



External Examiners' Handbook

2017/2018

CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction	3
	1.1 Welcome to Leeds Trinity University.....	3
	1.2 Revisions to the Handbook for AY 2017/18.....	4
	1.3 Contact details and further information.....	5
2.0	Prime functions of the external examining system	8
3.0	Procedures relating to the appointment of external examiners	8
	3.1 Requirement for external examiners.....	8
	3.2 Procedure for appointment.....	9
	3.3 Criteria for appointment.....	10
	3.4 Confirmation of appointment and period of service.....	12
	3.5 Information for students.....	13
4.0	Procedures relating to the duties of external examiners	13
	4.1 Reporting Lines and Membership	13
	4.2 The role of the programme/ subject external examiner	14
	Draft examination papers	14
	Assessment of examination scripts, projects, coursework and other assignments	14
	Oral and other live assessments.....	16
	Attendance at meetings of Panels of Examiners	16
	Endorsing assessment results	16
	Meeting with students.....	17
	Arbitration or adjudication on problem cases.....	17
	Provide comment or advice on programme content, balance and structure, on academic provision and on assessment processes.....	17
	Producing a report.....	17
	Mentoring new external examiners	19
	4.3 Mentoring arrangements for new external examiners.....	19
	Requirement for the appointment of a mentor	19
	Criteria and Procedure for appointment of a mentor.....	19
	The role of the mentor	20
	4.4 The role of the Lead External Examiners.....	21
5.0	Fees and expenses	22
	5.1 Payment of Fees	22
	External Examiners who commenced their term of office from AY 2014/15.....	22
	External Examiners who commenced their term of office prior to AY 2014/15. Error! Bookmark not defined.	
	5.2 Deductions from fees	23
	5.3 Expenses.....	23
6.0	Premature termination of contract	23
	6.1 Termination of contract by the external examiner	23
	6.2 Termination of contract by Leeds Trinity University	23
	6.3 Unsatisfactory Performance	24

APPENDIX 1	Moodle Guidance for External Examiners.....	27
APPENDIX 2	Material to be provided to an external examiner.....	31
APPENDIX 3	Academic Deliberative Structure Diagram.....	33
APPENDIX 4	Flowchart of Consideration of External Examiners' reports	35
APPENDIX 5	Overview of Academic Quality Cycle.....	37
APPENDIX 6	Extracts from the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.....	39
APPENDIX 7	External Examiner Structure representation	49
APPENDIX 8	Annual Programme/ Subject External Examiner Report form 2017/18.....	50
APPENDIX 9	Annual Lead External Examiner Report form 2017/18.....	50

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Welcome to Leeds Trinity University

Dear colleague

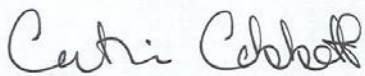
Whether you are an external examiner new to Leeds Trinity University, or a returning external examiner, I would like to thank you for agreeing to undertake a role that we value enormously.

This Handbook is intended for use by external examiners for taught programmes and by University staff who work in liaison with external examiners. It is intended to support you in your role and to enable the University to discharge its responsibility for the assurance of academic quality and standards. The Handbook is consistent with QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education (QCHE) - Chapter B7: External examining (2011). Further information about relevant sections of the QCHE are provided in Appendix 6 of the Handbook, for ease of reference, and are available in full on the QAA's website at: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality>

This Handbook provides details of Leeds Trinity's policies and procedures pertaining to external examining and information about how we consider and make use of your reports. It is updated on an annual basis and your comments and suggestions on your information needs are most welcome.

This Handbook is supplemented by The Handbook on Assessment Practice, which outlines the principles, processes, general rules and conventions of assessment at Leeds Trinity University and contains a glossary of the terms we use to describe our assessment processes. Subject-level material will be provided to you by the relevant academic department at the appropriate times. Electronic copies of the forms that you will need throughout the year will be made available to you by email and are available from our website. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us here at Leeds Trinity University (please see contact details in section 1.3).

So, thank you once again. We look forward to working with you and trust that you will find working with us a rewarding experience.



Catherine Cobbett
Head of Academic Quality

1.2 Revisions to the Handbook for AY 2017/18

In addition to minor textual amendments the following revisions have been made to the Handbook for AY 2017/18 (section numbers are shown in brackets):

- i) Changes to the references to 2016/17 (*throughout*);
- ii) Changes to the Academic Deliberative structure has resulted in a change to the approval of external examiner matters. The Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) have devolved authority to the External Examining Group to oversee the University external examining responsibilities (*throughout*);
- iii) Update references to programme/ subject external examiner (*throughout*);
- iv) Increased flexibility to facilitate remote attendance via Skype video conferencing, where appropriate (para 48)
- v) Change to the operational arrangements for the University's external examiner induction activities (Para 71);
- vi) Changes to the description of the Lead External Examiner Role (Para 89 and 90);
- vii) Change to the fee structure for Programme/ Subject examiners submitting more than one Annual Report (Para 94);
- viii) Changes to the fee arrangements for the Lead Examiner (Para 96);
- ix) Inclusion of the Annual Programme/ Subject External Examiner Report form (Appendix 8) and Lead External Examiners Report form (Appendix 9) as an appendices

1.3 Contact details and further information

General enquiries and information

If you have any questions regarding your appointment, fees and expenses, or any aspect of Leeds Trinity University's procedures please contact:

Academic Quality Office

Email: ex-ex-admin@leedstrinity.ac.uk Tel: 0113 283 7340

The electronic copy of your report form, which will be sent to you at the appropriate time, should also be submitted by email to the above address.

If you prefer, you can write to:

Ms Catherine Cobbett
Head of Academic Quality
Leeds Trinity University
Brownberrie Lane
Horsforth
Leeds
LS18 5HD.

Email: C.Cobbett@leedstrinity.ac.uk Tel: 0113 283 7337

Further information, including links to the Taught Course Academic Regulations and other related policies and procedures can be found on our external examiners' web page: <http://www.leedstrinity.ac.uk/external-examiners>

Your contact details

Please let us know if there are any changes to your contact details by emailing ex-ex-admin@leedstrinity.ac.uk

School contacts

The University is organised into the following academic units:

- **Institute of Childhood and Education (ICE)**
 - Cluster 1: Undergraduate (Non-ITE)
 - Cluster 2: Postgraduate ITE
 - Cluster 3: Postgraduate taught, CPD programmes (including Foundation degrees)
 - Cluster 4: Undergraduate ITE

- **School of Arts and Communication (SAC)**
 - English
 - History, Politics, Theology and Religious Studies
 - Journalism
 - Media, Film and Culture

- **School of Social and Health Sciences (SSHS)**
 - Business
 - Psychology, Criminology and Sociology
 - Health and Nutrition
 - Sport and PE

The Academic Administration Office supports all of the above Programme Clusters and Academic Groups. You can contact the Academic Administration Office by calling 0113 2837348 or by email at AAO@leedstrinity.ac.uk

Programme information

Summary programme details can be downloaded (as pdfs) from the online prospectus on the University's homepage: <http://www.leedstrinity.ac.uk/>, full Programme Specifications for a programme can be made available on request.

Programme Handbooks and other programme related information can be accessed via *Help & Support, Programme Information & Handbooks* from the moodle VLE: <http://moodle.leedstrinity.net/>

Moodle help

Appendix 1 contains moodle guidance for external examiners. The e-learning team will contact new external examiners to inform them of their log-in details (see paragraph 27 on access arrangements for new external examiners).

For further help with moodle you can contact the e-learning team by email:

Marcus Sugden: M.Sugden@leedstrinity.ac.uk
Patrick Turner: P.Turner@leedstrinity.ac.uk

Postgraduate Research Degrees

This Handbook relates to the external examining of taught courses.
For information about external examining of postgraduate research degrees
please contact:

Postgraduate Research Tutor: Prof Graham Roberts
Email: g.roberts@leedstrinity.ac.uk Tel: 0113 283 7193

Further information about Postgraduate Research Degrees is available at:
<http://www.leedstrinity.ac.uk/research/research-degrees>

External Links

The **Higher Education Academy** provides guidance and advice at a national level, including *A handbook for external examining*, available from its website at:
<https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/enhancement/themes/assessment-and-feedback/external-examining>

Information about the **Quality Assurance Agency** can be found on the QAA website at:
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality>

2.0 Prime functions of the external examining system

1. Leeds Trinity University is responsible for the academic standards of its awards and for the quality of the education it provides. The external examining system is designed to assist the University in exercising that responsibility. To this end external examiners should assist the institution in ensuring that:
 - a. the academic standard for each programme component is set and maintained by Leeds Trinity University at a level compatible with those described in the [Quality Code for Higher Education - Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards](#), and that student performance is properly judged against those standards;
 - b. Leeds Trinity University's processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards measure student achievement against the intended learning outcomes of the programme appropriately, and are fairly and consistently operated;
 - c. Leeds Trinity University is able to ensure that the standard of its programmes is comparable with those of similar programmes at other UK higher education institutions.
2. External examiners are independent and impartial advisers who provide Leeds Trinity University with informed comment on the standards set and student achievement in relation to those standards. External examining is therefore an integral and essential part of the institution's quality assurance mechanisms which seek a range of evidence, from a number of sources, through a variety of means. This handbook establishes criteria and guidance for external examining that enable its academic standards to be described and maintained.

3.0 Procedures relating to the appointment of external examiners

3.1 Requirement for external examiners

3. The University requires that at least one programme/ subject external examiner shall be appointed for each named higher education award. This handbook will refer to two types of external examiner, the programme/ subject external examiner and the lead external examiner. All examiners will be allocated a set of modules to examine, some examiners will also be appointed to examine a programme in its entirety.
4. There will be one subject external examiner appointed to oversee the overall standard and coherence of each programme and its component parts (the programme examiner). At least two programme/ subject external examiners per school shall be appointed to oversee progression and conferment of awards (lead external examiners).
5. A programme/ subject external examiner will be assigned to every module that contributes to the final award, irrespective of the marking scheme i.e. Level 4 for Certificates of Higher Education (where this is a final, rather than nested award), Levels 4 and 5 for Foundation degrees, Levels 5 and 6 for Honours degrees, and all postgraduate modules.

6. In addition to programme oversight, allocation of responsibilities will take into consideration:
 - the comparability of standards at module-level for modules that are delivered in multiple programmes;
 - the quantity and complexity of the assessments to be moderated,
 - the specialist nature of the provision, including any specific requirements for work/practice-based learning,
 - deployment of external examiners across subject areas for inter- or multi-disciplinary programmes;
 - any Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements.
7. The actual number of external examiners per subject area will be reviewed annually by the External Examining Group, on the recommendation of School Boards, to enable the University to ensure that no external examiner is overloaded in their duties.

3.2 Procedure for appointment

8. Leeds Trinity University recognises that academic staff are best placed to identify suitably qualified candidates to act as programme/ subject external examiners, based on their expertise within the discipline. It is therefore expected that the programme team will make recommendations to the Chair of the Panel of Examiners for endorsement by the School Board approval by the External Examining Group (XXG).
9. The Chair of the Panel of Examiners will provide sufficient information to enable both the nominee and the institution to proceed to the approval stage of appointment with a shared understanding of the role, its activities and the area of expertise to be covered. Potential external examiners should be advised that their personal details will be held and used by Leeds Trinity University for the purposes of their external examining duties.
10. In nominating a candidate for the position of external examiner the Chair of the Panel of Examiners will take into account the criteria specified below. The nomination will be made using the Nomination for Appointment form, together with a *curriculum vitae* and any supplementary information necessary to support the nomination. (A separate form is available for the approval of a change in responsibilities).
11. Following endorsement by the School Board, the secretary of the Board will send the nomination to the Academic Quality Office (AQO), which will make arrangements for its consideration by the External Examining Group.
12. Nominations should be made in good time for appropriate induction and support arrangements to be put in place prior to commencement of the appointment, including mentoring arrangements, where appropriate. New external examiners should be given the opportunity to observe a Panel of Examiners' meeting, shadowing the outgoing external examiner, prior to the commencement of their period of office, wherever practicable.
13. To facilitate the timely appointment of external examiners the AQO maintains a register of external examiners and will notify relevant Chairs of Panels of Examiners eighteen months in advance of any examiners whose appointment is due to expire. This should help programme teams with succession planning

and ensure that a suitably experienced examiner is in post at all times. The following dates apply to the nominations process:

- Academic year appointments: to be submitted to the AQO no later than for submission to the spring meetings of the External Examining Group of the academic year preceding appointment.
 - Calendar year appointments: to be submitted to the AQO no later than for submission to the autumn meetings of the External Examining Group of the year preceding appointment.
14. The appointment of Lead external examiners for shall be recommended by the School Board to the External Examining Group, following consultation with the nominee. Candidates should have been in post as an external examiner at Leeds Trinity University for at least one full academic year and consideration should be given to the content and timeliness of their written report, attendance at Panel of Examiners' meetings and their general engagement with the external examining process, at Leeds Trinity University and preferably have external examining experience more broadly.

3.3 Criteria for appointment

15. During its consideration of nominations the External Examining Group will seek to ensure that nominees are suitably qualified, have the necessary experience and are impartial. Chairs of Panels of Examiners should be mindful of Leeds Trinity University's [Equality and Diversity Policy](#) and should take into account the following UK-wide set of criteria and person specification¹ when proposing a candidate.
16. An external examiner should either have recent experience of external examining or other relevant, recent experience, such as extensive internal examining experience. An external examiner in his/her first appointment will normally be appointed a mentor and, where possible, join an experienced team of external examiners. The Chair of the Panel of Examiners should provide details of planned mentoring arrangements at the point of nomination.
17. External examiners may be drawn from a variety of institutional and professional contexts and traditions in order that the programme benefits from wide-ranging external scrutiny. The nomination of candidates from a non-higher education setting will require that they normally work alongside external examiners currently working in higher education and may be appointed a mentor where it is deemed that the candidate may require support combining academic judgements with their expert subject / professional knowledge.
18. Nominations for appointment should demonstrate evidence of the following person specification:
- a. knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality;
 - b. competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study, or parts thereof;
 - c. relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate;

¹ QAA QCHE Chapter B7 Indicator 5

- d. competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures;
 - e. 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;
 - f. familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed;
 - g. fluency in English, and where programmes are delivered and assessed in languages other than English, 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);
 - h. meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies;
 - i. awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula;
 - j. competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.
19. In order to ensure impartiality and independence, the following categories of people or circumstances must be avoided when submitting nominations:
- a. member of the Board of Governors, or a current employee of Leeds Trinity University or one of its collaborative partners;
 - b. anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme of study;
 - c. anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study;
 - d. anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study;
 - e. 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;
 - f. former staff or students of the institution unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the proposed external examiner have completed their programme(s);
 - g. a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another institution²;
 - h. the succession of an external examiner from an institution by a colleague from the same department in the same institution;
 - i. the appointment of more than one external examiner from the same department of the same institution;
 - j. the appointment of an external examiner who has been involved in the development of the programme or its component parts, for example as an external consultant, or member of the programme approval panel. Should such a nomination be submitted it should contain an explanation of how the benefits of a fully independent perspective are outweighed by the benefits of engaging someone who has been involved in the development of the programme, and an assurance that impartiality will be maintained.

² A register of the external examining duties of Leeds Trinity University staff is maintained to enable the University to discharge this responsibility.

Any of the above situations that cannot be avoided must be declared on the nomination form, and be accompanied by a rationale for the appointment.

20. Examiners should not be over-extended by their external examining duties, and should hold no more than two external examinerships at taught degree level at any point in time.
21. External examiners must also be able to demonstrate their right to work in the UK, in accordance with the Home Office rules currently in force, and will be required to provide the necessary documentation upon appointment. To avoid discrimination the University treats all applicants in the same way and asks applicants to confirm their eligibility to work in the UK at the point of nomination. Upon appointment new external examiners must send photocopies of the necessary document(s) before any work can be carried out and will be required to bring the original document(s) on their first visit to the University to be checked and verified. Further details are included in the Nomination for Appointment form and the appointment pack.

3.4 Confirmation of appointment and period of service³

22. External examiners are appointed by the Learning and Teaching Committee for a period of one year in the first instance, which will normally be 1st October to 30th September for academic year appointments and 1st January to 31st December for calendar year appointments⁴. Upon satisfactory execution of duties this period may be extended for a further period of up to three years. In exceptional circumstances, for example where a programme has been withdrawn, an extension of one further year may be requested to ensure continuity.
23. Where there is more than one external examiner covering a subject area the Chair of the Panel of Examiners should phase the terms of office of the examiners to ensure continuity.
24. The re-appointment of an external examiner will not normally be considered until a further five years have elapsed and only in exceptional circumstances.
25. Upon approval the Head of Academic Quality will write to the nominee to confirm the appointment and the initial allocation of duties, will provide details of the contractual agreement between Leeds Trinity University and the examiner and will send an appointment pack containing institutional-level information, such as the External Examiners' Handbook, the Handbook on Assessment Practice and the Taught Course Academic Regulations.
26. The Chair of the Panel of Examiners will be informed of the appointment simultaneously and asked to provide the examiner with subject-level information, including the previous external examiner's report when it becomes available. A checklist of material to be provided to external examiners is contained in Appendix 2.
27. The e-learning team will be asked to arrange access to the moodle VLE by the Academic Quality Office. The e-learning team will provide a username,

³ See also Section 6 on *Premature termination of contract*

⁴ Other appointment schedules may be implemented as appropriate to the nature and delivery of the provision.

password and instructions for access to the external examiner (see [Appendix 1](#)).

28. Any changes to the external examiner's programme or module allocation following the annual review of responsibilities ([see para. 7](#)) will be communicated by the relevant Chair of the Panel of Examiners, or the Academic Administration Office on their behalf.

3.5 Information for students

29. Students are provided with information about the external examining system in their Programme Handbooks. In the interest of transparency the University also includes the name and home institution of external examiners⁵ (no direct contact information is provided). External examiners are also asked to provide their current position and home institution on their annual report form, to enable the University to maintain its records ([see paragraph 61](#) below on sharing reports with students).
30. Students are advised that they should not, in any circumstances, contact external examiners directly as they are not in a position to comment on their individual performance in assessment. Information is provided on the appropriate procedures for student engagement in the quality management process and on the processes for academic appeals and complaints.
31. Any correspondence received by an external examiner from a student should not be responded to and should be referred directly to the Academic Quality Office, by email to: ex-ex-admin@leedstrinity.ac.uk

4.0 Procedures relating to the duties of external examiners

4.1 Reporting Lines and Membership

32. External examiners are responsible to the Academic Board through the Learning and Teaching Committee. The External Examining Group of the LTC provides initial, detailed consideration of all matters related to external examining and has delegated authority for the approval of external examining arrangements. [Appendix 3](#) contains a diagram of the University's academic deliberative structure.
33. Programme/ subject external examiners are full members of the Panel of Examiners for the subject area to which they have been appointed. The Panel of Examiners agrees marks to be reported to the Board of Examiners. Programme /subject external examiners are not required to attend the meeting of the Board of Examiners (see also paragraphs [48-50 below](#)).
34. Programme/ subject external examiners communicate directly with the relevant Chair of the Panel of Examiners / subject area throughout the assessment process and will be invited to provide oral feedback at meetings of the Panel of Examiners which they attend. They are asked to submit a formal written report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, via the Academic Quality Office, at the end of

⁵ QAA QCHE Chapter B7 Indicator 8

the academic year (see [paragraphs 57-67](#) below for further information on reporting arrangements).

35. School lead external examiners are members of the relevant Panel of Examiners in their role as programme/ subject external examiner and a member of the school-level Board of Examiners.
36. The lead external examiners are full members of the Board of Examiners which makes decisions regarding progression and award (see also paragraphs [86-91 below](#)). The lead external examiners are asked to submit a report annually to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, via the Academic Quality Office, which is subsequently considered by the External Examining Group of the Learning and Teaching Committee and is included in the annual Overview of External Examiners' Reports.

4.2 The role of the programme/ subject external examiner

37. The key tasks of the programme/ subject external examiners are to:
 - a. participate in assessment processes (as set out below) in order to assure the University that the processes have been conducted properly and consistently;
 - b. arbitrate or adjudicate on problem cases in respect of (a) above;
 - c. comment and give advice on programme content, balance and structure, on academic provision and on assessment processes;
 - d. produce a report at the end of the academic year in respect of (a), (b) and (c) above;
 - e. uphold Leeds Trinity University's values and apply relevant policies, procedures and regulations, in particular the [Equality and Diversity Policy](#).

Draft examination papers

38. Chairs of the Panels of Examiners are responsible for sending to the external examiner for comment, all draft question papers for examination of modules contributing to the calculation of a named award, including re-sit papers. Timescales for this involvement will be agreed between the individual Chair of the Panel and the external examiner(s) at the beginning of each Academic Year. Some subject areas may also ask external examiners to comment on assessment tasks other than formal examinations.

Assessment of examination scripts, projects, coursework and other assignments

39. The guiding principle for the selection of assessed work for external moderation is that external examiners should have enough evidence to determine that internal marking is of an appropriate standard and is consistent. External moderation is conducted to confirm that the marking and internal moderation process enables the University to maintain and assure the standards of its awards. The external examiner will therefore normally receive, *inter alia*, as a minimum, the internally moderated sample of work, along with the provisional marks agreed by the first marker and internal moderator, the assessment feedback and assessment verification form for the sample and the

full set of marks for the assessment⁶, the assessment criteria, marking scheme and model answers, where available.

40. Where work has been subject to internal double-marking (i.e. dissertations and final research projects) the minimum requirements for external moderation are the same as for sampling, as shown in [paragraph 41](#) below.
41. With regard to the moderation of assessments contributing to the final award the minimum sample shall comprise all fail marks plus a representative sample of at least six and no more than the square root of the total number of pieces of assessment, to include at least one piece of work from each classification or grade.
42. External examiners may request a further selection of work relating to their area of responsibility and may call for such evidence that will assist them in the conduct of their duties. For example, an external examiner might be particularly interested in work falling in the First Class/Distinction classifications or might request work which falls outside of their module allocation in order to reach judgements at programme-level.
43. Chairs of Panels of Examiners are responsible for the selection of assessed work to be sent to the external examiner(s) and arrangements for the selection and dispatch of assessed work will be agreed between the Chair and the external examiner(s) at the beginning of the academic year. However, widespread use of the moodle VLE means that external examiners may have access to a wide range of work without needing to make a specific request for additional work to be sent to them. Where moderation is to take place via universal access to the VLE the Chair of Panel will inform the external examiner of the minimum sample requirements.
44. External examiners shall not change individual marks (see also [paragraph 55](#) on the arbitration of problem cases).
45. Where an external examiner is unable to agree the marks within the sample of work, s/he may require one of the following actions, after consultation with the Chair of the Panel of Examiners, the results of which will be discussed by the Panel of Examiners and recorded in its minutes:
 - Request a further selection of work for sampling which, if it supports the trend, may lead to an agreed moderation of ALL marks in line with the findings. If it does not support the trend then internal examiners are asked to reconsider the full set of student work for that component of assessment.
 - Additional scrutiny of all the student work (or component of that assessed work) within the relevant group.
46. Any comments made by internal and external examiners relating to a student, including writing on examination scripts etc., are covered by the Data Protection Act 1998. The Act provides a right of access to the comments, or a summary of the comments, by the data subject / student. The University

⁶ Students' profiles of marks are not to be sent to the external examiner at the external moderation stage in order to maintain the integrity of the assessment process. Student profiles are made available in the documentation to be considered by the Panel of Examiners.

therefore requests that examiners refrain from writing comments directly on students' work.

Oral and other live assessments

47. The above principles apply to all forms of assessment. However, in the case of assessments that are unsuitable for post-assessment moderation, such as oral presentations and other live assessments, internal moderation and verification takes place at the time of the assessment. The event will be recorded and made available to the external examiner for the purpose of external moderation.

Attendance at meetings of Panels of Examiners

48. External examiners should be invited to all meetings of the Panel of Examiners at which significant decisions are to be taken with regard to the external examiner's allocated duties. They are required to be present at the final meeting of the Panel of Examiners to agree marks to be returned for final year undergraduate and all postgraduate assessments. Attendance at other Panel of Examiner meetings may be facilitated, where possible, remotely via Skype video conferencing. The responsibilities and authority of Panels of Examiners are set out in the *Handbook on Assessment Practice*.
49. With regard to other assessments within modules contributing to an award, and re-assessment, external examiners may confirm marks by correspondence rather than attendance at Panel meetings, other than in the circumstances described in [paragraph 50](#) below. An External Examiner's Approval Sheet is provided to confirm assessments considered in this way.
50. There will be instances when an external examiner is appointed for a newly approved programme of study where more frequent interaction and attendance at the University will be required in order to assure the quality and standard of provision whilst the programme is being established. This will be particularly relevant where new modes and/or patterns of delivery are being implemented.

Endorsing assessment results

51. External examiners should countersign the Panel of Examiners Attendance Sheet to endorse the marks presented to the Panel of Examiners. In so doing, the external examiner will be indicating that s/he is satisfied with the conduct of the assessment process and will be confirming that the standards set in the assessments are commensurate with equivalent awards at other UK institutions and as described in the [QAA's Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#). Such endorsement does not imply that the external examiner has reviewed the work of every candidate or that s/he agrees with every individual assessment decision.
52. In the unlikely event that an external examiner feels that s/he cannot endorse the results from the meeting of the Panel of Examiners the external examiner shall be invited to make a separate report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC). The reasons for the marks not being endorsed shall be recorded in the formal record of the meeting and shall be reported to the DVC by the Chair of the Panel of Examiners. The DVC shall determine an appropriate course of action and ensure that affected students are informed if there is to be any delay in finalising and communicating results.

53. The results conferred by the Board of Examiners are final, under the delegated authority of the Academic Board, as described in the Board of Examiners Terms of Reference.

Meeting with students

54. This is not a requirement. If, however, an external examiner wishes to meet with a group of students, arrangements should be made with the relevant Chair of the Panel of Examiners. The external examiner and the students involved should be made aware that the purpose of the meeting is to facilitate judgements about the educational experiences of the cohort, and is not an examination of individual student performance.

Arbitration or adjudication on problem cases

55. External examiners may exceptionally be asked to provide independent arbitration on individual cases which are to be considered at a Panel of Examiners' meeting. Arbitration in this sense does not extend to acting as a third marker: any differences between marks arising from the internal moderation process will have been resolved prior to the meeting of the Panel. The external examiner will be supplied with all relevant information, including the disputed marks, and markers' assessment feedback / comments on how the marks were reached and will be asked to adjudicate on an approach to resolving the dispute. The views of the external examiner will be influential in reaching agreement, although the final mark awarded will be the collective decision of the Panel of Examiners.

Provide comment or advice on programme content, balance and structure, on academic provision and on assessment processes

56. At the point of approval, review or modification of modules and programmes of study, external examiners will be asked to comment, using their expert judgement, on the appropriateness of proposals. To enable examiners to set the proposals in an institutional context Guidelines for Programme Design are sent to external examiners annually by the Academic Quality Office and are available on the external examiners' website ([see section 1.3](#)).

Producing a report

57. External examiners should produce a full and comprehensive report each academic year according to the template and timescale specified by the Learning and Teaching Committee, normally within 4 weeks of the final Panel of Examiners meeting⁷. [Appendix 4](#) contains a flowchart of the consideration of external examiners' reports.
58. External examiners are advised not to include the names of individual members of staff or students in the report as reports are circulated widely within the institution and may be made available to an external audience. The Academic Quality Office will make available the annual report form, at the relevant time. Should an external examiner wish to provide written comment

⁷ The academic year is defined by the delivery pattern of the programme of study. For example, reports for Honours degrees are normally submitted in July each year. Arrangements for Foundation degrees, accelerated degrees and postgraduate awards may differ.

which might identify staff or students this may be included as an appendix to the report, which will to be made available to the relevant Chair of the Panel of Examiners and/or Head of School and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor only in the first instance.

59. Examiners who are in their final year of office are asked to make closing comments on their observations over their full term of office.
60. The report will be given initial consideration by:
 - a. the relevant Programme Leader;
 - b. the relevant Chair of the Panel of Examiners;
 - c. the relevant Head of School;
 - d. the Head of Academic Development;
 - e. the Deputy Vice-Chancellor;
 - f. the Head of Academic Quality;and will then be considered in detail by:
 - g. the relevant Student-Staff Academic Committee (SSAC);
 - h. the relevant School Board;
 - i. the Learning and Teaching Committee's External Examining Group.
61. The Chair of the Panel of Examiners will provide a response to the external examiner advising him/her of the actions to be taken as a result of the report, or of the reasons that any recommendations will not be taken forward. The Chair of Panel will liaise with the Head of Academic Quality on matters raised for institutional attention to agree an appropriate response.
62. The report and proposed actions will be considered by the relevant School Board and the External Examining Group before being sent to the external examiner and will be discussed in full with the SSAC when it first meets (this is normally later in the academic session due to the timing of the election of student representatives). Sharing the reports and responses with student representatives in this way enables staff to help students understand the context and the content of the reports.
63. The external examiners' reports, and the schools' responses to them, are available to all students via the intranet and Programme Information & Handbooks section of the moodle VLE.
64. The external examiner will be asked in subsequent reports to comment on how the institution has responded to points raised in previous reports.
65. The reports are also one of the key reference points for annual and periodic review, along with, *inter alia*, student feedback and progression and completion data. [Appendix 5](#) provides a visual representation of the academic quality cycle.
66. An annual overview of external examiners' reports, produced by the Head of Academic Quality, is considered by the External Examining Group and the Learning and Teaching Committee prior to submission to the Academic Board. The report identifies themes and issues of generic or institutional significance and aspects of good practice. All external examiners receive a copy of this overview report.

67. In addition, should the external examiner feel it necessary, a separate, confidential report may be sent directly to the Vice-Chancellor⁸.

Mentoring new external examiners

68. An experienced external examiner may be asked to mentor a new appointee to the external examining team.

4.3 Mentoring arrangements for new external examiners

Requirement for the appointment of a mentor

69. The criteria for appointment of external examiners allows nominations to be drawn from a wide variety of professional contexts in order to ensure that there is an appropriate balance of academic and practitioner external scrutiny. The University considers each case individually to decide whether a mentor should be appointed. However, it is recognised that a new external examiner in the following situations would particularly benefit from a mentor:

- an external examiner in his/her first appointment and, where possible, s/he will join an experienced team of external examiners;
- candidates from a non-higher education setting who may require support combining academic judgements with their expert subject / professional knowledge. It is also expected that they will work alongside external examiners currently working in higher education
- where an new external examiner would be working in isolation, or where there might be a new team working together for the first time (although succession planning arrangements should mean that this situation is exceptional).

70. A new external examiner may also request for mentoring arrangements to be put in place in their first year of appointment if this form of support is required.

71. New external examiners who have been appointed a mentor will be expected to engage with the induction activities made available on the external examiner information bank on Moodle and where possible attend a briefing session organised by the Chair of the Panel of Examiners. The mentor would also be invited to the briefing event to provide an opportunity for the two to meet. New examiners will also be encouraged to undertake training available from the HEA.

Criteria and Procedure for appointment of a mentor

72. A mentor should be a current external examiner at Leeds Trinity University and the role is in addition to standard external examining duties. A mentor may be the outgoing incumbent of the post, forming part of the succession planning arrangements for the role. In exceptional circumstances an external examiner may be asked to perform a mentoring role past their normal period of office to ensure continuity.

⁸ External examiners also have recourse to the QAA's concerns scheme where there are concerns about systematic failings in the management of standards or quality and where internal mechanisms have been exhausted. Guidance for external examiners and details of the scheme are available at: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Complaints/concerns/Pages/default.aspx>

73. A mentor should have been in post at Leeds Trinity University for at least one full academic year and consideration should be given to the content and timeliness of the proposed mentor's written report and attendance at Panel of Examiners' meetings. Other than when it is the outgoing incumbent of the post, the proposed mentor should also have additional external examining experience.
74. A mentor should normally be from the same or cognate discipline and should have current or recent experience of working in higher education.
75. The need for mentoring arrangements to be put in place will be identified during the nomination of a proposed new external examiner and recorded on the Nomination for Appointment Form. The proposer, in consultation with the Chair of the Panel of Examiners, should approach potential mentors during the nomination stage and obtain confirmation that the proposed mentor is willing to act in this capacity.
76. In conjunction with the nomination of the new external examiner the School Board will be required to endorse the suitability of the arrangements, for submission to and approval from the External Examining Group. If no mentoring arrangements have been indicated for the nominee the XXG may require that they be put in place as a condition of approval. The new examiner's appointment will not be confirmed until the arrangements have been approved.
77. Following consideration of the proposal at institutional-level the Academic Quality Office will communicate the outcome to the proposer, the Chair of the Panel of Examiners and the Head of School. It is then the responsibility of the Chair of the Panel of Examiners (of the provision to be examined) to confirm the arrangements to the mentor and to provide contact details to both the mentor and mentee.

The role of the mentor

78. The mentoring of a new external examiner should not be an onerous task. The role of the mentor is to provide an independent, experienced point of contact for advice and guidance.
79. Following confirmation of the arrangements from the Chair of the Panel of Examiners, the mentor shall initiate contact with the mentee. Wherever possible the mentor should arrange to meet the mentee, but if this is not possible, the mentoring role can be accomplished without face-to-face meetings. If practicable a meeting could take place at a Leeds Trinity University event such as a Panel of Examiners meeting, where the mentor could be 'shadowed'.
80. It is recommended that the first point of contact between the mentor and mentee includes discussion around key dates in the examining cycle and plans for future points of engagement to support specific events.
81. It is anticipated that guidance would be provided via email or telephone. Topics might include:
 - a. the role and remit of an external examiner, for example on agreeing arrangements for the selection of samples of student work;

- b. any aspect of the assessment process, particularly those referred to in [section 4.2 above](#);
 - c. experiences from Panel of Examiners' meetings, including preparing for meetings, common scenarios that may arise and approaches to giving feedback at the meeting;
 - d. approaches to writing a formal report and what may or may not be appropriate to include in the report given the audiences that the report attracts;
 - e. advice during the consultation process for new or modified modules and programmes;
 - f. current issues in higher education and the discipline (where appropriate), particularly those pertaining to external examining.
82. Mentors of external examiners from a non- higher education setting should expect to provide a greater level of support for the assessment process in matters such as applying assessment criteria, HE levels of learning and learning outcomes, sampling across grade boundaries and dealing with borderline cases.
83. If, during discussion, issues arise that the mentor and mentee consider requires an institutional view then they should contact either the relevant Chair of the Panel of Examiners or the Head of Academic Quality, as appropriate.
84. The role of mentor is from the date of the approval of the appointment of the mentee until s/he has submitted her/his first report to Leeds Trinity University (normally 12-15 months). Both the mentor and mentee will be asked to complete a short questionnaire to enable the University to evaluate the operation of the arrangements.
85. The role of mentor attracts an additional fee of £100 (before deductions), which is paid automatically along with the external examiner's annual fee upon completion of an evaluation questionnaire.

4.4 The role of the Lead External Examiners

86. The lead external examiner is appointed by the XXG to oversee the working of the Board of Examiners with regard towards:
- a. adherence to Leeds Trinity University's regulations;
 - b. consistency of treatment by the Board of students across the institution;
 - c. rigorous implementation of the classification and award procedures;
 - d. adherence to the appropriate sections of the QAA's *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*.
 - e. ensuring that Leeds Trinity University's values are upheld, particularly in relation to equality and diversity.
87. The lead external examiners are members of the Board of Examiners and report annually to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor on procedural matters. The annual report of the lead external examiner is considered by the External Examining Group of the Learning and Teaching Committee and informs the annual overview of external examiners' reports. The annual report confirming procedural matters is an additional report to that submitted in the role as programme/ subject external examiner.

88. The lead external examiners are required to attend the main progression and award Board for undergraduate programmes, taught postgraduate and professional programmes. Lead external examiners will be invited to attend re-sit Boards. S/he will be asked to provide oral feedback and endorse the decisions made by the Board, by way of signing an External Examiner Approval Form at the end of the meeting of the Board. The lead external examiners will be sent the minutes of the meeting recording the outcomes of the meeting.
89. It is recommended that two lead external examiners are appointed from each school to the pool of lead examiners to mitigate the risk and to share the load of attendance requirements. In the unlikely event External Examiner is unable to attend a meeting of the Board of Examiners in person then exceptional arrangements may be put in place, for example for the meeting to be conducted via Skype, telephone or written correspondence and written endorsement of the outcomes secured as appropriate.
90. Following the first year of operation, the XXG reviewed the lead examiner role and agreed a change that would treat lead examiners as a pool of experts that could oversee the Board of Examiner processes across the institution. Lead external examiners will be appointed to a central pool and will be invited to Board of Examiner meetings outside of their home School. The pool of examiners will help to ensure practice at the Board of Examiners meetings is consistent across the institution.
91. The lead external examiners will be informed when consideration of extenuating circumstances and reasonable adjustment for students with a disability has taken place by way of an indicator on the Panel and Board documentation. Their detailed involvement in such consideration shall not normally be required.

5.0 Fees and expenses

5.1 Payment of Fees

External Examiners who commenced their term of office from AY 2014/15

92. Programme/ subject external examiners will be paid a flat fee of **£400** per annum.
93. Fee payments to external examiners are conditional upon the receipt of comprehensive written reports and are paid automatically upon receipt of that report(s) by the Academic Quality Office on an annual basis.
94. Where more than one report is required per annum due to the delivery pattern of the programme an additional fee will be agreed with the Director of Finance, in a case-by-case basis. One payment will be made upon receipt of the last report due in the academic year.
95. External examiners who are asked to mentor new appointees will receive a standard fee of **£100** per annum, upon completion of a short evaluation questionnaire.
96. Lead external examiners will receive a flat fee of **£100** per annum, payment will be made in accordance to para 93 above.

97. The MAXIMUM fee payable to any one examiner for taught courses, in any one year is **£1,000**, excluding the mentoring fee.

5.2 Deductions from fees

98. HM Revenue and Customs normally requires that income tax is deducted at basic rate direct from fee payments made to external examiners. Any external examiner who is exempt must provide proof of exemption from HMRC prior to fee payments being made.
99. Leeds Trinity University is required to quote National Insurance numbers and dates of birth in relation to all fee payments made, even those that fall below the National Insurance Contribution threshold level. A pro forma is provided on appointment to collect the necessary information, along with bank details to enable payments to be made through the BACS transfer system.

5.3 Expenses

100. Leeds Trinity University will meet claims for the re-imburement of any reasonable travelling, subsistence or other expenses incurred by external examiners in the course of their duties; these will be paid gross. All claims must be supported by appropriate receipts.
101. Leeds Trinity University encourages travel by public transport, whenever practicable. Rail travel should be at standard class fare and normally purchased in advance to minimise costs. Travel by private car will be paid for at the rate of 45p per mile travelled. It is the external examiner's responsibility to ensure that appropriate insurance cover is in force.
102. If overnight accommodation is required for visits to the campus the Academic Administration Office will be able to make arrangements on the external examiner's behalf. Alternatively, external examiners may make their own arrangements and claim the costs back subject to the limit of £90.
103. Completed claim forms should be returned by external examiners to the Academic Quality Office. Claims are authorised and paid as soon as possible on receipt.

6.0 Premature termination of contract

6.1 Termination of contract by the external examiner

104. The agreement between Leeds Trinity University and the external examiner sets out a commitment for the examiner to serve for one year in the first instance, with a view to an extension of the period of office of up to three years. In the event of resignation prior to the expiry of the period of office the external examiner shall give three months' notice, in writing, to the Head of Academic Quality.

6.2 Termination of contract by Leeds Trinity University

105. If, as a result of the phasing out or restructuring of academic provision, there are no or significantly fewer students presenting for assessment then the deployment of external examiners may be reviewed by the External Examining Group, on the recommendation of the School Board and the contract of an external examiner may be terminated prematurely.
106. If, during a term of office, a change in individual circumstances results in an external examiner no longer satisfying the selection criteria on the basis of which he/she was originally appointed, the Chair of the Panel of Examiners shall bring the matter to the attention of the Head of School and the Chair of the External Examining Group, who will form a joint recommendation to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. In such cases, consideration shall be given to the premature termination of contract.
107. In all cases where a contract is terminated prematurely by the University, the DVC will:
 - a. write, on behalf of the External Examining Group, to the external examiner concerned;
 - b. inform the Head of School and the Chair of the Panel of Examiners that the contract has been terminated.

6.3 Unsatisfactory Performance

108. Leeds Trinity University reserves the right to terminate the appointment of an external examiner prematurely on the basis of:
 - a. non-attendance at the Panel of Examiners meetings without prior notice;
 - b. non-submission of reports within the specified timescales without reasonable cause;
 - c. non-fulfilment of other duties outlined in the procedures;
 - d. a breach of University policies, procedures and regulations, relevant to the role, and in particular the [Equality and Diversity Policy](#).
109. If any aspect of an external examiner's performance or conduct is considered to be unsatisfactory it shall be drawn to the attention of the Head of School and the Chair of the External Examining Group, who will form a joint recommendation to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. In such cases the procedure detailed in *either* paragraphs 110 *or* 111 below shall be invoked.
110. The DVC shall, on behalf of the XXG, write to the external examiner concerned expressing the views of the Committee and requesting a change in conduct or enhancement in performance; and will request a written response. The DVC shall inform the Head of School and the Chair of the Panel of Examiners that the external examiner concerned has been sent the correspondence. The DVC shall submit the external examiner's written response to the XXG for consideration and shall provide a copy of the written response to the Head of School and the Chair of the Panel of Examiners.
 - a. If the response is deemed by the XXG to be unsatisfactory then the Committee shall invoke the procedure in [paragraph 115](#) below;
 - b. If the report is deemed by the XXG to be satisfactory then no further action shall be taken at this stage. The Chair of the Panel of Examiners shall be required to submit a report to the XXG at the next appropriate opportunity

monitoring any changes in the conduct and/or performance of the external examiner concerned.

111. Should the External Examining Group consider the case such as to warrant the premature termination of contract, it shall make a recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor accordingly. The DVC shall, on behalf of the XXG, inform the Head of School and the Chair of the Panel of Examiners. The Vice-Chancellor will decide whether to accept the recommendation. Should she do so, then she shall write to the external examiner concerned terminating the contract. The DVC shall inform the XXG, the Head of School and the Chair of the Panel of Examiners that the contract has been terminated.

Modification tracker:

Author	Date	Brief description of amendment	Version number
L J Baxter	17.10.17		V 0.1
L J Baxter	01.02.18	Updates following XXG meeting on 31 October 2017	V 0.2
K Priestley	15.05.18	Clarification on additional fees	V 0.3

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