## EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY

## PROPOSED GUIDANCE NOTE FOR EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

School Name

**Information for External Examiners**

Welcome to the SCHOOL NAME at Edinburgh Napier University. We look forward to working with you as our External Examiner. The document provides information on moderation procedures, the operation of Board of Examiners and advises on the information made available to you by the School.

In this pack, we have enclosed the following information for

(Delete one of the options below that is not applicable depending on the nature of the external examiner duties)

* *Module External Examiners:*
* School/Module contact information
* Dates of Board of Examiner Meetings for this academic session
* Module Descriptors for the modules you are responsible for
* *Module and Programme External Examiners:*
* School/Programme contact information
* Programme Specification
* Programme Handbook
* Dates of Board of Examiner Meetings for this academic session
* Module Descriptors for the modules you are responsible for

**University Information & Induction**

Details of your responsibilities, tenure of appointment and fees are in your contract. You are usually signposted to our external examiner webpages with the following useful information on hand for your induction purposes:

* [University Academic Regulations](http://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/sas/Regulations/Pages/Regulations-old.aspx)
* [University Assessment Handbook: Appendix D, E, F, G](http://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/vice-principal-academic/academic/LTA/Lists/Resources/Attachments/31/AssessmentHandbook_Dec_2014.pdf)
* [Academic Strategy 2020](http://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/principal/Documents/Academic%20Strategy%202020/academic-strategy-2020.pdf)
* [Duties of Module and Programme Boards of Examiners](http://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/sas/academic_quality/External_Examiners/external_examiners/Pages/roles.aspx)
* [Annual Report template and guidelines](http://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/sas/academic_quality/External_Examiners/external_examiners/Pages/Annual_Reports.aspx)
* [Induction Material](http://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/sas/academic_quality/External_Examiners/external_examiners/Pages/Induction.aspx) including Board of Examiner Scenarios
* [Process for Annual Fee Payments](http://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/sas/academic_quality/External_Examiners/external_examiners/Pages/fees.aspx)
* [Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF)](http://www.scqf.org.uk/framework-diagram/Framework.htm)

The University holds an Induction Event in late April each year for newly appointed External Examiners. The session focuses mainly on the University Academic Regulations and the operation of Boards of Examiners underpinned by practical scenarios. It also provides an opportunity for you to meet with representatives from the programme or subject area where appropriate.

If you have no previous experience as an External Examiner, the School will appoint a ‘mentor’ during your first year of appointment who will be an experienced examiner supporting you in your role.

**Moderation of Instruments of Assessment**

The University Academic Regulations state that an external examiner is appointed to report and comment on all assessments which count towards the awards of the University. All approved SCQF level 9, 10 and 11 modules and all programmes of study will be allocated to an external examiner.

The Head of School should devise a process which is appropriate to the context and needs of the school but which fulfils the overriding principle that all instruments of assessment must be subject to a process of moderation and quality control.

You will normally be involved in the moderation process of assessments and you are asked to scrutinise:

1. the academic appropriateness of the assessment in relation to module and programme learning outcomes
2. the academic appropriateness of the assessment in relation to any other components of assessment within the same module
3. procedural appropriateness, with particular reference to consistency with the validated module descriptor, the clarity of the assessment rubric, and any special instructions relating to materials or resources (for example, the use of calculators)
4. accuracy and the proof-reading of the paper.

**Moderation of Student Work**

Module leaders are responsible for ensuring that the marking of coursework and exam scripts are subject to a process of moderation (the scrutiny of a sample of students’ work across the range of marks). This will be designed to ensure consistency and fairness of marking, consistency in the interpretation and application of the assessment criteria and the reliability of results for the module.

Marking:

* The University applies a principle of anonymous marking in written examinations where these are formal, closed or open-book or seen/unseen.
* Written coursework assignments are required to follow a process of anonymous assessment except where the nature of the assessment precludes it.
* Oral, portfolio, exhibition, digital examinations cannot usually be assessed effectively using anonymous assessment.

After internal moderation is completed you will be sent an Assessment Report commenting on the student’s overall performance and providing a summary on performance statistics. This will be followed by a sample of internally moderated assessments at SCQF levels 9, 10 and 11 for your comments in January (Trimester 1), May (Trimester 2) and September (Trimester 3) with deadlines for return.

Each coursework is described to students using an Assessment Brief which will be provided to you for information. We will also send you the marking criteria outlining in greater detail the way in which students will be assessed on each element of the assessment.

Some Schools at Edinburgh Napier provide external examiners with module and programme information on our Virtual Learning Environment “Moodle”. Should this apply to your School then we will be providing you with log-in details to Moodle and instructions how to use this during the academic session.

**Annual External Examiner Report**

After having reviewed square root samples of completed assessment assignments during the academic session you are asked to comment on the following indicators in your annual external examiner report(s) towards the end of the session:

1. whether the academic standard of each module or programme of study being considered is set and maintained at the appropriate level
2. whether the standards of student performance are properly judged against the level set
3. whether the assessment process is appropriate, rigorous, equitable and conducted in accordance with University guidance
4. the comparability of the standard and level of student achievement with those in other higher education institutions.

The School will be in touch sending you a link to the report template including details of the report submission deadlines in due course. Please send the reports directly to externalexaminers@napier.ac.uk. The School will respond to any issues and recommendations made in your report as soon as possible.

**Arrangements for Programme and Module Boards of Examiners Meetings**

The University operates a two-tier system for Boards of Examiners: one tier for modules and a second tier for programmes. These cover every module and programme of study through the University’s validation processes. The purpose of these Boards is to consider module performance and issues arising from the learning, teaching and assessment approaches adopted by the modules; to review students’ overall performance on their programme of study; and to make awards. In addition, the Boards should actively facilitate reflection, review and dialogue within the module and programme teams and between these teams and external examiners.

The role of external examiners is to advise the Board of Examiners, but decisions on student performance, progression and awards are those of the Board as a whole. Module and Programme Boards of Examiners are held after the end of each trimester in January, May, August (resits) and September (Trimester 3 Boards are mainly for masters students). You will receive an invitation to all meetings and it is expected that external examiners attend these however, externals do not generally attend the resit Boards in August.

Please let the School Office know as soon as possible if you are unable to attend any of the meetings. We will send you scripts and results and will ask for remote input to the respective meeting(s).

In case there is a requirement for certain modules and programmes that external examiners have to meet with students, the details of the implementation of this will be communicated to you at the earliest opportunity by the School.

**Changes to your Contract**

From time to time, it may be necessary to amend your duties. Should we wish to make any changes, we will consult with you firstly and subject to your agreement and approval through the School, you will be issued with a revised contract if the changes amount to a change in fee level or extension of duty.

**Travel/Accommodation Expenses**

We will send you a travel claim form prior to or during your School visit which should be completed and returned to the School Office. Completed forms may also be sent online via email.