



S P Jain
London School
of Management
LONDON

External Examiner Policy and Procedure

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1. This External Examiners Policy and Procedure describes why and how SP Jain London School of Management ('SPJUK' or 'the School') uses External Examiners and how External Examiners are nominated, appointed, inducted, and managed. It applies to all taught programmes of higher education leading to an award listed in the School's Academic Regulations.
2. This Policy and Procedure has been developed by reference to the QAA Quality Code Advice and Guidance on External Expertise, and the External Examining Principles agreed by the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assurance.

Role and duties of the External Examiner

3. The School engages External Examiners to provide impartial and independent advice about the academic standards of its programme and student achievement in relation to these standards. Therefore, the School requires its External Examiners to:
 - confirm that the standards of the School's awards meet the threshold academic standards specified in external reference points such as the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, subject benchmark statements, and, where appropriate, the requirements of professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies;
 - confirm whether the academic standards of the School's awards are consistent with those of similar programmes in other UK higher education institutions;
 - report on whether the School's processes for assessment measure student achievement rigorously and fairly and are conducted in line with the School's regulations and policies;
 - identify, where appropriate, examples of good practice and innovation in learning, teaching and assessment;
 - comment on opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning experience provided to students.

4. The duties of the School's External Examiners are to:
 - Scrutinise and approve all summative assessment instruments (including coursework and examination papers) for modules which contribute to the classification of students' awards;
 - Review samples of the work of students proposed for each category of award and for failure, to ensure that assessment criteria have been interpreted correctly and that there is parity of assessment across a student cohort;
 - Make recommendations regarding the moderation of marks for a cohort of students on a module or programme either in relation to the consistency of marking or on matters affecting the conduct of assessment;
 - Consider the reliability of the mode of monitoring the marks of module assessments and the final end-of-module component and report to the Examination Board on such revisions as they consider necessary;
 - Report to the Chair of the Examination Board any candidate that they suspect may have been engaged in academic misconduct;
 - Attend the meetings of the Examination Board at which decisions on recommendations for module results, stages in programmes and awards are made and ensure that those recommendations have been reached by means in accordance with the School's requirements and normal practice in UK higher education;
 - Participate as required in the review of decisions about individual student awards;
 - Submit an annual report on student performance and academic standards as well as on the effectiveness of the assessments and any lessons to be drawn from them;
 - Report in confidence to the School's Dean on any matters of serious concern arising from the assessments which put at risk the standard of the School's awards or on matters that remain unaddressed by other School staff.
5. External Examiners will be consulted by the School about sampling methods and will have access to all students' work submitted for assessment counting towards an award.
6. External Examiners will also be consulted on any proposed major changes to the programme as described in the School's Programme Change Policy and Procedure.

Procedure of Examination Board and the role of External Examiner

7. The External Examiner appointed for a programme is a member of the relevant Examination Board and is required to attend the final meeting of the Board in person or via videoconference to carry out the required duties. In normal circumstances, a decision on the award of a qualification to a candidate shall only be made by an Examination Board if the appointed External Examiner is present.
8. External examiners have the right to speak on any matter regardless of whether their opinion has been specifically invited. However, the Board is not obliged to defer to their judgement in taking decisions.
9. No member of the Examination Board, including the External Examiner, can alter the individual marks of students.

10. The minutes of the Examination Board should include explicit confirmation of External Examiner(s) endorsement of the acceptance of the overall standards, and to signify acceptance of the individual classifications shown. Pursuant to the School's Academic Regulations, External Examiners are also required to sign the final list of degree results and Schools should retain a copy of this document. If the External Examiner is not able to attend a Board in person, they should confirm their endorsement of standards via email to the Chair of the Examination Board.
11. If the External Examiner is unwilling to endorse the outcome of the examination process with regard to the overall standards, the Chair of the Examination Board should report the matter to the Registrar, which shall collate the relevant information and refer the matter to the Dean for consideration.
12. External Examiners are encouraged to attend resit Examination Boards. Although attendance is not compulsory, all External Examiners for the provision should be consulted prior to these meetings and are required to engage with this stage of the assessment process.

Absence of an External Examiner

13. In the unavoidable absence of an External Examiner, the Examination Board may proceed on condition that the External Examiner:
 - has provided comments on the standards of the programmes for which they have responsibility;
 - is available for consultation;
 - receives a copy of the minutes of the meeting and related documentation;
 - completes and submits their annual report as normal.
14. In such cases, an alternative External Examiner attending the same Examination Board meeting can report on the operation of procedures by the Board.
15. If it is clear at an earlier stage in the academic year that an External Examiner will not be able to fulfil all the duties required of them, it may be appropriate for an emergency replacement External Examiner to be appointed for that year.
16. Absence, and the reason for that absence, must be documented and reported to the Academic Board by the Chair of the Examination Board.

External Examiner reports

17. External Examiners are required to submit an annual report to the School on:
 - the appropriateness of the standards of its awards, by reference to published national subject benchmarks, the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, programme specifications and other relevant information;
 - the extent to which students have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level;
 - the comparability of standards with those of similar programmes in other UK higher education institutions;

- the appropriateness of the intended learning outcomes for the programme(s) and the extent to which the curriculum enables students to attain these outcomes;
- the extent to which the School's processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards are sound and have been fairly conducted;
- the standards of student achievement including the strengths and weaknesses of the students as a cohort;
- examination and administrative procedural matters such as the provision of timely and sufficient information to fulfil their roles; the operation of the Examination Board;
- examples of good practice in teaching and learning;
- any areas for development;
- whether any issues identified in previous External Examiners' reports have been addressed satisfactorily.

18. External examiners should not identify individual staff or students by name in their annual report. Any names included in reports may be subject to redaction.
19. Reports should be submitted on the School's standard report form for External Examiners but should not be constrained by this form; External Examiners should feel free to add comments where appropriate.
20. A final report should be submitted where an External Examiner's period of office has expired. In addition to the matters addressed in the annual report, this final report should include an overview of their impression of the standards and quality of provision at the School, salient issues that have arisen during their period of office and any matters that should be brought to the attention of the incoming External Examiner.

Submission and consideration of External Examiner reports

Submission

21. Annual reports should be submitted by email to the Registrar no later than one month after the meeting of the Examination Board at which the awards are decided. If a report has not arrived by this deadline, the Registrar will notify the programme team to check whether there are exceptional reasons for the delay. If no reason is identified, the Registrar will contact the External Examiner directly to remind them of the need to submit their report as soon as possible. If the report is not received after such reminders, the Registrar will contact the External Examiner to advise them that the matter is being referred to the Dean for further consideration. If the report is not received by the time of the referral, the Dean will write to the External Examiner to terminate the External Examiner's appointment.
22. Payment of fees is contingent on receipt of completed reports.

Consideration

23. On receipt of the External Examiner's report the Registrar will circulate copies immediately to the Programme Director and relevant Head of School. The Programme Director shall be responsible for:

- ensuring the report is considered at the next meeting of the Programme Committee and fed into the live action plan for that programme;
 - giving detailed written feedback to the External Examiner on action taken in response to the report. This feedback should be provided to the Examiner within one month of the receipt of the report.
24. External Examiner reports will also be a key input (and appended) to the annual monitoring reports for each School.
25. Where a report raises any serious matters of concern, such as significant deficiencies in academic provision, substantial differences in the application of assessment criteria within the same programme, or major irregularities or deficiencies in the examinations and assessment processes, the Registrar will also share the report immediately with the Dean, who shall be responsible for providing the External Examiner with a detailed written response and for reporting the issue to the next meeting of the Academic Board.
26. The School will make any External Examiners' reports available in full to students, except for any part marked confidential by the External Examiner or a confidential report made directly to the Dean.

Reporting serious concerns

Confidential report to the Dean

27. An External Examiner may report confidentially directly to the Dean at any time where they are concerned about standards and performance, particularly where they are concerned that assessments are being conducted in a way that jeopardises either the fair treatment of individual students or the standards of the School's awards.

Raising concerns with the Office for Students

28. Where an External Examiner has a serious concern relating to systemic failings with the academic standards of a School programme and has exhausted internal procedures, including the submission of a confidential report to the Dean, she or he may raise the matter externally with the Office for Students under its [Notifications](#) procedure.

Nomination and appointment of External Examiners

While the School is operating with New Degree Awarding Powers for the programmes named in our NDAPs application, we will seek to have two External Examiners for each programme. Beyond that, the determination of the number of External Examiners the School requires for each programme will be subject to a review of this policy and procedure in the final year of the NDAPs probationary period.

Nominations

29. The Programme Director is responsible for identifying potential External Examiners and nominating them using the School's standard template [to be drafted]. Completed nomination forms should be submitted to the Registrar, who shall compare the information in the form against the criteria below. Those nominations that meet the criteria will be submitted to the Programme Development and Review Committee which will make recommendations on the external examiner nominations for formal approval by Academic Board.

Criteria for appointment

30. The School's External Examiners should be able to demonstrate:
- 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;
 - fluency in English;
 - meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies;
 - awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula;
 - competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.
31. At least one External Examiner for each programme should work for a higher education institution within the UK (or have worked at one within the last five years).

Avoiding conflicts of interest

32. The School will not appoint as External Examiners anyone in the following categories or circumstances:
- current members of School staff or members of the governing body or other School committee, or members of staff or committees at the School's awarding bodies;
 - 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 School 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 by a colleague from the examiner's home department and institution;
 - the appointment of more than one External Examiner from the same department of the same institution.
33. In addition, the School will not appoint as External Examiners:
- former External Examiners, unless a period of five years has elapsed since their last appointment;
 - External Examiners holding more than two External Examiner appointments at any institution for taught programmes/modules at any point in time.
34. If an External Examiner moves to a new post at a different institution, the External Examiner should advise the School so that no conflict of interest arises. Should such a conflict of interest occur, the relevant Programme Leader will liaise with Registrar in order to take any necessary action.

Appointment

35. Following confirmation of appointment by Academic Board, External Examiners will be sent by Registry:
- a confirmation email setting out the terms and conditions of appointment, including confirmation of the programme(s), module(s) to which the external is appointed;
 - links to key information including the School's Academic Regulations and Assessment Regulations;
 - information about the arrangements for induction.

Terms of office

36. New examiners should take up their appointments on or before the retirement of their predecessors.
37. External Examiners should remain available after the last assessments (including resit boards) with which they are to be associated to deal with any subsequent review of decisions.
38. The duration of an External Examiner's appointment will normally be for four years, with an exceptional extension of one year to ensure continuity.

39. If an External Examiner retires whilst in appointment, they will remain as the External Examiner for the remainder of their term of office provided they continue to meet the criteria for appointment.

Termination of appointment

40. An External Examiner may terminate their appointment for any reason, in which case they should write to the Registrar. External examiners must give no less than three months' notice when terminating their appointment.
41. The School may terminate an examiner's appointment at any time if:
- the examiner fails to attend an Examination Board where required to do so and without good cause and/or making alternative arrangements;
 - the examiner fails to submit an annual report by the deadline determined by the School, or submits an incomplete report;
 - the examiner fails to fulfil their obligations in some other way;
 - an unresolvable conflict of interest develops;
 - the programme is discontinued.
42. Academic Board is responsible for ensuring that the nomination and appointment process for External Examiners has been conducted in fair and rigorous manner. To fulfil this role, it shall approve all appointments.

Induction of External Examiners

43. Once appointed, all External Examiners will be invited to an induction event.
44. Induction will be led by the Registrar and relevant Programme Leader. At the induction the External Examiners will:
- be introduced to the School and its programmes;
 - receive administrative information: staff will clarify roles and responsibilities as well as set out the School's aspiration for its relationship with External Examiners. School staff will set out the School's assessments calendar, including a description of major External Examiner interactions throughout the year, and the likely workload. The School will clarify the rights of External Examiners to raise any serious matter with the Dean, if necessary by means of a confidential report, and the duty of the School to provide a considered and timely response, outlining any actions that may be taken.
 - learn how External Examiner reports are used at the School;
 - have an opportunity for discussion of the School's programmes: There will be opportunity for External Examiners to ask any programme-related questions, as well as an open discussion about developments and opportunities at the programme level;
 - Evaluate and endorse the assessment approach: The External Examiners will be provided with module materials on appointment so that they may evaluate and endorse the School's assessment instruments and marking criteria.