



University of Essex

External Examiners

Meeting with Students Guidance

Quality and Academic Development
2019-20



Meeting with students

Students play an essential role in our quality assurance and enhancement processes at Essex. The University believes that it can be helpful for External Examiners to meet students as part of their role.

Meeting with students can be difficult, particularly as External Examiners normally visit the University during vacation periods when students are often unavailable. However, Skype or other video link resources can be used during term time to facilitate virtual meetings as a valuable means of feedback from across the courses for which they are responsible. This could be at either Award or module level.

Organising meetings

Student representatives should attend any meetings organised. Departments may wish to extend the invitation to all relevant students, but student representatives should always be included, where possible. Members of academic staff from the department may not influence or attend the meeting.

Indicative agenda

Whilst the meeting is to primarily seek feedback from students, it is recommended that some questions or themes are prepared in advance to help guide discussions and provide a more valuable feedback session.

External Examiners are encouraged to discuss any relevant issues, but may wish to consider:

- How useful students have found feedback on assignments.
- Student experiences of year abroad, work-based and placement learning, and joint courses.
- What the students are particularly enjoying or finding challenging.
- Whether students feel they have opportunities to apply what they have learnt.
- Whether they feel that the curriculum is inclusive.

External Examiners should be encouraged to reflect on their meeting with students in their annual report.

Informing students

Departments should ensure that students are fully aware of the role that External Examiners play, and what their responsibilities entail. For example, it should be made clear to students that:

- **External Examiners only advise on academic matters**
Feedback on non-academic issues, such as parking or accommodation, should be voiced through the appropriate University channels.
- **External Examiners cannot influence individual circumstances**
External Examiners cannot and will not change or influence individual assessment marks, complaints or academic appeals, except under exceptional circumstances in accordance with the University's policies.

Students who have been part of discussions with External Examiner(s) are encouraged to feedback any comments to their department and the SU for inclusion in a faculty-level overview report. Departments should forward commentary from students (where available) to the relevant Deputy Dean (Education).

Quality and Academic Development can support training for students in engagement with all quality processes. Additionally, advice can also be sought from the Students' Union.

**Quality and Academic
Development**
quad@essex.ac.uk

Students' Union
suadvice@essex.ac.uk

Document owner	Quality and Academic Development
Document author	Quality and Academic Development
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