

External Examiners Policy Advanced Programmes Policy

This policy outlines the use of External Examiners at Multiverse and also acts as a handbook for potential External Examiners for our higher level accredited programmes.

1. Introduction

1.1 To ensure academically robust and independent higher level accredited programmes, Multiverse engages with External Examiners. This is to ensure that our programmes cohere with the relevant national qualifications framework and an external, impartial and independent expert ensures that we are meeting and exceeding the thresholds of the relevant standards. External Examiners are responsible for providing feedback, guidance on best practice, and advice on assessments and learning materials. External Examiners are also involved in assessment moderation and new programme approval.

1.2 External Examiners sit on relevant examination boards and contribute to discussions on assessment and progression. This policy outlines the facets of the External Examiner's role at Multiverse, alongside the expectations Multiverse has of its External Examiners.

2. Guiding Principles

2.1 This document has been prepared using the core practices and guiding principles outlined in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. The guiding principles which will be adhered to throughout this document are:

- The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent;
- The provider designs / delivers high quality courses.

3. Associated Policies and Procedures

- Academic Regulations
- Assessment Policy
 - Marking and Moderation
 - Extenuating Circumstances
 - Academic Integrity and Misconduct
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Programme Monitoring and Review Policy
- Programme Design, Development and Approval Policy

4. Scope

4.1 This policy is for Multiverse staff who liaise and engage with External Examiners as well as the External Examiners used by Multiverse.

5. External Examiner Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 External Examiners are people drawn from higher education or industry and are experts in the programme field. The role of an independent External Examiner is to:

- Critically evaluate academic standards of awards, programmes, and/or modules to which they have been assigned;
- Offer advice on good practice and opportunities to enhance the quality of those programmes/modules;
- Provide an informed view on how Multiverse's standards compare with the same or similar awards at other higher education providers;
- Provide an annual written report with observations of Multiverse's assessment processes and assessed works by the learners;
- Assess whether Multiverse's courses enable learners to demonstrate the achievement of the intended learning outcomes of the programme;
- Assess the extent to which learners have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level;
- Approve new programmes and/or amendments to existing programmes, where applicable.

5.2 The specific responsibilities of the External Examiner are to:

- Scrutinise, provide feedback for and approve all summative assessment structures, including assignments and examination papers;
- Evaluate learner's results through sampling assessments. Multiverse will provide assessments at all levels for varied sampling which will be either 5% of scripts in the range of marks or a minimum of 5 scripts;
- Ensure the assessment criteria have been employed correctly when moderating, checking that learner's marks are in line with the feedback they have received from the Tutor;
- Report to the chair of the BOE if they believe any academic misconduct has occurred, which has not already been flagged and dealt with, when assessing and moderating learner assignments;
- Attend BOE meetings in which decisions are being made about progressions and awards;
- Submit an annual report on learner performance and academic standards as well as on the effectiveness of the assessments. This should include any lessons to be drawn and actions to be taken;
- Report to the Director of Advanced Programmes confidentially on any matters of serious concerns relating to the assessment of learners or conduct of academic staff that is observed.

6. External Examiner Reports

6.1 External Examiners are expected to provide a written annual report to the Multiverse Academic Board. This report should contain the following information:

- Whether the thresholds for academic standards on the programme are being maintained;
- Whether the assessment process measures learner achievement rigorously and fairly against the learning outcomes;
- If the academic standards and achievements of the learners are comparable across the sector;
- Observed strengths and weaknesses of the learners' achievements;
- Quality of knowledge and skills demonstrated by the learners;
- Structure, organisation, design and marking of assessments;
- Quality of learning as derived from learner performance;
- Quality of programme curriculum as assessed by the programme materials and learning resources;
- Good practice and innovation related to teaching, learning and assessment;
- Areas for improvement;
- Whether any previous feedback has been satisfactorily acted upon

6.2 External Examiners will be provided with a template for the final report, however they should feel free to comment on other areas if appropriate and relevant to the report. Expectations of when the annual report is due will be provided to the External Examiner upon appointment.

6.3 The reports will be scrutinised by the Board of Examiners. The Board of Examiners will also agree upon an action plan, drafted by the Quality Manager, to respond to any feedback within the External Examiner report which must be acted upon. External Examiner reports can be made available to learners upon request.

6.4 The Multiverse Quality Manager will also provide a written overview of External Examiner reports to identify common themes. This will be provided to the Academic Quality Council yearly for review and scrutiny.

7. Reporting Concerns

7.1 If an External Examiner is concerned about any practices they have observed, they have the right to speak confidentially with the Director of Advanced Programmes in the first instance. This meeting can be arranged independently and all concerns will be heard.

7.2 If an External Examiner has a serious concern relating to systemic failings with the academic standards within Multiverse and has exhausted internal procedures, they may raise the matter with the Office for Students (OfS) under its Notifications procedure.

7.3 The External Examiner will be expected to report any concerns to the VP of Learning, Innovation and Operations before reporting to the OfS.

8. Appointment of External Examiners

8.1 Multiverse delivers a wide range of programmes and will be expanding its suite of higher level accredited programmes. Therefore, External Examiners must be appointed with careful consideration regarding their suitability for the position and with clear expectations regarding their engagement with Multiverse.

8.2 When recruiting for External Examiners, Multiverse will look for the following characteristics:

- A high degree of competence and experience in the relevant programmatic field;
- A good understanding of the UK Higher Education sector and appropriate sector reference points;
- An understanding of academic standards and quality assurance processes in higher education institutions;
- Understanding of the principles of applied learning in higher education;
- Experience of course design and assessment at the level which we are seeking;
- Experience of assessment procedures, particularly innovative forms of assessment which are focused on applied learning;
- Understanding of the specific programme provision and how it is different from other forms of higher education, if applicable, for example with apprenticeships

8.3 External Examiners are hired as independent academic advisors, and should not have any potential conflicts of interest. As outlined in [QAA guidance on External Examiners](#), an appointment should not be made if the the External Examiner is:

- A member of a governing body or committee of the appointing body or one of its partners, delivery organisations or support providers, or a current employee of the appointing body or one of its partners, delivery organisations or support providers;
- 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 learners 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 higher education provider 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 higher education provider;

- The succession of an external examiner by a colleague from the examiner's home department and provider;
- The appointment of more than one external examiner from the same department of the same higher education provider.

8.4 The Quality Manager will be responsible for nominating External Examiners using a standardised nomination template. This nomination will be approved by the Academic Quality Council to ensure robust scrutiny and externality.

8.5 The Multiverse Quality Manager will lead the administration for External Examiners. This includes organising inductions and training, tracking terms of appointment, and organising nominations.

8.6 It is the responsibility of Multiverse's Quality Manager to scrutinise any appointees to ensure there are no conflicts of interest as well as the potential External Examiner to declare if they believe there is a potential conflict of interest.

9. Terms of Appointment

9.1 As per QAA guidance, External Examiners at Multiverse will hold their post for four years with an exceptional one year extension to ensure continuity. External examiners may only be reappointed in exceptional circumstances, and only if 5 years or more have elapsed since their previous appointment.

9.2 External Examiners are expected to hold no more than two appointments for taught programmes at any one time. If an External Examiner changes roles during the period of their appointment, this must be declared and a new CV produced to ensure relevancy for the programme remains. If Multiverse changes the requirements of the External Examiner role during the period of their appointment, this must be updated in their contract.

9.3 If the appointed External Examiner is in such a position for the first time, Multiverse will make arrangements to appoint a more experienced External Examiner as a mentor. If there are no External Examiners for that specific subject area, Multiverse will make arrangements for an External Examiner from a different discipline to act as a mentor.

10. Briefing and Induction of External Examiners

10.1 When appointing External Examiners, Multiverse will ensure that they are appropriately briefed and introduced to the organisation. Upon appointment, all External Examiners will receive the following information with their offer letter and contractual arrangements:

- Relevant institutional and programme regulations;
- General academic regulations;
- Multiverse's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy;

- Multiverse’s External Examiner and assessment guidelines;
- Programmatic information, including handbook, curriculum, and learning outcomes;
- Marking and moderation criteria;
- Teaching and learning strategies;
- Details of Multiverse staff members to communicate with;
- Arrangements relating to the Board of Examinations.

10.2 All External Examiners will be required to attend a Multiverse induction session which will outline:

- Our approach to teaching and learning;
- Our commitment to diversity and inclusion;
- Expectations for External Examiners;
- Communication methods and expectations;
- Next steps of engagement.

11. Termination of External Examiner appointments

11.1 In the case an External Examiner is not meeting the expectations of Multiverse, there may be a case for termination. Termination of an External Examiner must be agreed upon by the Academic Quality Council and provided to the External Examiner in writing. Grounds for termination include but are not limited to:

- Failure to attend relevant Board of Examiner meetings without reasonable cause;
- Failure to produce reports in a timely manner or in accordance with the stipulations outlined in this policy;
- Failure to fulfil obligations as an External Examiner;
- Emergence of a conflict of interest that cannot be resolved;
- Change in job which means expertise may no longer be relevant;
- Discontinuation of the programme.

12. Appendix

- External Examiner annual report template:

Annual reports are a key part of the External Examiner responsibilities. They must be submitted annually in April/May, the quality team will prompt you to submit these each year and provide the online form link and specific deadline.

Please ensure your report does not identify any individual learners or members of staff.

The reports will be considered formally by the Board of Examiners membership, and a response collated and sent back to you once internally approved.

Agreed actions will be built into the Multiverse Quality Improvement Plan.

If you have any queries on any part of the process or the report then please contact Quality@multiverse.io

Name:

Date:

1. Organisation: Were you sent everything required for your responsibilities in a timely manner?

i) timeline of responsibilities,

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

ii) assessments for approval,

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

iii) email reminders of moderation,

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

iv) this annual report form

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

> If any of your 'organisation' answers are NOT agree or strongly agree, please provide as much detail as possible, including for example which modules or programmes you are referring to.

2. Internal marking and moderation

i) Internal marking and moderation was fair and applied consistently

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

ii) Feedback provided to learners on summative work was constructive

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

iii) Instances of Academic Misconduct (if applicable) were identified and addressed by the internal marking and moderation procedure.

Strongly agree Agree Not applicable Disagree Strongly disagree

> If any of your internal marking and moderation answers are NOT agree or strongly agree, please provide as much detail as possible

3. Board of Examiners

i) The Board of Examiners were well organised

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

ii) Decisions made by the Board of Examiners were fully in line with Multiverse's Academic Regulations and associated policies

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

iii) Your moderation feedback was satisfactorily addressed in the Board of Examiners

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

iv) There was a healthy distribution of grades seen for individual assessments, modules and cohorts

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

v) Areas of consistent low or high grades were satisfactorily discussed and addressed

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

> If any of your answers for Board of Examiners are NOT agree or strongly agree, please provide as much detail as possible, including Board of Examiners date(s) you are referring to (if applicable).

4. Assessment setting

i) You were satisfied with the range assessments

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

ii) Your feedback was responded to in a timely manner

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

iii) Response to your feedback explained the action to be taken, and if no action why.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

> If any of your answers on assessment setting are NOT agree or strongly agree, please provide as much detail as possible

5. Areas of concern (if applicable)

i) Areas of concern you raised were addressed and satisfactorily resolved

Strongly agree Agree Not applicable Disagree Strongly disagree

ii) Areas of concern you raised were addressed in a timely manner

Strongly agree Agree Not applicable Disagree Strongly disagree

> If any of your answers on areas of concern are NOT agree or strongly agree, please provide as much detail as possible

6. Sector standards

i) Multiverse's standards are in line with or exceed the sector

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

> If your answer on sector standards is NOT agree or strongly agree, please provide as much detail as possible

7. Good practice / areas for improvement

i) Are there any particular areas of innovation you have identified which Multiverse should continue?

ii) Please highlight any areas for improvement that you have identified including suggested actions.

8. If this is the last report of your tenure, use the space below to comment on your term in office.

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