

Introduction and scope

1. This section includes:

- ♦ a statement explaining the purposes of assessment;
- ♦ a summary of the regulations which are intended to safeguard the integrity of assessment and to ensure consistent treatment of students and consistent decision-making;
- ♦ general statement of responsibilities of staff with regard to assessment;
- ♦ procedures to be developed at the programme or monitoring committee level;
- ♦ an explanation of the external examiner system.

Purposes of assessment

2. The purposes of assessment are:

- ♦ to measure students' learning, capabilities and understanding;
- ♦ to support learning by providing feedback that allows students to recognise and enhance their achievements;
- ♦ for programmes that have a modular structure, to allow students to demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes for the modules that they have taken;
- ♦ to allow students to demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes for the programmes on which they are enrolled and achieved the standard of the award for which they are registered;
- ♦ to maintain the standards of the awards conferred by St George's;
- ♦ for vocational programmes, to demonstrate that students have attained the standards required for entry to a particular profession.

A summary of regulations regarding the assessment of programmes

3. The [General Regulations](#) require, with regard to the assessment of a programme, that **programme regulations** and a **scheme of assessment** are approved and published. Programme regulations and a draft scheme of assessment appear in the course document submitted for validation. After scrutiny by a Validation Panel, programme regulations are formally approved by Senate. The scheme of assessment is approved by the monitoring committee responsible for the programme although in practice this work may be delegated to a course or programme committee that reports to the monitoring committee and to the Board of Examiners.
4. The coverage of the **programme regulations** is defined in paragraph 2.5 of the [General Regulations for Students and Programmes of Study](#). They shall include the methods and timing of assessment; the scheme of assessment, rules for progression, the rules for re-entry to assessments, the conditions to be satisfied for the award of the qualification, the criteria for the award of honours or distinction (where relevant) and the constitution,

procedures for appointment and the duties of the Board of Examiners. In practice, many of these areas will be specified in outline form only in the programme regulations with the detail included in the scheme of assessment.

5. Each programme of study shall have a **scheme of assessment** for each stage or module defined in the programme regulations (paragraph 7 of the [General Regulations for Students and Programmes of Study](#)). Schemes of assessment detail the types of assessment to be used, the general timing of these assessments, marking schemes, marking criteria, rules for determining candidates' overall results and the criteria for the award of honours, distinctions and merits.

General statement of responsibilities of staff regarding assessment

6. The allocation of responsibilities for the design, organisation and conduct of assessments will vary dependent on the structure of a programme and the rationale for the assessment of that programme. For example, students may be assessed in all of the modules taken in a term, part or cycle of the programme by taking an integrated examination or sequence of examinations (or other forms of assessment) covering a range of modules. In this case, there will be a need for co-ordination between staff who are involved in teaching those modules. Alternatively, a specific assessment may relate directly to a specific module; in this example, the need for co-ordination is reduced.
7. It is for course committees to ensure that responsibilities are allocated. Where co-ordination between staff is required, the most common models allocate this function to course directors or to chief and responsible examiners working in partnership with administrative staff. Whatever programme model is adopted, a range of functions must be carried out:
 - ♦ the design, approval and maintenance of the programme regulations and the scheme of assessment for the programme;
 - ♦ nomination, on an annual basis, of the membership of the Board of Examiners,
 - ♦ nomination of external examiners;
 - ♦ liaison with external examiners;
 - ♦ development of procedures for ensuring that assessment is reliable, valid and at the appropriate level;
 - ♦ the organisation of examination boards;
 - ♦ the preparation and distribution of examination board agenda papers, including spreadsheets and maintaining records of examination board decisions;
 - ♦ the release of marks to students;
 - ♦ arrangements for reassessment;
 - ♦ reporting the outcomes of assessment to the monitoring committee and to Senate;
 - ♦ the issue by Registry of transcripts and award certification.

Procedures to be developed at the programme committee or monitoring committee level

8. Responsibility for ensuring that assessment is reliable, valid and at the appropriate level rests with the relevant academic staff and the committees and boards of examiners to

which they are accountable. The development of procedures to fulfil this responsibility may be defined for a programme or for a group of programmes. However, those procedures should encompass:

Internal moderation of marks – As part of the marking process, internal moderation entails the independent scrutiny of marks to ensure that the marking process has been rigorous, fair and consistent. Some form of moderation is expected and the [General Regulations for Students and Programmes of Study](#) (paragraphs 11.7 to 11.9) express the minimum expectations.

With coursework and other forms of assessment carried out by students in their own time, double-marking is not a requirement but is advocated as best practice. The nature of the moderation may vary in relation to the numbers of students, the number of staff involved in marking, and the strength and maturity of the assessment criteria and marking schemes. However double-marking is usual for final year undergraduate projects and for postgraduate project work. At present, the policy of the Taught Postgraduate Courses Committee is normally to require double-marking of all postgraduate work although TPCC can approve variations from this norm.

Double-marking need not be blind (i.e. the marks and commentary recorded by the first marker on an examination script can be visible to any subsequent marker). Blind double-marking is, however, good practice and, where it is practical to do so, a procedure for blind double-marking should be implemented.

Anonymised marking - Anonymity in marking means that the identity of the student who has completed work for assessment is not known to the person marking that work. Anonymity in marking is required for examinations only (regulation 11.6). Anonymised marking is however good practice and, where it is practical to do so, a procedure for anonymised marking should be implemented.

Assessment criteria – Assessment criteria explain how different levels of achievement by students will be rewarded through the allocation of marks. Assessment criteria can be developed for modules, groups of modules, programmes or groups of programmes.

Marking schemes - Marking schemes explain how marks are allocated to a piece of assessed work e.g. for a question, a group of questions or a section in an examination paper, for particular issues or concepts covered in an essay, or for other features of assessed work e.g. presentation, methodology, bibliography. Marking schemes also explain how students might be penalised e.g. for poor spelling and grammar.

Arrangements for providing feedback to students – these arrangements must reflect the expectations of the SGUL Feedback Policy (Appendix I2). The Policy is intended to ensure that students receive sufficient feedback to allow them to recognise and enhance their achievements and the areas in which they may be deficient. The Policy is also intended to ensure that markers give broadly the same levels of feedback, and that feedback is timely.

Feedback systems may vary to reflect the mode of delivery, the numbers of students, the level of the programme and the relationship of the assessment to the programme outcomes. Examples of different approaches to providing feedback are:

- ♦ the use of a pro-forma based on the assessment criteria and marking scheme to provide individual feedback to students;
- ♦ an arrangement for a student to meet a designated member of staff, such as the personal tutor, to receive feedback on overall performance;
- ♦ the preparation of a general analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the work submitted by the entire cohort that may help students set brief individual feedback in context;
- ♦ setting aside time in a teaching session in which the strengths and weaknesses of student work can be discussed;
- ♦ the distribution of model or exemplary scripts or coursework to students.

9. These procedures should be published in the information available to students.

AN EXPLANATION OF THE EXTERNAL EXAMINER SYSTEM

Principles

10. Section 8.2.7 of the General Regulations states that each Board of Examiners shall have at least one external examiner.
11. Section 9.1 of the General Regulations states that the primary duty of external examiners is to ensure that the standard of the awards made by St George's is consistent with that of institutions elsewhere in the United Kingdom. This regulation also states that Senate shall approve from time to time a statement of the detailed duties of external examiners which shall be issued to external examiners on their appointment.
12. The standards of all modules and assessments that contribute to the final award must be assured by an external examiner.
13. Responsibility for the approval of external examiners rests with Senate. The monitoring committees, on behalf of Senate, carry out detailed scrutiny of external examiner nominations.

The role of external examiners

14. St George's defines the role of the external examiner in an open manner and does not wish to preclude an external examiner from commenting on any aspect of institutional activities as they relate to the quality and standards of its programmes. St George's, however, recognises that responsibility for the assurance of quality and standards rests with the institution and not its external examiners. The role of the external examiner is to offer advice, as an experienced, independent, expert practitioner, on the extent to which approaches to assessment maintain and enhance the quality and standards of its awards.
15. More specifically, the role of the external examiner is to advise:

- ♦ on whether the threshold standards set by the institution are appropriate for its awards by reference to, where relevant, the expectations of professional registering bodies, published national subject benchmarks, the national qualifications frameworks;
 - ♦ on the standards of the awards achieved by students, and on the comparability of those standards with those of similar programmes in other UK higher education institutions;
 - ♦ on the extent to which the assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended learning outcomes for the programme and has been conducted in line with SGUL's policies and regulations;
 - ♦ on good practice and innovation that they have identified in relation to learning, teaching and assessment.
 - ♦ on opportunities to enhance the quality of learning opportunities provided to students.
- 16.** In asking its external examiners to advise on enhancement, SGUL makes use of the definition of enhancement developed by the Quality Assurance Agency to inform its review processes: "The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported." Advice on enhancement will be considered at the institutional level when SGUL agrees its priorities for development with regard to teaching and learning.
- 17.** External examiners are also invited to offer advice on all areas of assessment practice such as:
- ♦ Arrangements for internal moderation;
 - ♦ the relationship between assessment and learning outcomes;
 - ♦ the clarity of assessment criteria and marking schemes;
 - ♦ the information given to students about assessment;
 - ♦ arrangements for feedback to students;
 - ♦ the operation of boards of examiners' meetings.
- 18.** External examiners are also welcome to comment more generally on any area related to the quality of the institution's programmes and the standards of its awards. Examples of the more general areas in which an external examiner might comment are programme content, approaches to teaching and learning, the allocation of resources, clinical placements and the institution's internal quality assurance systems.
- 19.** In certain circumstances, the role of the external examiner might be extended. For example, an external examiner might from time to time be asked to adjudicate in cases where internal examiners are unable to reach agreement. An external examiner might also be asked to suggest solutions when problems have arisen in the design or the conduct of an assessment taken by students.
- 20.** External examiners do not themselves assess students other than in the circumstances laid down in the General Regulations, Programme Regulations or the Scheme of Assessment. It is a regulatory requirement for an external examiner to participate in the oral examination of a student (GR11.9). It is usual for an external examiner to viva students who are to be considered for distinctions or who fall on a borderline. External examiners may be appointed to assess dissertations as a means of ensuring that each dissertation is marked

by an expert in the field. Where this is the case, a senior external examiner(s) will be appointed to take an overview of quality and standards. In each of these cases, the role of the external examiner and the senior external examiner will be defined in programme regulations or in the scheme of assessment.

21. External examiners are required to observe institutional policies on equal opportunities in discharging their duties, especially when taking part in oral and clinical examinations.
22. External examiners are required to preserve absolutely the secrecy of unseen examination papers until the candidates have sat the papers. The contents must not be disclosed other than to members of the Board of Examiners or officers of the institution who are appointed to deal with the papers. External examiners must not communicate with a candidate about any aspect of the assessment process, or about the performance of the candidate unless authorised to do so by the Board of Examiners, or in the context of an oral examination.
23. Boards of Examiners reach collective decisions and the views of one individual do not have primacy over those of others. Thus, the Board of Examiners is not obligated to accept the advice of an external examiner although a Board should exercise caution in setting aside the advice of an external examiner. When such instances arise, the minutes of the Board meeting should explain why the advice of the external examiner was not taken.
24. Although external examiners can typically fulfil their duties remotely and through online meetings, we strongly encourage external examiners to visit the site at least once per academic year.

Other roles of external examiners

25. SGUL's procedural framework includes procedures for considering:
 - Requests from a student to adjust the assessment arrangements for a programme to take into account a student's special educational needs or disability;
 - Possible instances of academic misconduct;
 - Evidence of mitigation for failure or under performance supplied by students;
 - Appeals made by students against the decisions of Boards of Examiners.
26. External examiners are not for the most part involved directly in processes relating to special needs, academic misconduct or mitigation as they relate to individual student cases. External examiners do have a role in advising SGUL on application of its procedures and the integrity of its decision-making. They can, if they wish, expect to be provided with procedures and informed about decisions taken that fall within the remit of the Board of Examiners.
27. If an appeal from a student is upheld, the decision of a Board of Examiners may be overturned. In this circumstance, the reasons for the proposed change of decision will be discussed fully with the external examiner as soon as it is practical to do so. As with any other assessment decision, the support of the external examiner will normally be sought before the decision is communicated to the appellant.

Responsibilities and functions

- 28.** The following list of responsibilities and functions is indicative. An external examiner may, in negotiation with the relevant internal examiner, modify this list provided the external examiner is able to fulfil the role defined above.
- 29.** An external examiner will normally:
- ◆ check that draft examination papers and, where appropriate, draft assignment briefs, assess the learning outcomes, or a meaningful subset of the learning outcomes, for the programme;
 - ◆ check that draft examination papers and, where appropriate, draft assignment briefs, are clearly worded, and provide a basis for assessing the standards achieved by students;
 - ◆ advise whether the assessment criteria in use explain how different levels of achievement by students will be rewarded through the allocation of marks, and whether marking schemes explain how marks are allocated to a piece of assessed work;
 - ◆ check that the marks awarded and pass/fail judgements are commensurate with national norms;
 - ◆ advise on the consistency between internal markers;
 - ◆ participate in oral and practical examinations where such participation is a requirement of the General Regulations, programme regulations or the scheme of assessment;
 - ◆ attend meetings of the Board of Examiners. It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Board of Examiners to ensure that external examiners are invited to attend Board meetings and are notified of the dates of meetings in a timely manner;
 - ◆ from time to time be asked to sign a pass list. The signature of the external examiner confirms that assessment processes have been carried out in accordance with the policy and regulations of SGUL (see paragraph 32);
 - ◆ advise whether programme regulations are suitable for their intended purpose, clearly understood and consistently and fairly applied;
 - ◆ submit an annual report at the agreed time and to an agreed format.
- 30.** With the selective sampling of student work, it is unfair for an external examiner to adjust the marks of the limited number of students whose work had been sampled while the majority of the cohort retained the marks assigned by internal markers.
- 31.** SGUL has in place processes for the moderation of student work. Through the sampling of student work the external examiner is asked to review the accuracy and fairness of marking including the effectiveness of the approach to internal moderation. If minor problems are identified with marking, the external examiner will usually ask for these problems to be addressed before the next scheduling of the assessment. From time to time, an external examiner may decide that there is a more substantial problem, for example notably harsh or lenient marking, where more immediate action is needed. In this circumstance the external examiner may ask to see a larger sample to consider the extent of the problem. In consultation with the Course Director or Chief Examiner, the external examiner may ask for student work to be remarked or re-moderated (with or without prior adjustment of the assessment criteria). The external examiner may alternatively recommend the scaling up or down of marks for a cohort. In this instance, the external examiner and the Course Director

or Chief Examiner will then make a recommendation to the Examination Board for discussion and approval.

- 32.** If an external examiner is unwilling to sign a pass list, the reasons will be recorded in the minutes of the Board of Examiners meeting. The external examiner will also be asked to record fully the basis for any concerns in his/her report to the Vice-Chancellor. In addition, the Chair of the Board of Examiners will refer the matter to the Chair of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee who will decide whether the assessment decisions taken by the Board are to be processed with or without follow up action. In the event of any delay, the Chair of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee will authorise any communication with students affected by the delay.
- 33.** The paragraph of this chapter on induction specifies the information that an external examiner will receive at the time of his or her appointment. In addition, an external examiner will have access to the information needed to fulfil the external examiner role, and the functions attached to that role, effectively. This information may include:
- ♦ opportunities to meet with students on the programmes that they are examining (see paragraph 54);
 - ♦ opportunities to meet with internal examiners and staff involved in the teaching of the programmes that they are examining;
 - ♦ opportunities to visit clinical and practice placement areas.

Criteria for appointment

- 34.** SGUL has adopted the UK-wide criteria for appointing external examiners. External examiners are expected to show evidence of:
- a) knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality
 - b) competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study, or parts thereof
 - c) relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate
 - d) competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures
 - e) sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command the respect of academic peers and, where appropriate, professional peers
 - f) familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed
 - g) fluency in English, and where programmes are delivered and assessed in languages other than English, fluency in the relevant language(s) (unless other secure arrangements are in place to ensure that external examiners are provided with the information to make their judgements)
 - h) meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies
 - i) awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula

- j) competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

35. The following conflicts of interest would preclude an appointment:

- a) member of a governing body or committee of the appointing institution or one of its collaborative partners, or a current employee of the appointing institution or one of its collaborative partners;
- b) anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme of study;
- c) anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study;
- d) anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study;
- e) 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 programme(s) or modules in question;
- f) former staff or students of the institution unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the external examiner have completed their programme(s);
- g) a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another institution;
- h) the succession of an external examiner from an institution by a colleague from the same department in the same institution (see paragraph 35 and 36);
- i) the appointment of more than one external examiner from the same department of the same institution (see paragraph 36 and 37).

36. The conflict of interest criteria pertaining to departmental memberships (h and i) will be applied flexibly. Departments and divisions vary in size and complexity from one institution to another. Many institutions have large academic divisions or departments that include several operationally discrete academic disciplines and staff within these divisions may have very little direct contact with each other. Where this is the case, a conflict of interest may not arise even if a potential external examiner is from the same department as an outgoing or current external.

37. In seeking to determine whether there is a conflict of interest, staff preparing an external examiner nomination (and the committees considering the nomination) will need to consider the extent of any contact with an outgoing or current external examiners from the same department and confirm explicitly that any contact with others from the same department has not been insubstantial and does not amount to a conflict of interest.

The period of appointment of external examiners

38. An external examiner will not serve on a Board for more than four consecutive years although Senate can approve an extension to this period of appointment. An external examiner will not be eligible for reappointment until a period of five years has lapsed (see general regulation 8.2.3). External examiners should remain available after the end of their period of appointment in order to assist the Board of Examiners in dealing with any subsequent reviews of the decisions of the Board.

39. External examiners should not normally hold more than two external examiner appointments at any one time.

The appointment process

40. External examiners are appointed as part of the annual process by which the membership of the Board of Examiners is approved by Senate (or if an external examiner resigns partway through an academic year, when a replacement has been identified). The member of Registry staff that has administrative responsibility for the Board oversees this process.

Nomination

41. External Examiner nomination forms are available (appendices I3 and I4). The senior member of staff responsible for the programme nominates members of Boards of Examiners. Depending on the structure and complexity of the Board's constitution, the member of staff may be the chair of the responsible committee or the programme committee, the head of the relevant Institute or school, the Dean or the Vice-Chancellor.
42. Before a nomination is submitted to the monitoring committee, the external examiner should be asked if, in principle, s/he is prepared to take up the appointment by the member of staff responsible for the programme. At this time, the external examiner should receive sufficient information about the role to determine whether s/he will be able to carry out the role. This will include this section of the Quality Manual. The external examiner will be asked to provide a CV, and to confirm that s/he meets the criteria for approval specified by SGUL in paragraphs 34 to 37.

Scrutiny

43. Detailed scrutiny of external examiner nominations is carried out by the monitoring committee on behalf of Senate. This responsibility may be delegated to a sub-group of the Monitoring Committee as long as the membership has sufficient experience and expertise to reach a balanced and independent judgement about the nomination. Nominations are considered on the basis of the nomination form provided by Registry and on the basis of a CV.
44. The monitoring committee will take into account the appointment criteria laid down by the institution as part of its scrutiny of the nomination.
45. The monitoring committee formally proposes the appointment of the external examiner to Senate. If, in making this proposal, the committee has set aside any of the usual appointment criteria, this must be made clear to Senate.

Termination of an external examiner appointment

46. The appointment of an external examiner may be terminated by Senate if the Board decides that the responsibilities of the appointment have not or can no longer be fulfilled. Grounds for termination may include:

- ◆ not carrying out the responsibilities attached to the role;
 - ◆ exceeding the authority of an external examiner;
 - ◆ persistent non-attendance at boards;
 - ◆ persistent non-submission of reports or the submission of inadequate reports;
 - ◆ refusal to work within the general regulations of St George's;
 - ◆ a change in the circumstances of the external examiner that might bring about a conflict of interests.
- 47.** Informal steps will usually be taken to resolve difficulties. If these steps are unsuccessful, the chair of the monitoring committee will, after taking the advice of Senate, submit a written report to the Chair of Senate. The report will explain the nature of difficulty, the steps taken to resolve that difficulty, and why it has now become necessary to ask Senate to terminate the appointment.
- 48.** If Senate decides that the appointment should be terminated, the external examiner shall receive a letter of explanation from the Secretary and Academic Registrar.

Notification of appointment

- 49.** Following the approval of the appointment by Senate, the external examiner will receive formal notification of the appointment on behalf of the Academic Registrar. This notification will normally be accompanied by:
- ◆ the General Regulations for Students and Programmes of Study;
 - ◆ the section of this Manual relating to Assessment;
 - ◆ the handbook (or equivalent) for the programme of study;
 - ◆ the regulations for the programme of study;
 - ◆ the Scheme of Assessment;
 - ◆ the dates of examination board meetings;
 - ◆ the Programme Specification;
 - ◆ reports submitted by previous external examiners, where available, and the responses to those reports;
 - ◆ details of the fee payable to external examiners.
- 50.** External examiners will be asked to confirm that they accept the appointment and accept the terms and conditions that apply to the appointment.
- 51.** Institutions are expected to include the name, position and institution of their external examiners in module or programme information provided to students. SGUL meets this expectation by publishing information on the Portal. The publication of this information is accompanied by guidance to students. The guidance explains why this information is being provided and emphasises that students should not make contact with external examiners. An unauthorised approach to an external examiner by a student will be considered under SGUL's procedures for investigating academic misconduct. In the notification of appointment letter, it will be made clear to newly appointed external examiners that some personal data is available to students.

Induction

52. Each year, the Institution will offer a generic induction programme for external examiners. The purpose of this programme is to explain the general principles on which the external examiner system at SGUL is based and to outline the roles and responsibilities that define the role. Responsibility for organising the institutional induction rests with the Assistant Registrar (Examinations).
53. It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Board of Examiners or his/her nominee to ensure that the external examiner receives detailed preparation for the role. However, for postgraduate programmes, the course director will usually play a central role in briefing external examiners. This briefing, which can be handled formally or informally, should encompass:
- ♦ the role of the external examiner and the responsibilities and functions attached to the role;
 - ♦ the aims and objectives of the programme;
 - ♦ the assessment rationale, schedule and methods for the programme;
 - ♦ the regulatory framework for the programme (including those regulations concerned with progression and awards, with opportunities for repeat assessments, with compensation, and with failure);
 - ♦ the procedural framework for the programme (including arrangements for the internal moderation of marks, for developing assessment criteria and marking schemes);
 - ♦ the relationship with other external examiners appointed to the programme;
 - ♦ the volume of assessed work to be received by the external examiner and the level of scrutiny afforded to that work. Where a sample of work is to be received, the means by which the sample is selected should be agreed;
 - ♦ opportunities to meet students
 - ♦ the conduct of examination board meetings;
 - ♦ the dates on which the external examiner is expected to attend for examination board and other meetings;
 - ♦ the format of external examiner reports and the time at which those reports will be submitted.

Meetings with students

54. External examiners are encouraged to meet with students at least once during their period of appointment. Meetings with students are not compulsory. However, feedback from external examiners has indicated that structured meetings with students, in small groups or individually, provide opportunities for external examiners to find out more about the programme, the learning experience and assessment practices. Meetings with students also raise awareness of the external examiner system amongst students. If meetings are held, it must be made clear to all participants that discussions with external examiners will not influence assessment decisions and outcomes taken by Boards of Examiners. Such meetings should also not be used for or construed to be viva voce examinations.

External examiner reports

55. The external examiner will receive an external examiner report form, usually from the Registry Officer responsible for the administration of the programme. Report forms are usually distributed at the last examination board meeting of a session (or sent to those

external examiners who are unable to attend). External examiners can, if they prefer, submit a narrative report provided the report covers the same broad areas as the form. External examiner forms are provided electronically; external examiners are asked to submit forms electronically to facilitate their distribution within SGUL and, where this is a requirement, to professional bodies.

56. The external examiner report is submitted formally to the Vice-Chancellor. Reports will usually be submitted shortly after the final board of examiners' meeting for that year.
57. The nature of the response to the external examiner report will depend on the nature of the issues raised therein. (The procedure for responding to external examiner reports is available from the Quality and Partnerships Directorate – Appendix I1.)
58. Under the Data Protection Act (2018), a student may submit a Subject Access Request to receive all data held by St George's about the student. In this context, written comments made by an external examiner, for example on an examination script, may be disclosed to the student. Similarly, oral comments relating to individual candidates that are recorded in Examination Board minutes may be disclosed to the student. External examiners should therefore ensure that their published contributions are accurate statements and reasonably held opinions.
59. An external examiner may ask for the contents of his/her report to be read in confidence. Where this is the case, the Vice-Chancellor will discuss with the external examiner how the institution can respond to the matters raised in the report whilst maintaining its confidentiality.
60. External examiners' annual reports are available in full to students, with the exception of any confidential report made directly to the Vice-Chancellor. Reports will be discussed at Course Committee meetings (or an equivalent meeting that includes student representatives) to ensure that student representatives are given the opportunity to be fully involved in the consideration of issues raised by external examiners and the preparation of the response to those issues
61. At the end of the external examiner's period of appointment, the external examiner can, if he or she chooses, submit an overview report that summarises the issues that have arisen throughout the external examiner's period of appointment.
62. External examiners' reports will be used for specified internal purposes and any other use or publication of the report is the sole responsibility of St George's. In accepting the appointment, St George's understands that the external examiner consents to these uses of the report.

QAA Concerns scheme

63. Stakeholders with specific concerns about any institution that is registered with the Office for Students (OfS) can raise those concerns with the OfS. Where an external examiner has a serious concern relating to systemic failings with the academic standards of a programme or programmes and has exhausted all published applicable internal procedures, including

the submission of a confidential report to the Vice-Chancellor, he/she may raise a concern with the OfS or inform the relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body. Further details are published on the OfS website: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-students/ofs-and-students/notifications/>

Assessment – evaluation of processes

- 64.** The following arrangements are in place to review the effectiveness of the Institution's arrangements for quality management of assessment:
- The production of an annual report on the operation of the external examiner system including the confirmation that all programmes have external examiners; that reports have been received and responses issued. The report will include a summary of issues raised in external examiner reports. Responsibility for the production of this report rests with the Director of Quality and Partnerships.
 - Analysis of data held by Registry that emerges from relevant student procedures (such as academic appeals, requests for discretionary attempts at examinations, fitness to study and practise procedures, allegations of academic misconduct and the consideration of special needs in examinations). Responsibility for the production of this report rests with the Head of Student Conduct and Compliance.
 - Assessment issues emerging from annual monitoring and from the validation and review of programmes.

Compliance with QAA's UK Quality Code

- 65.** Compliance with the Expectations and Practices set out in the QAA's Advice and Guidance for Assessment, as well as the Advice and Guidance for External Expertise, will be monitored by QAEC from time to time: Compliance will usually be monitored by considering a mapping document prepared by QPD.

Forms and guidance notes

- 66.** The following are available:
- Appendix I1: procedure for responding to external examiner reports (available from Quality and Partnerships)
 - Appendix I2: Feedback Policy (available from Quality and Partnerships)
 - Appendix I3: External Examiner Nomination Form (to be completed by member of staff submitting the nomination) (available from Registry)
 - Appendix I4: External Examiner Nomination Form (to be completed by nominee) (available from Registry)
 - Appendix I5: guidance notes on external examiner meetings with students (available from Quality and Partnerships)