

External Academic Expertise Framework

1. Introduction

External, independent and impartial academic expertise is crucial in ensuring that the School's provision meets a range of requirements and expectations, including:

- € The assurance and alignment of academic standards with sector frameworks, standards and benchmarks, such as the [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#), the [Qualifications and Credits Frameworks](#) and any relevant Subject Benchmark Statements;
- € The assurance of the quality of the School's provision relative to sector expectations;
- € The identification of good practice in teaching, learning and assessment, and the identification of areas for improvement.

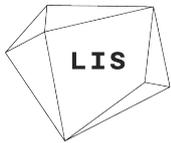
This document summarises the various ways in which the School engages external academic experts to assure its academic quality and standards, to support the continuous improvement of its teaching, learning and assessment, and to draw on and contribute to the wider academic community.

A summary of the ways in which the School engages students in its academic and general governance is set out in the [Student Engagement Framework](#).

In designing its arrangements with external experts, the School has ensured alignment with the core practices of the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) (2019), in particular:

- *Standard 1* ("The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications frameworks");
- *Standard 2* (The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers);
- *Standard 4* ("The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent")
- *Quality 2* ("The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses")

The School has also drawn upon QAA's [Advice and Guidance on External Expertise](#) (2019) and Advance [HE's Fundamentals of External Examining](#) (2019).



2. Related policies, procedures and frameworks

The following policies and procedures set out the School's detailed arrangements with external experts:

- Academic Council: Membership and Terms of Reference
- Programme Review and Approval Panel: Membership and Terms of Reference
- Board of Examiners: Membership and Terms of Reference
- Marking and Moderation Policy
- Programme Design, Development, Monitoring and Evaluation Procedures
- External Examiners Policy and Procedure
- Student Engagement Framework

3. Types of external academic expert engaged by the School

(a) External, independent members of academic governance committees

External, independent members sit on the School's academic governance committees to:

- Ensure comparability of academic provision and capture of good practice from other higher education institutions;
- Inform course design, approval and review, considering all elements contributing to the learning journey, including staff and resources to deliver a high-quality academic experience;
- Provide scrutiny, assurance and monitoring of the standards, as well as quality of the School's provision;
- Share good practice in teaching, learning and assessment;
- Advise on areas for improvement of provision;
- Advise on new and revised aspects of provision which may have a substantial impact of the quality of student learning opportunities;
- Ensure the connection of the School with a broader academic community.

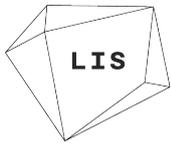
The external members of the School's major academic governance committees are as follows:

Academic Council

- Two independent members appointed by the Council with substantial experience at an executive level in the provision and management of higher education in the United Kingdom

Programme/Module Review and Approval Panel:

- Independent member(s) appointed to the Academic Council
- External Advisor



- External Scrutineer

Board of Examiners

- Independent member appointed to the Academic Council.
- External Examiners

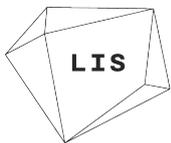
Associated Policies and Procedures

- Academic Council: Membership and Terms of Reference
- Programme Review and Approval Panel: Membership and Terms of Reference
- Board of Examiners: Membership and Terms of Reference

(b) External Advisors

The School engages External Advisors to provide independent academic expertise in the development and approval of any new programme, or any significant changes to existing programmes. The External Advisor sits on the Programme/Module Review and Approval Panel; their role is to provide external, impartial, and independent academic expertise to:

- Provide input and comment during the validation of new LIS programme/modules, or modifications to existing programme/modules; this includes consideration of:
 - The design principles underpinning the programme;
 - The validity and relevance of the programme's aims and intended learning outcomes;
 - The overall shape and structure of the programme, including progression, coherence and integrity;
 - The validity of the assessment methodology and its coherence with the programme's learning outcomes and academic standards;
 - All elements of contributing to the learning journey, including staff and resources to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
- Provide assurance that the quality and standards of LIS's programme/modules coheres with the [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#) and any relevant Subject Benchmark Statement.
- Comment on the reasonable comparability of the standards of LIS's programme/modules relative to standards achieved at other UK providers with whom the External Advisor has experience.
- Comment on whether students have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level.
- Comment on the relevance, currency and validity of the programme in the light of developing knowledge in the field.



- Comment on the extent to which the programme, in design and assessment methods, reasonably anticipates the needs of protected groups of students as defined under the [Equality Act 2010](#).

Associated Policies and Procedures

- [Programme Review and Approval Panel: Membership and Terms of Reference](#)
- [Programme Design, Development, Monitoring and Evaluation Procedures](#)

(c) External Scrutineers

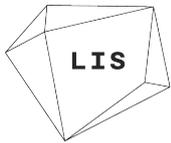
External Scrutineers have a key role in the programme approval process. After the programme has been signed off for review by the Director of Teaching and Learning and before the meeting of the Programme/Module Review and Approval Panel, External Scrutineers are appointed by the School to review the academic standards of each assigned module. The report(s) of the External Scrutineer(s) assist the School in ensuring that each module has been reviewed by a cognate expert and is coherent, current and valid. Where an External Scrutineer has reviewed an entire programme, they will be invited to the Programme/Module Review and Approval Panel to give an oral or written account of their views of the quality and standards of the programmes as a whole.

Specifically, External Scrutineers comment on:

- The extent to which the learning outcomes of the module align with and support the learning outcomes of the programme;
- The extent to which the learning outcomes provide a coherent area of study and are relevant and current in the light of developing knowledge in the field;
- The extent to which learning outcomes are set at the appropriate level of the [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#);
- Whether the amount of credit assigned to modules is appropriate;
- Whether the assessment methods are valid and proportionate;
- Whether there are appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience;
- Whether the proposed method of delivery provides students with a fair and reasonable opportunity to achieve the academic standards required for successful achievement of the learning outcomes.

Associated Policies and Procedures

- [Programme Review and Approval Panel: Membership and Terms of Reference](#)
- [Programme Design, Development, Monitoring and Evaluation Procedures](#)



(d) External Examiners

The School engages External Examiners to provide impartial and independent advice, and to comment on the standards of its programme and student achievement in relation to these standards. External Examiners comment on:

- The alignment of the School's standards with UK-recognised standards in determining awards;
- The maintenance and application of academic standards through internal marking practices and assessment processes;
- The extent to which the School's assessment instruments enable students to demonstrate the achievement of the intended learning outcomes for the module(s) or programme(s) they have been appointed to examine;
- The standards of student performance in the module(s) or programme(s) they have been appointed to examine;
- The extent to which the School's students have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level;
- The extent to which the School consistently and fairly implements its assessment policies, regulations, procedures and governance;
- The quality and standards of the School's programme(s) in relation to national sector benchmarks and in relation to their experience at other comparable UK higher education institutions.

External Examiners are an important source of guidance on best practice, and their advice supports the School in ensuring that it is continuously improving its teaching, learning and assessment practices. Their feedback is incorporated into ongoing monitoring of the quality of the School's provision.

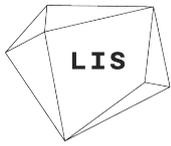
External Examiners sit on the School's Board of Examiners, which considers and makes recommendations on the results of students with regard to awards, modules and progression between the Levels of a Programme.

Associated Policies and Procedures

- Board of Examiners: Membership and Terms of Reference
- Marking and Moderation Policy
- Programme Design, Development, Monitoring and Evaluation Procedures
- External Examiners Policy and Procedure

4. Principles for Engaging External Academic Experts

External Academic Experts must:



- Have relevant academic expertise to the School's field of study and its mode of delivery, with sufficient depth and breadth of knowledge and experience to provide meaningful comment on the academic standards of the programme/module and its alignment with national qualification frameworks; and to identify good practice and recommend enhancements to course design, teaching, learning and assessment.
- Have sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the relevant field of study to be able to command the respect of academic peers.
- Be familiar with quality and standards and quality assurance in a higher education context.
- Have no direct involvement with the programme under consideration (e.g., delivery through teaching or any other direct involvement), so that they can provide independent and impartial comment and input.
- Have no other conflicts of interest preventing them from giving independent impartial comment and input (e.g., close personal or professional relationships with staff or students, or previous experts involved in their area of responsibility).

(5) Policies relating to the engagement of external and academic experts

Clear, transparent and appropriate guidance and procedures must be in place for the appointment of external academic experts, with due attention being paid to relevant expertise and the avoidance of conflicts of interest, including reciprocal arrangements.

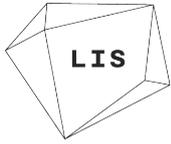
The School will provide clear, transparent and accessible information to staff, students and other stakeholders on roles of external experts involved in the assurance of standards, maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the student learning experience.

The School will support its external academic experts to fully understand and appropriately fulfil the role they are asked to undertake; this may include training, guidance and mentoring.

The School will give its external academic experts timely access to the range of evidence required to enable them to fulfil their role.

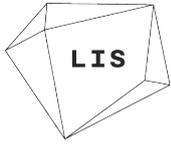
The School will have in place effective measures to ensure that input from external academic experts is considered, and where appropriate, actioned. It will also ensure that timely and reasoned responses are given to experts on actions taken or not taken as a consequence of their feedback.

An up-to-date register must be kept of all external academic experts appointed to the School, and all external appointments of LIS faculty. This register will be held and maintained by the Registrar.



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Audited by:	Academic Council
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Date of next review: (annually unless otherwise agreed)	
<i>Related documents:</i> <i>(eg associated forms, underpinning processes, related policies or overarching policies)</i>	Academic Council: Membership and Terms of Reference Programme Review and Approval Panel: Membership and Terms of Reference Board of Examiners: Membership and Terms of Reference Marking and Moderation Policy Programme Design, Development, Monitoring and Evaluation Procedures External Examiners Policy and Procedure Student Engagement Framework

Version Control



Version	Author	Date	Brief summary of changes
1	Hannah Kohler (Director of Admissions and Student Support)	17/01/2020	Original draft
2	Dr. Michael Englard (Director of Widening Participation and Student Success, Faculty)	12/02/2020	Minor wording changes
3	Prof. Chris Maguire (Registrar)	14/02//2020	Minor edits
4	Dr. Mattia Gallotti (Faculty)	25/02/2020	Minor wording changes, stylistic and structural changes
5	Academic Council	16/03/2020	Approved