

Taught Programme External Examiners Procedure for Raising Concerns

1. Imperial College London generally has positive interactions with its many external examiners and values greatly the input they provide into our quality assurance processes. The College gives full and serious consideration to the comments and recommendations received. Imperial recognises however that occasionally an external examiner may have a particular concern that they wish to raise outside the confines of the general reporting arrangements. This procedure outlines the action that external examiners can take to raise issues with the College.
- 2. Discussion of Concern with Department**
 - 2.1. External examiners are encouraged to raise any concerns they may have at the earliest opportunity with the relevant College Department. Issues relating to the programme for which the external examiner is examining should be raised with the Board Chair in the first instance. Any concerns regarding central external examiner administration (the issuing of contracts and payment of expenses and fees) should be directed to the Assistant Registrar (Academic Standards) at external.examiner@imperial.ac.uk
 - 2.2. In many cases concerns can be addressed by the relevant College Department or the Assistant Registrar immediately. Depending on the nature of the issue, the external examiner may also wish to note this at the Board of Examiners' meeting and/or in their annual report regardless of whether it was subsequently addressed/resolved.
 - 2.3. External examiners may also raise matters of serious concern, which have not been resolved at Departmental level, with the College's Provost – please see section (4) below.
- 3. External Examiner Report**
 - 3.1. The College requires Departments to make a formal response to the feedback provided by external examiners in their annual reports. The external examiner report form is available to download from the [external examiner website](#).
 - 3.2. The external examiner reports, and Departmental responses to them, are considered by the relevant Faculty Education Committees as part of the Department's annual monitoring report(s). These Committees are responsible for ensuring that Departments have responded adequately to external examiner feedback and are taking action as appropriate. External examiners receive feedback on their reports which comprises an individual response to their report from the relevant Department.
 - 3.3. It is hoped that any points of concern, highlighted by external examiners, will be satisfactorily addressed by the relevant Department at this stage. It should be noted that the College may not always agree with the comments made by

its external examiners and may choose not to take forward recommendations. Reasons for this will be documented in the feedback sent to external examiners.

- 3.4. Should an external examiner find that not all points raised have been satisfactorily addressed by the relevant Department and/or by the College, they should contact the Assistant Registrar (Academic Standards) at external.examiner@imperial.ac.uk who shall ensure that a further response is provided.

4. Raising Serious Concerns with the College's Provost

- 4.1. Should an external examiner wish to raise a matter of serious concern with the College's Provost they should complete a Confidential Serious Concerns Report Form. The Confidential Serious Concerns Report Form is available to download from the [external examiner website](#).
- 4.2. A confidential serious concerns report may be submitted at any time.
- 4.3. The Provost, or his/her nominee, shall consider the report and decide how best to take matters forward. The Head of the relevant Department will be informed of the existence of such a report and may be sent the full report for comment if the external examiner agrees to this. An external examiner can expect to receive an initial response from the Provost or his/her nominee to their confidential serious concerns report within 10 working days of receipt of the form.
- 4.4. The College will keep the external examiner informed of action taken in response to their confidential serious concerns report and will confirm when it considers the matter to be resolved.
- 4.5. The existence of such a report and the action arising from the report will be reported to the relevant Faculty Education Committee but the content will not be disclosed
- 4.6. Confidential serious concerns reports will not be published on the College's intranet.
- 4.7. There may be occasions where it would be appropriate for a concern to be raised with the relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body than the Office for Students. Accreditation details for the College's programmes are available from the Assistant Registrar (Monitoring and Review) at external.examiner@imperial.ac.uk

Approved by QAAC
November 2012

Document title:	External Examiners – Serious Concerns Policy		
Version:	4	Date:	September 2018

Location and filename:	R:\7.Quality Assurance\3. Policy Framework\5. External Examiners\Procedure for Raising Serious Concerns
Approved:	QAAC November 2012
Effective from:	Academic year 2012-13
Originator:	Registry Quality Assurance & Enhancement Team
Contact for queries:	Assistant Registrar (Academic Standards)
Cross References:	http://www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/tools-and-reference/quality-assurance-enhancement/external-examining/information-for-external-examiners/ http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=2908
Notes and latest changes:	Formatting changes made on 10 March 2016 Website links updated on 6 May 2016 QAA Concerns Scheme changed to HEFCE Unsatisfactory Quality Scheme – January 2017 Updates to staff titles 17 January 2018 Removal of references to HEFCE September 2018