

GUIDELINES FOR EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORTS 2021

Background

1. Thank you for acting as an external examiner for the University of Oxford. The University asks all of its external examiners to prepare a report following each examination session in which they have participated. This guidance and form are for those examining in the 2020-21 academic year.

Submission

2. Please ensure you complete **both** parts A and B, and submit your completed report within **four weeks** of the final Examination Board meeting. The timely receipt of reports helps the University to give full and prompt consideration to the valuable comments of external examiners which are a key element of the University's quality management procedures. The University acknowledges that occasionally circumstances arise in which a delay in submission is unavoidable; in this case, please keep us fully informed. Please kindly note, however, the following extract from the University's Examination Regulations: '*An external examiner who fails to submit the annual report required by the University may continue in office only with the permission of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) and the Proctors.*'
3. Please submit your report centrally by email to: external-examiners@admin.ox.ac.uk and copied to the appropriate divisional contact as set out at paragraph 14. Alternatively, please post a copy to: The Vice-Chancellor c/o Richard Gill, Head of Research Degrees and Quality Review, Education Policy Support, University Offices, Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JD.
4. **It is important that reports are submitted centrally in accordance with these instructions in order that payment can be processed.**

Content

5. All reports should be prepared using the template form which accompanies these guidelines. The form aims to strike a balance between capturing essential information and enabling detailed qualitative comments on any aspect relating to the examination/assessment system, processes and outcomes, including any features unique to a particular subject or programme. The comprehensive and careful commentaries provided by most external examiners are valued highly within the University.
6. Question A1 asks whether the academic standards and the achievements of students comparable with those in other UK higher education institutions of which you have experience. If you do not have experience of UK higher education institutions but have nevertheless been approved to act as an external examiner, please note this in the 'other' column and provide comments in section B1.
7. Question A2 asks whether the threshold standards for the programme appropriately reflect the Qualifications Frameworks (the "*Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies*") and any applicable Subject Benchmark Statements so as to comply with the expectations and core practices for standards set out in the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#).
8. The University recommends that external examiners consult the [UK Quality Code – Advice and Guidance: External Expertise](#) for a full description of those areas upon which external examiners are generally expected to comment. In order to develop its quality enhancement strategy, the University particularly welcomes comments in relation to: (i) issues which should be brought to the attention of supervising committees (Question B3) and (ii) good practice and enhancement opportunities which should be noted and disseminated more widely, as appropriate (Question B4).

9. The University would be grateful for comments on the effectiveness of any changes made to the course or processes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These comments should be made as part of answers to the appropriate B question.
10. The University requests that external examiners do not discuss the contents of their report within the responsible faculty or department prior to its submission to the University.

Circulation of Reports

11. Reports will normally and routinely be circulated widely among members of the department/faculty and division concerned, including to students (subject to the deletion of any references to identifiable individuals). This is in accordance with the [UK Quality Code – Advice and Guidance: External Expertise](#). Examiners are, however, welcome to send a separate confidential report to the Vice-Chancellor if desired. If so, **please clearly mark the message or letter as ‘confidential’**. In such circumstances, it is not necessary to copy the report to the divisions concerned.
12. Please note that a number of universities, including the University of Oxford, have in the past received requests under the Freedom of Information Act requesting disclosure of the full text of external examiner reports. It is our policy to notify examiners personally where such requests occur.
13. You should receive a response to your report from the relevant department/faculty or division, including details of any actions taken as a result, or the reasons for not taking action.

2nd BM Courses

14. External examiners for 2nd BM courses should follow any additional directions for reporting provided by the Medical Sciences Division.

Further Information

15. Please do not hesitate to contact the University via external-examiners@admin.ox.ac.uk in case of any queries, or if further information is required, and we will be pleased to advise or redirect your enquiry, as necessary.
16. As set out in paragraph 3, please send reports to: external-examiners@admin.ox.ac.uk and copied to the applicable divisional contact:
 - **Humanities:** exams@humanities.ox.ac.uk (*Classics; English Language and Literature; Fine Art; History; Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics; Medieval and Modern Languages; Music; Oriental Studies; Philosophy; and Theology and Religion.*)
 - **Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences:** bulvinder.gurm@mpls.ox.ac.uk (*Biological Sciences; Chemistry; Computer Science; Earth Sciences; Engineering Science; Materials; Mathematics; Physics; Plant Sciences; Statistics; and Zoology.*)
 - **Medical Sciences:** nicholas.field@medsci.ox.ac.uk (*Biochemistry; Clinical Medicine; Clinical Neurosciences; Medicine; Experimental Psychology; Oncology; Orthopaedics, Rheumatology and Musculoskeletal Sciences; Paediatrics; Pathology; Pharmacology; Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics; Population Health; Primary Care Health Sciences; Psychiatry; Surgical Sciences, and Women’s and Reproductive Health.*)
 - **Social Sciences:** ga@socsci.ox.ac.uk (*Anthropology and Museum Ethnography; Archaeology; Business; Economics; Education; Geography and Environment; Global and Area Studies; Human Science; International Development; Internet; Law; Management; Politics and International Relations; Public Policy; Social Policy and Intervention; and Sociology.*)
 - **Department for Continuing Education:** student.support@conted.ox.ac.uk (*part-time and open/distributed learning provision.*)

