



Handbook for External Examiners of Apprenticeship Courses

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If you require this handbook in an alternative format, please contact Academic Registry,
email: externalexaminers@bath.ac.uk)

1 Introduction

- 1.1 You have been invited to join the University of Bath as an External Examiner because of your expertise and experience in your subject, in learning, teaching and assessment. The University is grateful to you for taking on this role.
- 1.2 This handbook is intended to help you to understand and fulfil your role as an External Examiner at the University of Bath. It sets out the University's expectations, provides further information on our procedures and signposts relevant University ordinances, regulations, codes of practice and policies, and indicates the type of support you may expect.
- 1.3 For an integrated apprenticeship, this handbook is intended to help you fulfil your role as External Examiner for End Point Assessment for External Quality Assurance purposes, where applicable.
- 1.4 Your departmental contacts will provide you with an induction to the course and your role. Departmental information is supported by this handbook and the [Guidance](#) for External Examiners web pages.
- 1.5 Formal information on External Examining of apprenticeship courses at the University of Bath is set out in our Quality Assurance Code of Practice Statement [QA12\(A\) External Examining \(Apprenticeship Courses\)](#). Other key reference documents are listed in section 6 below.
- 1.6 The details of procedures described in this handbook may be varied under the terms of an Institutional Agreement where a course of study is delivered by a subcontractor. However, where the University is the awarding body, the appointment and functions of the External Examiner remain the University's responsibility.
- 1.7 This handbook is reviewed annually and updated with changes arising from revisions to the [Quality Assurance \(QA\) Code of Practice for Apprenticeship Courses](#), the [Assessment Regulations](#) and other requirements e.g. from public, regulatory or quality bodies such as the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE), the Education and Skills Funding Agency, Ofsted and Office for Students (OfS). The update replaces the previous edition each year. Please check each year for revisions. Where there have been significant changes these will be indicated in section 10. The [handbook](#) is available online to view or download.

2 Contacting the University

- 2.1 Administration of external examining processes and procedures is overseen by Academic Registry. Queries relating to the University's quality management framework, your appointment and terms of contract, however, should be addressed in the first instance to:

Academic Registry (External Examiners)
University of Bath
Claverton Down
Bath
BA2 7AY

Email: externalexaminers@bath.ac.uk.

Queries about academic issues, examination papers, dates of meetings, or payment of fees and expenses for example should be addressed to your nominated contact in the Department/ School, (usually the Head of Department/School or the Director of Studies).

- 2.2 Your annual report (see Appendix A) should be submitted within six weeks of the completion of the examination process and sent, preferably electronically, by emailing it to externalexaminers@bath.ac.uk. You should expect an acknowledgement of receipt. Further details about the report process are given in section 9 of this handbook.

Alternatively, if you prefer to send a printed copy, it should be addressed to:
Academic Registry (External Examiners), University of Bath, Claverton Down, BATH BA2 7AY.

The payment of fees and expenses are authorised once your report has been received.

- 2.3 Details of how to [how to reach us](#) and a [map](#) of the Claverton campus are available online.

3 Quality management at the University of Bath

- 3.1 The University of Bath was awarded its Royal Charter in 1966, but can trace its history, via the Bristol College of Science and Technology and the Merchant Venturers' Technical College, to the Bristol Trade School of 1856. We retain an emphasis upon sciences, engineering and technology, but have also developed our portfolio in humanities and social sciences, management and health.
- 3.2 The mission of the University is to deliver world-class research and teaching, educating our students to become future leaders and innovators, and benefiting the wider population through our research, enterprise and influence. We have a distinctive academic approach that emphasises the education of professional practitioners and the promotion of original inquiry, innovation and collaboration. The University is a centre of academic excellence, where high quality research and teaching are mutually sustaining, and where the context within which knowledge is sought and applied is international as much as regional and national.

- 3.3 The University comprises sixteen academic Departments grouped into three Faculties (Engineering & Design, Humanities & Social Sciences, Science); as well as the School of Management and the Learning Partnerships Office (LPO).
- 3.4 The University has a bicameral governance structure, with Council as its governing body, and Senate as the supreme academic decision-making body. The principal institutional committees in relation to learning and teaching and quality management are the Education, Quality and Standards Committee, the Courses and Partnerships Approval Committee and for apprenticeship courses the Degree Apprenticeship Quality and Standards Group. Within Faculties and Schools, the Board of Studies is responsible to Senate for all matters relating to the organisation of education, teaching and research, including all examination matters. Faculty-level Learning, Teaching and Quality Committees are responsible to the respective Boards of Studies for the detailed scrutiny of the academic standards and quality of the Faculty/School undergraduate and taught postgraduate provision, including apprenticeships.
- 3.5 The University is committed to bringing together quality assurance and quality enhancement in its mechanisms for the management of the quality of its courses. As an institution with mature quality assurance mechanisms and a well-established reputation for the quality of its student experience, the University's focus is upon putting into place quality management structures that not only uphold academic standards, but also underpin the process of self-evaluative reflection that supports ongoing enhancement and development.
- 3.6 The institutional approach to quality is based on five core elements:
- reliance on sound academic principles in the design and delivery of learning and teaching
 - the importance of the informed student voice
 - the importance of peer review from colleagues in other academic institutions, professional bodies, industry and commerce
 - a multi-stranded approach to enhancement
 - a commitment to quality management processes that are efficient as well as effective.

For further information see:

- [About the University of Bath](#)
- [The University of Bath Strategy 2021 to 2026](#)

4 Overview of your responsibilities as an External Examiner

National Expectations:

- 4.1 The University of Bath fully subscribes to the principle and practice of taking account of external expertise in the management of quality and standards. The role of external expertise in assuring quality and standards in higher education is recognised in the QAA [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) and associated

[External Examining Principles](#) published in 2022, and in the guidance provided by External Quality Assurance (EQA) body for EPA.

- 4.2 For an integrated apprenticeship, where the University is the both the Training Provider and End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO), the role of external expertise in assuring quality and standards remain the University's responsibility for the period of on-programme training and assessment and End Point Assessment (EPA).
- 4.3 The University attaches great importance to peer review from External Examiners as a key means of ensuring that:
- the academic and occupational standards of University awards and their component parts are set and maintained at the appropriate level, and that the standards of Student Apprentice performance are properly judged against this
 - the EPA process accurately measures Student Apprentice achievement against knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the relevant approved Apprenticeship Standard and meets the requirements set out in the EPA Assessment Plan
 - the final assessment, to include EPA, is rigorous, fair and fairly operated, and in line with University Regulations and policies
 - the University can compare the standard of its awards with those of other higher education institutions
 - the University's provision is continuously enhanced to reflect developments in the sector, institution and discipline.
- 4.4 The responsibilities of individual External Examiners relate to their role to act as independent and impartial advisers providing informed comment on the academic and occupational standards set, and Student Apprentice achievement in relation to those standards.
- 4.5 The University will not make an award without participation in the examining process by at least one Examiner External to the University, who is a full member of the relevant Board of Examiners for Courses.
- 4.6 In keeping with the University's alignment of quality assurance and quality enhancement, the role of External Examiners is not confined to consideration of examination results and attendance at examination boards. External Examiners are encouraged to comment and advise on the content, balance and structure of courses and units, the development of courses/units and on assessment strategies and processes. Your feedback to us, as someone working in the discipline area, is valued and will be used to inform the academic Department's process of reflection on its performance.
- 4.7 External Examiners are expected to record their professional opinion, feeding back to the academic Department their views on academic and occupational standards, aspects of good practice, learning and teaching, course structure and content.

For further information see:

[Ordinance 15 Examiners and Examinations](#)

5 Your appointment as an External Examiner

- 5.1 For an integrated apprenticeship an External Examiner can be appointed as both External Examiner for the period of on-programme training and assessment and EPA.
- 5.2 Where separate External Examiners are appointed for the period of on-programme training and assessment and EPA, they will be expected to provide feedback for the period to which they are appointed. Collectively, however, they should be able to provide advice on the course as a whole, including through their attendance at the Board of Examiners for Courses.

Criteria for appointment

- 5.3 You have been appointed to an external examining role having been nominated by the Department/School and approved by the relevant Board of Studies on behalf of Senate. In coming to a view, the Board of Studies will have discharged its responsibility to ensure that:
- any individual recommended as an External Examiner has an appropriate level of academic, and where appropriate, professional knowledge, seniority and experience;
 - where the nominee is new to external examining, or is from outside the UK Higher Education sector, sufficient induction and briefing has been put in place to enable the nominee to fulfil their role;
 - the nominee has no existing, or prior, connection with the University that would call into question their ability to exercise objective, impartial and independent judgements.
- 5.4 You will be/have been asked to provide the designated information on academic background, knowledge and experience, at which point you are expected to have declared any relevant interests. It is important that if your circumstances change materially and you no longer meet these criteria, you inform the University immediately.
- 5.5 Full appointment criteria, including information on conflicts of interest for External Examiners, can be found in [QA12\(A\)](#) paragraphs 5.1 – 5.6.

Personal data

- 5.6 All personal data supplied by you for the purpose of your appointment and subsequently concerning your appointment will be held in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018. Your data will be held securely and for no longer than is necessary. The University will use your personal data for purposes connected with your appointment, for example communication about and payment of fees and expenses, and for any other legitimate reasons. The University will not disclose your contact details or any other personal details to third parties (i.e., outside the University) without your consent unless required to do so under the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018.

- 5.7 Student Apprentices are informed of the name and institution of External Examiners linked to their course(s) in the Course Handbook. They are advised that it is inappropriate to make direct contact with you, in particular regarding their individual performance in assessments, and advised of the appropriate channels for raising any questions. If you should receive any direct contact of this nature, please do not respond but refer the matter to Academic Registry who will guide the Student Apprentice to the appropriate route for their query or comment. The University attaches great value to the informed student voice in its approach to quality management and there are mechanisms in place by which Student Apprentices can engage formally with the process through which the institution considers and responds to External Examiners.

Your period of office

- 5.8 Your initial offer of appointment will usually be for three years, with the possibility of extension for a further year. External Examiners are appointed for no longer than four consecutive years. Upon expiry of this period, External Examiners for apprenticeship courses may not be reappointed to the same or any other course of the University until a period of five years has elapsed.
- 5.9 Following your appointment, Academic Registry will issue a letter of appointment setting out the period of tenure and the course(s)/units(s), to include EPA, for which you will be responsible.

Fees and expenses

- 5.10 Only once your report has been received can the Department/School proceed with the payment of your fee. External Examiners for undergraduate courses are paid as a form of employment through the payroll. In these instances, the University will need to check documentation of your eligibility to work in the UK in line with UK Visa & Immigration Service (UKVI) requirements, for details, please see [Right to Work in the UK checks for External Examiners \(UG\)](#). Please note that due to the legislation on right to work in the UK, we would not be able to pay your External Examiner fee without having completed the Right to Work in the UK process. If you have any queries on this process, please contact hr-visas@bath.ac.uk. External Examiners for taught postgraduate courses are engaged as contractors and not directly employed by the University.
- 5.11 For External Examiners appointed to undergraduate courses, 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.
- 5.12 Payments of fees and expenses to External Examiners are made by BACS into your bank account.
- 5.13 External Examiners may claim reasonable expenses such as travel costs, accommodation and subsistence. A claim form for expenses, together with guidance on completion, is provided to new External Examiners by Academic Registry. Further copies are available from your nominated departmental contact.

ALL completed expense claim forms must be submitted to your nominated departmental contact.

Discontinuation of employment

- 5.14 An appointment may be terminated with six months' notice on either side or exceptionally within an earlier period in the circumstances described in [QA12\(A\)](#) sections 6.11 to 6.15. We would ask that, should you need to resign your position prior to the completion of your contract, you provide if possible, a *minimum* of six months' notice in order to maintain continuity of assessment.
- 5.15 The University reserves the right to terminate the contract of any External Examiner without notice in the circumstances described in [QA12\(A\)](#) paragraph 6.12.

For further information, see:

- [Ordinance 15](#);
- [QA12\(A\)](#) sections 5 and 6.

6 Preparing for your role

Induction

- 6.1 Academic Registry, via this Handbook, is providing and/or signposting the key University and national frameworks and relevant supporting documentation with which you need to be familiar.
- 6.2 In addition, the Head of Department/School will ensure that the following information is sent to you:
- a Department/School contact;
 - the composition and membership of the Boards of Examiners including the names and subject areas of other External Examiners;
 - the schedule for examining procedures including the proposed dates of the relevant Board of Examiners meetings;
 - the final report(s) of the outgoing External Examiner(s).

For an External Examiner acting as External Examiner for EPA, the following additional information will be provided:

- the schedule of EPA activities to include the proposed dates of the Board of Examiners where EPA will be discussed
 - the final report(s) of the outgoing External Examiner for EPA, as appropriate
- 6.3 The Department/School will provide relevant information on the scheme of study and assessment for the course(s)/unit(s) for which you have responsibility, such as:
- the Apprenticeship Standard
 - the EPA Assessment Plan, where applicable
 - the course handbook;
 - the Course Specification and unit descriptions;
 - course assessment regulations and methods;

- the Department/School policy on confidentiality relating to matters of commercial sensitivity(which may arise in relation to assessment of work-based learning), where relevant.

6.4 Departmental practices should also be made clear to you. This information may include, as appropriate:

- the method and extent of sampling (which should be agreed with you – see [QA12\(A\)](#) (para 8.10);
- the way in which access will be provided to assessed parts of the course (e.g., where the final assessment involves online learning).

6.5 The Head of Department/School is also responsible for ensuring that you receive appropriate induction and briefing material to enable you to appreciate the aims and philosophy of the provision with which you will be associated, and to contribute in an effective manner to the assessment process. In practice, responsibility for briefing and induction may be delegated, for example, to the Director of Studies.

6.6 If you are new to external examining or to the UK Higher Education system, you may expect additional appropriate training and support for the first year of your appointment. This may take the form of a mentoring arrangement with a more experienced External Examiner or additional contact with a relevant member of staff. This support may be a condition of the approval of your appointment.

6.7 You may also be offered the opportunity to visit the Department/School to familiarise yourself with the course, the institution and its procedures, before the assessment procedure.

6.8 The Head of Department/School is responsible for ensuring that you are informed of any changes affecting your role and responsibilities.

Key reference documents

6.9 The following documents reflect the University's regulatory and policy framework, with which you are expected to act in accordance as an External Examiner.

Key reference document	Description, and how this relates to your role	Quick index of topics
Ordinance 15 Examiners and Examinations	This Ordinance establishes the requirement for External Examiners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of External Examiner
Regulation 15 Assessment of Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Courses	Regulation 15 defines in outline the University's procedures for summative assessment, including the position taken on the use of calculators and dictionaries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum period of registration
Assessment Regulations	Assessment regulations to which Boards of Examiners considering the outcomes of courses should adhere. The application of the relevant assessment regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment regulations for all taught courses • Award of credit • Degree classification

Key reference document	Description, and how this relates to your role	Quick index of topics
	should be one of the subjects of the External Examiner's report.	
QA12(A) External Examining (Apprenticeship Courses)	This section of the University's QA Code of Practice sets out in formal terms the University's expectations of External Examiners and the external examining process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment • Induction • Assessment • Quality enhancement • Reporting
QA35 Assessment Procedures for Taught Courses of Study	This statement in the QA Code of Practice sets out the principles and procedures relating to assessment decision-making including what is expected of External Examiners (see sections 6.7 and 7.7).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boards of Examiners • Scaling
QA3 Approval of New Courses of Study	Annex A sets out the University's academic framework, and Annex B the University's credit framework, with which all courses of study should conform unless an explicit exemption has been granted by Courses and Partnerships Approval Committee. It is part of your responsibility to ensure that these, together with national frameworks, are being upheld.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credit framework • Modular framework • Qualifications framework
QA16 Assessment, Marking and Feedback	This section of the University's QA Code of Practice provides common definitions used in assessment, and defines University expectations for assessment, marking and feedback to Student Apprentices. The processes employed by Departments/ School in this regard should be open to audit by External Examiners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment • Marking • Moderation • Feedback to Student Apprentices
QA53 Examination and Assessment Offences	This section of the University's QA Code of Practice sets out the University's processes for dealing with examination and assessment offences including plagiarism. In particular, if an allegation has not been resolved before the Board of Examiners meets, then that Student Apprentice's performance cannot be	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment offences • Plagiarism

Key reference document	Description, and how this relates to your role	Quick index of topics
	<p>considered. Once the allegation has been resolved, it is expected that the Department/School will consult the External Examiner on the best way to proceed.</p> <p>If an External Examiner, in the course of reviewing Student Apprentices' work, suspects an examination or assessment offence has been committed, the Department/School should be informed immediately, so that the process set out in section 6 of QA53 Examination and Assessment Offences and Regulations 7 and 8 can be carried out.</p>	
<p>Specific rules of IMCs are outlined in our assessment regulations or in the Individual Mitigating Circumstances and Assessment document. Details of the IMC procedures that apply to specific courses are available in the University's Assessment regulations.</p>	<p>Principles and procedures governing the consideration of individual mitigating circumstances. They identify the difference between individual and structural mitigating circumstances, indicate what are common individual mitigating circumstances, and set out the procedures for dealing with these. Department, School or Faculty panels are required to consider claims by Student Apprentices in advance of Boards of Examiners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Mitigating Circumstances
<p>Statement of Equality Objectives 2023 to 2025</p>	<p>The University is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all students and staff. External Examiners are expected to act in accordance with this policy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal opportunities
<p>Data Protection and Freedom of Information</p>	<p>Data protection legislation is relevant to the storage of personal data about External Examiners; the handling of student data during the assessment process; and, together with Freedom of Information legislation, is pertinent to the handling of External Examiners' reports.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Protection • Freedom of Information

- 6.10 From 2022/23 the University has been transitioning to new assessment regulations. For all UG courses the regulations (previously known as the New Framework for Assessment: Assessment Regulations) have been rearticulated into a new, clearer, succinct format known as the Undergraduate Assessment Regulations or UGAR. UGAR applies to all UG courses except any Foundation Degree and Honours Year courses. PGT courses are transitioning to a new set of assessment regulations (PGTAR) between 2022/23 to 2025/26. More information on which set of regulations apply to a course can be found [online](#).
- 6.11 Examiners are also expected to take nationally recognised frameworks into account:
- the [Higher Education Credit Framework for England](#)
 - where applicable, [subject benchmark statements](#);
 - where applicable, the expectations of professional accrediting bodies.
 - for EPA, the EPA Assessment Plan for the relevant approved Apprenticeship Standard

7 Your role in assessment

- 7.1 The role of the External Examiner is to verify the quality of final assessment processes and ensure that academic and occupational standards of awards are set and maintained at the appropriate level (rather than to seek to judge individual cases). Final assessments are defined in [University Regulations](#) as those assessments the results of which count in determining the award or the level of the final award (Degree, Diploma or Certificate of the University) and the award and level of the final award for the apprenticeship (apprenticeship certificate) . For an integrated apprenticeship, Student Apprentices are required to pass the End Point Assessment (EPA) to qualify for both a University award and the apprenticeship award.
- 7.2 The External Examiner should be an independent and impartial adviser who provides informed comment upon the academic and occupational standards set, and the Student Apprentices' achievement in response.
- 7.3 In support of these general principles, the External Examiner is involved in:
- assuring the quality and validity of assessments at the design stage, including the quality of assessment criteria, the setting of assessment questions and the quality of assessment materials and instruments
 - assuring the quality of the marking processes, including the quality of marking, moderation/double marking, scaling, etc
 - assuring the correct application of relevant assessment regulations
 - verifying marking of Student Apprentices in line with the guidance in the EPA Assessment Plan
 - assuring the fairness of the examining and examination board processes
 - ensuring the consistent use of marking boundaries for units and helping Departments/the School to calibrate their marking
 - confirming that the academic and occupational standards sought and achieved are comparable with other universities in the United Kingdom.

These principles are drawn from QA12(A) External Examining (Apprenticeship Courses), section 8.

- 7.4 You are therefore expected to:
- comment by the deadline specified on draft examination papers or other proposed forms of assessment referred to you
 - review the work of Student Apprentices
 - provide input, where necessary, to meetings of the Board of Examiners (see below paras 7.17 to 7.20)
 - attend the final Board of Examiners for Courses where awards are considered, participating as a full member by contributing to decisions/recommendations being made.
- 7.5 In discharging your role, External Examiners are expected to take into account the University's policy and regulatory framework as outlined in Section 1 and the [University's Statement of Equality Objectives](#) as well as nationally recognised guidelines, e.g. [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#), [Subject Benchmark Statements](#), and the expectations of professional accrediting bodies.
- 7.6 In discharging your role, External Examiners are required to consider the relevant approved Apprenticeship Standard and, where applicable, the appropriate EPA Assessment Plan.
- 7.7 In discharging your role, External Examiners for EPA are also required to act in line with the activities outlined in the External Quality Assurance (EQA) Guidance published by the EQA body for EPA. For integrated apprenticeships, this is the Office for Students (OfS). This may include:
- reviewing documentation relating to the EPA, including the EPA assessment instruments, materials and internal quality assurance documentation
 - reviewing a sample of EPA assessed work, including observing live assessments
 - observing assessor standardisation or moderation meetings
 - meeting with Independent Assessors and EPA delivery staff
 - meeting with Student Apprentices and, where possible, employers
 - observing the meeting at which the final decision on the EPA is confirmed (Board of Examiners for Courses).

Moderating the setting of assignments and examination papers

- 7.8 The first responsibility an External Examiner is likely to undertake will be the reviewing of and commenting upon examination questions and other assignments. The University expects that all summative examination papers and summative assessment tasks which make a significant¹ contribution to a final award of the University should be externally moderated following the internal moderation procedure.
- 7.9 The University expects that each piece of assessment that contributes to a final award should have clear marking criteria or model answers appropriate to the

¹ defined as all work contributing 7% or more towards degree classification

discipline. You are therefore asked to comment upon the quality of assessment criteria as well as to review examination questions and assignments.

- 7.10 An External Examiner for EPA will have responsibility for reviewing EPA assessment methods to ensure they align with the methods set out in the EPA Assessment Plan for the relevant approved Apprenticeship Standard. This should include clear marking criteria and model answers appropriate to each assessment method.
- 7.11 As you will appreciate, the preparation of assessment materials is a significant and time-critical task. We therefore encourage you to work closely with your nominated contact to ensure that assessment materials are prepared, not only to the highest standard, but also in a timely fashion.
- 7.12 Procedures for moderation are open to audit by External Examiners who may advise on the appropriateness of the mechanisms for moderating the summative assessments set.

See:

- [QA12\(A\) External Examining \(Apprenticeship Courses\)](#) section 8
- [QA16 Assessment, Marking and Feedback](#)

Reviewing Student Apprentice work

- 7.13 An External Examiner has the right to see all examination scripts, any assignments contributing to the assessment of the final award (where the University's retention policy allows). In cases where it is agreed that only a selection of scripts shall be inspected, the principles for such selection must be agreed in advance and must normally include those around classification borderlines (on the understanding that borderline candidates should be considered collectively rather than as individual cases). Where a selection has been agreed, External Examiners may wish to see a representative sample from the top, middle and bottom of the range, and all failures. The guiding principle is that External Examiners should have seen sufficient assessments to assure themselves that internal marking, the marking by the Independent Assessor, and the resultant classification of awards are of an appropriate and consistent standard.
- 7.14 As External Examiner, you will be asked to review and comment upon Student Apprentice work that has already been assessed internally. This may be sent to you in advance of the Board of Examiners' meeting. Alternatively, if arrangements have been made for this, you may undertake the review while visiting the University before the Board of Examiners' meeting.
- 7.15 When looking at Student Apprentice work, you are expected to determine whether the academic and occupational standards are comparable, in your professional opinion, with national frameworks, and with any similar courses in your own institution or other institutions for which you are an External Examiner.
- 7.16 You are expected to respect the confidentiality of the materials you review. Any personal data must be held securely, and details of examination scripts or project/dissertation work must not be disclosed to a third party without prior permission. All Student Apprentice work must be returned to the Department/School

upon completion of the assessment process. Examination scripts themselves may not be disclosed following a subject access request under the Data Protection Act 2018, but Student Apprentices do have right of access to any comments or notes recorded on the script. Do not therefore record any comments on an examination script that you would not be happy for a Student Apprentice to see. For more information, see the University's [Data Protection and Privacy Statement summary](#).

Participation in Boards of Examiners' meetings

- 7.17 External Examiners are members of Boards of Examiners for Units and Boards of Examiners for Courses. They are involved in agreeing marks contributing towards final awards and the determination of final degree classifications.
- 7.18 External Examiners for the period of on-programme training and assessment are not expected to attend meetings of Board of Examiners for Units (BEUs), but they may attend if they wish to do so. You may be contacted if an unusual situation arises (for instance a unit is scaled) and your advice is needed. A decision to scale a unit should not normally be made without your input. You also not expected to attend BECs considering the progression of Student Apprentices only (where awards will not be considered) unless confirmation of the apprentice's achievement of the academic requirements at Gateway prior to progressing to EPA is being considered, or the course is new.
- 7.19 External Examiners for EPA are not expected to attend meetings of the BEU for EPA, but you may attend if you wish to do so.
- 7.20 External Examiners for the period of on programme training and assessment and EPA are required to attend the main meetings of the Boards of Examiners for Courses (BECs) where conferment of awards, the determination of final degree classification and confirmation of successful achievement grade of the apprenticeship are considered. The University will not make an award without participation in the examining process by at least one Examiner external to the University. Neither are External Examiners expected to attend BECs considering awards following supplementary assessment, on the basis that they will have had an opportunity to judge academic standards on the course(s) earlier in the cycle. Decisions regarding exit awards may be made without an External Examiner present. However, you must have had the opportunity to comment on assessed work associated with the exit award for an award to be made.
- 7.21 The Department/School will contact you in advance to establish a date for the Board of Examiners' meeting at which your attendance is required. If, in an emergency, you are not able to attend a meeting, please contact your nominated contact immediately in order that an alternative arrangement can be made.
- 7.22 Your nominated contact will brief you further on the operation of the Board of Examiners. The formal procedures for Boards of Examiners are set out in full in [QA35 Assessment Procedures for Taught Courses of Study](#).
- 7.23 A Board of Examiners makes collective decisions with all members being full and equal, and no one member having primacy. External Examiners may be called upon to advise but it is the Board of Examiners as a body that must reach a collective decision.

- 7.24 The focus of your role and that of the Board of Examiners should generally be upon overall standards and upon the fair application of relevant regulations and processes, rather than upon consideration of individual cases.
- 7.25 These meetings are, by their nature, formal in tone, but this should not prevent you from commenting on the quality of awards or on the examination process as you see fit.
- 7.26 At the final BEC meeting External Examiners will be invited to make a brief verbal report on the quality and standards of the course and the assessment processes, commenting on the University's adherence to the points of principle set out in para 7.3. External Examiners will also be expected to comment on the development of the course and highlight opportunities for enhancement. Where there is more than one External Examiner, the BEC provides an opportunity for the External Examiners to meet and exchange views on the course. Collectively External Examiners should be able to provide an overview of the course as a whole (see [QA12\(A\)](#) paragraph 4.6).
- 7.27 Unless you specify otherwise, it will be assumed that you support the decisions of the BEC which will then be recommended to the Board of Studies which makes awards on behalf of Senate.
- 7.28 Minutes of Boards of Examiners meetings constitute personal data. You should therefore respect the confidentiality of Boards of Examiners meetings and be aware that the minutes of meetings may be made available to a student making a subject access request under the Data Protection Act.
- 7.29 If after thorough and careful discussion, an External Examiner should feel unable to participate in the collective decision of the Board of Examiners or to endorse the conduct of the assessment process, the Secretary to the Board will make a full report to the Board of Studies in the Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Examiners. Boards of Studies have responsibility for consideration of the recommendations of Boards of Examiners for Courses and approve decisions on progression and the making of awards, under authority from Senate.

See:

- [QA12\(A\) External Examining \(Apprenticeship Courses\)](#), section 8
- [QA35 Assessment Procedures for Taught Courses of Study](#), paras 6.2, 6.7, 7.2 and 7.7

8 Quality enhancement

- 8.1 The University values your expertise in contributing to the ongoing enhancement of the quality of the University's provision through commenting and advising on the content, balance and structure of courses and units, the development of courses/units and on assessment strategies and processes, and, where you are engaged as External Examiner for EPA, the delivery of EPA.

- 8.2 Your involvement may take a variety of forms:
- your visits are an opportunity for the Department/School to discuss with you the structure of the course(s) of study and the curriculum and End Point Assessment, and to share ideas in light of your expertise in the discipline/experience of similar courses in peer institutions
 - your reports are used to inform the process of Annual Monitoring of units and courses, contributing to the action plan of developments and enhancements to the course(s) planned for the year ahead
 - your reports and comments also form part of the evidence base for periodic review of the course(s): Degree Scheme Review, or equivalent. Periodic review is an opportunity for the Department/School to step back from the day-to-day development and delivery of a course, drawing upon input from academic peers, professional bodies, employers and students, in order to revisit the aims and intended learning outcomes of the course, examine the existing quality of provision and identify opportunities for ongoing improvement. Your External Examiner reports will form part of the evidence base for periodic review, and the Department/School may also invite you to contribute further comments as part of the review process.
 - when proposing amendments to courses of study affecting the nature and pattern of assessment, Departments/Schools will invite your comments on the proposal. The aim of this is to seek your advice on the potential impact of a proposed change upon academic and occupational standards, but also, through peer review, to ensure that proposals take account of best possible practice.
- 8.3 Where you are acting as External Examiner for EPA, your report is used to inform ongoing EQA monitoring of EPA delivery by the EQA body responsible for EPA.

See: QA12(A) External Examiner (Apprenticeship Courses) section 9.

9 Your External Examiner report

- 9.1 You are required to provide an annual report on the course(s) and/or unit(s) for which you are appointed, including observations on academic and occupational standards, aspects of good practice, learning and teaching, course structure and content.
- 9.2 Where an External Examiner is acting as both External Examiner for both the on-programme period of training and assessment and EPA, this should be clear through the submission of two separate reports:
- QA12(A) Form 2: External Examiner's Annual Report (period of on-programme training and assessment)
 - QA12(A) Form 3: External Examiner Annual Report (End Point Assessment).

The most recent version of each report template is available for download from the [QA12\(A\) External Examining \(Apprenticeship Courses\)](#) webpage.

- 9.3 In Form 2, you are asked to comment on the appropriateness of academic and occupational standards, adequacy of information, appropriateness of learning

outcomes and assessment, the arrangements for the Board of Examiners and the examination process, and the quality of learning and teaching methods.

- 9.4 In Form 3 you are asked to comment on the conduct of the EPA process against the EPA Assessment Plan for the relevant approved Apprenticeship Standard. There is no prescribed length for reports, however, you are asked to provide reports that are as full and detailed as possible.
- 9.5 Where a course is delivered via several modes, this should be reflected in your report, either by the submission of separate reports, or by clear differentiation of comments on each mode within the body of a single report. The Department will advise on which method is appropriate for the course you are appointed to.
- 9.6 If this is your final year as External Examiner, we would welcome your further comments upon your period of office. This report is then made available to the incoming External Examiner.
- 9.7 The External Examiner report forms are divided into two parts. In keeping with the University's commitment to the informed student voice, the University shares Part 1 of the form with Student Apprentice representatives via Staff Student Liaison Committees and with Student Apprentices directly on request. It is expected that the majority of your comments will be provided within Part 1 of the form. You should NOT include any data relating to individual staff or students in Part 1. Part 2 is provided for instances where you find it necessary to make comments relating to an individual student or member of staff or make comments of particular sensitivity or importance (The full formal statement of the University's position is provided in [QA12\(A\) External Examining \(Apprenticeship Courses\)](#) and on the report form itself).
- 9.8 External Examiners for EPA should complete Form 3 and submit this in the same way as External Examiners for the period of on-programme training and assessment (see 9.10). The University, as End Point Assessment Organisation, will then provide a copy to the relevant EQA body for EPA as part of ongoing monitoring arrangements.
- 9.9 If you feel that there are any matters of serious concern arising from the process which may put the standard of the University's awards at risk, you should report this to the Vice-Chancellor.
- 9.10 Your annual report should be completed and submitted within six weeks of the completion of the examination process. We recognise that our External Examiners give important feedback on the operation of our courses, and the timely receipt of reports enables us to take early action to address issues raised and make an impact on the experience of the next cohort of students. It is therefore vital that you meet the deadline for the submission of reports.
- 9.11 Where possible, reports should be submitted electronically to: externalexaminers@bath.ac.uk. Alternatively, they can be sent by post to the Vice-Chancellor, care of: Academic Registry (External Examiners), University of Bath, Claverton Down, Bath BA2 7AY. This enables us to acknowledge receipt promptly.

- 9.12 If we do not receive a report from you, you will receive a reminder from the Head of Department/School. If a report is still not forthcoming, a further reminder will be sent to you on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor.

What happens to your report?

- 9.13 You can expect consideration to be given to any concerns that you raise and can expect to have the nature of any resultant action or rationale for lack of action communicated to you.
- 9.14 Once you have submitted your report, its receipt will be acknowledged by Academic Registry, and it will be circulated to relevant staff in the Department/School and Faculty.
- 9.15 Having received your report, the Head of Department should respond to you in writing, normally within six weeks of receipt of the report. A copy of this response will be lodged with Academic Registry.
- 9.16 The Head of Department/School is responsible for ensuring that any matters of concern raised in your reports are addressed at course level, by raising specific points with the academic staff responsible for the delivery of the course or the Independent Assessor. Where the requirements of external professional bodies are the focus of comments, the Head of Department/School is also responsible for informing those bodies of action taken in response to your report. In practice, some of these duties may be delegated to an appropriate member of staff, such as the Director of Studies.
- 9.17 Where broader issues are raised, action is taken at the appropriate level, whether this is at the level of the faculty or the institution.
- 9.18 Your report and the response to it are considered internally as part of the annual cycle of monitoring of courses (QA51(A)) and an annual overview of issues and good practice raised by External Examiners is prepared by Academic Registry for consideration by the Education, Quality and Standards Committee.
- 9.19 Your report may also be made available to public and professional bodies for audit and accreditation purposes.
- 9.20 If you have very serious and continuing concerns about issues related to standards and have already exhausted previous discussions with the Head of Department or the Dean but without satisfaction, you may contact the Vice-Chancellor directly and confidentially by email (vice-chancellor@bath.ac.uk) or post (address above in 9.9) with 'confidential' in the address or heading.
- 9.21 Where an External Examiner has a serious concern relating to systemic failings with the academic and occupational standards of an apprenticeship course and has exhausted all internal procedures, including the submission of a confidential report to the Vice-Chancellor, they may send a notification to the relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body.

For more information, see [QA12\(A\)](#) section 11.

Appendix A:

[QA12\(A\) Form 2: External Examiner Annual Report \(Period of On-Programme Training and Assessment\)](#)

[QA12\(A\) Form 3: External Examiner Annual Report \(End Point Assessment\)](#).