations to the Board of Examiners meeting.

It is the University's expectation that External Examiners, as full members of the relevant Board of Examiners, will attend the Board of Examiners meetings pertinent to their appointment. Attendance in person is the norm, to enable the External Examiner to review work and discuss any issues arising from the assessment process with programme directors.

In exceptional circumstances, if an External Examiner cannot attend a meeting where their presence is formally required, participation by video link should be considered or the External Examiner should be available for consultation by telephone.

For cohorts of 10 students or less, the views of the External Examiner may be sought by post, e-mail, telephone and/or video link. The usual examination processes must still be followed, nevertheless.

For full-time undergraduate programmes following the normal September to June registration period, the Board of Examiners meetings will normally be held once annually in June (or late May for Languages and Music programmes). The School of Health Sciences holds two Board of Examiners meetings for nursing and midwifery programmes, in March and September.

For full-time taught Masters programmes the Board of Examiners meetings will normally be held once annually in late October or early November, after the dissertations have been marked.

Schools may also hold a Board of Examiners meeting at the end of Semester 1 to review students' performance in the Semester 1 assessment period, and at the end of Semester 2 to review the performance of Masters students in Semester 2. However, progression at these stages is automatic and External Examiners are not required to attend these meetings.

The role of a Board of Examiners is to:

- consider the academic performance of individual students;
- agree awards and classifications, in accordance with regulations;
- consider borderline cases in accordance with regulations;
- agree progression decisions, including recommendations for re-assessment or termination of studies;
- ensure the appropriateness of assessment and marking practices
- make recommendations on prizes;
- consider comments from External Examiners.

The University's student record system produces a number of key reports or Examination Board lists to assist the Board of Examiners in agreeing students' results. Many Schools now present these electronically.

Prior to the confirmation of results, the University expects External Examiners to endorse the outcomes of the assessment processes they have been appointed to scrutinize. External Examiners should sign Confirmation of Results Process Form (CORP) which is then sent to the Quality Assurance & Validation Unit.

Where the Board of Examiners is involved in the assessment of multi-disciplinary degrees and Joint Honours courses, arrangements will be made for the appropriate External Examiner(s) to be involved in the assessment and degree classification process.

3.5. Extenuating Circumstances

The Board of Examiners may establish a sub-group, which may include the External Examiners, to make recommendations or make decisions on its behalf for the following:

- [i] To decide on behalf of the Board of Examiners whether candidates be granted special arrangements for undertaking their assessment, subject to appropriate medical and/or other evidence. The designated School Examination Officer shall be responsible for notifying the University Examinations and Graduation Officer in Student Administration of any special arrangements that are recommended.
- [ii] To make recommendations to the Board of Examiners on how to deal with late submission of assessment.
- [iii] To make recommendations to the Board of Examiners on how to deal with extenuating circumstances presented by candidates, based on the categories defined in the Regulations for Taught Programmes.

The Board of Examiners shall designate an individual to be responsible for ensuring that all information in relation to extenuating circumstances which have been submitted to the central special circumstances system is available for consideration by the appropriate Board of Examiners and/or pre-meeting to discuss such cases.

Candidates are responsible for reporting any extenuating circumstances in a timely manner and providing appropriate supporting evidence.

More details about Extenuating Circumstances can be found in the Regulations for Taught Programmes: www.bangor.ac.uk/regulations/regulations/reg01.php.en

3.6. Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is defined as:

“any attempt by a student or any attempt by an individual to aid a student, to gain an unfair advantage in any assessment by deception or fraudulent means”.

It is viewed very seriously by the University.

The University strongly recommends the use of electronic plagiarism detection systems, currently Turnitin, although Schools can employ whatever methods are deemed appropriate in order to detect

plagiarism. Suspected plagiarism should be confirmed by producing documentary evidence that allows the source of plagiarised text/material to be identified unambiguously.

If an External Examiner, whether in the course of the marking period or subsequently, suspects that a student has engaged in unfair practice in any form of assessment, they must report the matter in writing to the Chair of the Board of Examiners.

If a student is suspected to have engaged in plagiarism or otherwise attempted to gain an unfair advantage, the University's Unfair Practice Procedure will be invoked.

Detailed information can be found in the University's Unfair Practice Procedure:

www.bangor.ac.uk/regulations/procs/proc05.php.en

3.7. Viva voces

The following guidance does not apply to instances where *viva voce* examinations are a formal part of the assessment structure for a programme. Such examinations must be agreed as when a programme is validated and must relate to the learning outcomes of the programme. Such use of *viva voce* examinations should also be consistent with the Regulations for Taught Programmes.

Viva voce examinations may be conducted by External Examiners on all or a sample of students. The purpose of such examinations is to assist an External Examiner to moderate a programme. Evidence from such examinations should not be used as part of a Board of Examiners' consideration of individual candidates. However, evidence from such examinations can be used by External Examiners to inform their judgement about the general standards of the programme. Where appropriate, External Examiners may use evidence from such examinations to recommend adjustments to the marks of all students within a cohort – such adjustments can only be applied at a module level. For example, an External Examiner, based on an examination of assessed work and a *viva voce* examination, may conclude that marks allocated to specific modules are too low and may recommend a re-evaluation of the marks or that the marks for all students on those modules be raised. Such a recommendation must then be considered by the Board of Examiners.

The allocation of borderline candidates to degree classes should be based on the criteria that form part of the Regulations for Taught Programmes. *Viva voce* examinations should not be used by Boards of Examiners to assist in the classification of borderline candidates except for evidence obtained from *viva voce* examinations that form part of the assessment structure for a programme.

A *viva voce* examination should not be used as the basis for reducing an individual student's mark or an individual student's degree classification under any circumstances.

Interviews with candidates may be arranged at the request of the Chair of the Examination Board (or nominated Chair of a School's special circumstances committee or equivalent). Such interviews may be arranged to obtain further information from a student about matters such as unexpected results or extenuating circumstances. Such interviews should not be referred to as *viva voce* examinations. Following an interview, pertinent information should be relayed to the Examination Board so as to inform its consideration of a student's performance. No candidate shall be disadvantaged as a result of having been interviewed.

3.8. Assessment of students through the medium of Welsh

Every student has the right to sit examinations and submit assignments through the medium of Welsh or English, irrespective of the language medium of the course. This excludes subjects where a language is the subject of study, where it will be compulsory to answer questions in the language which is the subject of the course.

More information about this can be found in section 6.5 of the Regulations for Taught Programmes:

www.bangor.ac.uk/regulations/regulations/reg01.php.en

3.9. Inappropriate contact from students

It is inappropriate for students to initiate direct contact with External Examiners. Students are advised of this in the online student handbook. Any direct contact received by External Examiners should be referred to the University Secretary. External Examiners should not respond to any direct contact initiated by students.

3.10. Role of the Associate Examiners

The function of an Associate Examiner is to report on the standards of student performance in those parts of programmes which they have been appointed to moderate, and on the comparability of the

standards with those of similar programmes or parts of programmes in other UK higher education institutions.

All Associate Examiners, including those appointed for collaborative provision, are required to submit an annual report using the pro forma provided.

Associate Examiners are not required to attend the Board of Examiners meeting. Moderation work will be completed by post or via Blackboard prior to the Board of Examiners meeting. The Head of School or the Examinations Officer will correspond with the Associate Examiner prior to the Board of Examiners meeting to confirm marking standards etc.

4. Information for External Examiners

4.1. Information Provided by the Quality Assurance & Validation Unit

The Quality Assurance and Validation Unit will provide new External Examiners with an induction briefing. External Examiners will also be provided with a copy of the External Examiners' Handbook and information about relevant University Regulations, Codes of Practice and Procedures etc.

The Quality Assurance and Validation Unit will also arrange for access to the University's IT Systems for new External Examiners.

During an External Examiners term of office, if there are substantive changes to the University's regulations, the Quality Assurance and Validation Unit will inform External Examiners directly.

Each year, usually about 4-6 weeks before the Board of Examiners meeting, the Quality Assurance and Validation Unit will provide External Examiners with reminder information about the process for submitting their External Examiner's report and how to claim their fees and expenses. New External Examiners will also be sent a copy of the previous External Examiner's report at this time.

4.2. Information Provided by the School

Heads of Schools are responsible for ensuring that External Examiners receive appropriate induction and briefing material to enable them to appreciate the aims and philosophies of the programme with which they will be associated and contribute in an effective manner to the assessment process. This will include a copy of the programme specification and scheme of study with a schedule of assessment. The Head of School is responsible for ensuring that External Examiners are apprised of the learning outcomes for individual modules and the programme.

Full details of school assessment practices and procedures should also be provided. Where academic standards have been defined explicitly, these should be made clear to the External Examiner.

At the start of their term of office External Examiners should therefore be provided with:

- Programme handbooks
- Programme specifications
- Module descriptions or access to them via the on-line student handbook or module gazette

plus any other relevant course specific documentation, where appropriate

During each academic year External Examiners should be provided with:

- a) Information about changes to the curriculum.
- b) Copies of all draft end of semester examination papers that count towards the degree, in time for the External Examiner to comment.
- c) Where one piece continuous assessment forms a significant part (more than 50%) of the module assessment, copies of draft continuous assessment briefs, in time for the External Examiner to comment.

Schools should also confirm the date of the Board of Examiners meeting early in the academic year.

5. External Examiners' Reports

5.1. How and when to submit

The University provides pro forma External Examiner report forms on the quality and standards web pages: www.bangor.ac.uk/ar/main/quality/ext_exam.php.en . Please do not name staff or students in your report. If you wish to comment on the work of a member of staff, please use their role, e.g. the School Administrator or the Examinations Officer.

The report form comprises a series of yes/no questions and four sections at the end for comments. If, for a particular question, the answer is 'in part' or 'mostly', please note this in the tick box, and elaborate in the comments boxes at the end. The first comments box, in section 7, asks External Examiners to note any commendable features of the programme. The section 8 provides space for External Examiners to suggest any areas for enhancement. If you have responded No to any of the questions, please say why in section 9. Section 10 should only be completed by External Examiners in their final year of appointment. Please use this section to provide a brief overview of the programme over the past four years.

Please note that for extended undergraduate programmes (MChem, MEng, MArts, MSocSci, MSci, MEnvSci, MOcean, MBiol, MZool, etc.) the undergraduate External Examiners' report form should be used.

External Examiners for professional doctorates such as DClInPsy, DHealthcare or EdD should use the report form for Taught Postgraduate programmes to report on the taught element of the programme, following the Board of Examiners meeting. As part of the examination process for the thesis element, External Examiners are also required to a report on the performance of each individual student using the research degree External Examiner report forms which are on the quality and standards web site: <https://www.bangor.ac.uk/ar/main/external/pgr.php.en> . The School will provide further guidance about this process at the appropriate time.

External Examiner(s) report forms should returned electronically to the Quality Assurance and Validation Unit, using the e-mail address qualityassurance@bangor.ac.uk . External Examiners submitting their reports in the medium of Welsh are asked to send their report as a Word document in order to facilitate the translation process. External Examiners are expected to return their report form no later than 1 month after the Board of Examiners meeting. Reports not received within 3 months will be brought to the attention of the Teaching and Learning Task Group and could result in the termination of an appointment.

5.2. What happens to your report

All External Examiners' reports are read by the Senior Quality Assurance Officer when they arrive at the University. A copy is also forwarded to the relevant Head of School. At the start of the following academic year, External Examiners' reports are made available to students via the online student handbook. Schools are expected to consider their External Examiners' reports at the next Board of Studies meeting and the Staff Student Liaison Committee.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning) and the Vice-Chancellor receive also copies of all External Examiners' reports.

A summary of the issues raised in each External Examiner's report is presented to the Quality Assurance and Validation Task Group at the next available meeting. As part of the University's quality assurance processes, Schools are required to respond to the issues raised in External Examiners' reports as part of their annual review and development plan (QA1 form). All QA1 forms are checked by the Senior Quality Assurance Officer to verify that this has been completed, and if not, further information is requested from the School.

Schools are expected to respond directly to External Examiners on issues of an academic nature, and they may do this by sending a copy of their annual review and development plans to the External Examiners. This will provide External Examiners with a broader picture of how the programmes are being developed, not only the School's response to the issues raised in the External Examiners' reports.

The Quality Assurance and Validation Unit will acknowledge the receipt of all External Examiner's reports. Where an External Examiner has raised issues for the University, such as regulations and other centrally agreed matters, the Senior Quality Assurance Officer will provide a substantive response.

If an External Examiner raises serious concerns in their report, the report is forwarded to the Head of the Quality Assurance and Validation, for immediate consideration. A meeting is usually held with the Head and other senior staff in the School to agree an action plan to address the issues raised. In such cases, the External Examiner's report and a report of the meeting are considered in detail by the Task Group. The Head of Quality Assurance and Validation will also write to the External Examiner explaining the actions that have been agreed in response to their report.

External Examiners' reports also feed into other elements of the University's quality assurance processes, such as Internal Quality Audits, mid-term reviews and revalidation.

5.3. Data Protection

Bangor University takes its responsibilities with regard to the management of the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation very seriously and has developed a policy framework through which this effective management can be achieved and audited. The University's Data Protection Policy is available on the University's website:

<https://www.bangor.ac.uk/planning/dataprotection/index.php.en>

5.4. Freedom of Information

External Examiners should note that although it is a confidential document, under the Freedom of Information Act, their report may be released outside the University. External Examiners should not allow this to deter them from making an accurate and honest report.

5.5. Making a confidential report to the Vice-Chancellor

In the event of serious concerns which are not being adequately addressed by the School or the Quality Assurance and Validation Unit, External Examiners have the right to submit a confidential written report directly to the Vice-Chancellor, Professor John Hughes. This can be sent by post addressed to the Vice-Chancellor, Bangor University, College Road, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 2DG or by e-mail to john.hughes@bangor.ac.uk

5.6. QAA Causes for Concern procedure

Where an External Examiner has a serious concern relating to systemic failings with the academic standards of a programme or programmes and has exhausted all internal procedures, including the submission of a confidential report to the Vice-Chancellor, the External Examiner may invoke QAA's concerns scheme. Information about this is available on the QAA website, where there is a link specifically for External Examiners: www.qaa.ac.uk/concerns/concerns-about-providers .

6. Fees and Expenses

6.1. Accommodation

When External Examiners travel to Bangor to attend the Board of Examiners meeting and an overnight stay is necessary, accommodation will normally be booked for them in the University's Management Centre. Please note that if the Management Centre is full, accommodation will be booked at alternative venues. Schools will liaise with External Examiners regarding their accommodation requirements, and the accommodation will be booked on their behalf by the Quality Assurance and Validation Unit. Late notification from an Examiner about their requirements may result in less convenient accommodation. Please also note that the Quality Assurance and Validation Unit is required to pay for unused accommodation in the Management Centre, so if an Examiner no longer requires accommodation, they should let the School know as soon as possible *and* follow the cancellation instructions provided on the booking confirmation (if that has been received).

The University will only pay for the accommodation costs of the External Examiner, and not for any additional guests such as a spouse or partner.

6.2. Fees and Expenses Claim Form

External Examiners must use form PYEE to claim their fees and expenses. Annual fees are paid following receipt of the External Examiner's report, but the examiner must submit a claim form for this. Please note that if you fail to submit your report, you will not be paid. Payments are made by bank transfer through the University's payroll, on the last day of the month. However, the deadline for the end of month payroll is the 10th of each month. Please allow some days for processing in the Quality Assurance and Validation Unit before this date.

External Examiners should complete all the personal information on the form, but the fees and cost codes will be added when the form is received by the Quality Assurance and Validation Unit. In the fees section of the form, when claiming your annual fee the 'date from' box should be the start of the academic year.

Regarding travel expenses, public transport should be used where practicable, and standard, special reduced and cheap day fares should be used where available. The University will **not** reimburse first class rail fares.

Where reasonable public transport facilities do not exist, or a substantial saving in time could be effected, a car mileage allowance may be claimed at the rate of 40p per mile. Examiners should ensure that their policy covers the use of their car on business.

Air travel within the UK may be permitted in exceptional circumstances. This **MUST** be agreed in advance with the Senior Quality Assurance Officer. External Examiners traveling from Dublin are expected to travel as foot passengers on the ferry. The University will not reimburse the cost of bringing a car to the UK.

Expenses claims must be supported by original receipts, photocopies will not be accepted by the University's Finance Office. Please also note that the Finance Office require a proper signature in the claimants signature box, in the middle of the last page.

The University will only reimburse costs actually and necessarily incurred in undertaking your external examining duties. To avoid any embarrassment, please note the information about the maximum amounts that may be claimed for subsistence.

6.3. Tax, NI, P60, pensions

The University is obliged to deduct Income Tax and National Insurance from External Examiners' fee payments and basic rate will be assumed unless you provide a P45 or P46/P38s before the payment is made.

The University does not routinely provide a P60 for External Examiners. If you require one to support your HMRC self-assessment form, you may request one by e-mailing qualityassurance@bangor.ac.uk. The Finance Office sends these out by post, so please do allow sufficient time.

A very small number of External Examiners whose annual fee is over about £800 may receive information with their payslip regarding auto-enrolment into the University's pension scheme. Providing you receive no further payments above the threshold in the subsequent 3 months, the matter should automatically expire. In the unlikely event that you do receive information to suggest

that you are being automatically enrolled into the pension scheme, please contact the Senior Quality Assurance Officer for further advice.

7. Academic Regulations

The Senate Regulations and Special Cases Committee has responsibility for the University's academic regulations, codes of practice and procedures etc. These documents are part of the University's quality assurance procedures and represent its Quality Assurance Manual. All the University's regulations, codes of practice and procedures etc can be found on the University's website: www.bangor.ac.uk/regulations . The key regulations that will assist you in your external examining duties are outlined below.

7.1. Regulations

Regulations provide the governing precepts and procedures that determine the way in which the University manages its academic programmes, including admitting students and awarding qualifications. Regulations also define the expectations in terms of student conduct. Regulations may be supplemented by codes of practice, guidelines or rules, or by any combination of these.

Regulations for Taught Programmes: www.bangor.ac.uk/regulations/regulations/reg01.php.en

This document contains important information that External Examiners will find useful in discharging their duties, such as:

- Categorical marking scheme
- Procedures for second marking
- Progression rules
- Degree classification
- Borderline cases

Regulations for PGCE Programmes: www.bangor.ac.uk/regulations/regulations/reg09.php.en

7.2. Codes of Practice

Codes of practice provide detailed procedures and rules for specified activities. They provide the detail that enables the University's officers and academic schools to comply with the regulations. They also provide instructions that ensure that the University's procedures, as defined in the regulations, or otherwise specified, are interpreted and applied consistently.

External Examiners (Code 06): www.bangor.ac.uk/regulations/codes/code06.php.en

Placement Learning (Code 07): www.bangor.ac.uk/regulations/codes/code07.php.en

Programme Approval, Monitoring & Review (Code 08):
www.bangor.ac.uk/regulations/codes/code08.php.en

7.3. Procedures

Procedures contain details as described for Codes of Practice but also provide operational detail, instructions and advice on implementing specific aspects. Procedures are commonly used where it is appropriate to combine detailed rules, as might be found in a Code of Practice, and operational guidelines in one document.

Unfair Practice (Proc 05): www.bangor.ac.uk/regulations/procs/proc05.php.en

7.4. Guidelines

Guidelines define the recommended approach for conducting a specific activity. They normally provide operational detail, instructions and advice that facilitate the implementation of a code of practice. Guidelines may also be used to encourage the adoption of practices and standards, and in this context they define what is considered to be best practice.

8. Other useful links

8.1. Quality and Standards at Bangor

The University's Quality and Standards web pages can be found here:

www.bangor.ac.uk/ar/main/quality/index.php.en

8.2. QAA UK Quality Code Chapter B7

The Quality Code is the definitive reference point for all those involved in delivering higher education which leads to an award from or is validated by a UK higher education provider. It makes clear what institutions are required to do, what they can expect of each other, and what the general public can expect of all higher education providers.

This Chapter is designed to ensure that external examining can operate in a way which is transparent, rigorous, and as consistent as possible across all UK higher education institutions, taking into account institutions' autonomy and differences in their mission, size, organisational structures and range of provision.

www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/chapter-b7_-_external-examining.pdf

8.3. Higher Education Academy External Examiner Handbook

The HEA's external examining handbook is a reference source for External Examiners and brings together the outcomes from research and development in the field.

The guidance is supported by evidence derived from the collective experience of practising examiners – staff who support the process, research studies and publications. Case studies are used to illustrate issues that can arise in External Examiner practice.

https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/HE_Academy_External_Examiners_Handbook_2012.pdf

