

## External Examining Summary Report 2023-24

### Background

1. External examiners are appointed by Queen Mary to comment on issues of academic content, standards, and process. They review assessment questions, review module results and attend Subject Examination Boards (SEBs). At the end of the academic cycle, each external completes the report template to outline their experiences that year. This report gives a high-level summary of those reports.
2. The consideration route for external examiner reports is as follows:
  - i. Individual reports are sent to SEBs for consideration and action within the School/Institute.
  - ii. Consideration of all reports by School/Institute through Annual Programme Review/Education Committees.
  - iii. Identification of any institution-level issues and statistics in the Summary Report (this present report).
3. Reports are received and formally acknowledged by the Directorate of Governance and Legal Services (DGLS). DGLS reads and highlights key issues requiring a response before forwarding reports to the associated SEB. SEBs are not required to respond to all external examiner reports, formal responses are only required where issues have been identified. DGLS will note where a formal response is required and SEBs are asked to respond, in writing, within 30 days and to send a copy to DGLS.
4. All reports and SEB responses are used in the Annual Programme Review process and summaries are discussed at School/Institute Education committed and SSLC meetings.
5. In addition to SEB level external examiners, Queen Mary also appoints an External Member to review and oversee the final UG Degree Examination Board (DEB) process. The report of the External Member was received and considered by EQSB at its November 2024 meeting.
6. External examiners have the right to raise any matter of serious concern with the Principal via a confidential report.
7. There were no institutional concerns raised in the 2023/24 reports

### Part 1 - Statistical data (as of 18/12/24, for both 23/24 and 22/23)

EQSB should note:

- i) the usefulness of the examiners annual report loses currency if submitted too late, as this doesn't provide Schools/Institutes time to reflect and take action on recommendations proposed.
  - ii) new external examiners are provided with a guidance document which outlines their role and responsibilities. DGLS sends an email in May and September with a reminder of our processes for the submission of reports, fee payment and expenses claims.
  - iii) SEBs remain the main point of contact for external examiners and conduct an induction to outline the programmes and modules under their review.
8. Once again there was an increase in external examiner numbers in 2023/24, but a reduction in the amount of missing reports: 38 compared to 53 last year. A reminder was sent by DGLS in November and forms part of the usual communications between the SEB and its external examiners.

9. However there is still a high column of SEB responses outstanding from SEBs: 48 compared to 34 last year. This is likely to be due to this report being prepared in December rather than February.
10. Non-submission and late submission of reports should remain a concern. Submission of the annual report is only one part of the external examiner role and, although there is no suggestion that externals are not considering assessment design and marking during the year, the annual report is a qualitative resource that provides Institutional consideration beyond the SEB. Externals are not paid if they do not submit the report, but the fee is often nominal and is generally not a major motivator for academics/specialists to seek the roles.

**Total number of external examiner reports and SEB responses, by level for 2023/24 (2022/23 for comparison):**

	<b>UG</b>	<i>(22/23)</i>	<b>PG</b>	<i>(22/23)</i>
Expected Reports	<b>152</b>	145	<b>125</b>	107
Actual received	<b>138</b>	126	<b>101</b>	84
Total of missing reports	<b>14 (9%)</b>	19 (13%)	<b>24 (19%)</b>	23(21%)

  

Expected SEB responses	<b>101</b>	84	<b>57</b>	50
Actual responses received	<b>77</b>	66	<b>33</b>	34
Total of missing SEB responses	<b>24 (23%)</b>	18 (21%)	<b>24 (42%)</b>	16 (32%)

**Total number of external examiner reports and SEB responses, by Faculty and level for 2023/24 (2022/23 for comparison):**

	<b>FMD</b>				<b>HSS</b>				<b>S&amp;E</b>			
	<b>UG (22/23)</b>		<b>PG (22/23)</b>		<b>UG (22/23)</b>		<b>PG (22/23)</b>		<b>UG (22/23)</b>		<b>PG (22/23)</b>	
Expected Reports	<b>26</b>	27	<b>49</b>	47	<b>84</b>	81	<b>54</b>	44	<b>42</b>	39	<b>22</b>	18
Actual received	<b>22</b>	24	<b>38</b>	27	<b>77</b>	66	<b>42</b>	37	<b>39</b>	34	<b>21</b>	15
Total missing	<b>4</b>	3	<b>11</b>	20	<b>7</b>	15	<b>12</b>	7	<b>3</b>	5	<b>1</b>	3

  

Expected SEB responses	<b>15</b>	19	<b>16</b>	15	<b>53</b>	37	<b>26</b>	24	<b>33</b>	28	<b>15</b>	11
Actual SEB responses received	<b>10</b>	13	<b>9</b>	10	<b>43</b>	32	<b>21</b>	16	<b>24</b>	21	<b>3</b>	8
Total missing	<b>5</b>	6	<b>7</b>	5	<b>10</b>	5	<b>5</b>	8	<b>9</b>	7	<b>12</b>	3

**Summary of External Examiner comments 2023/24**

11. Broadly, external examiners remain complimentary of the work of colleagues to provide clear and comprehensive feedback. However, externals continue to note variation in the amount of feedback provided by internal markers.
12. Fewer externals expressed concern about the levels of achievement, but this still features as a comment for many SEBs.
13. The challenge faced by the rise of AI was a predominate factor in many external examiner reports. Noting the achievements of some Boards to embrace and/or mitigate the challenge of AI in assessment design. Externals were very aware that this was an issue faced across the sector.

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