# External Examiner Reports and Responses Process

## Introduction

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education states that External Examiners should “submit a report at least annually to the degree awarding body which provides clear and informative feedback to the provider on those areas defined for the role” and that External Examiners should “receive a formal response from the degree awarding body to their reports” (QAA, 2018). External Examiner reports are an important part of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement of our programmes. Ensuring these reports are received and that the feedback is addressed and responded to is one of the mechanisms which supports us in ensuring that our programmes continue to deliver value and meet the expectations of our beneficiaries.

These requirements are reflected in Aston’s own regulations on External Examiner Reports which are set out in section 2.10 of the General Regulations for the Code of Conduct for Boards of Examiners. Reports should be submitted within 1 month of the meeting of the awarding Examination Board for the programme(s) and/or module(s) (section 2.10.1 of [The General Regulations of the Code of Conduct for Boards of Examiners](https://www2.aston.ac.uk/clipp/documents/Quality/Regulations/2021-22/used/final-au-rsc-20-3963-a-general-regulations-for-the-conduct-of-boards-of-examiners-202122.pdf)).

## External Examiner Report Template

The QAA anticipates a number of specific points that External Examiner reports must address. In order to support this, Aston uses a standard template for all External Examiner reports. This is a word document which sets out the key areas for consideration and is updated annually. The main template document is stored on the External Examiner shared drive, which College Quality teams will be able to access. Colleges are responsible for providing copies of the report templates pre-populated with the External Examiner’s name, institution, and details of the programme(s) and or module(s) to the External Examiners for their College’s programmes. All External Examiner reports must use this template.

External Examiners are encouraged to provide as much depth as possible in their reports to facilitate meaningful reflection and support the improvement of the programme(s) and/or Module(s) they are reporting on, in line with Advance HE guidance. Failure to submit a report in a timely fashion may lead to cancellation of an Examiner’s appointment (section 2.4.5 of [The General Regulations of the Code of Conduct for Boards of Examiners](https://www2.aston.ac.uk/clipp/documents/Quality/Regulations/2021-22/used/final-au-rsc-20-3963-a-general-regulations-for-the-conduct-of-boards-of-examiners-202122.pdf)).

External Examiner Reports and Responses are made available to students via MAP and should be considered public documents. Therefore, they must accord with [General Data Protection Regulations](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation) and [Aston’s Data Protection Policies](https://www.aston.ac.uk/about/statutes-ordinances-regulations/publication-scheme/policies-regulations/data-protection) and not contain any information that could identify any individual.

## Matters of Concern

External Examiners may also raise matters of serious concern through a separate confidential written report addressed to the Vice Chancellor.

If all internal mechanisms have been exhausted, External Examiners have recourse to the Office for Students ‘Notification’ procedure with guidance available at <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/contact/notifications-and-complaints/>

## Roles and Reporting Responsibilities

## The Process

The below table sets out the stages and actions of the process and the specific responsibilities of each role at each stage of the process.

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## Checking Reports and Responses

There are several stages to the process for reports and responses and each includes some responsibility for checking specific elements.

The below tables highlight the key checks that each role should undertake.

Report

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Central Quality Officer | College Quality Officer | Programme Director |
| Correct form has been used and report is complete | Programme codes and names are complete and correct | Factual errors |
| Anything that could identify an individual or breach data protection regulations | Any issues within the College Quality Officer’s remit | Issues identified  |
| Issues occurring within the Central Quality Officer’s remit | Report is correct | Actions required |
| Suitability of language | Any issues that the College Quality Team may need to address | Any other issues and concerns |
| Recurring Themes |  |  |

Responses

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Central Quality Officer | College Quality Officer | Programme Director |
| Response has been completed and all issues and concerns have been addressed | Response has been completed and filled in properly | The External Examiner has been appropriately thanked for their feedback |
| Suitability of responses | All issues and concerns have been addressed | All points have been adequately addressed and responded to |
| Language and typographical errors smoothed | Timeliness | Associate Dean has viewed the response and made comment |
| Issues to take forward | Language and tone |  |
| Overall readability | Formatting |  |
| Any signatures are removed before uploading to MAP | Associate Dean Education Comment has been included or a note to say no further comments to add |  |

## Expected Timelines

The below shows the normally expected timeframes for key actions following receipt of the report to the formal response being sent to the Examiner.