

Award External Examiner Information 2017-18

This document provides an overview of the changes to the University's processes and regulations and relevant contact details and links to information.

Contents

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Changes to academic processes and regulations for the 2017-18 academic year | 2 |
| 2. Contact details and links to relevant information | 7 |
| 3. Award External Examiner report questions | 8 |

Changes to academic processes and regulations for the 2017-18 academic year

2B: Academic Framework

A review of the Academic Framework for both credit bearing and non-credit bearing provision was undertaken during 2016/17. The updated framework comes into effect from 2017/18; existing courses will align to the new framework during revalidation.

The key changes to the frameworks includes:

- a) Section 2C (Academic Framework: Non-credit bearing provision) has been deleted. Information has been moved to other sections of the Academic Handbook.
- b) Section 2X (Student Attendance Statement) has been deleted. Key principles of student attendance has been included in the Academic Framework.
- c) Curriculum Plus has been removed from the Framework. Employability is a 'USP' for the University should be embedded within a course's curriculum. The principles of employability is reflected in the University's Educational Principles.
- d) Courses no longer need to offer a minimum number of optional units. The Educational Principles include the requirement to provide students with appropriate choices and this would be assessed at course approval and revalidations.
- e) To ensure courses continue to align to the University's Internationalisation Strategy all undergraduate courses of three levels or more must provide a language option; this could be an option against a single unit if the course only has 'core' units. Additionally the Framework now permits all undergraduate students on a three year (or more) course to study level 5 at a partner institution abroad where the units are equivalent and have been appropriately mapped.
- f) To ensure uniqueness of courses within the University's academic portfolio a minimum number of credits of a course must be distinct to that course: 60 credits across level 5 and 6 for undergraduate courses of three or more levels or 45 credits at level 7 for postgraduate courses, excluding research methods, dissertation/final year projects.
- g) To encourage consistency in unit sizes and course design the minimum unit size should be 20 (undergraduate courses) and 30 (postgraduate taught courses). Any 10 (undergraduate) or 15 (postgraduate) credit units must be approved by the Director of School/Service and explicitly considered by the validation panel.
- h) The Professional Development Framework including all Professional Development Units (PDU) have been discontinued. Students currently studying a PDU can complete the unit and those who are currently eligible for a Professional Development Award will receive their award in line with current regulations. The Framework provides the option for standalone units to be developed and for existing units to be studied as standalone units.

2C: Academic Framework: Non-credit bearing provision

This Section has been deleted. The information contained in this section has been moved appropriately to other sections of the Academic Handbook.

2D: Approval, monitoring and review of University Provision

A review was conducted on the University's Periodic Review policy. Periodic Review as currently conducted has been discontinued and replaced with revalidation.

The new policy requires all courses to be revalidated on a 6-yearly cycle. The process to be followed is the same as the course approval process except for Stage 1. The work done at Stage 1 depends on the level of risk: if the course is deemed low risk then APRC can approve the course for revalidation without receiving full documentation; however if the course is deemed high risk then full Stage 1 documentation must be presented to APRC.

The other key changes to this policy were:

- a) For all course proposals School/Service Management Teams must approve an initial business case for the development of the course. Once approved the lead developer would complete the full stage one documentation required for approval by APRC.
- b) The external and student panel members would be recruited at the development phase and would be part of the development team as well as the validation panel.
- c) Additional requirements for approving courses to be delivered online were incorporated into this policy; previously this had been a separate section.
- d) Validation panel membership has been amended and now stipulates a minimum requirement for the constitution of the panel. The internal panel member does not have to be an academic member of staff but must still come from the staff standing panel; to be on the staff standing panel staff must meet a specific criteria.
- e) The policies relating to course review, periodic review (now revalidation) and academic audit have been inserted into this policy.

2E: Course review, Periodic Review and Academic Audit

This Section has been deleted. Information contained in this section has mostly moved to Section 2D.

2F: Unit approval and course modifications; and 2G: Collaborative provision

These policies have been updated to enable the University's Unit Approval and Course Modification Group to approve changes to units and courses delivered by a partner institution. Previously these changes would have been considered and approved by the relevant Partnership Management Group.

2H: Recognition of Prior Learning

The period within which students at level 4 may transfer to a new course has been reduced from six weeks to four weeks. This will ensure that the student, the tutor and others students on the new course are not overly disadvantaged by the transfer.

Course leaders are required to confirm that appropriate mapping has been completed and indicate their approval of the transfer request.

The criteria to award advanced standing was revised to allow students to be admitted with advanced standing when they can demonstrate they have the equivalence of the learning outcomes of an earlier stage/level; rather than having to demonstrate they have achieved all the learning outcomes.

The requirement for RPL applications to be approved by external examiners has been removed as external examiners confirm the standards of the units through the assessment moderation process.

2I: External Examiners

External examiners will no longer moderate assessments at level 3 and level 4*. All assessments across all levels will continue to be internally moderated, as per current practice.

The new external moderation policy is similar to policies at many other UK universities and continues to meet the Quality Assurance Agency's requirements.

This change will help the University to ensure that student results are confirmed and published as scheduled in the academic calendar.

*some exceptions do apply to this and are detailed in the policy.

2L: Student Academic Misconduct Policy

Minor changes to terminology has been made to aid clarity of meaning. The term 'exclusion' has been replaced with 'withdrawn from the course'.

In order to get withdrawal decisions to students more quickly approval is only required from the Chair of the Academic Board. Award external examiners will not be required to ratify the decision; they will be updated after the process has been completed with details of the process followed in reaching that decision. Award external examiners will be required to confirm in their report that due processes had been followed. This will enable the University to inform students of the withdrawal decision quicker and therefore allowing students to take the necessary actions without any unnecessary delays.

The revised process continues to meet the Quality Assurance Agency's requirements.

20: Assessment Policy 20 (Annex 1): Assessment Regulations

The authority to approve exemptions to grade and anonymous marking has been clarified; these exemptions are approved through the course approval or the unit approval and course modifications processes.

The requirement to record performance based assessments has been inserted to enable these types of assessments to be moderated in line with the University's regulations.

The policy relating to students changing an option unit that they have failed has been updated in order to aid clarity. The revised wording confirms that students can choose to change the option unit after one or more assessment elements have been failed but before any reassessments are taken. Students can, subject to availability, start the new unit the next time it is delivered and within the first two weeks of the unit's start date

The policy regarding repeat levels has been updated to clarify that students who are unable to repeat a level as they have already done a repeat level will be given the remaining referral opportunities available; if the student is unable to proceed after all referral opportunities have been taken they will be withdrawn from the course.

The regulations relating to registration periods have been moved to the Academic Framework (Section 2B).

2V: Framework for online course and units

This Section has been deleted. Where relevant, information contained in this section has been moved to Section 2D.

2X: Student attendance statement

This Section has been deleted. The information contained in this section has been moved to other sections of the Academic Handbook.

2Z: Online Submission of Assessments

The University wide deadline to submit assessments online has changed from 2200 hours (10pm) to 1600 hours (4pm). This will ensure that students have better and easier access to academic and professional support staff during the submission period.

Contact Details and Links to Relevant Information

- Information on the External Examiner role can be found on our website here:
www.solent.ac.uk/externalexaminers
- The University's guide for External Examiners can be found here:
<https://www.solent.ac.uk/about/documents/guide-for-external-examiners.pdf>
- All course documentation can be found on Solent Online Learning (SOL) here:
<http://learn.solent.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=6152>
- For any queries relating to the role or responsibilities of the External Examiner role please contact:

Mike Firth - External Examiner Officer
AS.ExternalExaminers@solent.ac.uk
02382 016351

- For any queries relating to moderation or assessment boards the Assessments Team can be contacted on:

Email: Assessments@solent.ac.uk
Telephone: 02382 015023

Award External Examiner Report Questions

The following questions have been extracted from the 2016-17 report template. The template and questions for 2017-18 will be confirmed later in the academic year; minimal changes are expected so the questions should be similar.

The report is split into five sections:

- Section 1 - Support
- Section 2 - Progression and Award Boards
- Section 3 - Student Progression and Awards
- Section 4 - Good Practice and Enhancement
- Section 5 - Final Exit Report

Section 1 - Support

1.1

If this is your first report, have you attended an external examiner briefing day during your tenure?

Yes/No/NA

1.2

Were you adequately briefed concerning your responsibilities and right as an Award External Examiner?

Yes/No

1.3

Were you able to access necessary information and resources to carry out your role?

Yes/No

1.4

If you made recommendations in your previous report, did you receive a response to these?

Yes/No

1.5

Are there any recommendation you would make with regards to the information that is given to Award External Examiners to better support them in their role?

Yes/No

Please comment on your responses above specifically highlighting any areas of good practice or concerns.

Section 2 - Progression and Award Boards

Comments provided each question must be informative and, where possible, highlight any areas of good practice and/or concerns that you have identified.

2.1

How did you attend the board?

Onsite/Remotely/Both

2.2

Was adequate and timely information provided to you before and during the board?

Yes/No

Comment:

2.3

Were you satisfied with the conduct of the board?

Yes/No

Comment:

2.4

Were all students treated equitably and objectively at the board?

Yes/No

Comment:

2.5

Were you able to endorse the outcomes of the board?

Yes/No

Comment:

Section 3 - Student Progression and Awards

Comments provided for each question must be informative and, where possible, highlight any areas of good practice and/or concerns that you have identified.

3.1

Were you satisfied that student results were considered fairly and in line with the University's regulations?

Yes/No

Comment:

3.2

Were there any patterns of student attainment that caused you concern?

Yes/No

Comment:

Section 4 - Good Practice and Enhancement

4.1

Please identify and comment on areas of distinctive and/ or innovative good practice.

Comment:

4.2

Please identify any areas for enhancement.

Comment:

Section 5 - Final Exit Report

5.1

If this is the last report of your tenure, use the space below to comment on your term in office.

Comment: