



EXTERNAL

HANDBOOK

**For Taught Programmes
(Undergraduate & Postgraduate)**

Contents

Welcome	3
1. Introduction	4
1.1. A Brief History	4
1.2. The University's Mission	4
1.3. Bangor University Today	4
1.4. University Structure	5
2. Selection & Appointment Process	6
2.1. Criteria for Selection	6
2.2. Nomination Process	7
2.3. Appointment	7
2.4. Eligibility to work in the UK	7
2.5. Induction	7
2.6. Resignation and Termination	7
3. Roles and Responsibilities	9
3.1. Purpose	9
3.2. Moderating the setting of assignments and examination papers	9
3.3. Reviewing student work	9
3.4. Participation in the Board of Examiners meeting	10
3.5. Extenuating Circumstances	11
3.6. Academic Integrity	11
3.7. Viva voces	11
3.8. Assessment of students through the medium of Welsh	12
3.9. Inappropriate contact from students	12

Welcome

On behalf of Bangor University, may I welcome you as an External Examiner, and thank you for undertaking this valuable role, which is a central part of our quality assurance processes. External Examiners work hard for a modest fee, and carry substantial responsibility. The University is very grateful, and appreciates your role enormously.

This Handbook provides information for External Examiners for all taught programmes at Bangor University, and has been produced primarily to assist you in your role. It contains information about our Regulations and Procedures, duties of External Examiners, and the ways in which the University will consider your reports. It supplements other documentation which you will receive from the School about the programme(s) for which you are acting as External Examiner.

In passing, I note that the Handbook has been produced in accordance with the University's Regulations and Codes of Practice, and has been informed by the section on External Expertise in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. It should also be fairly easy to find your way around. However, if there is any aspect which is unclear or has been omitted, please do not hesitate to contact us (see below for contact details).

My thanks, once again for your help. I hope you find your time associated with Bangor to be an engaging and helpful experience.

1. Introduction

1.1. A Brief History

Founded in 1884, Bangor University has a long tradition of excellence, both for academic standards and student experience.

The University was founded as a direct result of a campaign in the late nineteenth century for high

2. Selection & Appointment Process

2.1. Criteria for Selection

In approving any nominations the Curriculum Delivery Group

The number of External Examiners per programme of study is based on the requirements of a discipline and cohort numbers. For undergraduate programmes, the norm is 1 examiner to 200 students per subject of examination.

Where a part of a programme covers a specialist subject area, and student numbers would not justify the appointment of an additional Examiner, the School may consider appointing an Associate Examiner, using the normal nomination process.

2.2. Nomination Process

Nominations for External Examiners should be made in the school at the recommendation of the Head of School, and with the approval of the appropriate Teaching and Learning or other designated School Committee or Board of Studies.

Nomination forms for examiners for schemes of study beginning in September should be submitted to the Quality Enhancement Unit, at the latest by the beginning of the preceding February.

In cases where a nominated External Examiner does not meet all the criteria for appointment a detailed explanation and a curriculum vitae is required from the nominating school at the time of the nomination.

In cases where the Curriculum Delivery Group rejects a nominated External Examiner for failing to meet the criteria for appointment, an alternative nomination will be required. Schools may appeal to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education & Student Experience) on the rejection of an External Examiner by the Curriculum Delivery Group.

2.3. Appointment

The appointment period for an External Examiner to a School is 4 years. An extension of one year may be permitted in exceptional circumstances, to ensure continuity.

Following approval by the Curriculum Delivery Group, invitation letters are sent from the Quality Enhancement Unit. Confirmation of the appointment is given to Schools once nominees have accepted the position, and provided evidence of their eligibility to work in the UK. The Quality Enhancement Unit will communicate clearly in writing to all concerned the modules, programmes or award(s) to which each External Examiner is appointed.

2.4. Eligibility to work in the UK

To comply with UK Border Force requirements, all External Examiners must confirm their eligibility to work in the UK. All new External Examiners are required to provide the Quality Enhancement Unit with appropriate documentation verifying their eligibility to work in the UK. No External Examiner appointment will be confirmed until the University has received evidence of the examiner's eligibility to work in the UK.

2.5. Induction

In 2024, External Examiner Induction materials will be provided online.

2.6. Resignation and Termination

Should an External Examiner wish to terminate their appointment early, due to illness or other unforeseen circumstances, Examiners are asked to notify the Quality Enhancement Unit in writing at the earliest opportunity.

External Examiner reports not received within the 3 months of the Board of Examiners meeting will be brought to the attention of the Curriculum Delivery Group and could result in the termination of an appointment.

Whilst it is hoped that such a situation will not arise, an External Examiner whose performance or general conduct is deemed to be unsatisfactory by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education & Student Experience) may be warned in writing in the first instance and, if necessary, be advised on appropriate remedial action(s) which need to be taken.

In exceptional circumstances, such as failure to engage with the School at all during the academic year, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education & Student Experience) can authorise a letter of premature termination to be sent to the External Examiner concerned without prior warning. This will have the effect of terminating the contract immediately.

A letter of premature termination may also be sent in respect of a less serious incident where an External Examiner has received previously a warning of the type described above.

programme is validated and must relate to the learning outcomes of the programme. Such use of *viva voce* examinations should also be consistent with the Regulations for Taught Programmes.

Viva voce examinations may be conducted by External Examiners on all or a sample of students. The purpose of such examinations is to assist an External Examiner to moderate a programme. Evidence from such examinations should not be used as part of a Board of Examiners' consideration of individual candidates. However, evidence from such examinations can be used by External Examiners to inform their judgement about the general standards of the programme. Where appropriate, External Examiners may use evidence from such examinations to recommend adjustments to the marks of all students within a cohort – such adjustments can only be applied at a module level. For example, an External Examiner, based on an examination of assessed work and a *viva voce* examination, may conclude that marks allocated to specific modules are too low and may recommend a re-evaluation of the marks or that the marks for all students on those modules be raised. Such a recommendation must then be considered by the Board of Examiners.

The allocation of borderline candidates to degree classes should be based on the criteria that form part of the Regulations for Taught Programmes. *Viva voce* examinations should not be used by Boards of Examiners to assist in the classification of borderline candidates except for evidence obtained from *viva voce* examinations that form part of the assessment structure for a programme.

A *viva voce* examination should not be used as the basis for reducing an individual student's mark or an individual student's degree classification under any circumstances.

Interviews with candidates may be arranged at the request of the Chair of the Examination Board (or nominated Chair of a School's special circumstances committee or equivalent). Such interviews may be arranged to obtain further information from a student about matters such as unexpected results or extenuating circumstances. Such interviews should not be referred to as *viva voce* examinations. Following an interview, pertinent information should be relayed to the Examination Board so as to inform its consideration of a student's performance. No candidate shall be disadvantaged as a result of having been interviewed.

3.8. Assessment of students through the medium of Welsh

Every student has the right to sit examinations and submit assignments through the medium of Welsh or English, irrespective of the language medium of the course. This excludes subjects where a language is the subject of study, where it will be compulsory to answer questions in the language which is the subject of the course.

More information about this can be found in section 6.5 of the Regulations for Taught Programmes: www.bangor.ac.uk/regulations/regulations/reg01.php.en

3.9. Inappropriate contact from students

It is inappropriate for students to initiate direct contact with External Examiners. Students are advised of this in the online student handbook. Any direct contact received by External Examiners should be referred to the University Secretary. External Examiners should not respond to any direct contact initiated by students.

3.10.

4.

'incognito'. To do this, click on the 3 dots at the top right of the browser window and select 'new incognito window' (Chrome) or 'new InPrivate window' (Microsoft Edge).

6. Fees and Expenses

6.1. Accommodation

When External Examiners travel to Bangor to attend the Board of Examiners meeting and an overnight stay is necessary, accommodation will normally be booked for them in the University's Management Centre. Please note that if the Management Centre is full, accommodation will be booked at alternative venues. Schools will liaise with External Examiners regarding their accommodation requirements, and the accommodation will be booked on their behalf by the Quality Enhancement Unit. Late notification from an Examiner about their requirements may result in less convenient accommodation. Please also note that the Quality Enhancement Unit is required to pay for unused accommodation in the Management Centre, so if an Examiner no longer requires accommodation, they should let the School know as soon as possible *and* follow the cancellation instructions provided on the booking confirmation (if that has been received).

The University will only pay for the accommodation costs of the External Examiner, and not for any additional guests such as a spouse or partner.

6.2. Fees and Expenses Claim Form

External Examiners must use form PY

The University does not routinely provide a P60 for External Examiners. If you require one to support your HMRC self-assessment form, you may request one by e-mailing qualityassurance@bangor.ac.uk. The Finance Office sends these out by post, so please do allow sufficient time.

A very small number of External Examiners whose annual fee is over about £800 may receive information with their payslip regarding auto-enrolment into the University's pension scheme. Providing you receive no further payments above the threshold in the subsequent 3 months, the matter should automatically expire. In the unlikely event that you do receive information to suggest that you are being automatically enrolled into the pension scheme, please contact the Quality Assurance Manager for further advice.

7. Academic Regulations

The Senate Regulations and Special Cases Committee has responsibility for the University's academic regulations, codes of practice and procedures etc. These documents are part of the University's quality assurance procedures and represent its Quality Assurance Manual. All the University's regulations, codes of practice and procedures etc can be found on the University's website: www.bangor.ac.uk/regulations . The key regulations that will assist you in your external examining duties are outlined below.

7.1. Regulations

Regulations provide the governing precepts and procedures that determine the way in which the University manages its academic programmes, including admitting students and awarding qualifications. Regulations also define the expectations in terms of student conduct. Regulations may be supplemented by codes of practice, guidelines or rules, or by any combination of these.

Regulations for Taught Programmes: www.bangor.ac.uk/regulations/regulations/req01.php.en

This document contains important information that External Examiners will find useful in discharging their duties, such as:

- Categorical marking scheme
- Procedures for second marking
- Progression rules
- Degree classification
- Borderline cases

8. Other useful links

8.1. Quality and Standards at Bangor

The University's Quality and Standards web pages can be found here:

www.bangor.ac.uk/quality/index.php.en

8.2. QAA UK Quality Code

The Quality Code is the definitive reference point for all those involved in delivering higher education which leads to an award from or is validated by a UK higher education provider. It makes clear what institutions are required to do, what they can expect of each other, and what the general public can expect of all higher education providers.

This section is designed to ensure that external examining can operate in a way which is transparent, rigorous, and as consistent as possible across all UK higher education institutions, taking into account institutions' autonomy and differences in their mission, size, organisational structures and range of provision.

www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/advice-and-guidance-external-expertise.pdf

8.3. AdvanceHE External Examiner Handbook

AdvanceHE's external examining handbook is a reference source for External Examiners and brings together the outcomes from research and development in the field.

The guidance is supported by evidence derived from the collective experience of practising examiners – staff who support the process, research studies and publications. Case studies are used to illustrate issues that can arise in External Examiner practice.

<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/external-examining>