

HE06

Board of Examiners and External Examiners Policy



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| Policy Name and Reference | Board of Examiners and External Examiners (HE06) |
| Version | 1.3 |
| Name of Responsible Committee | HECQS |
| Job Title of Responsible Author | HE Quality Officer |
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| Application to Collaborative Provision | Compulsory |

Revision History

| Version Number | Date | Type of Amendment | Amendment Details |
|----------------|----------|-------------------|---|
| 1.0 | Sep 2013 | New Policy | New |
| 1.1 | Sep 2018 | Major Review | Removal of reference to GIG and replacement with TEC Partnership Updating of job roles Addition of processes for non-attendance of external examiners at exam board Change of Deliberative Committee titles Inclusion of Removal of EE contract |
| 1.1.1 | Feb 2020 | Minor Amendment | Addition of text regarding TDRM |
| 1.1.2 | Sep 2020 | Minor Amendment | Clarification of Assessment Task Proforma Change of Awarding power from GIFHE to TEC Partnership HE06O to be used where EEs cannot attend |
| 1.1.3 | Sep 2021 | Minor Amendment | Adoption by ERC Creation of an Annex to show where specific procedures are used across specific sites |
| 1.2 | | Major Review | Updating of committee structure, titles and job roles Clarification on process for setting up exam boards Change to endorsement of results process Addition of text requiring Exam Board Chairs to sign the previous minutes at the next board following approval by the members |
| 1.3 | Mar 2025 | Major Review | Remove references to specific partner HEIs/awarding institutions and their processes Typographical and factual updating Consistency of terminology |

If you need any further advice on how the regulations work, you should contact the HE Quality Office.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This policy makes clear TEC Partnership's expectations regarding administrative conduct and preparation leading up to, including and upon completion of a board of examiners and matters relating to the external examiners process for its own awards.

1.2 TEC Partnership acknowledges that in every instance it will refer to the awarding institution/partner HEI's regulations or policies appertaining to exam boards and external examiners for programmes validated outside of TEC Partnership.

1.3 Within this policy the term 'board of examiners' is used to describe any board with a remit for confirming module marks for student output and/or the progression of students between stages and/or the determination of award classifications.

1.4 The policy has been developed as a result of TEC Partnership's own review processes and analysis of key sources such as external examiner reports.

1.5 The policy is underpinned by the following key principles.

- i) Rigour, probity and fairness
- ii) Timeliness
- iii) Coherency
- iv) Accountability
- v) Consistency
- vi) Accuracy
- vii) Confidentiality

1.6 The policy applies to the range of processes leading up to, including and upon completion of a board of examiners. These include:

- i) the setting of pre-board and board of examiners dates
- ii) the nomination of a secretary, chair and quality representative responsible to a board of examiners;
- iii) the preparation of reports, results grids, agendas, minutes and endorsement forms;
- iv) timescales;
- v) minuting of board of examiners' meetings;
- vi) accuracy and availability of records;
- vii) confidentiality and data protection; and
- viii) production of results letters and transcripts.

1.7 The policy, whilst existing in its own right, aligns itself with institutional and other relevant policies and regulations.

1.8 Any queries relating to boards of examiners should be referred to heqa@tecpartnership.ac.uk.

2.0 Exam Boards and Student Assessment and Award Data

2.1 The process for managing exam boards at all TEC Partnership campuses and for all TEC Partnership awards no matter where delivered are listed in Annex 1.

2.2 It is the responsibility of each college's Senior Leadership Team, where not following the processes listed in Annex 1 to maintain records of student enrolments, assessments and outcomes in accordance with the awarding body regulations and for reporting to the Office for Students or the Designated Data Body.

2.3 Records of awards given via transcripts should be kept by any college not following the processes described in Annex 1. These should be stored so that students can request copies of these for 125 years.

3.0 Purpose and Function of External Examiners

3.1 In common with awarding institutions and partner HEIs, TEC Partnership recognises in every instance the functions of the external examining process as defined by the QAA. External examining processes assist TEC Partnership in ensuring that:

- i) threshold academic standards of each award and its component parts is set and maintained at the appropriate level;
- ii) standards of student performance are properly judged against the appropriate level;
- iii) academic standards and the quality of the student experience are properly judged against relevant external reference points such as the components of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education including The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (FHEQ), and/or the requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRB);
- iv) assessment process measures student achievement appropriately against the intended outcomes of the programme, and is rigorous, fairly operated and in line with the awarding institution's regulations and policies;
- v) TEC Partnership is able to compare the standards of programmes it delivers with those of other higher education or similar institutions, though their content may vary; and
- vi) good practice is captured and disseminated.

4.0 Appointment of External Examiners, Rights and Responsibilities

4.1 The appointment period and External Examiners role is defined and regulated by TEC Partnership in accordance with QAA requirements.

4.2 Nominations for the appointment of External Examiners must be received by the HE Quality Officer on the proposal form (HE06H).

4.3 The nomination for the appointment of an External Examiner will be considered and approved by TEC Partnership's Higher Education Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee (HECQS). This 'approvals process' includes consideration of appropriate documentation/ evidence in support of the nomination. All decisions must be based upon principles of integrity and objectivity and judged against TEC Partnership's criteria for the approval of External Examiners.

4.4 Any nomination for an External Examiner appointment must be able to satisfy the following criteria.

- i) Academic, currently teaching and where appropriate other professional expertise, experience and qualifications appropriate to the award being examined, with both level and the subject(s) of those qualifications generally matching those to be examined.
- ii) The External Examiner is able to command 'respect' which may be demonstrated through academic

expertise and/or professional achievement.

iii) The External Examiner has expertise and experience in assessment at the appropriate level. If the nominee has no previous external examining experience, they will be expected to have extensive internal examining or other relevant experience.

iv) The External Examiner is 'impartial' which may be demonstrated through no prior involvement with TEC Partnership during the last five years.

v) The incoming External Examiner must not be from the same institution as the outgoing External Examiner.

vi) The External Examiner can satisfy any requirements laid down by relevant professional, statutory or regulatory bodies where appropriate.

vii) The External Examiner must not normally hold more than two external examiners appointments for taught programmes at the same time.

4.6 Where an External Examiner fails to attend a board of examiners without the prior approval of the Chair, provides false information, fails to produce written reports or fails to act in accordance with this policy, TEC Partnership reserves the right, with four weeks' notification, to withhold payment of fees or terminate the appointment.

5.0 Communication with External Examiners

5.1 The HE Quality Office will issue the following to an External Examiner upon approval of their appointment to their position.

i) Letter of Engagement for Service as an External Examiner (HE06I) for signing and return to the HE Quality Office.

ii) Reply slip (HE06J) for signing and return to the HE Quality Office.

iii) Information regarding their role and remit (HE06K).

iv) Information on payment and expenses (HE06L).

5.2 TEC Partnership's HE Quality Office must also ensure all External Examiners receive a welcome and orientation to the TEC Partnership. This will include:

i) an introduction to TEC Partnership's HE Quality Office;

ii) a copy of TEC Partnership's boards and committee structures;

iii) a copy of TEC Partnership's structures and its portfolio of programmes; and

iv) how to access TEC Partnership's handbook for quality and standards.

5.3a The HE Quality Office must also ensure that External Examiners, on appointment, are sent copies of the validation document

5.3b The academic team must ensure that External Examiners, on appointment, are;

i) sent copies of programme and module handbooks and the Assessment Task Proformas;

ii) provided with marking schemes/criteria;

iii) sent a copy of any external PSRB requirements (if applicable);

iv) provided with dates for forthcoming examination and assessment deadlines and dates for boards of examiners meetings; and

v) clearly communicated with to establish and ensure agreement over how arrangements will occur for matters relating to the External Examining process such as receipt and return of student assessment, attendance at boards of examiners.

5.4 TEC Partnership's HE Quality Office is responsible for maintaining a live register of External Examiner appointments. This must include:

- i) the External Examiner's name and home institution (if applicable);
- ii) programme(s) and/or modules of responsibility and awarding institution;
- iii) date of appointment;
- iv) length of period of appointment;
- v) date of receipt of the External Examiners Report; and
- vi) date of programme leader's response to the External Examiner's Report.

6.0 External Examiners and Assessment Procedures

6.1 External Examiners and staff within TEC Partnership must comply with expected roles and responsibilities as defined in HE06I.

6.2 In every instance the programme team must make the Assessment Task Proforma (HE09A) and content of all summative assessment tasks/briefs including the module handbook available to the External Examiner before assessment tasks/briefs are published to the student.

6.3 In addition, prepared examination papers must in every instance be seen and approved by an External Examiner before release to any student.

6.4 External Examiners must be invited, and are expected, to attend where practicable all relevant Module and Programme Boards being given sufficient notice of the dates of meetings. Where attendance is not possible the Endorsement of Assessment Process form (HE06O) must be returned within 7 days of receipt from the secretary.

7.0 Receipt of External Examiner Reports

7.1 External Examiner reports must be completed on the online report form.

7.2 External Examiners must submit their report by 31st August of the academic year in question.

7.3 All External Examiner's reports must be scrutinised by the Academic Registrar and HE Quality Officer and an institutional analysis produced by October of the following academic year.

7.4 The institutional analysis will be reported on via TEC Partnership's annual Quality Enhancement Report. Institutional governance of themes and trends arising from External Examiners reports will be reported and considered at TEC Partnership's Higher Education Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee (HECQS) and reported through to the HE Oversight Committee.

7.5 Full and serious consideration in all instances will be given by TEC Partnership to the comments and recommendations contained within External Examiners' reports and the outcomes arising from those comments. Planned actions and outcomes will be recorded at institutional level in the Quality Enhancement Report, at faculty or area level in Self Evaluation and Enhancement Documents and at programme level within the programmes annual monitoring report.

8.0 External Examiner Reports and Quality Enhancement

8.1 External Examiners' reports must be circulated to the managers of the programme teams.

8.2 External Examiners' reports must be circulated to all staff responsible for teaching, learning and assessment on the relevant programme and be discussed at programme team meetings which will normally be before the start of the next academic year to allow appropriate planning and to ensure enhancement led activities inform the quality and standards agenda.

8.3 Student groups must be made aware of how to access the relevant External Examiners' report and where practicable, external examiners reports should be discussed with students in student engagement meetings.

8.4 The name and home institution of each programme's external examiners must be included in the programme handbook provided to students.

8.5 The programme leader must respond to all External Examiners' reports in written format as defined by the HE Quality Office within six weeks of its receipt. This should normally include a letter of acknowledgement and details of how external examiner comments have been or will be acted upon including details of the programme teams' response and any planned actions for enhancement of quality and standards.

8.6 Responses must be sent to TEC Partnership's HE Quality Officer by email to heqa@tecpartnership.ac.uk.

8.7 External Examiners' reports must also be discussed with PSRBs in instances where External Examiners' comments/reports may be requested or are relevant.

8.8 External Examiners reports must, in every instance, be used to share good practice with other programme teams.

9.0 Termination of External Examiner Contract

9.1 The Higher Education Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee (HECQS) has delegated powers to terminate the contract of a TEC Partnership external examiner under the following conditions:

9.1.1 The external examiner has failed to provide their annual report;

9.1.2 The external examiner has ceased to make contact with TEC Partnership for a significant period of time;

9.1.3 The external examiner no longer teaches in a UK Higher Education institution;

9.1.4 Information comes to light which could call into question their impartiality.

Annex 1 – Exam Board Processes Applied to all TEC Partnership campuses and all TEC Partnership Validated Awards

Terminology - Where roles are mentioned the following definitions apply;

- Chair – Refers to a senior manager of an academic area who has been trained by the Academic Registrar to chair an Exam Board.
- Exam Board Secretary – Refers to HE Data Administrators, PA's, Administrators

1.0 Preparation of Reports, Results Grids and Relevant Documentation

1.1 The HE Management Information Systems team (HE MIS) must ensure careful and timely preparation of reports, results grids and relevant documentation required for a board of examiners.

1.2 The Degree Compliance Officer must nominate Exam Board Secretaries, Chairs and Quality Representatives to support the administration of the boards of examiners and take in to account:

- i) the number of boards of examiners within their remit of responsibility.
- ii) the dates relevant boards of examiners are scheduled to convene.
- iii) the dates pre-boards are scheduled to convene.

1.3 The Degree Compliance Officer must nominate Chairs and Quality Representatives to support the board of examiners

1.4 The HE Quality Office team should develop a calendar of scheduled boards (and other meetings and deadlines) at the start of each academic year.

1.5 Before the start of the academic year, the academic calendar must identify the dates by which all student results should be entered into the recording system, commonly referred to as grade lock.

1.6 The HE Quality Office Team will be responsible for setting up the board of examiner dates in the Exam Board calendar and ensuring all attendees are added to the invite, including the chair, quality representative, external examiners, secretaries, teaching teams and collaborative partners.

1.7 The Exam Board Secretary will be responsible for liaising with the external examiners and TEC Partnership teaching teams, providing board of examiners' dates for the academic year. A record of acceptance or apology for external examiners must be logged on the Invite Tracker located on OneDrive.

1.8 HE MIS must use the definitive validation/approvals document for preparing results grids and relevant documentation; such a process will require HE MIS to annually collect the latest version of all relevant validation/approval's documents being mindful of any minor or major amendments that may have been made to the programme during each academic year. Where a module requires all assessments to be passed this must be clearly shown on the relevant module grid.

1.9 Student names are to be used on the results reports, agendas and minutes.

1.10 HE MIS should refer to the formal notification provided by TEC Partnership's HE Quality Office throughout the year for outcomes of recognition of prior learning and academic misconduct before

entering information onto the management information system; any queries should be addressed to the department in a timely fashion.

1.11 The programme leader must ensure that a curriculum report for each programme, including relevant, accurate and reliable information is provided and/or confirmed to HE MIS annually. This includes details of the:

- i) full programme title;
- ii) accurate module titles;
- iii) module credits;
- iv) module levels;
- v) numbers of assessments per module and type i.e. case study, essay;
- vi) assessment weighing;
- vii) the requirement to pass a specific element in order to pass the module overall; and
- viii) module tutors.

1.12 HE MIS must triangulate any information provided by a programme leader/module tutor to information from relevant validation/approvals documents. Any anomalies must be raised and rectified with the module tutor and chair of the board prior to a board of examiners convening.

1.13 Programme leaders/module tutors must enter on to the management information system a timely, exact, accurate and complete list of student results for each assessment taken within each module. Aggregate results should not be calculated by the module tutor.

1.14 HE MIS is not responsible for ensuring student results provided for a board of examiners is complete in instances where a programme leader/module tutor fails to provide requested results in the first instance.

1.15 Should a programme leader/module tutor fail to respond to a HE MIS direct request to provide timely and complete student results, HE MIS must immediately report the delay or omission to the relevant Head of Faculty or Area (or equivalents) and Chair for immediate action.

1.16 In the event of a chair's action the Degree Compliance Officer will complete a chair's action form (HE06A) with the reason for the amendment(s), chair's signature and HE Quality Office signature. This will be sent to HE MIS to complete a new results grid which must then be signed by the Chair and External Examiner. This process will be tracked on the chair's action tracker on OneDrive. These chair's actions will then be added to the next board of examiner's agenda by the secretary to the board.

2.0 Timescales

2.1 Results grids must be prepared and completed by HE MIS prior to a board of examiners convening.

2.2 Results grids will be prepared before a scheduled board of examiners to allow for a pre-board to be convened; HE areas should operate pre-boards as a process through which to 'iron out' any procedural errors, difficult cases, omissions or inconsistencies in the presentation of results grids before a formal board convenes.

3.0 Accuracy and Availability of Records

3.1 HE MIS and Exam Board Secretaries must keep clear and appropriate records relating to any board of examiners. Clear and rigorous record keeping permits TEC Partnership to assure itself that:

- i) it is operating consistently with the framework of relevant codes, policies, regulations and PSRB requirements
- ii) it is able to recall and inform itself of relevant details in the advent of complaints and/or appeals.

3.2 Records within the confines of this code include:

- i) provisional results grids;
- ii) approved results grids signed by the chair;
- iii) Attendance list (HE06B);
- iv) board agendas (HE06C) adhering to the standard format as defined by the relevant awarding body;
- v) provisional and a full set of approved minutes of board of examiner (HE06D) proceedings (adhering to the standard format as defined by the relevant awarding body);
- vi) Signed Confirmation of Endorsement and Attendance forms where the external examiner is not present (HE06O)

3.3 The Exam Board Secretaries must ensure they arrive at the meeting venue at least 20 minutes prior to the board start time to ensure the room is set appropriately, the computer and projection screen are on with relevant grids opened and that paperwork is ready to be distributed.

3.4 The Exam Board Secretaries must ensure that upon the collation and preparation of relevant material, sufficient copies are available for all members prior to the start of board of examiners meeting. Below is a checklist of what should be provided for each member. Previous exam board minutes will be shown on the smartboard.

- i) Chair – a module and programme board agenda and a full set of all module and progression and award grids relevant to the board. A copy of the previous minutes that the chair will sign and date once they have been approved at the beginning of the meeting.
- ii) External Examiner – a module and programme board agenda and a set of module and progression and award grids relevant to the external examiner .
- iii) Programme Leaders – a module and programme board agenda and a copy of progression and award grids relevant to the programme leader.
- iv) Module Tutors and all other members should have a module and programme board agenda only.

3.5 Endorsement forms (HE06O) must only been sent to external examiners who are not in attendance at the board either in person or virtually.

3.6 Endorsement of results (HE06O) will be accepted verbally from the external examiners by the board of examiners during the meeting and recorded accordingly in the minutes. Where an external examiner is not present in any form then an endorsement of results form must be sent within 24 hours of the board of examiners.

3.7 The Exam Board Secretaries must ensure that records of all decisions and any revisions to results made during a board of examiners meeting are accurately recorded.

3.8 Exam Board Secretaries must ensure that, upon the completion of a board of examiners:

- i) Results are signed by the chair during the board of examiners meeting;

- ii) Previous minutes are signed by the chair at the beginning of the meeting
- ii) Confirmation of Endorsement and Attendance forms (HE06O) are sent to absent External Examiners for their signature within 24 hours of the board;
- iii) minutes are prepared within 10 working days of the board and sent to the chair to approve. The Degree Compliance Officer will spot check these once approved.
- iv) Minutes must be taken to the next exam board for the chair to sign and date as a verified true and accurate record. They must then be saved in SharePoint.

3.9 Electronic records for example results, transcripts and minutes must be kept indefinitely. These should be saved in the HE Results folder located on SharePoint.

3.10 The Exam Board Secretaries must complete the Exam Board Tracker to confirm each stage of the board of examiners procedure, to ensure timeliness and completeness of paperwork.

3.11 The Degree Compliance Officer will be responsible for checking the process has been adhered to and recorded as set out.

4.0 Confidentiality and Data Protection

4.1 HE MIS and the Exam Board Secretaries are responsible for preparing and/or ensuring the maintenance of appropriate records for a board of examiners respecting absolute confidentiality at all times by following GDPR.

4.2 Where ICT is used to project results onto a screen during a board of examiners meeting, Exam Board Secretaries must ensure that results are not visible to students or third parties for example, through windows or glass doors.

4.3 No copies of records from a board of examiners must be retained by any member. Upon completion of a board the Exam Board Secretaries must collect all records from other members, leave no evidence in the vacated room where a board has convened and shred records no longer needed.

4.4 Details of results and decisions confirmed during a board of examiners must not, without a chair of the board giving prior permission within the framework of awarding body regulations, be disclosed to any student or third party. Students will receive their transcripts via ProPortal.

4.5 Board of examiners' records must be filed for record keeping with reference to the programme and/or board and not any individual(s) discussed or considered. Grids must be filed by programme and minutes must be filed by board.

4.6 Disclosure of results must occur in accordance with the relevant awarding body regulatory framework, within the provisions of the GDPR and not over the phone.

4.7 HE MIS and Exam Board Secretaries must ensure that disclosure of approved results and decisions do not result in the disclosure of sensitive information relating to the privacy of students. This refers to results, transcripts and minutes. Examples of sensitive information includes matters such as mitigating circumstances, academic misconduct, professional unsuitability and disciplinary matters.

4.8 All enquiries relating to access to any boards of examiners' records by a student or third party must be referred to TEC Partnership's HE Quality Office.

4.9 All signed papers must be scanned and saved in the HE Results SharePoint folder as soon as practicably possible and all paper copies shredded.

4.10 Students must be referred to by student number throughout the agendas and minutes.

5.0 Production of Results Letters and Transcripts

5.1 TEC Partnership must ensure that information provided to students across its programmes of higher education provision via results letters and transcripts, is consistent and accurate.

5.2 The format and presentation of results letters and transcripts must be approved by TEC Partnership's HE Quality Office who will work within the framework and requirements of the regulations.

5.3 All results letters and transcripts prepared by HE MIS must be approved by TEC Partnership's HE Quality Office prior to release.

5.4 Where anomalies are reported TEC Partnership's HE Quality Office will contact HE MIS and a new transcript produced where appropriate.

5.5 Transcripts will be made available to students online via ProPortal. TEC Partnership's HE Quality Office will be responsible for printing only the final transcripts which will be posted to students.

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