

EXTERNAL EXAMINING HANDBOOK

5. External Examining in Exceptional Years/ Circumstances

- 5.1 In Exceptional Years or other Exceptional Circumstances, the processes for External Examiners and examining set out in [Chapter 2](#) above may not be provided in the way initially planned. This Chapter sets out exemptions to the usual processes where they have been impacted by localised or more widespread Exceptional Circumstances. The [Exceptional Circumstances Handbook](#) provides further information on procedures for Exceptional Years / Exceptional Circumstances.
- 5.2 These exemptions to the usual processes should not be used to remedy any errors or omissions in the nomination, appointment, review of assessment briefs/examination papers, sampling of assessment work, or reporting of External Examiners in non-Exceptional Years or where there are other non-Exceptional Circumstances.
- 5.3 In Exceptional Years or other Exceptional Circumstances, where an appointed External Examiner is not able to fulfil their roles and responsibilities, for example due to sudden ill health or short-term additional commitments beyond their control, an interim replacement may be sought.
- 5.4 In such circumstances, the following relaxed criteria should be applied to facilitate an interim appointment:
- a. The External Examiner and University of Exeter department **should** ensure that there is no reciprocal external examining between departments at the University of Exeter and the External Examiner's home department.
 - b. The External Examiner **should** not be appointed for any one programme consecutively from the same institution, nor **should** more than one External Examiner be appointed from any one department.
 - c. The External Examiner will serve for the period required arising from the Exceptional Circumstances but for not more than a period of four years and shall not be re-appointed for the same programme/s without exceptional reason, normally after a period of five years or more has elapsed since their last appointment.
 - d. The External Examiner **should** normally not hold more than two External Examining appointments for taught programmes at the same time; this includes their appointment for the University of Exeter.

- 5.5 To provide Faculties/Departments with greater agency and expediency, Associate Pro-Vice Chancellors for Education (or their nominees) may approve nominations for interim External Examiners, without them being signed off by the Dean for Taught Students or Associate Dean for Taught Students.
- 5.6 Approval for absence of External Examiners from Programme/Department Assessment Progression and Awarding Committees (P/DAPACs) in such Exceptional Circumstances (including where absence cannot be approved in advance due to their sudden onset) will not be required. In accordance with their contractual obligations, External Examiners should submit a written record as soon as possible thereafter and, if possible, in advance of the release of marks. Where absence can be notified and approved in advance, the requirements of [Chapter 7](#) of the Assessment, Progression and Awarding Handbook should be adhered to.
- 5.7 In order to allow for changes to be made to assessments or examinations at short notice in Exceptional Years or due to other Exceptional Circumstances, the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education (or their nominee) can provide final approval without the need for External Examiner approval. All changes to assessments **must** be recorded and **must** be reported at the relevant Programme/Discipline APAC. Please also refer to the [Exceptional Circumstances Handbook](#) for further information on alternative assessments.
- 5.8 Any existing External Examiner who is unable to attend the APAC and submit a final report during an assessment period for reasons associated with the designation of an Exceptional Year or during other Exceptional Circumstances, will not be deemed to be in breach of their contract and will be expected to carry on their duties in the next assessment period.
- 5.9 Where it is not possible to recruit an interim External Examiner under the relaxed criteria, a process of Internal Externality may be followed. An appropriate academic member of the University of Exeter may act as an objective observer of the APAC's materials and processes, including the sampling of assessed work, and should submit an independent report via email to [Education Policy, Quality and Standards](#).
- 5.10 Where an APAC is not quorate (e.g., when no prior warning of External Examiner absence was received), the APAC meeting may continue. However, this **must** be reported in writing via email to [Education Policy, Quality and Standards](#) for onward notification to the University Assessment, Progression and Awarding Committee.

(UAPAC). All decisions **should** also be referred to the Faculty Assessment Progression and Awarding Committee (FAPAC) for consideration and confirmation. The quorum for the attendance of members at a meeting of a Programme/Discipline APAC is outlined in [Chapter 7](#) of the Assessment, Progression and Awarding Handbook.