

University of Liverpool

EXTERNAL EXAMINER HANDBOOK
FOR TAUGHT PROGRAMMES 2024



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Introduction

The Handbook is intended to help you understand and fulfil your role as an External Examiner at the University of Liverpool. It provides information on our procedures, regulations, code of practice and policies and what support you may expect to perform your role.

This External Examiner Handbook has been produced by the Student Life team to help aid and support external examiners who have been appointed to positions, covering the taught provision, across the University of Liverpool. The External Examiner Enquiries team within Student Life are responsible for the central administration of the External Examiner appointment process. The University appoints around 340 external examiners each year from a range of both academic and non-academic institutions, and these positions are crucial to ensuring that the degree programmes offered are comparable in both standards and quality to other national and international programmes. The University of Liverpool fully subscribes to the principle and practice of taking account of external expertise in the management of quality and standards throughout the degree portfolio. The role of external expertise in assuring quality and standards in higher education is recognised in the revised [UK Quality Code External Expertise](#) and associated Advice and Guidance published in 2018.

This handbook is also made available to all existing External Examiners on a yearly basis.

Structure of the University

- General information about the University of Liverpool can be found on the [University website](#).
- The University of Liverpool comprises of Schools and Institutes which are organised into three Faculties: [Science and Engineering](#), [Health and Life Sciences](#) and [Humanities and Social Sciences](#).

Key Periods

Please find below information regarding key periods for an External Examiner at the University of Liverpool.

August to October

The Schools/Depts. will process all nominations for new External Examiners when they have been put forward by the academic team. During this time the School/Dept will request documentation from new External Examiners. Therefore, among other requests, you will be asked for such items as your CV and a copy of your passport/right to work/settlement document. The copy of your passport/settlement document is required to comply with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and the Immigration Act 2016, the University has a legal responsibility to ensure that all employees have the right to work in the UK.

They will also ask you to complete some essential University of Liverpool paperwork such as a nomination proforma and a new starter form. Once they receive all of your nomination documentation they will inform the University's Central External Examiners Team within Student Life, who will then send you an appointment email. The Schools/Depts. also process annual reappointments via HERMES (more information on this system can be found further on in this document).

For compliance and workload purposes, External Examiner Enquiries request confirmation of any other External posts held by External Examiners and this information is provided by completion of an Excessive Burden form. External Examiners should notify their School/Dept. of any changes prior to the commencement of the academic session, such as a change in title, institution, contact details etc.

Overview of role

The details of your appointment are described within the letter of appointment sent to you by email. You may have been asked to externally examine at Subject Level and/or Programme Level and/or Award Level. For full details of your role and the criteria for appointment, please refer to the Code of Practice on Assessment Appendix H ([click here](#)).

External Examiners are nominated for (re) appointment on an annual basis and appointed for a standard four-year tenure, or for the duration of a programme remaining where it has exceeded four years. Please ensure that you provide a summary of your term of office when completing the annual report following your final year of appointment. Details of your fee are explained within your appointment email. Payment of your fee is contingent upon submission and approval of your annual report, which should be submitted in accordance with the deadline dates published on HERMES (External Examiner portal).

Induction

This should be carried out by the host School/Dept. for all External Examiners, even if a formal Induction is not offered all Externals should expect to have the following:

- A named contact from the host School/Dept. administrative team who they can direct queries to
- A timeline or set of key dates so that they know when work will need to be carried out (including when examination papers have to be returned, when Board meetings will be held)
- Access to, or copies of, relevant paperwork set out in Annex 1 of [CoPA Appx H](#)

Please contact your host School/Dept. if you have not received any of the above or if you wish to query your workload, timeline or responsibilities as an External Examiner for The University of Liverpool.

Termination of Appointment

A period of three months' notice is required from any external examiner wishing to resign from their position. This can be provided in writing/email to the host School/Dept. or to External Examiners Enquiries via email to extexam@liverpool.ac.uk

External Examiner Annual Report

The Annual Report uses a template to ensure that the feedback you provide addresses QAA requirements, and allows the University to assure itself of appropriate academic quality and standards and enhancement of quality. For this reason, the University asks that you use the template (which is accessed via the External Examiners HERMES pages). Reports which are not provided using this template will not be accepted and this may delay the payment of your fee. **NB. Report(s) should NOT refer to specific students or staff by name.**

The deadline for submission of your annual reports can vary. For your specific deadline, please refer to your page within HERMES. However, the general submission deadlines for 2024/25 are:

- The Undergraduate courses External Examiners report deadline is **31 July 2025**.
- The Postgraduate courses External Examiners report deadline is **01 December 2025**.

Completion of your report in HERMES triggers Ext Exam Team to arrange the payment of your Fee. You **do NOT** need to submit a claim for the fee.

Please note that your report will be made available to students and staff and therefore should not include named individuals. On receipt of your submission the department will then submit a formal response addressing the points you raise. In general, departments take this as an opportunity to thank the external for his/her input, note any positive comments and offer responses to concerns or issues raised by the examiner.

Exam Board Dates

These should be provided by your host School/Depts. but as a general rule the Undergraduate Examination Boards are in June and the Postgraduate Taught Examination Boards are normally in November.

University of Liverpool systems

MWS Account (Managed Windows Service)

You will receive instructions on how to gain an MWS account at appointment. This is required for access to Tulip (HERMES), CANVAS, Sharepoint and other UoL sites that Schools/Depts. may wish to share with you.

The MWS Account is also necessary to gain access to COREHR (our Payroll system). You will use this system when submitting your expense claims, and also when needing to view your electronic payslips or P60's as paper copies are not provided.

If you forget your MWS password, please follow the link

<https://register.liv.ac.uk/ResetPassword/>

You will need your username and staff/person id number for this. If you cannot remember your username and/or staff id please contact extexam@liverpool.ac.uk for reminder.

Duo Two-Factor authentication

The IT Services Department has partnered with industry experts, Duo Security, to launch two-factor authentication, strengthening the protection around university data, and reducing the risk of cybercrime, following a series of recent high-impact cyber-attacks targeting the Higher Education sector. This becomes relevant, for access to all of UoL systems.

As an External Examiner at the University of Liverpool, there are three main systems you will be using;

Tulip (HERMES)

[Click here to access system](#)

HERMES (Handling External Examiner Reports, Maintenance of appointments and Expense Claim) is the online system used by the University of Liverpool to manage all aspects of administration in relation to External Examiner appointments for taught provision. You will use HERMES to review/accept your appointment, submit your report and review the departmental response to your report.

Your login credentials for HERMES are your MWS login (an account you created yourself with username and password) You will need to login to HERMES to formally accept the appointment. You will be provided with MWS login details on completion of a New Starter Form that the School/Dept. ask you to complete at the initial nomination stage.

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to access the user guide for HERMES.

To view a list of Frequently Asked Questions about HERMES, please [click here](#)

If you forget your username or password for HERMES, please contact the External Examiner Enquiries team on extexam@liverpool.ac.uk

Canvas

As an External Examiner, you will also be given access to Canvas, The University of Liverpool's virtual learning environment (VLE). Canvas is virtual library holding key information regarding modules through their own independent area within the VLE. This information includes assessment details, learning resources and module specifications. Most importantly, Canvas is where students submit their assessments and where you will be able to view those submissions. To gain access to Canvas you will be provided with a University of Liverpool staff username and password. The credentials to access Canvas are sometimes referred to as 'MWS' login details.

Your host School/Dept. will be best placed to tell you how they use Canvas.

Please note that Canvas operates best when used through the [Google Chrome](#) internet browser.

COREHR (Payroll)

- To submit your expense claims please access the Guide for [COREHR](#)
- To view your payslips/P60 online please login to - [\(COREHR\)](#)

Fees and Expenses

For External Examiners appointed to programmes, under the Inland Revenue instructions regarding examinations payments for taught courses, we are obliged to deduct tax at source under PAYE unless you have supplied us with a certificate that you are not liable to tax because total earnings or taxable benefits do not exceed the lower personal allowance for the tax year. National Insurance will not be applied to the fee.

External Examiners will be reimbursed reasonable and actual costs of UK-based expenses incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily in the performance of the role, in accordance with the University's Expenses policy.

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to view a copy of the 'External Examiner Expenses Claim Policy'.

Payments of fees and expenses to External Examiners are made by BACS into your bank account.

Policies and useful documents

Code of Practice on Assessment

The Code of Practice on Assessment ([Click here](#)) sets out the frameworks for the structure and assessment of taught undergraduate and modular postgraduate degrees and awards. It defines the conventions for qualification descriptors and for the classification of degrees and awards. It contains the regulations for the conduct of exams, for student progression procedures and for assessment appeals procedures. It also includes the University's policies on feedback on assessment, group work, coursework submission, academic integrity, extenuating circumstances and on adjustments for disabled students. It is abbreviated as 'CoPA'. Key appendices for reference are:

- [Appendix C](#) - *Framework for Postgraduate Modular Provision*
- [Appendix D](#) - *Regulations for the Conduct of Examinations*
- [Appendix H](#) - *External Examiner System for Taught Provision*
- [Appendix I](#) - *System for the Classification of Three-year Non-Clinical Undergraduate Degrees*
- [Appendix J](#) - *Classification of Four-Year Non-Clinical Undergraduate Degrees*
- [Appendix L](#) - *Academic Integrity Policy*
- [Appendix M](#) - *Extenuating Circumstances in Relation to Performance in Assessments and Examinations*

University Framework for Quality and Standards

[The University Framework for Quality and Standards](#) specifies the responsibilities and processes by which the standards of the academic programmes and the quality of the student learning experience are managed, assured and enhanced.

Previous External Examiners Reports

If you would like to review the External Examiners report from the previous academic year, please contact your Host School/Dept.

External Examiner Intranet

Access to site - [Click Here](#)

These pages are intended to provide you with key information about the purpose and function of the External Examiner role and contain a useful [FAQ's section](#) and also contain an [External Examiner Support section](#)

External Sources

- [AdvanceHE](#) (previously Higher Education Academy)– [External Examining Handbook](#) (Feb 2019)
- The Quality Assurance Agency guidance on [External Expertise](#) (Nov 2018)
- The Quality Assurance Agency guidance on [Assessment](#) (Nov 2018)

Contact details and web addresses

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions and we will be more than happy to help.

For information and support with using HERMES, content of the Handbook, general queries and information regarding the processing of expenses, and fees, please contact:

Mrs Maria Muldoon, Senior Administrator, Student Life
Email: extexam@liverpool.ac.uk