

AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY
Guidelines, Policies and Procedures

Policy Name	Policy on External Examiners
Policy Number	007
Approved by	Academic Council
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Contact Office	Registrar's Working Group

1.0 To assist standardisation, national and international equivalence, and integrity of examinations, the University requires that examinations leading to the award of a degree or qualification leading to licensure include an evaluation by external examiner(s).

1.1 The University units will determine which additional programmes require an external examiner(s).

2.0 The external examiner will:

2.1 Assess whether examination results and awards support the stated academic standards of the programmes, for the stated group of students being examined.

2.2 Ensure that students are assessed fairly in comparison with other students in the programme; and in accordance with the specifications stated in the course/programme, and standard national and international practices.

2.3 Provide feedback on the value of the assessment process in which the external examiner has participated.

2.4 Comment on design, structure and content of the programme and its standards of achievement.

3.0 External examiners will be required to:

3.1 Review samples of a range of assessments, in order to confirm the standards of marking.

3.2 Endorse the outcomes of assessment for which they have been appointed, moderating internal marking where appropriate, prior to the posting of results of the examination.

3.3 Provide a structured report on a prescribed form which indicates:

3.3.1 The appropriateness of assessment standards set for its awards, or award elements, as judged against published national subject benchmarks, the institutional and

- national qualifications framework, programme specifications and other relevant information.
- 3.3.2 The standard of student performance in the programme(s) or part(s) of programme(s) which they have been appointed to examine.
 - 3.3.3 The comparability of the standards with those of similar programmes or parts of programmes in other international higher education institutions.
 - 3.3.4 The extent to which all processes for assessment and the determination of awards are sound and have been fairly conducted.
 - 3.3.5 The possible actions that could follow on the basis of that report.
- 4.0 External examiners' physical presence at the examination site is not essential, provided that the abovementioned roles can be effectively fulfilled.
- 4.1 Opportunities for dialogue with members of relevant and appropriate examination committees will be encouraged but, the external examiners' presence in committee meetings is not mandatory.
 - 4.2 External examiners must be available for consultation during the term of their contract.
- 5.0 Each programme will define and facilitate the work of the external examiner by developing procedures that state the:
- 5.1 Method and extent of sampling of students' work for external scrutiny.
 - 5.2 Extent of the external examiners',
 - 5.2.1 Access to relevant documents and to any assessed part(s) of the programme.
 - 5.2.2 Scrutiny of and involvement in assessments in distance learning programmes, and assessments which are performance or presentation-based and not paper-based.
 - 5.2.3 Participation in decisions relating to cases of suspected or proven cheating or other assessment offences and malpractices.
 - 5.3 Mechanisms for implementation of appropriate recommendations by the external examiner, regarding adjustment of marks and/ or decisions for individuals, or for students collectively on the basis of sampled assessments.
- 6.0 The selection, appointment, and termination of contract of external examiners will be the responsibility of an examination or programme committee which will make its recommendation to the Dean, who will forward, where appropriate, the recommendations to the Registrar's Working Group. The committee will ensure that,
- 6.1 Criteria and processes for the identification, nomination and appointment of external examiners are understood and accessible to all.
 - 6.2 Nominations are assessed rigorously for integrity, subject expertise, and understanding of academic processes involved in assessment.
 - 6.3 External examiners will be chosen from other academic institutions from faculty who have not been involved in the planning or teaching of the students to be examined.

- 6.3.1 External examiners from institutions other than academic will only be chosen under exceptional circumstances and only with the approval of the Dean, and where appropriate, the Registrar's Working Group.
- 6.3.2 All units of the Aga Khan University are to be considered as being internal to the University, and faculty from other units cannot serve as external examiners.
- 6.4 Appointments are limited up to a two-year term in the first instance, renewable for another two terms, after which reappointments should occur after a period of five years.
- 6.5 All potential conflicts of interest are identified and resolved prior to appointment.
- 6.6 The number of examiners appointed is adequate to cover the full range of studies and designated tasks.
- 6.7 External examiners are selected normally from amongst individuals in professorial ranks who have more than five years of experience as examiners.
- 6.8 Grounds for early termination of external examiner's contracts, which include but are not necessarily limited to breach of contract, conform to the unit's policies and procedures, and are clearly articulated.
- 7.0 The University normally will not encourage:
 - 7.1 Reciprocal external examining between courses or departments in two institutions.
 - 7.2 Replacement of external examiner by an individual from within the University.
 - 7.3 Appointment of more than one examiner from the same institution for a subject or course.
 - 7.4 Appointment of former members of faculty as external examiners, within a period of five years or until sufficient time has elapsed for students taught by the individual to have graduated from the programme, whichever is longer.
 - 7.4.1 Exceptions to the above can only be made with the Dean's approval.
- 8.0 Each unit will provide external examiners with effective support systems to facilitate the conduct of their work and will send information prior to the examination on the,
 - 8.1 Vision, mission, values and Academic Policies of the University.
 - 8.2 Nature of the programme being assessed.
 - 8.3 Composition and function of Examining Boards, Registrar's Working Group, Curriculum committees and Evaluation and Promotion committees.
 - 8.4 Relevant aspects of policies and procedures of the institution, including those relating to academic quality assurance and standards, teaching and learning, and equal opportunities.

- 8.5 Contractual arrangements, including information on,
 - 8.5.1 Rates of payment, reimbursement of expenses and tenure.
 - 8.5.2 Responsibilities, roles, and powers assigned to them; and an individual examiner's role in relation to the examining team as a whole and the extent of their discretion.
 - 8.5.3 Specific details regarding examination timings, nature and timing of pre-examination briefings, examiners meetings, and names of other examiners.
 - 8.5.4 The significance of an external examiner's signature when appended to pass lists, assessment marks or similar documents.

- 9.0 The University will protect the rights of external examiners to enable them to judge students, and uphold the University's standards impartially without influence.

- 10.0 In case of disagreements between external and internal examiners, recommendations will be carefully reviewed where appropriate by relevant University bodies who will be authorized to make the final decision taking into consideration any external licensure requirements. Such decisions will be accepted as final.

- 11.0 Each unit of the University will have in place a system to ensure that,
 - 11.1 All external examiners are competent to perform their roles.
 - 11.2 Specific and appropriate practical experience is provided for on-going development of novices as external examiners.
 - 11.3 The performance, mentoring, phasing in and out of external examiners, and the associated logistics are adequately tracked.