

GUIDELINES ON MENTORING FOR EXTERNAL EXAMINERS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS LONDON

What is the purpose of the Mentor Scheme at UAL?

Sometimes proposed External Examiners are well qualified to examine in terms of their specialist subject knowledge but do not have sufficient recent external examining experience. Proposed Examiners without, in the opinion of the College Quality Committee (CQC) and Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC), sufficient recent external examining experience must, where possible, join an experienced External Examining team. Where there is only one External Examiner, the new appointee must initially work alongside an experienced currently-appointed External from a related course, and in the University's systems, who will act as Mentor.

Key Responsibilities of the Mentor

Mentors are responsible for providing advice and guidance on the protocols of external examining to their less experienced colleagues. This might include:

- General discussions about previous external examining experiences;
- An explanation of examination board procedures and common scenarios that might arise at examination boards;
- Information and advice about current issues in HE that are relevant to external examining, and
- Guidance on how best to approach report writing. This might be approached by the appointed External Examiner writing a draft report and sending this to the Mentor for comment. Crucially, though, the report and opinions expressed are the sole responsibility of the External Examiner, not the Mentor. Mentors might also assist their less experienced colleagues by showing them examples of reports written for previous cohorts of the course in question.

How are mentors chosen?

A mentor would normally have previous external examining experience at least one other institution, and would need to have examined at least one cohort on a course at the University of the Arts London. Mentors should also normally come from an academic background. When assigning a Mentor, consideration will also be given to the reports the examiner has written in the past; ideally the previous reports of the proposed mentor will have been constructive and thorough, will have been structured under the five required headings and will have been received within a month or two of the final visit.

How are Mentors appointed?

It is the responsibility of the Course Leader to arrange a Mentor for the proposed External Examiner. Where a proposed External Examiner has insufficient recent examining experience, this should be indicated on the required nomination form and a suitable Mentor should be listed. Course Leader's should therefore approach potential Mentors during the nomination stage of a new External Examiner. The appointment of the Mentor will be taken into consideration by CQC and AQSC and is subject to approval.

Once the proposed External Examiner has been confirmed by AQSC, the Assessment and Quality team will inform the Quality Administrator or other relevant member of staff of the decision, and the Quality Administrator will send written confirmation to the External Examiner, which indicates that a Mentor has been allocated. It is then the duty of the Course Leader/Quality Administrator, or other relevant member of staff, to inform the proposed Mentor that their appointment has been confirmed, and to provide their details to the External Examiner. (Staff may wish to use the template letter which can be found at Appendix A).

How long does the mentorship last?

An External Examiner would normally undertake Mentor duties for one year only. A fee of £180.00 (maximum) can be allocated to a Mentor to cover extra work undertaken. Where an extra fee is required, College staff should liaise with Assessment and Quality for confirmation.