

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

1. The principle roles of external examiners

- a) To verify that standards are appropriate for of each unit of study and to provide independent impartial comment on standards set and student achievement of those standards. The capacity to fulfill this is based on knowledge of standards set and achieved in other higher education institutions, of subject benchmark statements and where applicable of the expectations of Professional and Statutory Bodies or co-awarding bodies.
- b) To verify that the process of deciding assessment outcomes for individual students is fair, fairly operated, and in line with the University's regulations

1.1 The specific roles and responsibilities

1. Make judgments independent of the internal examiners
2. Have powers to recommend to the Faculty Board the adjustment of marks for individual or all students examined
3. Have access to the assessed parts of the programme (student scripts and coursework)
4. Determine the method and extent of sampling of students' work to scrutinize
5. May recommend to the Faculty Board for the remarking of a student's script
6. Select students for and determine to nature of VIVA VOCE
7. Check cases of suspected cheating
8. Endorse mark and pass lists before they are published
9. The external Examiner should in specific cases the extent to which medical and other extenuation circumstances were taken into account.

2. Nominations and Appointments

2.1 Eligibility and Qualities of External Examiner

- i) The external examiner should be an Academic Professor or Senior Lecturer or practicing professional at the rank of consultant or the equivalent.
- ii) A former member of the teaching staff of the University will not be eligible for appointment until a period of three years has elapsed

- iii) An external examiner will not be appointed from a department in which a member of staff of the relevant department at Makerere University is serving as an external examiner or teaching.
- iv) An external examiner should have enough recent examining experience, including external examining experience, to assure the Faculty Board and Senate of his/her competence in assessment and understanding of academic standards in a broad higher education context.
- v) The external examiner should be a critical friend so as to offer constructive comments, criticism and suggestions for enhancement in the area of assessment practice.

2.2 Process of Nomination and Appointment

The head of relevant department through informal contacts establishes willingness and availability of nominee to serve as external examiner and solicits a his/her Curriculum Vitae

- a) The academic members of the department study the Curriculum Vitae to satisfy themselves that the nominee has the necessary expertise, experience and seniority to serve as external examiner.
- b) External examiners for Undergraduate Programmes are appointed by the University Senate or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) on the recommendation of the respective Faculty Board.
- c) External examiners for Graduate Programmes are appointed by the Board of Graduate studies or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) on the recommendation of the respective Faculty Board.
- d) External examiners should be appointed for a period of three years with a possible **one year extension**. This will permit arrangements to be made well in advance and avoid delays and last minute rash.
- e) Thereafter the same external examiner cannot be re-appointed until a period of one year has elapsed.

3. Status of External Examiners

External examiners will be Ex-Officio members of the relevant Examiners' Boards.

3.1 Information to be availed to the external examiners upon Appointment

The host department shall send to the newly appointed external examiner the following information:

- i. Programme and course aims, objectives and syllabuses
- ii. Copies of past examination papers
- iii. Methods of assessment/Marking Scheme
- iv. Ways in which marks of individual parts of the examination are aggregated, averaged to produce the final result
- v. The method by which the pass mark (cut-off point) at and above which students are pronounced passed and below which they are declared to have failed. The two alternatives are:
 - a. **Absolute or Criterion Reference Test** where the pass mark is set and students scoring below that fail regardless of the number.
 - b. **Relative or Norm Reference Test** method where the pass mark can vary depending on students' performance.
- vi. Proposed dates of departmental and faculty examiners' board meetings
- vii. The external examiner should be given a face to face briefing
- viii. The route by which external examiners can raise matters that are important and of a sensitive nature is by making a confidential report to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic Affairs)

4. Facilitating and Hosting

The following should be done to facilitate and streamline the work of External Examiners:

- a) Air ticket and in country transportation arrangements should be made well in advance.
- b) The external examiners should be met by University support staff whose role is to collect and deliver External Examiners to their prearranged accommodation.
- c) Per Diem or out of pocket allowance shall be paid to External Examiners on arrival.
- d) Any refunds for transit expenses should be processed in a timely fashion and paid to External Examiners before they depart for home.
- e) External Examiners should be given the scripts to look at upon arrival at their accommodation.
- f) Payment of examiners' fees is authorized once the reports are received.

5. Moderation of Examination Papers

The external examiner should review, moderate and approve all examination papers. Therefore:

- a) Draft examination papers shall be sent to the external examiners well in advance allowing enough time for them to propose any modifications they feel necessary
- b) Draft examination papers shall be sent with marking schemes or model answers.
- c) External examiners may be invited to propose one or more questions to be included in the examination papers.
- d) Dissertations where appropriate shall be sent to the External Examiner at least a month in advance.
- e) Care must be taken to safeguard the examination against leakage and dissertations against loss by sending them through sealed courier or other secure means.
- f) Departments shall always carry out internal moderation of examination questions. Moderators are asked to comment on: the appropriateness of the paper for the level of the Course, coverage of the syllabus or course content by the questions, wording of questions, typographical and grammatical errors, Consistency of presentation, Accuracy of rubrics, including length of examination, texts permitted, Format of question paper (correct sections etc), Weighting of questions, Clear indications to students of the marks obtainable for each question Clarity of wording of questions, Appropriateness of formulation of questions, Non-repetition of questions, ie that these questions have not been part of previous papers, Discriminating questions, Appropriateness of demands of the examination paper – *can it be completed in the time available?* Relationship of paper to teaching undertaken on the module,

6. Access to written scripts and coursework that contribute to the final assessment

External examiners will be given unfettered access to the following:

- i. All marked examination scripts
- ii. All evaluated coursework materials

7. Participation in Oral and Clinical Examinations

External examiners are required to participate in oral and clinical examination as follows:

- a) Where only a proportion of students are subjected to oral examination, the criteria for selection of those students should be agreed upon with the external examiner in advance.
- b) Be involved in the selection of content of the examination, in the marking and making final judgments'
- c) The external examiner will be allowed to meet with the students examined to assess their opinion on the conduct of the examination process should the need be.

8. Participation in Examination Board Meetings

Aware that most of the courses in the first semester are prerequisites for most of the academic Programmes, external examiners shall be invited during the second semester examination season and the following will apply:

- i. He/she will attend the main Examiners' Board meetings at which final examination results are reviewed and approved before they are published.
- ii. With regard to the conduct of the Examiners' Board meeting a formal minute must be kept noting the following:
 - a. Members present
 - b. The final decisions taken
 - c. In specific cases the extent to which medical and other extenuating circumstances were taken into account
 - d. Any general comments made by internal and external examiners

9. External Examiners' Reports

External Examiners must annually make a report on the student assessment process to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) with a copy to the respective Faculties and Departments.

The report must include answers which to some extent will act as indicators as to whether the students received the knowledge, skills, values expected to be provided by the respective courses. The external examiner's report should be well defined and the structure of the report should include the following:

- i. The Curriculum Design and its relevance
- ii. Comparability of the program with those offered in other institutions of Higher Education internationally.
- iii. Variability in the assessment process

- iv. Academic standards of awards
- v. Academic standards of student achievement.

In that respect the external examiner's report will include answers to the following questions:

- a) Were the structure, content and methods of assessment used appropriate and adequate?
- b) How satisfactory was the administration of the examination process?
- c) Was the assessment process appropriate to the course (or subject); **the level students (1st, 2nd or third year or postgraduate)**; and competencies of interest?
- d) Were the examinations sufficiently comprehensive with regard to the programme or course being examined?
- e) Were the materials and facilities used for practicals and clinical examinations appropriate and adequate?
- f) Was the external examiner given adequate access to examination scripts of all borderline candidates and coursework for forming a reasonable opinion?
- g) Was the internal marking appropriate, fair and consistent?
- h) Was the Examiners' Board meeting conducted in an impartial and fair manner?
- i) Was the programme structure, content and objectives well defined and appropriate to the subject matter and the level at which it was taught?
- j) Was the quality of teaching and methods used, as revealed by the examination, effective and appropriate?
- k) Was the general standard of performance of the students satisfactory and comparable to similar institutions?
- l) Was the failure rate acceptable or too high?
- m) Was the distribution of honours comparable to other institutions

The External Examiners' reports must:

- a) On completion of the exercise, the external examiner should submit his/her report directly to the Academic Registrar and copied to Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) plus to the respective Faculties and Departments. The Academic Registrar will submit the report to the Quality Assurance Committee for consideration and action.

- b) The Quality Assurance Unit should ensure that the respective Faculties and Departments attend to the concerns/suggestions of the External Examiners.

It is important to note that External examiners' reports are part of the University's annual quality assurance audit system.

10. Other Roles of External Examiners

External Examiners may be consulted on possible review of existing Programmes and the process of external examination for purposes of improving the assessment process.

11. Termination of Appointments

The appointment of an external examiner may be terminated by the Faculty Board if the Board judges that the responsibilities of the appointment have not been or cannot be fulfilled in the manner or to the standard which the University requires. Reasons for termination may include, but not limited to:

- i. failure to provide reports on the assessment process required by the University;
- ii. in the case of an examiner appointed to an Award and Progression Examination Board, inability to attend two successive such boards;
- iii. A change in the external examiner's circumstances which brings about potential conflicts of interest which might jeopardize objectivity.
- iv. persistent refusal to work within the University's academic regulations;
- v. conduct which in the case of an employee of the University would be the subject of disciplinary action;

a) When circumstances arise which are considered as possible grounds for termination of an external examiner's contract, the Chair of the Board of Examiners will notify the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) of the relevant details. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) will write formally to the examiner to inform him/her that the termination is being considered and to offer the opportunity for the examiner to explain the circumstances and request that the termination is not effected.

b) The Chair of the Faculty/ School/ Institute Quality Assurance Committee, acting on behalf of the Faculty Board, will take the final decision regarding the termination; the external examiner will be

notified in writing of this decision. The Chair of the Quality Assurance Committee will inform the Faculty Board of the circumstances of the case and of its outcome.