

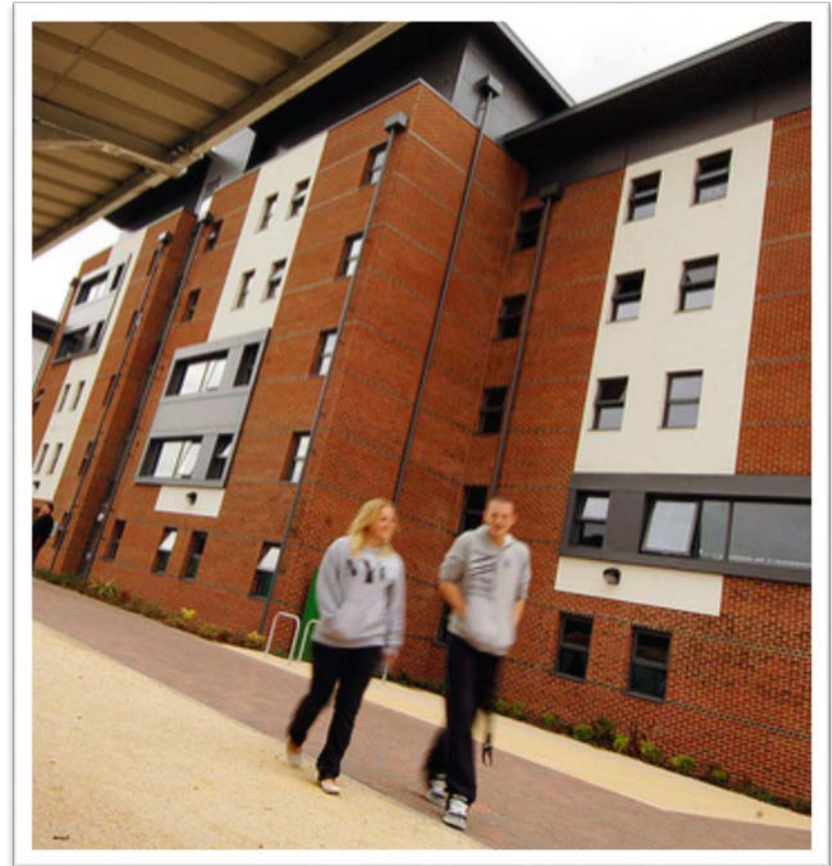
EXTERNAL EXAMINER INDUCTION

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Academic Registry



Overview

- Background to Bucks New University
- Quality Assurance in Higher Education
- The External Examiner process at Bucks
- Housekeeping



SECTION ONE

Background to Bucks New University

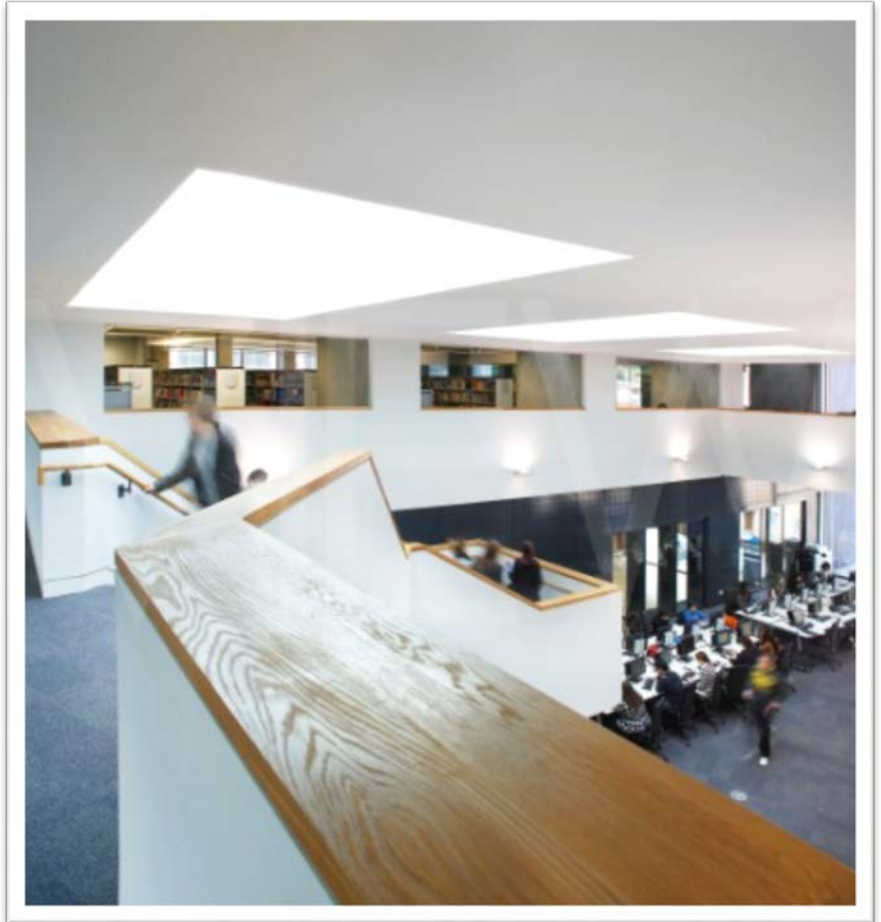
Our Vision

A leading
University for
professional
and creative
education and
applied
research



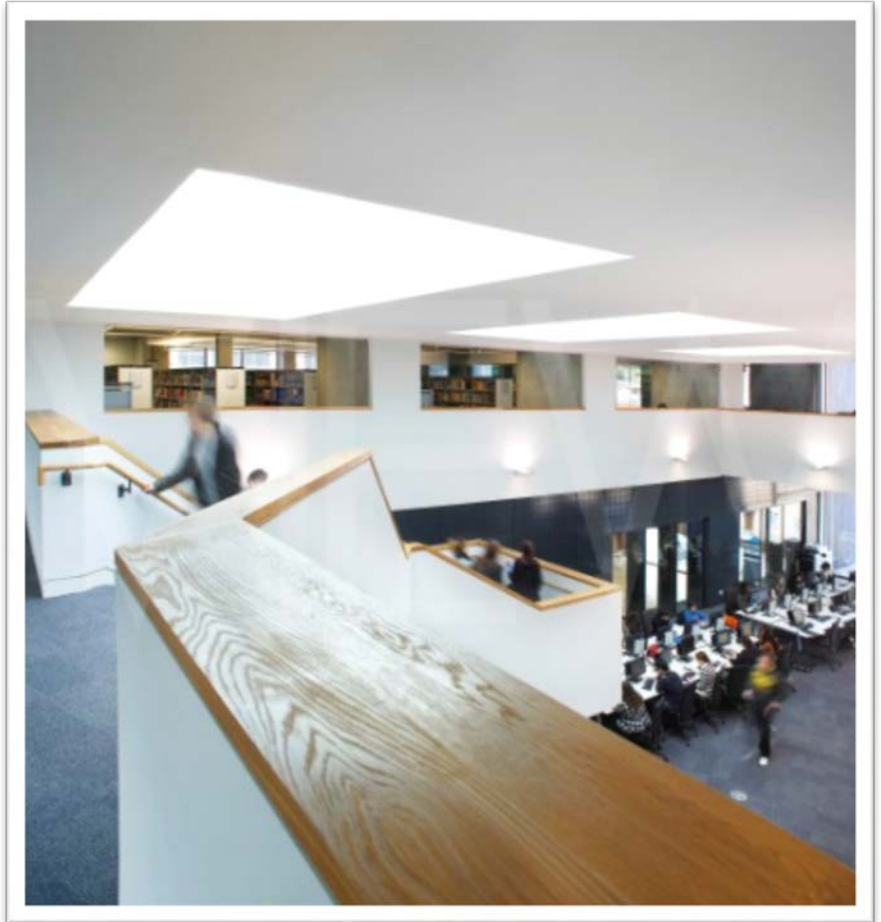
Bucks Facts

- 8,614 students, including 7,499 undergraduate and 1,151 postgraduate students
- 3,751 students enrolled with collaborative partners (UK and Overseas)



Bucks Facts

- Subjects range from business management to the creative arts
- Courses also support the public sector, e.g. policing and nursing education
- A growing Apprenticeships Hub
- Campuses in High Wycombe, Uxbridge and Aylesbury



Educational Character

- A modern, widening participation university driving professional and creative excellence
- Characterised by a commitment to delivering an outstanding student experience
- Courses are intended to prepare our graduates for employment, designed to meet the changing needs of employers and markets



Educational Character

- Accept students from under-represented groups and those in work or looking to develop higher skills
- Award a range of foundation degrees, bachelors degrees, postgraduate taught and research degrees.
- Also deliver a range of short and bespoke professional courses for employers



SECTION TWO

Quality Assurance in Higher Education

UK Quality Code for Higher Education

- Published by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)
- Sets out the **Expectations and Practices** that all providers of UK higher education are required to meet as well as **Guiding Principles** that are non-binding
- Expectations are supplemented by **Practical Advice**, which indicate how expectations may be met

Expectations for standards

- The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications frameworks.
- The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.
- Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.
- The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.
- The provider reviews its core practices for standards regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.

Expectation for quality

- The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.
- Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.
- The provider's approach to managing quality takes account of external expertise.

Judging Standards

- External examining is only one aspect of the safeguarding of standards within HE:
 - Subject Benchmark Statements
 - Programme Specifications
 - Validation
 - Periodic Review
 - External Review



SECTION THREE

The External Examiner Process at Bucks

Division of responsibilities: Governance & Quality (Academic Registry)

- Review of process and quality assurance mechanisms
- Approval of nominations, appointments and extensions to term or remit
- Receipting, RAG rating, and acknowledgement of annual reports
- Preparation of institutional report
- Correspondence with external examiners during the appointment process
- Induction and training
- Administration of changes to external examiner details, including address, employer, resignations and terminations
- Processing of fees and expenses

Division of responsibilities: Student & Course Admin (Academic Registry)

- Provision of relevant documentation, including in particular Programme Specifications and / or Module Descriptors, Handbooks, Assignment Briefs and other information relevant to the programme
- Invitation to relevant panels or boards of examiners where attendance is required
- Instructions for the delivery and return of scripts / online assessments
- Provision of School contact details and information on academics and academic administration
- Provision of all dates for assessment, approval, submission, marking and panels or boards of examiners
- Booking of accommodation, car parking and submission of expenses claims
- Receipt of right to work documentation

Your role at Bucks as External Examiner

- Verify the standard of student achievement as being appropriate to the standard set by the University
- Compare the standards of courses offered with similar courses in other UK HEIs with which you are familiar
- Evaluate whether the standards are appropriate for the awards or award elements, by reference to:
 - UK Quality Code
 - Subject benchmark statements
 - Programme Specifications and Module Descriptors
 - Industry / professional standards (as appropriate)
- Examine the extent to which the University's assessment, marking scheme, examining and award making processes have been fairly and consistently implemented

Your role at Bucks as External Examiner

- Consider whether the University's procedures on Mitigating Circumstances, Academic Misconduct and borderline performance have been equitably and consistently applied
- Identify good practice and provide feedback on whether the curriculum remains current
- Comment on and/or recommend enhancements to the quality of learning opportunities for students

The University expects that individuals undertaking their first External Examiner appointment at Bucks will be mentored during the first year of their appointment, normally by another external examiner from the team.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Assessment (increasingly online)
- Sampling and moderation
- Interim visit / meeting with students
- Attendance at module boards
- Attendance at assessment boards
- Completion of annual report



Assessment

- Comment on whether assessments have been through the relevant approval process and are of an appropriate standard for the task, level and nature of the module
- Confirm that assessment tasks are accurate and clear with detailed instructions, and that they enable achievement of the specified learning outcomes
- Moderate the achievement of students against standards set by the University and / or Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) for all modules that count towards an award of the University
- Give assurance that the internal marking / moderation is fair, consistent and with appropriate feedback to students

Sampling and moderation

- Assessments will normally be sampled. The sample will usually be that selected for internal moderation. Criteria for selection are:
 - Number approximately the square root of the number of assessments submitted (and not fewer than 8). For small cohorts (fewer than 10) all work will be considered
 - Sample should cover the full range of marks awarded. There is no requirement to include all First Class or all Fail marks in the sample, except
 - All failed Level 6 and Level 7 Projects and Dissertations should be included
- Samples should be of a sufficient size to enable you to consider whether marking has properly assessed students' performance and that fair, consistent and appropriate feedback has been given

Sampling and moderation

- Where assessments have been electronically marked and moderated, you will be required to moderate electronically
- You should be provided with the Marks Collection sheet for the whole cohort, but a sample will have been identified for moderation
- You may **not** change individual marks. Where inconsistencies in marking or moderation are identified you can:
 - Request additional samples to moderate, and / or
 - Request that the internal moderator / assessment team revisits part or all of the sample, and / or
 - Recommend an overall scaling of the marks for a module based on a clear rationale

Sampling of studio-based or practical courses

- For studio-based or performance courses you will normally attend or see a recording of the final Degree Show or performance and will view all work displayed. Full discussion about individual students should be limited to the sample
- To ensure that the assessment of practice is of an appropriate standard, you may wish to attend various meetings between the student, mentor and lecturers involved in grading



Interim Visits

- You are encouraged to make at least one interim visit per year
- You may also be invited to attend scheduled staff development days, especially where quality assurance issues are being discussed



Interim Visits

- The interim visit allows you to:
 - Network with other external examiners (where possible)
 - Meet with School staff and course teams
 - Meet students (if required)
 - Review student work (as appropriate)
 - Be updated on new regulations / processes



Module and Assessment Boards

- Boards of Examiners ensure that University regulations are followed and comprise the following:
 - **Module Board** – where module marks are discussed and confirmed and module statistics considered
 - **Assessment Board** – where individual student profiles are considered in accordance with University regulations. They also provide external examiners an opportunity to give verbal feedback on the course as a whole
- You will be expected to attend at least one Module or Assessment Board per year. Attendance can be virtual, e.g. by Webex or Skype to recognise work commitments.

Module and Assessment Boards

- If you are unable to attend, an *In Absentia* report **must** be submitted ahead of the Board
- Where you are part of a team of external examiners, at least one member of the team should attend each of the appropriate Boards of Examiners
- The University monitors External Examiner attendance at Boards of Examiners and report on this annually
- All External Examiners are full members of the relevant Boards

Annual Report

- The external examiner annual report provides an independent and objective appraisal of the standard and quality of our provision
- Reports **must** be completed using the online template. This contains sections on:
 - Standards set and achieved (setting assignments, marking and feedback, decision-making with respect to student progression and achievement and comparability of this with other HEIs)
 - School support and organization (provision of materials, efficiency of overall administrative processes, interim visits, responses to previous reports)
 - Key comments and recommendations (including areas of good practice and examples of enhanced student learning opportunities)
 - Suggested action points (Essential, advisable and desirable actions)
- Deadline: **1 August** (or appropriate date for courses ending at other points in the year).

Annual Report

- All reports are coded using our RAG 'traffic light' system (Red, Amber, Green):
 - **Red** signifies immediate action required by the School or University
 - **Amber** signifies a good report but with areas of minor concern and / or some areas for improvement
 - **Green** signifies a good report, with no areas for concern but which may have some areas for improvement
- Course team (or appropriate person) will respond to any issues and provide a response in the body of the report. This should be emailed to you
- Reports will be shared in full with students (please do not refer to individual staff or students and please don't include names)

Annual Report

- Reports can be submitted confidentially to the Vice Chancellor if required
- You may also refer unresolved concerns either to the relevant PSRB or to the QAA via their Cause for Concern procedures
- A summary report will be prepared which highlights areas of good practice and enhancement and flags any issues for debate by the Education Committee



SECTION FOUR

Housekeeping

Changes to examiner appointments

- You will normally be appointed for a period of four years (usually 1 October to 30 September)
- Appointments can be extended by one year only. Remits may be amended in accordance with changes to award
- You can suspend your appointment (e.g. ill health, maternity leave, sabbatical, change of personal circumstances etc.). Original retirement date remains the same
- Appointments can be terminated in the following circumstances:
 - Changes in award structure
 - Non-fulfilment of external examiner duties
 - Unprofessional conduct, e.g. fraudulent expenses claims
 - Irretrievable breakdown of relationship with course teaching team
 - Conflict of interests arising during the appointment
- Reappointment may only be approved in exceptional circumstances, after five years has elapsed

Right to work / Home Office requirements

- The University must ensure that any person undertaking paid work with the University, including external examiners, is eligible to work in the UK (Right to Work)
- On appointment, external examiners are required to provide one of the following:
 - A passport showing they are a British citizen / other papers verifying the right to work in the UK
 - A British birth certificate
- Externals are asked to bring photocopies (front and personal details pages of passport) and originals to their induction day. Copies will be checked against the originals and countersigned before being passed to the Academic Registry
- Documentation is retained for up to 2 years post retirement

Fees and Expenses

- Fees and expenses will be paid by BACS automated transfer into your nominated account. Payments are processed on the last day of the month and claims need to have been processed by payroll by the 10th of the month
- Fees will be paid in accordance with the University's published rates and are based on credit bands.
 - Fees are specified in the appointment letter.
 - Will be paid on receipt of the annual report and confirmation of visits as required by the School
- Expenses claims must be submitted within three months of the date of expense. Original receipts and/or ticket stubs are required and must be stapled to the claims form

Fees and Expenses

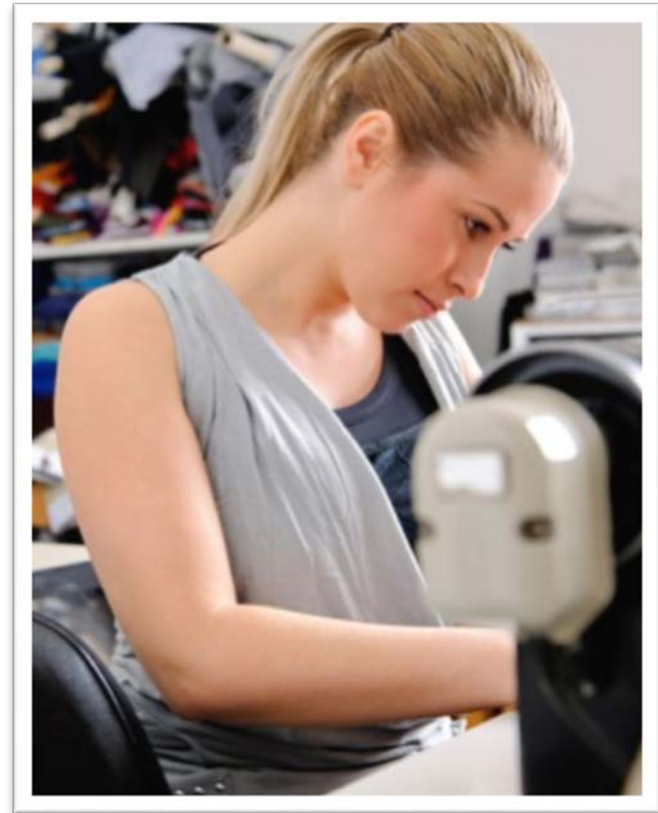
- Expenses can be claimed for:
 - Mileage, payable at 45p per mile
 - 2nd class rail return ticket (the return journey should be from and to the same destination unless otherwise authorised by the School)
 - Car parking charges
 - Accommodation at up to £100 per night. School registrars will normally make any arrangements for an overnight stay and the bill will be invoiced directly to the University
 - Lunch, including other refreshment breaks, to a maximum of £10 per day
 - Evening meal up to £30. Alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed
 - Postage

Formal Documents

- The following documents are available on our website (<https://bucks.ac.uk/about-us/governance-and-policies/policies>)
 - Academic Appeals Process
 - Academic Assessment Regulations
 - Academic Misconduct
 - Assessment of Students (under review)
 - Boards of Examiners
 - E-Submission, Marking and Feedback Policy (under review)
 - Fitness to Practise Procedure
 - Mitigating Circumstances
 - Reasonable Adjustments Policy
 - Turnitin Policy

External Examiner website

- Website available at:
<https://bucks.ac.uk/about-us/governance-and-policies/external-examiners>
- Link to the External Examiners' Handbook and all related documentation including report forms
- Guidance on fees and expenses, including fee credit bandings



Useful sources

- *External Examiners Handbook*, Bucks New University (2018). Available: https://bucks.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/12753/External-Examiners-Handbook.pdf
- UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: External Expertise. Available: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/advice-and-guidance-external-expertise.pdf?sfvrsn=6f2ac181_2
- *The Higher Education Academy: A handbook for external examining*, The Higher Education Academy, 2012. Available: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/HE_Academy_External_Examiners_Handbook_2012.pdf

Thank you

