

## **Mentoring arrangements for new external examiners**

### *Requirement for the appointment of a mentor*

1. 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 a 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).
2. 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.
3. New external examiners who have been appointed a mentor will be expected to attend an External Examiners' Induction and Development Day and/or a separate briefing session organised by the Chair of the Panel of Examiners. The mentor would also be invited to the event to provide an opportunity for the two to meet.

### *Criteria and Procedure for appointment of a mentor*

4. A mentor should be a current external examiner at Leeds Trinity 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.
5. A mentor should have been in post at Leeds Trinity 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.
6. A mentor should normally be from the same or cognate discipline and should have current or recent experience of working in higher education.
7. 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.

8. 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 the External Examining Group and subsequent approval by the Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC). If no mentoring arrangements have been indicated for the nominee the LTC 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.
9. Following consideration of the proposal at institutional-level the Academic Quality and Standards 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*

10. 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.
11. 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 event such as a Panel of Examiners meeting, where the mentor could be 'shadowed'.
12. 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.
13. 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 of the External Examiners' Handbook;
  - 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.

14. 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.
15. 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 Academic Registrar, as appropriate.
16. 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 (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.
17. 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.