

Document Reference: EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORTS

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The following guidance is designed in line with the City of Liverpool College collaborative partner Universities' relevant external examiner's policies.

This policy is designed to ensure that:

- QAA requirements on external examination are in place;
- all external examiners receive a timely and comprehensive individual response following submission of their report
- relevant action plan is designed in response to the report and followed up
- key findings of the report are shared with students, quality team and curriculum managers

1. Access to External Examiner reports

a. For the HE programmes validated by collaborative partner universities:

External Examiners will be asked to submit their reports directly to a designated University office

- for LJMU it is the Office of the Vice Chancellor via a designated email address – ExternalExaminersVCOffice@ljmu.ac.uk
- for OU a report should be sent to the Senior Quality and Partnership Manager.

When they arrive, reports will be sent to the University Link Tutor, Programme Teams and will be shared with the relevant College Head of School and Quality Manager.

b. For the HE programmes validated by Pearson Edexcel:

External Examiners will be asked to submit/notify their completed reports directly to programme teams and relevant Head of School and College quality manager who will have access to all Pearson Edexcel External Examiner reports. When the reports are made available (on-line), programme teams and relevant Head of School will be notified to access the reports.

The Quality Manager will receive all institutional External Examiner's reports and will keep electronic version of the reports on the designated College network drive.

2. Responses to External Examiner Reports

All letters of response / comments to External Examiner Reports or contributions to the responses will be drafted by programme teams. Programme teams should aim to draft their letter of response and complete the internal feedback/ action plan form within two weeks of receiving the report and will share the feedback with the relevant College Head of School before being sent out to either:

- a.
 - **LJMU**: The relevant University link tutor and University Head of School. University quality contact will approve final version of the Internal Summary/feedback on action form and send the response to the External Examiner.
 - **OU**: The University takes note of the response to EE reports at annual monitoring.
- b. Edexcel external examiner.

Programme teams should note that the report and response must be shared with students through Course team / Board of Study meetings, and via the programme's VLE site.

In summary, the response will ensure that the following has taken place:

- Thanks are given to the EE for their report;
- Specific issues/comments/concerns are addressed;
- An outline is given of how, by whom and when these will be considered and/or addressed;
- Details are given of where the report and response will be considered (CTM/BoS) and how action will be monitored and the EE kept informed of progress; and
- If possible, there should be some description of how the report will inform the annual monitoring and review processes.

3. Quality Assurance of the responses and action following the External Examiner reports

EE Reports and responses will be reviewed by the College Quality Assurance team in October/November and finalised in June/July. Where outstanding actions are not being completed the Quality Manager will prepare a report for consideration and action for the relevant Assistant Principal (Curriculum). **Responses to this report will be sent to the Head of Academic Quality, with sign-off by the Deputy Vice Principal.**

APPENDIX: HE Structure and Communication Lines

Reference Code: Str&Com - HE

Version: 2.3

Date: September 2018

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Originator: Head of Higher Education

Policy developed in consultation with Deputy Principal

Approval by: HE Strategy Group

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Introduction

The City of Liverpool College Higher Education (HE) Academic and Communication structure is integrated within the existing College structure. It identifies distinctive, additional roles and responsibilities created to ensure that all HE programmes, offered within the College, are compliant with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education set by the Quality Assurance agency (www.qaa.ac.uk). The structure is set to support decision making processes by setting communication lines that are clear and inclusive of all the relevant stakeholders, ensuring that the relevant academic standards are embedded, communicated, monitored and reviewed.

HE Strategy Group – Roles and Responsibilities

The HE Strategy Group has a strategic role and will provide strategic direction relating to College's HE provision offer; it will also hold the overall responsibility over the safeguarding of the relevant academic standards and quality of the HE provision.

The HE Strategy Group holds the overall and final responsibility for the:

- the implementation and review of the agreed strategic direction relating to HE provision offer;
- consistent and full implementation of the relevant HE academic standards;
- assure the consistent quality of learning opportunities is offered to students that meet all the expectations of the quality code;
- setting and overseeing implementation of the agreed processes for promoting continuous and systematic improvement of the higher education provision;
- ensuring that relevant information in relation to HE provision is publicly available, accurate, up to date and transparent.

The HE Strategy Group has overall responsibility to ensure that the College's Higher Education provision and services operate in line with the following overarching key values of the Quality Code:

- every student is treated fairly and with dignity, courtesy and respect;
- every student has the opportunity to contribute to the shaping of their learning experience;
- every student is properly and actively informed at appropriate times of matters relevant to their programmes of study;
- all policies and processes relating to study and programmes are clearly explained and transparent;
- all policies and processes are regularly and effectively monitored, reviewed and improved;
- sufficient and appropriate external involvement exists for the maintenance of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities
- all staff are supported, enabling them in turn to support students' learning experiences.

HE Strategy Group - Terms of Reference

The HE Strategy Group reports to SLT and Board of Governors. The HE Strategy Group will meet four times during each academic year. It is chaired by the Deputy Principal. The members of the HE Strategy Group are: Head of Higher Education, Vice Principal Curriculum, Assistant Principals, Head of Pastoral Support, Director of Learning, Marketing and Communications Director, Vice Principal for Finance and Corporate Resources and LRC Manager. HE student and teaching staff representatives and other management and support staff are invited to attend the HE strategy group meetings as appropriate.

College HE Boards: The City of Liverpool College adopts the HE structure that includes HE Boards: HE Board of Study and HE Assessment Board within each curriculum area/pillar:

- HE Board: Creative and Digital
- HE Board: Service Industries
- HE Board: Technical and Enterprise
- HE Board: City 6 and Teacher Education

Assistant Principals, assisted by the Head of HE, chair the HE board meetings and report on the key decisions and actions from the HE Boards to the HE Strategy group. The minutes of the HE Boards are submitted to the CoLC HE Strategy group.

HE Board of Study (HE BoS)

HE BoS is responsible for overseeing the quality of the HE provision and implementation of the HE standards including all the relevant academic policies and procedures for the range of HE programmes offered within the curriculum department/ pillar. BoS will oversee the setting and delivery of the HE programmes processes ensuring that the required academic

standards and quality assurance requirements are in line with the College's Strategy and the QAA quality code for Higher Education.

HE BoS will report to the HE strategy group. It is chaired by the relevant curriculum Assistant Principal or Head of Higher education.

Where BoS meetings are organised and held by the collaborative university partners' relevant minutes, action and feedback from the BoS meetings will be presented at the College, within relevant curriculum/pillar BoS meeting.

Where the programme of study is reviewed BoS will promote inclusiveness of staff and students and an ethos of shared contributions in the programme's development and improvement.

Terms of reference - HE Board of Study

HE Board of Study has the responsibility to ensure that HE Programmes are set and deliver required academic standards. It will oversee the following activities:

- The submission for the new HE programme designs, planning and specifications
- Monitoring, evaluation and review of academic programmes
- Monitoring of student recruitment, achievement and retention across the programmes
- Proposing closure of the academic programmes
- Consideration of student feedback, including outcomes from formal surveys as appropriate
- Formally approving the annual monitoring report and monitoring the action plans arising from annual review activity
- Consideration of proposed module and programme developments and amendments, for approval
- Consideration of regular reports from staff/student liaison groups;
- Communication between teaching staff and students on matters relating to the programme(s), including the provision of feedback from Strategic and HE management meetings
- Consideration of regular feedback from student representatives from all levels of the programme(s)

Standard agenda for the meetings, informed by the terms of reference is established to ensure the Board of Study is fulfilling its role.

Membership - HE Board of Study members:

- Assistant Principal
- Head of HE
- Curriculum Heads of School responsible for the programmes

- The Programme Leader responsible for the awards
- At least one representative from teaching staff from each HE programme presented
- A representative from the Industry may attend
- A representative from the Collaborative University (lead tutor) may attend (where Board of Study for a HE programme is established with Collaborative University lead tutor's attendance is considered as good practice and is encouraged but is not mandatory)
- For the board of study agenda ONLY (not assessment) at least one student representative elected from each year/award (or *appropriate evidence that students have been consulted and have had the opportunity to provide input for the meeting*)
- Programme administrator, or equivalent, who will act as secretary
- Representatives from admission, marketing, quality, employability, enrichment or other departments may attend Board of Study

Quoracy (minimum number of members needed to ensure the meeting can go ahead)

- Chair (Assistant Principal or Head of School for HE or curriculum HoS responsible for one of the programmes)
- Secretary
- 1 academic member of staff from each programme represented
- 1 student representative from each programme (or *appropriate evidence that students have been consulted and have had opportunity to provide input for the meeting*) for the Board of Study agenda.

Frequency of Meetings – Board of Study

HE Board of Study will meet at least three times a year, within the time slot scheduled for the regular pillar/ departmental meetings:

- **November** (Board of Study agenda: student feedback; consideration and approval of annual monitoring report including external examiner reports and responses; internal and external survey results);
- **January** (Board of Study agenda: student feedback; internal and external survey results; module and programme amendments, HE course table).
- **March/April** (Board of study agenda: external examiners reports, programme validation and support for the approval request for the new programme design, planning and specification, HE course table confirmation, students' feedback)

HE Board of Study - Standard Agenda:

1. Minutes of the previous meeting
2. HE provision update/ review and self-assessment/ risks
3. Academic standards

- programme design and approval, annual monitoring report validation, externalities, External Examiner's report action and link tutor's reports and validations
- 4. Teaching, learning, assessment and support
 - resources and enhancement opportunities (including employability and enterprise)
- 5. Public Information
 - Web, prospectus, publicity, course and module handbooks, VLE
- 6. Students' input and views
- 7. Stakeholders input (where appropriate)
- 8. AOB

HE Assessment Board (HE AB)

HE AB is responsible for overseeing implementation of the relevant Assessment regulations and processes for the range of HE programmes offered within the curriculum department/ pillar. HE AB will meet at the end of each assessment cycle (two to three times/ year) to confirm the validity of the assessment processes and internal and external validation processes and to confirm the final assessment grades for all the students on the set of HE programmes within the curriculum department/ pillar.

The overall operation of the HE Assessment Boards will be led by the relevant Assistant Principal responsible for HE provision within the curriculum area, assisted by the Head of HE, and will report to the HE strategy group.

HE AB - will approve and record all moderation, assessment, progressions and certification decisions:

- Consideration of external examiner reports and appropriate responses
- Confirming assessment and progressions decisions and awards
- Confirming decisions regarding resubmissions, extensions and outcomes of the academic misconduct panels

Standard agenda for the meetings, informed by the terms of reference is established to ensure the Assessment Board is fulfilling its role.

For the HE programmes that are delivered within the collaborative partnership arrangements, where the assessment boards are organised by the universities, assessment and progression decisions will be noted by the relevant College curriculum/pillar HE Assessment Board. In preparation for the Assessment Boards held by the University College's assessment board will record applications and outcomes of those applications for extensions and mitigating circumstances.

Membership - HE Assessment Board members:

- Assistant Principal
- Head of HE
- Curriculum Heads of School responsible for the programmes
- The Programme Leader responsible for the awards
- At least one representatives from teaching staff from each HE programme presented
- A representative from the Collaborative University (lead tutor) may attend (where Board of Study for a HE programme is established with Collaborative University lead tutor's attendance is considered as good practice and is encouraged but is not mandatory.)
- External Examiner may attend
- Programme administrator, or equivalent, who will act as secretary

Quoracy (minimum number of members needed to ensure the meeting can go ahead)

- Chair (Assistant Principal or Head of School for HE or curriculum HoS responsible for one of the programmes)
- Secretary
- 1 academic member of staff from each programme represented

Frequency of Meetings - HE Assessment Board

- **January/ June / September** Assessment Board agenda: assessment outcomes and module grades; overall grades, external examiners reports, mitigating circumstances, extensions and resubmissions, progressions and completion outcomes, communication and recording of the assessment and outcome decisions)

HE Assessment Board standard agenda:

1. Minutes of the previous meeting
2. Students' profile reports:
 - a. Noting progressions/completion of target awards
 - b. Confirming reassessment requirements, extensions with extenuating circumstances, and resubmissions
 - c. Academic misconduct report
 - d. Exit awards
 - e. Student Engagement Awards
3. External examiner's report and action plan
4. Report on intended destinations (by PL)
5. Release of completion and progressions letters

6. AOB

HE Operations Group

HE operations group is responsible for the cross college standardisation of the HE curriculum and monitoring of the implementation of the standards.

HE Operations group is chaired by the Head of Higher Education.

Group's remit is to:

- Oversee all HE operational tasks related to implementation of the academic standards
- Support for students
- Enhancement of learning opportunities
- Quality
- Public information

Group meets four times a year. Members of the operations group are HE programme leaders; HE HoSs, Advanced Lecturer and a Quality representative.

HE Academic Misconduct Panel

The HE Academic Misconduct Panel is responsible for dealing with academic misconduct. It is chaired by the relevant HE manager: Head of Higher Education or Assistant Principal or curriculum Head of School. Procedures and documentation for this panel are noted in a separate set of documents relating to Academic Misconduct.

HE Development Groups

All teaching staff involved with the delivery of HE programmes are members of the HE development group. They also form individual HE course team groups. The HE development group meets at least three times/year. Agenda for the meeting varies but it is primarily focusing on sharing of good practice, updating knowledge and information to support enhancement of students learning opportunities and enhancement of the quality standards. He Development group is chaired and organised by the Head of HE.

HE Service Groups: Admissions - HE, Quality - HE, Research- HE, Teaching and Learning - HE, Student finance - HE, HE data, Employability and Enterprise - HE, HE Graduation, HE Marketing and others.

HE Service groups will meet when required during the year. Meetings will be initiated by the Head of HE and may be led by the Head of HE or another nominated lead.

HE Programme Teams

All teaching staff involved in delivering a HE programme form a programme team. The programme team is coordinated by the Programme leader. Programme team will meet at least once every term or more often when required to discuss programme specific

operational matters. HE programme team minutes are provided by the PL and shared with the relevant Head of School, Assistant Principal and Head of HE. Any outstanding action is reviewed by the Curriculum Head of School.

Individual HE roles and responsibilities:

Deputy Principal has the overall responsibility for the implementation of the quality standards and requirements relating to the Higher education provision. Deputy Principal chairs the HE Strategy group meetings.

Head of Higher Education is responsible for:

- Chairing and organising the HE operations group
- Chairing and organising HE development groups meetings
- Initiating development, approval and review of the HE strategy, HE policies, procedures and related HE documents
- Overseeing and where required chairing and organising Academic Misconduct Panel;
- Chairing and organising HE support groups meetings at the operational level with the representatives from : Quality, Admissions, Research, Marketing, E-learning, Student finance, HE data, Employability and Enterprise, HE Graduation
- Liaising with external HEIs:
 - Collaborative University partners and awarding bodies (Edexcel)
 - OfS
 - UCAS
 - QAA
 - Other HEIs: AoC, JISC, HEA, OFFA, HESA,
- Liaising and leading the North West Regional Forum of Further Education colleges offering Higher Education provision.

Curriculum Head of School (HoS)

Curriculum HoS holds overall responsibility for the delivery of the HE programme and for providing adequate and full support for implementation of the academic standards for individual HE programme. Curriculum HoS will allocate suitable staffing and other required resources, set the course table and ensure that the timetable and support for students, allocation of teaching and learning resources and support for staff are in place.

HE Programme Leader (HE PL)

HE PL is responsible for individual HE programmes and coordinates the delivery of the provision.

Document with HE PL role description is available.

HE Administrator

HE Administrator supports all administrative and communication activities relating to the Higher Education provision as specified in the relevant Job specification.