

A'Sharqiyah University Policy

EXTERNAL MODERATION POLICY

Policy name	External Moderation Policy		
Policy number	AC0018		
Contact Person	Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research		
Approval Authority	Board of Trustees		
Date first approved	7 January 2019	Last substantive review	08 June 2023
Policy Review Cycle	Two years	Next review	07 June 2025

1. Definitions

Terms / Abbreviations	Definition
ASU	A'Sharqiyah University
DVCAAR	Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research
External examiner	External examiners are experienced academics in higher education and practitioners from industry. The role involves scrutiny and evaluation of a body of evidence to provide an overall judgement on student performance and the quality and standard of a program (The UK Higher Education Academy, 2019).
External Members of College Academic Boards or University Committees.	These are usually industrialists from outside the University who are appointed because of their expertise to provide external input and independent perspectives to College Academic Boards or University Committees.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that external examiners are given the opportunity to provide independent and impartial evaluation of course, program content, and the student assessment processes at the University. External examiners play a key role in ensuring that academic assessments at the University are rigorous, fair, valid, reliable, and consistent. Although the value of the external moderation process remains a subject of intense debate and creates additional work for academic staff (Bloxham, 2009), the overall consensus is that external examining plays a key role in supporting the maintaining of academic standards. External examiners are involved in the assessment and examination of each cohort of students. They also play a role in sharing best practice between institutions and in benchmarking against comparable programs (Universities UK, 2011). In this policy, the terms external moderation and external examination are used interchangeably.

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3. Scope

The policy applies to a given program nominated by the College Academic Board and its assessments and examinations at all levels and for all programs at the University.

4. Policy Statement

4.1. The external moderation process shall seek to assure that the academic standards at A'Sharqiyah University are comparable to those at other Universities both nationally and internationally.

4.2 The external moderation process shall involve consideration of the program and course content, learning outcomes and the assessments for all courses and programs at the University.

4.3 The external moderation process shall be undertaken by an external examiner who shall be someone external to the University.

4.4 The external examiner shall be an acknowledged subject expert in their particular area and shall ideally hold an appointment at or above the rank of Associate Professor. In exceptional circumstances, an Assistant Professor with more than five years University teaching experience or a master holder with minimum 10 years of experience in the relative field may be considered for appointment.

4.5 External examiners shall not be appointed from Academic Departments and Colleges at other Institutions where academic staff of the University currently serve as external examiners. In other words, reciprocal arrangements for external examiners shall not be acceptable.

4.6 External examiners shall be provided with relevant information to enable them to reach objective judgements regarding the quality of a course or program. This information includes program specifications, course descriptors, all coursework, and draft examination papers, outline solutions, marked assignments and examinations scripts, and course files.

4.7 An external examiner may not serve as external examiner for more than one program at the University. In exceptional circumstances, more than one external examiner may be appointed for one program.

4.8 External examiners shall provide a detailed written report annually to the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research with a copy to the Relevant Dean of College

4.9 Colleges will be given an opportunity to respond to the external examiners report and also to report on the main outcomes of the external examination process in the Dean's Annual Report.

4.10 The Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research will compile a report annually to the University Academic Board addressing the University-wide effectiveness of the external examination process with recommendations for improvement, if any.

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5. Key Stakeholders

University staff, Students, Board of Trustees, Board of Directors, Government Departments.

6. Procedures and Guidance

6.1 Procedure for Appointment of External Examiners.

The procedure for appointment of external examiners shall be as follows:

- a. The College Academic Board will identify a program to be reviewed by the external examiner.
- b. Heads of Departments and College Deans shall establish through their contacts an individual's ability and willingness to serve as an external examiner and obtain his or her curriculum vitae.
- c. The College Academic Board shall review the curriculum vitae of the proposed examiner to ascertain that he/she has the relevant qualifications and experience to serve as external examiners.
- d. External examiners shall be appointed by the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research /Vice Chancellor following the recommendation of the College Academic Board.
- e. External examiners shall serve for ONE year and could be renewed for a period of one another year, if needed.
- f. External examiners shall be paid an annual honorarium for their services. The value of the honorarium shall be approved and published annually in September by the Vice Chancellor based on a recommendation of the Deans' Council.
- g. Former faculty members of the University shall not be eligible to serve as external examiners unless a period of five years has elapsed since their last day of service with the University.

6.2 Role and Responsibilities of the External Examiner.

The role and responsibilities of the external examiner are to:

- a. Provide independent verification that academic standards in each course of study and program are appropriate and comparable to those at other national and international institutions of higher education.
- b. Verify that the assessment processes at the University are fair and that they are conducted in accordance with the University regulations.
- c. Review instruments of academic assessment and make recommendations for any changes.
- d. Review marked samples of coursework and examinations and verify that that the marking is fair and consistent.

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- e. Select and interview any student on the course or program
- f. Attend meetings of the College Assessment and Review Committee as an ex-officio member.
- g. Submit a written report annually to the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research with a copy to the relevant Dean of College as part of the University's quality assurance processes and annual review of academic standards.

6.3 External Examiners Report

The External Examiners Report on a Program shall seek to address the following points:

- a. Whether the program structure and objectives; and course content are appropriate and well defined.
- b. The adequacy and appropriateness of the assessments methods and processes for each course on the program.
- c. Adequacy of administration of the assessment processes.
- d. The extent to which the assessment instruments address the specified learning outcomes of each course.
- e. Whether the assessment instruments are at the right academic level.
- f. The adequacy and appropriateness of arrangements for laboratory and practical examinations and assessments, if any.
- g. Whether marking by internal examiners was fair and consistent
- h. General standards of student performance on courses and the implications for quality of teaching.
- i. Failure rates on the courses and whether they are acceptable.
- j. The distribution of grades and cumulative grade points and whether they are following a normal distribution curve or not.
- k. Whether the external examiner was given access to review all borderline cases.

6.4 External Members of College Academic Boards and other University Committees

External members of College Academic Boards and University Committees are not external examiners as defined in this policy. They will however be paid an annual fee for their services which will be determined and published annually in September by the Vice Chancellor based on a recommendation of the Deans' Council.

7. References

Bloxham, Sue (2009) Marking and moderation in the UK: false assumptions and wasted resources. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 34(2) 209-220.
Universities UK (2011) *Review of External Examiner arrangements in Universities and Colleges in the UK: Final Report and Recommendations*. London: Universities UK.

The UK Higher Education Academy (2019). *Fundamentals of External Examining* available at www.heacademy, accessed on 02 June, 2020.

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8. General Provisions

- Anything that is not stated in this policy or strategy is subject to the Law and internal rules and regulations of the University.
- Any infringement or breach of any of the terms of this policy or strategy may result in the offender being held responsible under the provisions of the Law and the University's internal rules and regulations.
- Any exception from this policy or strategy, up on implementation, shall not have any effect against the University or third parties unless it has been endorsed by the Vice Chancellor of the University and approved by the Board of Directors and/or the Board of Trustees, as the case may be.

9. Revision History

Version	Author/ Reviewer	Revision(s) made and justification	Date
1	University Learning and Teaching Committee	The external moderation policy has been amended as follows: 1. The definition of an external examiner has been added to the policy; 2. Distinction is made between an external examiner and an external member who serves on a University Committee; 3. Appointment of external examiners for Master's level dissertations is now a mandatory requirement at the University; 4. The process by which fees to be paid for the services of external examiners and external committee members has been clarified.	8 June 2020
2	University Learning and Teaching Committee	The External Moderation Policy has been amended as follows: 1. Modifications are made under the definition of the external examiner and scope of the policy to include the program nominated by the College Academic Board. 2. The possibility of appointment of an external examiner holding a master's degree with a minimum of 10 years of experience in the relevant field is included.	8 June 2023

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		<p>3. Removed the external examiner for master's degree research thesis from the policy statement.</p> <p>4. The role of the College Academic Board to identify a program to be reviewed by external examiner and to review the CV of external examiner was added under procedures and guidelines.</p> <p>5. The serving period of external reviewer was revised.</p> <p>6. The role and responsibilities of the external examiner regarding the academic judgements of student performance, making recommendations to adjust marks of students and verifying marks and pass lists before they are published.</p>	
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