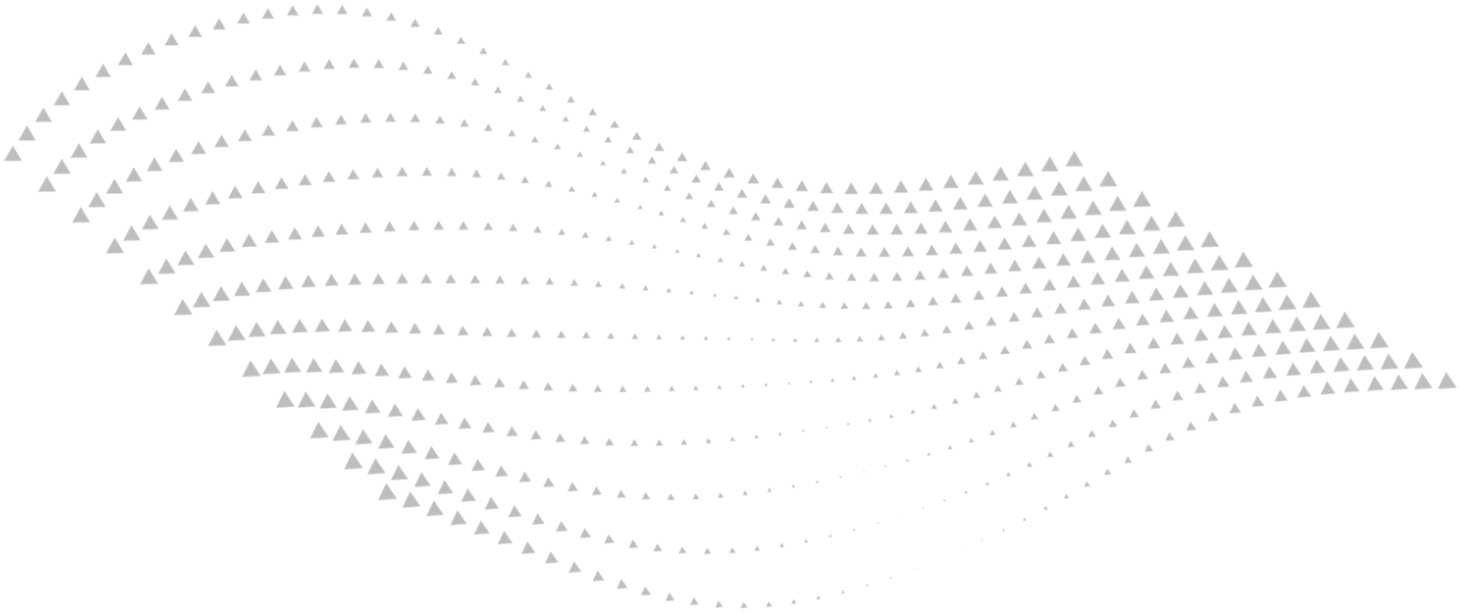
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External Examiners' Handbook



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1. Applicability

This External Examiner handbook applies to External Examiners for all provision leading to a BIMM University Award.

2. The structure of the External Examiner system

The University's curriculum is modular – academic courses are made up of combinations of modules, which may operate across more than one course. A course may lead directly to an award or may combine with one or more other courses to make up an award.

The framework of external examining reflects the structure of the modular course. All of BIMM University's Higher Education (HE) provision is overseen by External Examiners (EEs) who are qualified, experienced and enabled to monitor the assessment processes for fairness and academic standards.

EEs are recommended by the Quality Assurance & Compliance Committee (QACC). In order to carry out their duties, EEs have access to a range of evidence, including marked student work, and attend the relevant Assessment Boards. EEs report annually to the Chair of Academic Board on the academic standards of modules and courses and on the validity of the awards granted to students. EE reports are received by a variety of academic staff and University committees and their recommendations for improvement lead to actions which are monitored through BIMM University's quality assurance and academic review processes.

3. The Purpose and Role of External Examiners

BIMM University is committed to ensuring that fairness is applied to each individual student and that the standard of awards and award elements are maintained in comparison with those elsewhere in the UK education system.

BIMM University will enable EEs to perform the function of independent reviewers of the assessment process for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to the accuracy, comparability of standards (internally and externally), compliance with regulations and the fairness of the output from that process.

The key duties of EEs include:

- reporting on whether the standards set are appropriate for BIMM University's awards or award elements, by reference to published national subject benchmarks, the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), course specifications and other relevant information.

- reporting on the standards of student performance on courses (or parts thereof) which they have been appointed to examine and on the comparability of the standards with those of similar courses (or parts thereof) in other UK HE institutions.

- reporting on the extent to which processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards are rigorous, ensure equity of treatment for students and have been fairly conducted in accordance with BIMM University's regulations and policies, as demonstrated by reviewing a sample of assessed work.

- reporting on whether the assessment processes measure student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended learning outcomes and enable students to demonstrate the achievement of those learning outcomes.

- reporting on the appropriateness of the published marking criteria and to scrutinise and approve draft examination papers and assessment briefs for large weighted assessments, where appropriate.

- confirming that the marking and internal moderation processes have been conducted appropriately, based on a sample of assessed work provided, and that these are in line with BIMM University's assessment regulations.

- being full member of and attending the main meeting of the Award Board as requested by BIMM University, and to ensure Assessment Boards are conducted according to approved processes. At least one EE must also attend the Retrieval Award Board.

- signing a statement of compliance to confirm that BIMM University's assessment regulations and policies have been complied with. This should be completed at the end of the Award Board.

- commenting on proposed curriculum changes and/or changes to assessment methods.

- raising any causes for concern in relation to academic standards at the earliest available opportunity.

- submitting an annual report to BIMM University's Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement and a final report at the end of tenure, each of which provides detailed feedback on both the individual modules being examined in each campus and on the course/collection of modules as a whole.

- visiting at least one campus each academic year (in addition to attending the Award Board) to meet with the course delivery team and students in order to assist in understanding the context of the academic provision, gain a general impression of student ability, and obtain feedback on the student experience.

- abiding by the requirements of EEs, as laid out in this EE Handbook.

The remit of an EE may cover one or more courses or cohorts and, depending on the requirements of a particular subject or course, EEs may be called upon to undertake the observation of practical assessments.

In addition, EEs may be asked, at their discretion, to play an advisory or developmental role, for example in module or course development or in preparation for periodic reviews.

In order to carry out their duties, EEs have freedom in three dimensions:

- **Operational independence** - freedom to determine what work is necessary for them to carry out their duties effectively.
- **Investigative independence** - freedom to carry out the work so determined. This entails access to all relevant assessment documentation and the right to request additional information from any relevant persons.

- **Reporting independence** - freedom to express their opinion. This entails having the right to receive adequate notice of and to attend and be heard at any meeting concerned with deciding assessment outcomes.

Full information about assessments must be made available to EEs, including:

- Module Specifications
- Course Handbook
- Assessment tasks
- Assessment criteria
- Marking schemes
- Moderation documents

In addition, relevant contextual information, such as module evaluations and annual reports at module or course level, may assist the EEs in carrying out their role.

To enable an EE to express an opinion on the outcomes of assessment, evidence should be gathered from the assessment process to demonstrate that the internal controls designed to assure accuracy, comparability and fairness of the assessment processes are operating effectively. EEs will have access to the same sample of assessments and statistical data that will have been reviewed as part of the internal moderation process. They will also have access to the internal Moderator's decision and any comments made. This ensures that evidence is provided which confirms that marking, feedback and moderation have been completed.

The direct powers of EEs are limited to reporting their opinion. No EE has the power to individually or unilaterally amend assessment requirements, marks, grades or classification of awards, although their advice is sought by internal examiners and Assessment Boards and may normally be acted on in this regard.

4. Courses with Multiple External Examiners

For courses with larger cohorts and/or large numbers of modules delivered across several campuses, multiple EEs may be appointed.
On such courses, each EE will be assigned a specific set of modules across all campuses in which they are delivered. EEs will be responsible for writing a report based on modules covered for submission to BIMM University and for attending Assessment Boards as requested.

Separate EE reports covering the same course will be shared with all EEs with responsibility for that course.

5. Nomination, selection, appointment, extension & termination of tenure

EEs must be independent of BIMM University and must be competent to express an opinion on the matters charged to their consideration.

5.1 General Regulations

The general regulations for the appointment of EEs at BIMM University are as outlined below. These regulations are based on the recommendations of the Universities UK (UUK) report, 'Review of external examining arrangements in universities and colleges in the UK' published in April 2011, Advance HE's 'Fundamentals of External Examining' (2019), and the advice and guidance relating to 'External Expertise' within the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

a) There will be at least one EE for each course/subject area. More than one EE may be appointed for subjects or courses where the quantity of modules or the subject range of work exceeds the range or workload of a single EE.

b) An EE must:
   - Be appropriately experienced in the field of study and qualified at least to the level of the course to be examined, and preferably above that level.
   - Be fluent in written and spoken English.
   - Prove their right to work in the UK, prior to the issue of a service agreement (see section 10 of this EE Handbook for further information).

c) An EE should have no direct interest or ties to BIMM University or its staff, courses or students. To avoid potential conflicts of interest, EEs should not be selected if any of the following categories apply:
   - Anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the course;
   - Anyone who is an examiner on a cognate course at BIMM University;
   - Anyone closely associated with the sponsorship of students on the course;
   - Anyone closely associated with placements or training;
   - Anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the course;
   - Anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the course;
   - Anyone significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the course.

d) EEs should normally hold no more than two EE appointments at any one time.

e) There should not be more than one EE from the same faculty/department within another HE Institution appointed at any one time.

f) There should be no reciprocal examining arrangements between BIMM University and the same subject or course within the EE's employing organisation, save in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Academic Board. These circumstances may include, for example, emergency cover or a proven shortage of specialists in the curriculum area. Any reciprocal arrangements will be for a limited time as defined by the Academic Board.

g) An EE may not be replaced by another from the same institution unless the EE has not completed the term of office. In this case, a replacement from the same institution would only be appointed for the remainder of the original term of office, or, in exceptional circumstances, where the curriculum area to be examined is highly specialised.

h) BIMM University should not accept applications where the proposed EE is from a partner institution.

i) Retirees can be considered, provided they have sufficient evidence of continuing involvement in the academic area, depending on the time elapsed since their retirement.

j) Once appointed, BIMM University should make clear to EEs what their duties and obligations are, including those relating to attendance and feedback, as well as any legal obligations. EEs will also

be provided with access to BIMM University's Academic Framework and updated Regulations, along with details of any changes made on an annual basis.

k) Once appointed, EEs must inform BIMM University immediately of any change in employment status or of any new roles with other educational institutions.

l) The duration of an EE's appointment will normally be four years, with a possible exceptional extension of one year. The expectation is that all EE appointments will end after four years unless there is a very strong rationale for extension. Further details on the criteria for extensions can be found below.

m) An EE may be re-appointed in exceptional circumstances, but only after a period of four years has elapsed since the end of their last appointment at BIMM University.

n) The appointment of an EE can be terminated by BIMM University if they fail to fulfil their obligations, or where there has been a significant change in circumstances of the EE in relation to appointment. Termination is normally subject to two months' notice. Such a termination must be approved by QACC.

o) Former staff and students of BIMM University can only be appointed as EEs for BIMM University after a period of not less than four years has passed since leaving.

5.2 Criteria for appointment

QACC will consider the extent to which the proposed appointee has:

- The right to work in the United Kingdom
- Qualifications of at least the level of the awards to be externally examined
- Proven expertise in the curriculum area to be externally examined
- Evidence of scholarship/research/consultancy related to the awards to be externally examined
- Experience of teaching and assessing in HE at the levels to be externally examined
- Understanding of quality and standards in other HE institutions

In reaching a decision, QACC will take into account the balance of experience and expertise of the existing EE team, as well as the degree of induction and support to be offered. Academic appointees must demonstrate they meet the above criteria.

5.3 Practice externals

Where an EE has industry/practice expertise but limited experience of teaching at the required standard, i.e. they do not meet all of the above criteria, they must be supported in their role by academic external(s) covering the same curriculum.

In circumstances where the academic appointee is not qualified to the level above that of the award, the Chair of QACC should produce a detailed rationale for Academic Board to confirm the appointment, demonstrating how the EE is able to carry out the key functions:

- To make a judgement about the setting and maintenance of standards;
- Calibration of student performance between BIMM University and other institutions.

Examples could include:

- That the EE is teaching at the higher level and has relevant experience of graduate expectations;
- Evidence of on-going scholarly activity;
- Evidence of studying towards a higher-level qualification;
- Evidence of engagement at other institutions;
- Evidence of knowledge of the scope of the HE system;
- Evidence that the EE is a professional within the field.

If a proposed EE does not meet the above criteria and cannot demonstrate that they are able to carry out the key functions via exceptional circumstances, they will not be appointed as an EE at BIMM University.

Criteria for extension of duties and/or extension of tenure

Where appropriate, proposed alterations to the contract will be negotiated by mutual agreement. Any major changes, such as the move to other courses or major extensions of duties, must be formally notified to QACC for approval. Minor changes (e.g. to sampling arrangements, module allocation, etc.) may be made by agreement between BIMM University and the EE, and recorded in the External Examiner Annual Agreement (EEAA).

The expectation is that all EE appointments will end after four years. An application for extension to a fifth year should be exceptional, made for sound academic or quality reasons and in response to circumstances that could not be foreseen. Examples of such circumstances could include:

- Resignation of another EE and the need to cover duties for a limited time;
- Overseeing the teach-out of a course;
- Allowing a period of mentoring for an incoming appointment;
- For the avoidance of reciprocal external examining.

Criteria for termination of contract

An appointment may be terminated by either party, normally subject to two months' notice. BIMM University's decision to terminate a contract early will be made by QACC and informed by the views of the Deans of Faculty.

The decision to terminate may be based on one or more of a number of factors, including:

- Changes to the curriculum/discontinuation of courses;
- significant change in circumstances of the EE in relation to appointment
- Failure to carry out duties in accordance with the contract and EE Annual Agreement
- Conflict of interest through changed circumstances
- Evidence that the EE's application/CV was inaccurate
- Evidence that the EE does not have the right to work in the UK
- Evidence that the External Examiner's judgement/reporting are insufficiently thorough, critical or objective

BIMM University, through the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team, will maintain a central register of appointments and periods of tenure.

6. The responsibilities of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team

The overall responsibility of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team at BIMM University includes the appropriately timed provision of sufficient information to enable the EEs to fulfil their role.

The Quality Assurance and Enhancement team will ensure that the EE is briefed about the role in relation to BIMM University, as well as the subject area in which the Course/Modules are located and the contribution of the modules to the institution's courses and awards.

In addition, there must be an External Examiner Annual Agreement (EEAA) between an EE and BIMM University. An EEAA will be provided for each individual EE by the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, specifying the duties regarding module allocation, sampling periods and dates of Assessment Boards, normally **before 31st October in each academic year**. If an EE is appointed in-year, their EEAA should be provided within one month of appointment.

7. External Examiner Annual Reports

EEs are required to submit an annual report to the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement on the conduct of the assessments concluded and on issues related to assessment. The purpose of the report is to enable QACC to judge whether the subjects or courses are meeting their stated objectives and to make any necessary improvements, either immediately or at the next review of the subject or course, as appropriate.

At the end of their tenure, an EE will be required to comment on the period of their appointment as a whole in their final Annual Report.

EE reports should comply with BIMM University's most current template and guidance for reporting, and EEs are asked to submit their report electronically to externalexaminers@bimm.co.uk. Reports must be submitted no later than three weeks after the award (or retrieval) board attended by the EE. Exact submission dates will be confirmed annually by the Quality Assurance and Compliance team.

The Quality Assurance and Enhancement team will ensure that the report is distributed to the appropriate members of University staff. The Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, as Chair of QACC, is responsible for ensuring that the reports of EEs are received, formally considered and that, where necessary, appropriate action is taken.

In all cases where BIMM University receives an annual report from an EE, the EE must be informed in writing that the report has been received and considered and that relevant actions have been or will be taken. Prior to this response, the Faculty Deans and relevant Heads of School will be consulted, as well as any Academic Partnership staff where appropriate.

The Quality Assurance and Enhancement team will ensure that a summary of External Examiner Reports are presented to QACC for consideration each academic year, and full reports will be considered at internal review and audit events.

The Quality Assurance and Enhancement team will also ensure that a summary of EE Reports is submitted to Academic Board for consideration and shared with all current EEs of BIMM University.

8. Procedures for dealing with complaints by External Examiners

Any EE has the authority to report directly to the Chair of Academic Board, in confidence, where there are any concerns about standards and performance, or about issues of overarching importance that concern them which may not easily be expressed in their report – particularly if it is considered that assessments are being conducted in a way that jeopardises either the fair treatment of individual students or the standards of BIMM University's awards. This can be done by separate letter or email.

As a general principle, an attempt should be made to resolve the complaint through dialogue before entering a formal phase.

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally to the EE's satisfaction, then the matter will be referred to the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, who will act to resolve the complaint.

If the complaint involves the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team, it will be investigated by a member of BIMM University's Executive Management Team, and the resolution will be reported to the Chair of Academic Board.

9. Fees

The University annually reviews EE workloads and agrees fees, as set out below.

Annual fees are calculated on a scale, calculated based on how many of the University's eight campuses a module is delivered at, and how many credits the module is worth.

In addition to the scaled fee, a basic fee of £250 will be paid to each undergraduate or postgraduate EE per annum. The basic fee remains the same for all EEs, regardless of module delivery locations and credits.

The scale is as follows:

Module delivered at:	Per 15 credit module	Per 30 credit module	Per 60 credit module
1-2 campuses	£35 payment per annum	£70 payment per annum	£105 payment per annum
3-4 campuses	£45 payment per annum	£90 payment per annum	£135 payment per annum
5-6 campuses	£55 payment per annum	£110 payment per annum	£165 payment per annum
7-8 campuses	£60 payment per annum	£120 per annum	£180 payment per annum

For example, an EE is assigned 4 x 15 credit modules and 1 x 30 credit module to review across an academic year:

- Module A (15 credits): delivered at 3 campuses (£45 payment)
- Module B (30 credits): delivered at 2 campuses (£70 payment)
- Module C (15 credits): delivered at 3 campuses (£45 payment)
- Module D (15 credits): delivered at 5 campuses (£55 payment)
- Module E (15 credits): delivered at 7 campuses (£60 payment)

Based on the above model, the EE would be paid a total annual fee of £525 (£250 basic fee + £45 + £70 + £45 + £55 + £60 = £525).

In addition to this, our PGCert Learning and Teaching (Professional Practice) course carries additional expectations with regards to ongoing Quality Assurance and Calibration around the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) at Descriptor 2, as well as accreditation from AdvanceHE. For this reason, EEs for this course are paid **£600 per 30 credit module**. There is no basic fee included at this level.

EEs are required to attend an Award Board. An extra £100 fee is paid to EEs who attend the Retrievals Board in addition to the Award/Progress Board, where requested to do so.

BIMM University will review these fees regularly to ensure that they remain comparable to other providers.

Once the EE Annual Report has been received by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team and, provided that an EE has already completed the Proof of Right to Work process (as laid out in Section 11) and returned a signed an Annual Agreement, their fee payment will be authorised. EEs will be notified by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team when their payment will be processed.

10. Expenses

- Subsistence: EEs will be reimbursed for the cost of meals incurred whilst carrying out their duties, in keeping with these agreed rates:
  - Breakfast – total cost should not exceed £10 (where separate to inclusive hotel booking).
  - Lunch Meal – total cost should not exceed £15 and cannot include an alcoholic drink.
  - Evening Meal – total cost should not exceed £25, which may include one alcoholic drink.
- Rail Travel: EEs will be reimbursed for the cost of rail travel at the standard-class rail fare only.
- Taxi Travel: EEs will be reimbursed for the cost of taxi travel in either direction between an EE's home address and departure station and/or between the destination station and BIMM University Campus or location of accommodation.
- Mileage: EEs will be reimbursed for the cost of car travel at the rate of 45p per mile (up to a maximum of 500 miles per annum).
- Accommodation: where an overnight stay is required prior to attendance at an Award, BIMM University will arrange this on behalf of EEs where requested. Please note that this will not include hotel parking where charged as an add-on.
- All travel expenses are assumed to be based on the home address provided by the EE upon appointment, unless agreed in advance.
- Receipts are required for all expenses, except for mileage (for which journey details from the AA/Google maps or similar website must be provided) and must be accompanied by a completed invoice (template available on request). Debit/credit card receipts alone cannot be accepted. Any expenses claimed without corresponding receipts will not be approved for payment.

Expenses claims should be submitted to externalexaminers@bimm.co.uk and will normally be paid within one month.

11. Proof of right to work in the UK

In order to comply with the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2006, EEs must supply original documentation to BIMM University proving that they have a right to work in the United Kingdom. This requirement applies to all individuals, whether a UK national or otherwise, and the documentation will be retained for the duration of tenure.

BIMM University is fully committed to upholding the principles laid out in the Data Protection Act 2018. The
University's Data Protection Policy is available on our website. An EE's personal information will be held and used in accordance with the Act and the aforementioned policy.

In exceptional circumstances, we may accept right to work checks via videoconference (for example, in the event of a pandemic).

If an EE is currently employed by another Institute in the United Kingdom, they may submit a certified photocopy of one of the items in the list below. The photocopy **must** be signed by a senior member of staff (e.g. Head of School, Dean of Faculty, Registrar, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Vice Chancellor) at the home institution and include the following details:

- The statement: 'I confirm that this is a true and accurate copy of the original document.'
- Name
- Signature
- Job Title
- Department
- Institution
- Date

The copy should be on headed paper or accompanied by a compliments slip which must be signed by the verifier. Photocopies of passports must include a copy of the front cover, which must also be signed in accordance with the instructions above.

If an EE is not currently employed by another Institute in the United Kingdom, they must provide **one** of the original documents listed below:

- A passport showing that they are a citizen of the United Kingdom.
- A passport or national identity card showing they are a national of the European Economic Area or Switzerland.
- A passport or other travel document endorsed to show they are exempt from immigration control, have leave to stay indefinitely in the United Kingdom, have the right of abode in the United Kingdom, or have no time limit on their stay in the United Kingdom.
- A passport or travel document endorsed to show they are allowed to stay in the United Kingdom and are allowed to do the type of work in question, provided that it does not require the issue of a work permit.
- A work permit or other approval to take employment issued by the Home Office or the UK Border Agency **when produced in combination with** either a passport or another travel document endorsed to show they are allowed to stay in the United Kingdom and are allowed to do the work

in question, or a letter issued by the Home Office or the UK Border Agency to them or the Institute confirming the same.

- A full birth certificate or adoption certificate issued in the United Kingdom, together with an official document issued by a previous employer or Government agency confirming their name and national insurance number.

Please note that EEs will be unable to undertake any type of work with BIMM University until we have received the appropriate documents confirming their right to work in the UK.