1. External examining provides one of the principal means of maintaining UK academic standards within autonomous higher education providers. External Examining is therefore an important part of UCL’s Quality Review Framework (QRF). The following regulations are applicable only to taught programmes of study, including Undergraduate, Initial Teacher Education and Postgraduate.

4.1 Criteria for Appointment

1. External Examiners must be appointed for all taught programmes delivered by UCL and academic partner institutions.

2. External Examiners must be from outside UCL and must not be involved in teaching on the programme, or be involved in collaborative activity with the staff or students of that programme, for five years before their term of office and during their term of office. This includes Honorary staff members.

3. External Examiners must be competent in assessing students’ knowledge and skills at higher education level; expert in the field of study concerned and have appropriate academic and/or professional experience and authority.

4. External Examiners appointed to programmes must meet any specified qualification requirements of the relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies.

5. External Examiners are not expected to hold more than the equivalent of two substantive External Examinerships at the same time; this includes their appointment for UCL.

6. Boards of Examiners should avoid appointing an External Examiner to examine a single module without good reason for doing so.

7. A member of the academic staff of a College of the University of London other than UCL, or any other external institution with which UCL has service teaching arrangements, may be appointed as an External Examiner. It is imperative that the Board of Examiners at UCL, on which the appointee will serve, so far as can be anticipated, is examining no students from the appointee’s college.

8. Former members of UCL staff and former UCL students must not be appointed as External Examiners before a lapse of at least five years. It must also be ensured that all students taught by that former member of staff have left the programme being examined.

9. External Examiners for taught postgraduate Boards of Examiners who are not eligible to work in the UK must obtain a Tier 5 visa or a Permitted Paid Engagement letter to
enter the UK. It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Board of Examiners to verify eligibility of External Examiners to work in the UK or arrange the provision of a Tier 5 visa or a Permitted Paid Engagement letter to enter the UK. The guidance set out on the UCL Human Resources - Immigration website ('Sponsored Researchers and Visiting Academics' section of the 'UCL Right to Work and Immigration Guidance' document) should be followed.

10. External Examiners for undergraduate programmes must be eligible to work in the UK. It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Board of Examiners to verify eligibility to work in the UK. The guidance set out on the UCL Human Resources - Immigration website ('Sponsored Researchers and Visiting Academics' section of the 'UCL Right to Work and Immigration Guidance' document) should be followed.

11. An External Examiner will not be appointed from a department/division in which a member of UCL staff is serving as an Examiner.

12. Only one External Examiner from the same department/division and Faculty of an institution will be appointed to examine the same programme at any one time.

13. An External Examiner may be appointed from the same department/division of an institution only after at least two years have elapsed since the termination of the previous appointment from that department/division.

14. Boards of Examiners should avoid appointing excessive numbers of External Examiners.

15. Exceptions to the foregoing stipulations may on occasion be permitted, for example, in the case of subjects taught only in a very small number of institutions or subjects with an unusually high number of specialisms. These exceptions must be granted by the Chair of Education Committee or their nominee.

16. External Examiners will be asked at the time of appointment, or continuation in appointment, to declare any interest in or connection with any student or staff on the programme for which they are acting as Examiner whether that interest or connection is personal or professional. If such an interest or connection exists, the Examiner in question should not be appointed. The Chair of the Board of Examiners is responsible for managing this process and should notify any cases to the Chair of Quality Review Sub-Committee (QRSC) of Education Committee.

17. After serving for a period of four consecutive years, (or five years if an extension to service was approved by the Chair of Quality Review Sub-Committee (QRSC)), an External Examiner is not eligible for re-appointment for a period of five years. The period of service is defined as the period of service as an External Examiner at UCL and not as the period of service as External Examiner to a particular Board of Examiners.

4.2 Responsibilities of UCL

1. At the time of nomination UCL should provide the External Examiner with sufficient information to enable him/her to make an informed decision as to whether or not to accept the appointment.

2. Student & Registry Services issue an appointment email clarifying information on payment, visa requirements and details of UCL's academic regulations.

3. UCL should ascertain whether or not External Examiners have any access requirements or require any reasonable adjustments in order to carry out their duties, as outlined in UCL's Equal Opportunity Policy.

4. UCL will pay expenses promptly on receipt. The fee will be paid on receipt of the External Examiner’s report, provided that it is submitted via Portico within one month of the Board of Examiners meeting.

5. Where resources permit, Departments should take the opportunity to invite new External Examiners to UCL ahead of their first Board of Examiners, to ensure that this meeting is not the first time at which they meet the generality of academic staff.

6. As a minimum, Departments must provide new External Examiners with the following information by the start of the first session of their appointment:
   i. The name of departmental/divisional board contact (e.g. Examinations Liaison Officer, or Board Administrator).
ii. The date(s) of meetings of Board of Examiners to which the External Examiner is invited (when known).

iii. An outline of UCL’s examination policies and procedures for Board of Examiners (e.g., time allowed for marking, procedures for setting and scrutinising papers).

iv. Relevant departmental/divisional booklets such as a Student Handbook or syllabus information, or links to these if they are online.

v. Programme specification(s).

vi. Module descriptions.

vii. The Scheme for the Award and marking scheme for individual modules and components of assessments.

viii. The previous External Examiner's final report and the departmental response.

4.3 Responsibilities of the External Examiner

1. External Examiners should refer to the UCL regulations in Chapter 4, Section 13: Boards of Examiners, noting in particular:
   - 13.2 Programme Boards of Examiners
   - 13.2.4 Candidate Anonymity
   - Annex 4.3.6 Procedures When Marks Are Missing
   - Annex 4.3.7 Procedure When an External Examiner is Unable to Attend
   - Annex 4.3.8 Procedures to Follow in the Event of An Emergency

2. The primary responsibilities of a Taught Programme External Examiner are to review summative assessment methods prior to students being assessed and to submit an annual report via Portico, based upon their professional judgement, about the following aspects of the programme(s) they examine:
   i) Whether the academic standards set for the programme qualifications are appropriate.
   ii) The extent to which the assessment processes are rigorous, ensure equity of treatment for students and have been fairly conducted within UCL’s regulations and guidance.
   iii) The standards of student performance in the programme, or parts of programmes, which they have been appointed to examine.
   iv) To formally delegate authority to Sub Boards to make decisions on their behalf.
   v) Where appropriate, the comparability of the standards and student achievements with those in some other higher education institutions in the UK.
   vi) Identify comparable practice.

3. The External Examiner's Report Form requests External Examiners to suggest recommendations based on areas of concern not satisfactorily resolved at the meetings of the Board of Examiners.

4. The form must be completed on Portico (UCL's student and assessment record system) within one month of the final meeting of the Board of Examiners so that External Examiner's comments can be taken into account for the next academic session. The External Examiners Reporting procedures are set out in Annex 9.4.1 Main Steps: Response to External Examiners' Reports. Payment of the External Examiner’s fee is authorised when the report is received via Portico by Student & Registry Services and within the one month timeframe.

5. External Examiners should consider the totality of the degree in respect of both the syllabus and examination. The major part of their role should be devoted to modules and the assessment elements which are the main determinants of the degree classification.

6. Departments and Divisions should invite External Examiners to comment on the appropriateness of new or amended methods of assessment.

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1 In some cases this will not be possible as External Examiners are appointed to examine specific module(s) and not a full programme.
7. All forms of assessment and dissertations must be comprehensively moderated internally before being sent to the External Examiner. **An External Examiner must never be asked to mark or moderate any form of assessment or dissertation.**

8. External Examiners must have sight of a representative sample of a range of assessments that will enable them to make an informed judgement as to whether the internal marking is of an appropriate standard, consistent and fair to all students. Departments/Divisions should make suitable practical arrangements for this task either by sending a sample by post/email. The Chair may make arrangements for External Examiners to review a sample when they visit UCL for a Board of Examiners meeting.

9. For oral examinations, External Examiners should receive a representative sample of the recorded oral examinations or all of the recorded assessed work in the case of a minority language. In this context a minority foreign language refers to a language where there is only one qualified member of staff who could teach that language in a given academic session.

10. External Examiners may be invited to attend oral examinations as observers and must not directly examine students.

11. External Examiners must also see the mark sheets for all students for the assessment from which the samples are taken. Final projects and dissertations from programmes should be treated in the same way as other forms of assessment. The Chair may make arrangements for External Examiners to review final projects and dissertations when they visit UCL for a Board of Examiners meeting.

12. External Examiners should also receive the assessments of borderline students where the External Examiner is examining a whole programme (not just a component).

13. An External Examiner may recommend to the Board of Examiners changes to the marks already arrived at by the Internal Examiners if these appear to them to be inappropriate. Where significant changes are recommended by the External Examiner it is essential for them to see all the assessments for that component of the assessment.

14. When reviewing students’ assessments External Examiners should comply with data protection regulations, maintaining confidentiality of the content of students’ work.

15. At least one External Examiner present at the final Board of Examiners is required to sign a statement that the examination has been conducted according to the general UCL regulations and the specific programme regulations to the best of their knowledge, and that they have agreed to the results.

### 4.4 Nomination and Appointment

#### 4.4.1 Process of Nomination

1. The Chair of a Board of Examiners will nominate a new External Examiner for all or part of a taught programme.

2. New External Examiners must be appointed before the start of the first academic session so that they can review assessment tasks in good time. Nominees must not be asked to undertake any duties until their appointment is confirmed.

3. In making a nomination, the Chair will take account of the appointment criteria specified in Section 4.1 Criteria for Appointment, including confirmation of approval of the nomination from the relevant Chair of the Faculty Board of Examiners and the Quality Review Sub-Committee.

**Further Guidance**

1. In order for External Examiners to complete the nomination form on-line External Examiners need access to a restricted area of Portico (UCL’s student records system). NB - This is particularly important because External Examiners will submit their annual reports to UCL also using an on-line tool constructed for this purpose.
2. Access is gained by sending brief details to examiners@ucl.ac.uk providing all of the information listed below. Please note that if any of the required information is missing you will be asked to provide it before the nomination can proceed. Required information:
- Nominee’s Title
- Nominee’s Forename
- Nominee’s Surname
- Nominee’s Date of Birth (required to set up on UCL Services System)
- Nominee’s Email address
- Nominee’s Place of residence, including country (so we can advise on travel implications, see paragraphs 12 and 15 below)
- Board Title
- Board Code
- Faculty
- Board Chair
- Board Administrator
- Name of outgoing External Examiner
- Academic Year duties of nominee will begin in
3. Student & Registry Services will then set up the nominee on UCL’s Services System.
4. Student & Registry Services will send the nominee a link to Portico with information about accessing Portico to enter details of their relevant teaching and examining experience.
5. Upon completion of the on-line form, the nominee will then submit the form to the Chair of the Board by confirming that they wish to proceed (using a radio button on the on-line form).
6. The form will then appear in the Chair’s (and/or their nominee’s) ‘In-tray’ on their homepage on Portico. They will also receive an email letting them know that the form has been submitted.
7. Upon checking the details and being content to proceed with the nomination, the form will be is sent to the Faculty approver via the Portico in-tray and email process set out in paragraph 6 above.
8. The Faculty approver can accept or reject the nomination or send queries back to the Chair of the Board.
9. If content with the nomination, the Faculty approver can proceed by sending the form to the Chair of QRSC, via the Student & Registry Services, via the in-tray and email process set out in point 6 above.
10. The Chair of QRSC can accept or reject the nomination or send queries back to the Chair of the Board.
11. If the nomination is accepted the External Examiner is appointed by UCL for a period of 4 years (or less if requested), to be confirmed on an annual basis.
12. Chairs of Boards should consider the travelling distances involved from a proposed External Examiner’s place of residence to UCL, practicalities of travel and the likely costs to UCL in expenses, noting that Student & Registry Services is only able to reimburse up to certain values, and any additional sums will be charged to the relevant department / division. Please refer to Annex 9.4.2, External Examiner Fee Payment and Expenses Claim Form.
13. Departments/divisions should book and pay for External Examiners’ travel arrangements well in advance (at least one month) of the Board meeting to ensure the best rates are achieved. They should also book and pay for any hotel accommodation, submit an interdepartmental transfer with supporting documentation (invoices, receipts) to Academic Services and also retain receipts locally. See Annex 9.4.2 External Examiner Fee Payment and Expenses Claim Form for more information.
14. External Examiners should claim expenses using Annex 9.4.2 External Examiner Fee Payment and Expenses Claim Form. A link to this form is sent to them upon their appointment, but departments/divisions should also ensure that External Examiners make use of this form.
15. The appointment of overseas External Examiners should be limited.
4.4.2 Period of Appointment

1. In exceptional circumstances, External Examiners may have their four-year term extended for one further academic session only, subject to the approval of the Quality Review Sub-Committee. Chairs of Boards of Examiners are responsible for requesting extensions for their External Examiners via examiners@ucl.ac.uk.

2. If it is decided that an External Examiner will not be nominated for reappointment within the four year appointment period, the Chair of the Board must formally notify the External Examiner concerned and inform the Chair of Quality Review Sub-Committee of the decision via examiners@ucl.ac.uk with a brief statement of reason.

4.4.3 Continuation of Appointment

1. Chairs of Boards of Examiners will confirm that External Examiners are continuing in appointment annually before the start of the next academic year.

2. An External Examiner has the right not to seek continuation in appointment at any time during the period in which they are eligible to serve. See point 4.4.4.2 below for details on early termination of appointment.

2. If an External Examiner interrupts his/her service, the interrupted period does not count when calculating the total period of service. examiners@ucl.ac.uk should be informed of any interruption of service before the interruption takes place.

Further Guidance

1. When prompted by the Student & Registry Services, Chairs or their nominated administrators should confirm that a taught programme External Examiner is continuing for another academic session.

2. This task is carried out via the Chair’s or nominee’s Portico staff homepage.

3. When confirmed, the External Examiner will receive an email, issued by the Student & Registry Services, appointing them for another year.

4. If External Examiners have not been confirmed by a cut-off date (to be decided by Student and Registry Services and communicated to Chairs and administrators) they will automatically be confirmed. By the end of September each year all External Examiners will be confirmed unless Student and Registry Services has been informed to the contrary.

4.4.4 Termination of Appointment

1. UCL reserves the right not to continue the appointment at any time during the period that the External Examiner is eligible to serve. External Examiners will be formally notified by the Chair of the Board as outlined in Section 4.4.2 Period of Appointment.

2. If the External Examiner wishes to terminate their appointment, this should normally be arranged to take effect at the end of an academic year, but in any case is subject to three months’ notice.

4.5 Student Contact with External Examiners

1. UCL is required to provide details of its External Examiners, for information only, to students, including the name and institution of the External Examiner. For a list of current External Examiners, see Annex 9.4.3 for UG programmes and Annex 9.4.4 for PGT programmes.

2. Students must not make direct contact with External Examiners regarding their individual performance in assessments. Appropriate mechanisms are available to raise these concerns through the procedures set out in Chapter 6, Section 10: Student Complaints Procedure. External Examiners should inform examiners@ucl.ac.uk should a student contact them.

3. External Examiners may be given an opportunity to meet students to ascertain their thoughts about the strengths and weaknesses of their educational experience at UCL. This is not something that is routinely offered to External Examiners but can be
4.6 Entitlements of External Examiners

1. External Examiners are entitled to withhold their approval by signature to decisions of the Board of Examiners under the following circumstances:
   i) They are in a dispute with those decisions which cannot be resolved at Board of Examiner level.
   ii) They are not satisfied that the examination procedures have been properly carried out.
   iii) They perceive serious deficiencies in the examination procedures. In all such exceptional circumstances the matter in question will be referred directly to the UCL Quality Review Sub-Committee.
   iv) External Examiners have the right to raise matters of serious concern at the highest level of UCL, either with the Chair of Quality Review Sub-Committee or Vice-Provost (Education & Student Affairs). When all institutional avenues have been exhausted, External Examiners may contact QAA through its Concerns scheme route.

4.7 External Examiner Reports

4.7.1 Distribution of Reports and Response to Reports

1. The process for considering External Examiners’ reports is set out in the External Examiners’ Reporting Process (see Annex 9.4.1 Main Steps: Response to External Examiners’ Reports).
2. Access to these documents will be provided to students via UCL’s student records system, Portico, and should also be discussed at Departmental Staff-Student Consultative Committees.
3. A flow chart for the External Examiner Reporting process is available at Annex 9.4.5.

4.7.2 Annual Student Experience Review (ASER)

1. The Annual Student Experience Review process (see Section 2) is intended to provide an increased level of central data analysis which will flag up statistically significant issues and highlight particularly strong or weak data from a variety of sources. Each Department will respond directly to the issues identified by its own data which will allow for the collation and comparison of meaningful data and reflects a genuinely risk-based approach. The central analysis will also help to identify cross-institutional trends and variances.
2. External Examiners’ Reports will be used in conjunction with quantitative data and additional sources, such as external survey results, feedback from internal surveys and employability statistics, to compile the central datasets that will be considered by Quality Review Sub-Committee. Please refer to Section 2: Annual Student Experience Review for further information.

4.7.3 Monitoring of Reports and Responses

1. Academic Services will monitor responses to all reports. A step by step process for monitoring External Examiners’ reports and responses to the reports is set out in Annex 9.4.1 Main Steps: Response to External Examiners’ Reports and a flow chart for the External Examiner Reporting process is available at Annex 9.4.5). In order to help faculty and departmental internal processes, an optional template to record departmental Chair of Board responses to External Examiners’ recommendations is at Annex 9.4.6.
2. External Examiners will be asked to make recommendations within their report and grade these as Essential, Advisable or Desirable, which would require timely
responses. The report must make clear whether or not there are, in the Examiners’ opinion, any risks to academic standards. If External Examiners are satisfied that no recommendations are required, they should clearly state this in the relevant sections of the report. They are asked not to leave sections blank or to enter ‘not applicable’. The definitions for the three categories are as follows:

i) **Essential**: Areas of concern which, in your opinion, place academic standards and/or the student learning experience at immediate risk and requires action before the start of the next academic year.

ii) **Advisable**: Areas of concern regarding threshold standards which, while currently being met, in your opinion, could be significantly improved.

iii) **Desirable**: Areas where, in your opinion, there is potential for enhancement.

3. A designated member of academic staff should be available to respond to External Examiners’ recommendations within the specified timeframe. The Chairs of Boards of Examiners must ultimately be responsible for drafting a response if the designated academic has conflicting responsibilities.

4. Academic Services will prepare annual reports on matters of general interest and concern for wider dissemination to Quality Review Sub-Committee.

5. A Department’s (or partner institution’s) annual main meeting of the Board of Examiners for a programme at which an External Examiner is present should include early in its agenda a copy of the report and the Department’s response for the previous year.