



GUIDELINES FOR EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORTS 2024-25

Background

1. Thank you for acting as an external examiner for the University of Oxford. The University requires all of its external examiners to submit a report annual following each examination session in which they have participated. This guidance is for those examining in the 2024-25 academic year.

Submission

2. The report should be submitted via the online survey platform, Jisc. You will be able to download a pdf of your responses for your own records after you have submitted the form.
3. Please ensure you complete **all questions** on the form before submitting the report. You will be able to start the form, and save and return to it at a later point before submission if needed. After you have submitted the form, you will be unable to update it.
4. You will receive an email with a personalised link to access the report template. The email will be sent out in early June 2025, where the final Examination Board does not meet until late in the calendar year, **do not** complete the form now. Please retain this email for future reference and submit your completed form after the final Examination Board has met.
5. If you do not receive an email, please contact the examination board administration team for your course(s) who will liaise with the External Examiner reports team to resolve the issue.
6. Please submit your completed report within **four weeks** of the final Examination Board meeting. If you are acting as external examiner for multiple courses which have separate exam boards, please submit the report within **four weeks** of the date of the latest exam board.
7. The timely receipt of reports helps the University to give full and prompt consideration to the valuable comments of external examiners which are a key element of the University's quality management procedures. The University acknowledges that occasionally circumstances arise in which a delay in submission is unavoidable; in this case, please keep us fully informed.
8. Please kindly note, however, the following extract from the University's [Regulations for the Conduct of University Examiners: Part 6 External Examiners and Assessors, 6.5](#): 'An external examiner who fails to submit the annual report required by the University may continue in office only with the permission of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) and the Proctors.'
9. **It is important that reports are submitted centrally in accordance with these instructions in order that payment can be processed.**

Content

10. Before completing the report, the University recommends that external examiners consult the [UK Quality Code – Advice and Guidance: External Expertise](#) for a full description of those areas upon which external examiners are generally expected to comment.
11. The form aims to strike a balance between capturing essential information and enabling detailed qualitative comments on any aspect relating to the examination/assessment system, processes and

outcomes, including any features unique to a particular subject or programme. The comprehensive and careful commentaries provided by most external examiners are valued highly within the University.

12. The first page of the form asks for:

Your title and name *

The name of your home institution

The level of the course(s) you acted as external examiner for *

The Division(s) responsible for the course(s) that you acted as external examiner for *

The Faculty/Department(s) responsible for the course(s) that you acted as external examiner for *

The course(s) that you acted as external examiner for *

Whether you are in your first, last or other year of office as external examiner

The date that the final exam board took place* **

** Note: responses to these questions have been pre-populated, please check and amend if needed.*

*** If you are acting as external examiner for multiple courses which have separate exam boards, please check this is showing the date of the last of the board meetings for the courses.*

13. The second page of the form, **Part A**, asks you to indicate yes, no or not applicable to the following questions:

- A1.i) Are the academic standards of students comparable with those in other UK institutions of which you have experience
- A1.ii) Are the academic achievements of students comparable with those in other UK institutions of which you have experience
- A2.i) Do the threshold standards for the programme appropriately reflect the framework of higher education qualifications
- A2.ii) Do the threshold standards for the programme appropriately any applicable subject benchmark statement
- A3 Does the academic process measure student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the programme(s)
- A4 Is the academic process conducted in line with the University's policies and regulations
- A5 Did you receive the information and evidence in a timely manner to be able to carry out the role of External Examiner effectively
- A6* Did you receive a written response to your previous report
- A7* Are you satisfied that the comments in your previous report have been fully considered, and where applicable, acted upon

** Note: these questions are not shown where an external examiner is in their first year of their term of office.*

14. The second page of the form, **Part B**, provides free text boxes for you to provide comments on the following matters:

- B1.a) How do academic standards achieved by the students compare with those achieved by students at other higher education institutions of which you have experience?
- B1.b) Please comment on student performance and achievement across the relevant programmes or parts of programmes and with reference to academic standards and student performance of other higher education institutions of which you have experience (those examining in joint schools are particularly asked to comment on their subject in relation to the whole award).
- B2. Please comment on the rigour and conduct of the assessment process, including whether ensures equity of treatment for students, and whether it has been conducted fairly and within the University's regulations and guidance

- B3. Are there any issues which you feel should be brought to the attention of supervising committees in the faculty/department, division or wider University? If you acted as external examiner for multiple courses, please indicate whether the issues related to all or selected courses.
- B4. Please comment/provide recommendations on any **good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment**, and any **opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities** provided to students that should be noted and disseminated more widely as appropriate.
- B5.a) Please provide any other comments you may have about any aspect of the examination process. Please also use this space to address any issues specifically required by any applicable professional body.
- B5.b)* Now that your term of office is concluded, please provide an overview here.

** Note: this question is only shown where an external examiner is in their final year of their term of office.*

- 15. For questions A1.i) and ii), if you do not have experience of UK higher education institutions but have nevertheless been approved to act as an external examiner, please check 'not applicable' and indicate this as part of your response to question B1.
- 16. For question A2. i) and ii), please refer to the [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#) when indicating whether threshold standards for the programme appropriately reflect the Qualifications Frameworks and any applicable Subject Benchmark Statements so as to comply with the expectations and core practices for standards set out in the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education 2024](#). If the course(s) you acted as external examiner for do not have any Subject Benchmark Statements, please select 'not applicable' for question A2.ii).
- 17. In order to develop its quality enhancement strategy, the University particularly welcomes comments in relation to:
 - (i) issues which should be brought to the attention of supervising committees (Question B3).
 - (ii) good practice and enhancement opportunities which should be noted and disseminated more widely, as appropriate (Question B4).
- 18. The University requests that external examiners do not discuss the contents of their report within the responsible faculty or department prior to its submission to the University.

Circulation of Reports

- 19. Reports will normally and routinely be circulated widely among members of the department/faculty and division concerned, including to students (subject to the deletion of any references to identifiable individuals). This is in accordance with the [UK Quality Code – Advice and Guidance: External Expertise](#). Examiners are, however, welcome to send a separate confidential report to the Vice-Chancellor if desired by posting a copy to: The Vice-Chancellor c/o Susan Brace, Head of Research Degrees and Quality Review, Education Policy Support, University Offices, Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JD. If so, **please clearly mark the message or letter as 'confidential'**.
- 20. Please note that a number of universities, including the University of Oxford, have in the past received requests under the Freedom of Information Act requesting disclosure of the full text of external examiner reports. It is our policy to notify examiners personally where such requests occur.

Response to Reports

- 21. You should receive a response to your report from the relevant department/faculty or division, including details of any actions taken as a result, or the reasons for not taking action.

2nd BM Courses

22. External examiners for 2nd BM courses should follow any additional directions for reporting provided by the Medical Sciences Division.

Further Information

23. Please do not hesitate to contact the University via external-examiners@admin.ox.ac.uk or your appropriate divisional contact in case of any queries, or if further information is required. We will be pleased to advise or redirect your enquiry, as necessary.
24. Divisional contacts:
- **Humanities:** exams@humanities.ox.ac.uk (Classics; English Language and Literature; Fine Art; History; Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics; Medieval and Modern Languages; Music; Oriental Studies; Philosophy; and Theology and Religion.)
 - **Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences:** mplsexaminations@mpls.ox.ac.uk (Biological Sciences; Chemistry; Computer Science; Earth Sciences; Engineering Science; Materials; Mathematics; Physics; Plant Sciences; Statistics; and Zoology.)
 - **Medical Sciences:** julia.leung@medsci.ox.ac.uk (Biochemistry; Clinical Medicine; Clinical Neurosciences; Medicine; Experimental Psychology; Oncology; Orthopaedics, Rheumatology and Musculoskeletal Sciences; Paediatrics; Pathology; Pharmacology; Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics; Population Health; Primary Care Health Sciences; Psychiatry; Surgical Sciences, and Women's and Reproductive Health.)s
 - **Social Sciences:** ga@socsci.ox.ac.uk (Anthropology and Museum Ethnography; Archaeology; Business; Economics; Education; Geography and Environment; Global and Area Studies; Human Sciences; International Development; Internet; Law; Management; Politics and International Relations; Public Policy; Social Policy and Intervention; and Sociology.)
 - **Department for Continuing Education:** quality.assurance@conted.ox.ac.uk (part-time and open/distributed learning provision.)

Access issues

In the event of any problems accessing the report via Jisc, please try the following:

1. Disable any extensions such as coupon applications such as Honey, Klarna and Rakuten, as these may block the form from loading.
2. Clear browser data, including the cache.
3. If using Safari, press Command + comma, the menu below will pop up. Under the Security tab, untick Enable JavaScript, and that might allow the form to load.

If you are unable to access the report after attempting those solutions, please contact external-examiners@admin.ox.ac.uk who will advise further.