External Examiner Handbook:

BA (Hons) Professional Management – 2026/27

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1. Introduction

Established in 1994, UCQ is a privately owned, financially robust, independent provider of further and higher education with approximately 35 staff and many years' experience in delivering work-based learning provision. UCQ is a registered Higher Education Provider (HEP) with the Office for Students, a Further Education (FE) contract holder, a Combined Authority devolved adult skills budget holder and a registered provider of apprenticeship training.

UCQ's vision is to be a leading provider of further and higher education in England. Its mission is to enable all students, staff and organisations with whom we work to achieve their potential. UCQ is committed to achieving five strategic goals to fulfil this vision: excellence in teaching learning and assessment; excellence in partnership and community engagement; sustainable financial independence; achieve Degree Awarding Powers (DAPs) and full university title; be regarded as a leading provider of work-based higher education in England, and finally, be recognised as an excellent place to work.

UCQ develops people to achieve excellence in leadership and management, supporting their career potential and helping to enrich their working life and that of the teams they lead and manage. Programmes are created and delivered by leading practitioners who combine their practical business expertise with experienced programme delivery.

UCQ specialises in supporting managers that have, or are preparing to change their profession, as well as those that favoured a vocational rather than a traditional academic education. The approach works because there is a tripartite agreement between UCQ, the individual and the employer, working together to share success and achieve lasting results. Programmes include a strong focus on experiential learning and contextualisation of assignments directly to the employment.

UCQ is approved by the Open University as an appropriate organisation to offer higher education programmes leading to Open University validated awards.

UCQ's approach to external examining is aligned with the Office for Students (OfS) Condition B5, which requires providers to ensure that sector-recognised standards are maintained. External Examiners provide vital assurance that awards are comparable with those granted by other UK higher education providers, and that assessment processes are rigorous, fair, and transparent.

Some information within this Handbook has been adapted from the best practice guidance published within the Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which remains © QAA.

2. Key UCQ contacts

UCQ Head Office Details	
Name	University Centre Quayside (UCQ)
Head office address & postcode	University Centre Quayside Quayside i-4, Albion Row Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear NE6 1LL
Head office telephone	03330048470
Email address	enquiries@ucq.ac.uk
Office hours	Monday to Friday 9am-5pm

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Vice Principal	Michelle Elliott	michelle.elliott@ucq.ac.uk
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Board of Examiners	
Chair	Michelle Elliott: michelle.elliott@ucq.ac.uk
Member	Lisa Flett: lisa.flett@ucq.ac.uk
Member	Helen McCreeth: helen.mccreeth@ucq.ac.uk
Member	Prof Yvonne Moogan: yvonne.moogan@ucq.ac.uk
Member	Andy Price: andy.price@ucq.ac.uk
Member	Open University Representative

The Open University	
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Student Registry Manager	Lisa Hastie	lisa.hastie@ucq.ac.uk
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Professional & Administration Services Officer	Kay Wilson	kay.wilson@ucq.ac.uk

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	Megan Sormus	megan.sormus@ucq.ac.uk
Apprenticeship Standards Manager	Colleen Henderson	colleen.henderson@ucq.ac.uk
Professional Development Assessors	Michelle Atkinson	mich.atkinson@ucq.ac.uk
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HE Academic Support Tutors	Abby Pattison	abby.pattison@ucq.ac.uk
	Megan Sormus	megan.sormus@ucq.ac.uk

Safeguarding Team	
Strategic Safeguarding Lead: **Michelle Elliott**	Tel 03330048470 or michelle.elliott@ucq.ac.uk
Designated Safeguarding Lead: **Kelly Pattison**	Tel 03330048470 or kelly.pattison@ucq.ac.uk
Designated Safeguarding Lead: **Ben Devine**	Tel 07366 564 165 or ben.devine@ucq.ac.uk

3. The BA (Hons) Professional Management

The BA (Hons) Professional Management is delivered as part of the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship (CMDA), an overview of which is shown below.

Elements of CMDA	Training organisation	Awarding body	Level
BA (Hons) Professional Management (includes an embedded CMI Level 5 Diploma in Management and Leadership)	UCQ	The Open University (OU)	6
Chartered Manager Status (Optional)	UCQ	Chartered Management Institute (CMI)	N/A
Functional skills – English and Maths (Optional)	UCQ	NCFE	2

The Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship (CMDA) enables students to develop their knowledge, skills, behaviours and understanding of the operational and strategic dimensions of management within a real working environment. The CMDA incorporates a BA (Hons) Professional Management.

Upon successful completion of the BA (Hons) Professional Management, the five following learning outcomes will have been achieved:

1. An in depth understanding of the main areas of professional management and the way these areas interrelate

2. Knowledge and understanding acquired through formal learning and applied to the business environment

3. An ability to apply an independent approach to develop the skills required by a professional manager

4. Skills acquired and demonstrated through continuous professional development in the workplace

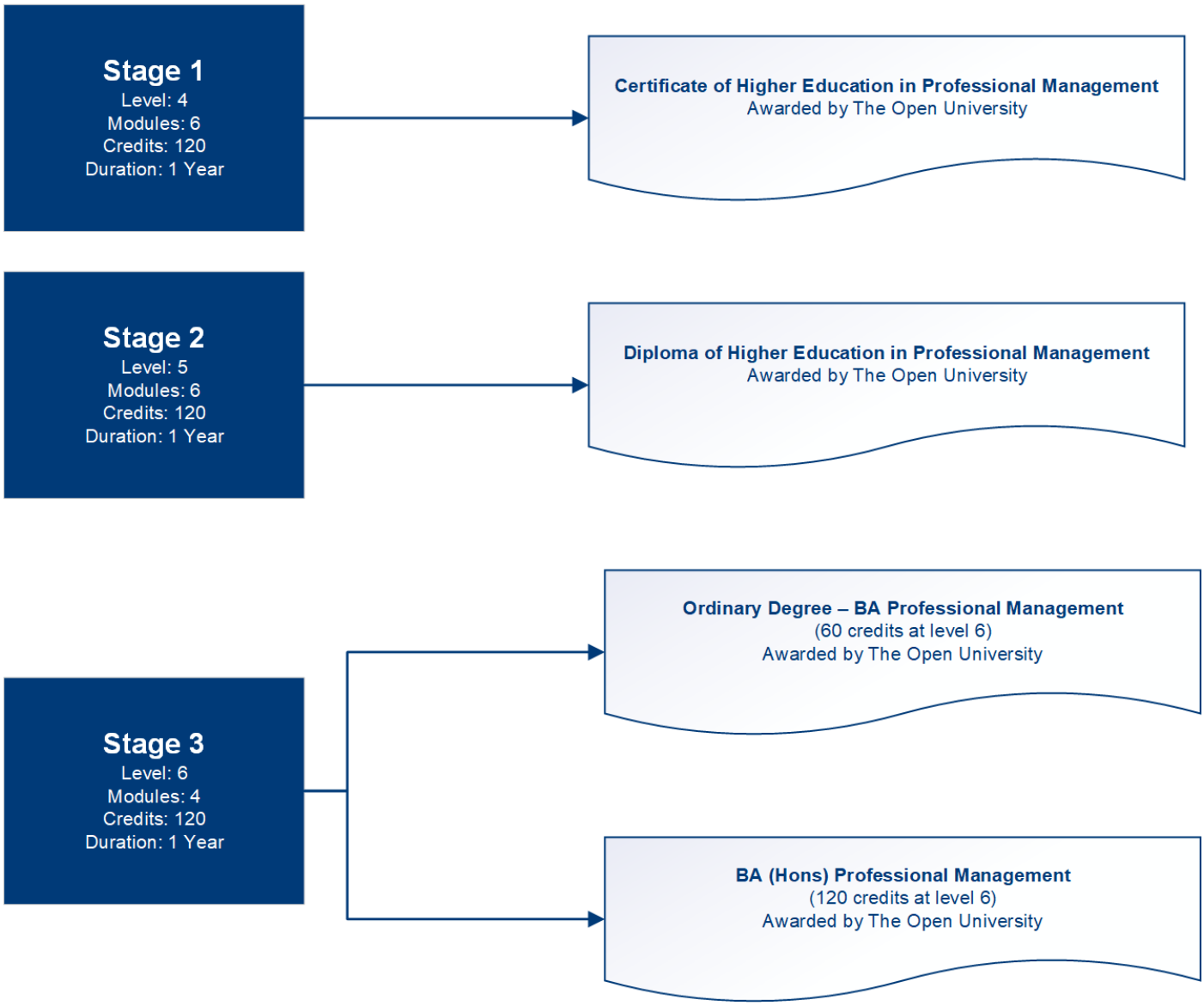
5. The ability to apply critical tools and techniques that enable the integration of theory and practice within a work environment

Each of the modules will be assessed through a range of methods. Some of these methods include:

- Essays
- Reports
- Presentations
- Reflective reviews
- Observations
- Professional discussion and demonstration
- Witness testimonies
- Peer reviews
- Work product evidence

This degree has three stages; each stage comprises of 120 credits and 1200 guided learning hours (GLH); each equivalent to one-year full-time university study. The estimated duration of this programme is 3 years.

Exit awards



Stage 1 modules:

Ref	Description	Credits	GLH
1.1	**Academic Writing and Study Skills** Provides students with essential skills and knowledge required of a higher education student. It introduces professional and academic skills, such as teamwork, professional communication and writing. Its aim is to lay a successful foundation for academic achievement during the degree and for later professional achievement in the real world of professional management.	20	200
1.2	**Leadership** Gives students the opportunity to understand the impact of different leadership styles on individual and organisational performance. Students will review the purpose and values of the organisation and understand the impact culture has on different ways of working. Students will understand how to develop a high-performance work culture and how to develop others in the team by using a range of coaching and mentoring support methods.	20	200
1.3	**Effective Communication** Gives students the opportunity to understand different forms of written, verbal, non-verbal and digital communication and their effectiveness in different situations in the workplace. Students will have the opportunity to develop their own communication skills including effective listening, influencing, negotiation and persuasion. Students will also take part in managing and chairing meetings.	20	200
1.4	**Marketing** Gives students the opportunity to learn about sales and marketing strategies relating to specific segments of the organisation's market. Students will assess different methods of setting sales and marketing objectives and evaluate their own organisation's customer base. Students will create a sales and marketing solution for an organisation based on an analysis of customer data.	20	200
1.5	**Decision Making** Gives students the opportunity to understand how to make and communicate effective decisions. Students will review different decision making and problem-solving models to enable effective decisions to be made. Students will analyse complex data enabling them to draw sensible conclusions. Students will review critical analysis tools and ensure that ethical approaches are used to solve problems.	20	200
1.6	**Management in Practice: Developing Self and Others** Gives students the skills and competencies needed as a higher education student and first line manager. Students will understand how to carry out academic research, use referencing correctly and write a literature review using appropriate academic format. Students will understand the competencies required as a manager and develop these through practical activities, reflecting on their own performance.	20	200
Total		**120**	**1200**

Stage 2 modules:

Ref	Description	Credits	GLH
2.1	**Managing People** Gives students the opportunity to understand how to recruit, manage and develop people using various methods, including inclusive talent management approaches. Students will also understand how to manage team and individual performance and ensure that legal requirements are met, such as health and safety.	20	200
2.2	**Finance for Managers** Gives students the opportunity to assess the financial performance of an organisation. Students will understand the tools and techniques used to do this and the importance of regular financial monitoring. Students will assess how an organisation contracts for supplies and its procurement process.	20	200
2.3	**New Technologies** Gives students the opportunity to understand new technologies available to organisations and the impact of these on current and future developments within organisations. Students will learn about knowledge management and the importance of this to business survival. Students will generate ideas for improvements to products and services using innovative approaches.	20	200
2.4	**Digital Business** Gives students the opportunity to understand future and predicted trends relevant to digital business and how it is an essential part of today's modern business. Students will understand the complexities of digital business and the links between this and organisational strategy. Students will learn how digital business can be used for competitive advantage.	20	200
2.5	**Stakeholder Relationship Development** Gives students the opportunity to improve and develop relationships with key stakeholders and to understand supplier engagement and management. Students will learn about strategies to minimise conflict and work with those from different cultures, backgrounds and levels within an organisation.	20	200
2.6	**Management in Practice: Developing Self and Others** Gives students the opportunity to reflect on their development as a manager and higher education student. Students will learn about emotional and social intelligence and evaluate factors that impact on improvements to their own performance. Students will develop commercial acumen and sound judgment competencies and reflect on these in their personal development plan.	20	200
Total		**120**	**1200**

Stage 3 modules:

Ref	Description	Credits	GLH
3.1	**Strategy and Change** Gives students the opportunity to understand how to develop and implement an organisation's strategy and to manage change. Students will deliver operational plans and produce reports interpreting organisational data and delivering successful outcomes.	20	200
3.2	**Project Management** Gives students the opportunity to learn how to manage a project through the planning, design, development and implementation stages. Students will also understand how to evaluate a project, review risk management models and create plans for mitigation enabling students to lead and drive change within an organisation.	20	200
3.3	**Management in Practice: Developing Self and Others** Gives students the opportunity to reflect on their development as a manager and higher education student through stage three. Students will learn about stress management techniques and understand how to identify this within their team. Students will reflect on how creative, innovative and enterprising students have been on the programme and demonstrate new ways of working based on the most up to date management theories.	20	200
3.4	**Management Research Project** Gives students the skills to develop a proposal to solve a management related problem within their own organisation. Students will develop their own set of terms of reference, decide on the research techniques to use to collect primary and secondary data, collect and analyse the data and recommend solutions to solve the problem. Students will present their findings and recommendations through a presentation and a formal academic research project report.	60	600
Total		**120**	**1200**

4. External Examiner Person Specification

UCQ apply a UK-wide set of criteria for appointing External Examiners. This person specification has been adapted from the best practice guidance published within Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code for Higher Education. UCQ makes every effort to ensure that their External Examiners are competent to undertake the responsibilities defined in this Handbook and any potential conflicts of interest are identified and resolved prior to appointment or as soon as they arise.

External Examiner evidence requirements:

- knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality
- competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study, or parts there of
- relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate
- competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures
- sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command the respect of academic peers and, where appropriate, professional peers
- familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed
- fluency in English, and where programmes are delivered and assessed in languages other than English, fluency in the relevant language(s) (unless other secure arrangements are in place to ensure that External Examiners are provided with the information to make their judgements)
- meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies where applicable
- awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula
- competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

UCQ is committed to promoting equality, equity, diversity and inclusion in all external examiner appointments and welcomes applications from underrepresented groups across the sector.

5. Conflicts of interest

UCQ do not appoint as External Examiners anyone in the following categories or circumstances:

- a member of a governing body or committee of the appointing body or one of its partners, delivery organisations or support providers, or a current employee of the appointing body or one of its partners, delivery organisations or support providers
- anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme of study
- anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study
- anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to significantly influence the future of students on the programme of study
- anyone significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme(s) or modules in question
- former staff or students of the higher education provider unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the External Examiner have completed their programme(s)
- a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another higher education provider
- the succession of an External Examiner by a colleague from the examiner's home department and provider
- the appointment of more than one External Examiner from the same department of the same higher education provider.

6. Nomination and appointment

UCQ nominate External Examiners in accordance with the Person Specification criteria above. The Open University are responsible for the formal appointment of External Examiners for all validated UCQ awards.

During the nomination and appointment process, the Vice Principal takes responsibility for:

- Considering the evidence requirements and appropriate documentation in support of nominations
- Reporting to the Academic Board all eligible nominations for discussion and approval; thus ensuring the integrity and objectivity of the nomination process is maintained
- Maintaining a central register of appointments and periods of tenure
- Ensuring appointed External Examiners are clear about their duties and are offered suitable support

Where more than one examiner is appointed to a programme or part thereof, UCQ will consider phasing examiner appointments to enable and encourage the mentoring of new examiners. Where one External Examiner is appointed to a programme or part thereof, support shadowing or handover arrangements are also considered.

7. Termination of contract

The importance of the role of the External Examiner in contributing to UCQ's management of standards and quality means that any failure to fulfil the role is viewed seriously by UCQ. Action is taken, including early termination of the contract, in appropriate cases.

In particular, the failure to attend examination boards (where attendance is required) without making alternative arrangements, the failure to submit reports, or the provision of incomplete reports are grounds for early termination.

The power to terminate the appointment is not restricted to a particular time period, such as the end of the academic year. UCQ will ensure that decisions are made on sound evidence of non fulfilment and make such decisions in accordance with the procedures set out in this Handbook.

A conflict of interest may arise during a term office. Where this cannot be resolved, normal practice would be for the External Examiner to resign. However, as a last resort UCQ may terminate the appointment to protect the independence of its external examining arrangements.

With regard to whistleblowing, neither the raising of well-founded concerns about academic standards, nor the submission of a confidential report to the Academic Board, are valid grounds for termination.

Procedure for termination of contract

A broad summary of the progressive staged approach is outlined below:

Stage 1 Verbal warning confirmed formally in writing to the External Examiner

In most cases, an External Examiner will have received an informal warning before receiving a formal verbal warning.

Verbal warning: This is actioned by a member of the Senior Leadership Team. After the formal verbal warning takes place, details of the nature of the warning will be confirmed in writing to the External Examiner. This will be countersigned by a different member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Stage 2 Written warning to the External Examiner

In most cases, an External Examiner will have received a verbal warning before receiving a formal written warning.

Written warning: This is actioned by a member of the Senior Leadership Team or voting member of the Academic Board where required and countersigned by another member of the Academic Board.

After the formal written warning takes place, details of the nature of the warning will be given or forwarded to the External Examiner.

Stage 3 Final written warning to the External Examiner

In most cases, an External Examiner will have received a written warning before receiving a final written warning.

Final written warning: This is actioned by a voting member of the Academic Board and countersigned by another voting member of the Academic Board.

After the formal final written warning takes place, a letter detailing the nature of the warning will be given or forwarded to the External Examiner and The Open University.

Stage 4 The matter will be referred to The Open University for investigation

Suspension from attendance to UCQ Board of Examiners is likely to occur for a specified period or while the investigation takes place. The outcome of Stage 4 may lead to termination of contract by The Open University (for validated awards).

Right of appeal

All External Examiners have the right to appeal a disciplinary action at each stage of the process if there are extenuating or mitigating circumstances, additional evidence or information that is relevant but not known by the member of staff at the time of the disciplinary action. Appeals must be lodged in accordance with AC-001 Appeals Procedure.

8. Arrangements for the publication of name, position and institution

To ensure UCQ's external examining arrangements are transparent, and to support the involvement of students in quality management processes, students are made aware of the identity and current position of the External Examiners appointed to their modules/programmes and awards.

The publication of the name, position and institution of External Examiners is published in the Student Handbook (GP-004) available on the UCQ website and within e-portfolio system Ecordia.

Any direct contact received from students to the External Examiner should be immediately reported to UCQ.

Students also have access to a summary of the annual External Examiner reports and UCQ's response, which are published via the student e-portfolio system Ecordia.

9. Commercial confidentiality arrangements

It is the responsibility of the Vice Principal to ensure that any potential intellectual property issues that may require commercial confidentiality agreements (i.e. industrial placements) be resolved prior to the appointment of External Examiners being made.

10. Terms of office

The duration of an External Examiner's appointment will normally be for four years, with an exceptional extension of one year to ensure continuity.

An External Examiner may be reappointed in exceptional circumstances but only after a period of five years or more has elapsed since their last appointment.

External Examiners normally hold no more than two External Examiner appointments for taught programmes/modules at any point in time.

11. Inductions

As soon as possible after formal appointment, you will be invited by Michelle Elliott to attend an induction to clarify your role and responsibilities, meet with key staff relevant to your role, complete a handover with the previous External Examiner and, if desired, meet with students or employers. This induction may occur over several appointments as required.

The induction will also provide an opportunity to discuss interactions during the academic year such as dates for Board meetings and the sampling of assessment.

Draft Induction Meeting Agenda:

- Introduction and welcome to UCQ and the UCQ Core Values
- Introduction to key staff: Vice Principal, Academic Programme Lead, HE Admissions Manager
- Role and responsibilities of an EE for an OU validated award
- Key documentation
- Key dates

- Handover with previous EE
- Meeting with students/employers where requested
- Further questions/clarification

12. Responsibilities of External Examiners for OU Validated Awards

In line with the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023, External Examiners are reminded that students and staff have lawful rights to freedom of expression, and assessment practices should uphold these principles while ensuring compliance with academic and professional standards.

The Open University (OU) appoints External Examiners for two main reasons: to benefit from direct experience of relevant standards in other universities; and to subject its examining methods and processes to external assessment.

The role of External Examiners appointed by the OU for a validated programme or group of modules is to ensure that justice is done to the individual student and that the standard of the OU's validated awards is maintained. The role of the External Examiner is to maintain academic standards; measuring achievement, rigour and fairness and the comparability of standards and student performance. In order to carry out these responsibilities, External Examiners must:

Be aware of the integrated nature of the degree apprenticeship programme and consider how the academic assessment aligns with apprenticeship standards and employer expectations, while maintaining academic integrity.

Be able to judge students impartially on the basis of the work submitted for assessment without being influenced by previous association with the programme, the staff or any of the students

- Be able to compare the performance of students with that of their peers undertaking comparable programmes of higher education in the UK and in the light of subject benchmarks and qualification descriptors, as appropriate
- Moderate and approve the final draft of each examination paper or end-of-module component together with the related marking scheme or notes for the guidance of markers. This activity should include scrutinising the form and content of examination papers, coursework and other assessments that count towards the award in such a way as to enable the External Examiners to judge whether students have fulfilled the aims and learning outcomes of the programme and reached the required standard. This activity should include alternative assessments and adjustments made for students with declared disability or impairments, in order to ensure that all students will be assessed fairly in relation to the programme syllabus and regulations
- Be consulted about and agree to any proposed changes to the approved assessment regulations or assessment strategy which will directly affect students currently on a programme
- Have access to all assessed work, and see samples of the work of students proposed for each category of award and for failure, in order to ensure that assessment criteria have been interpreted correctly and that there is parity of assessment across the cohort
- Consider the reliability of the mode of monitoring the marks of module assessments and the final end-of-module component (e.g. examination) and report to the board of examiners on such revisions as they consider necessary
- Have the right to moderate the marks awarded by internal examiners where this is within the regulations for the programme and does not bias the overall assessment or cause unfairness to individual candidates
- Have the right to meet students and, where appropriate, conduct a viva voce examination of any candidate

- Ensure that the assessments are conducted in accordance with the approved programme regulations
- Attend the meetings of the board of examiners at which decisions on recommendations for award are made and ensure that those recommendations have been reached by means in accordance with the OU's requirements and normal practice in UK higher education
- Provide verbal and written reports
- Participate as required in any review of decisions about individual students' awards taken during the examiner's period of office
- Report back to the OU and the partner institution on student performance and academic standards as well as on the effectiveness of the assessments and any lessons to be drawn from them
- Report in confidence to the OU's Vice-Chancellor on any matters of serious concern arising from the assessments which put at risk the standard of the OU's validated award.

13. Expectations of External Examiners

UCQ expect the External Examiner to provide informative comment and recommendations upon whether or not:

- UCQ is maintaining the threshold academic standards set for its awards in accordance with the frameworks for higher education qualifications and applicable Subject Benchmark Statements
- the assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the programme(s) and is conducted in line with the awarding body's policies and regulations
- the academic standards and the achievements of students are comparable with those in other UK degree-awarding bodies of which the external examiners have experience

External Examiners are encouraged to identify examples of effective practice and opportunities for enhancement that may support the continuous improvement of learning, teaching, assessment and the student experience.

Maintaining academic standards

Fundamental to carrying out this part of the role is to provide feedback on whether:

- the programme and its component parts continue to be coherent and their outcomes aligned with the relevant qualification descriptor set out in the applicable qualifications framework, supplemented where applicable by one or more subject benchmark statements
- the programme reflects any additional PSRB requirements
- assessments in modules of the same level are of a comparable standard
- the curriculum remains current
- assessment criteria, marking schemes and arrangements for classification are set at the appropriate level

Measuring achievement, rigour and fairness

An important element of the External Examiner's role is to provide assurance that the assessment process is properly designed and applied, and is carried out in a manner that is fair and equitable to all students concerned as well as supportive of achieving the intended outcomes.

External examiners pay attention to whether:

- the types of assessment are appropriate for the subject, the students, the respective level of study and the expected outcomes

- the marking scheme/grading criteria have been properly and consistently applied, and whether internal marking is therefore of an appropriate standard, fair and reliable
- the assessment processes are carried out in accordance with the awarding body's regulations and procedures
- procedures governing mitigating/extenuating circumstances, academic integrity/misconduct and borderline performances have been considered fairly and equitably applying institutional regulations.

External Examiners may also comment on the provider's approach to the use of artificial intelligence tools in assessment, including the effectiveness of guidance provided to students and staff, and the consistency of institutional responses to suspected misuse.

Comparability of standards and student performance

External examiners should provide feedback to UCQ on the comparability of standards and student achievement. This feedback is based on their experience of other higher education providers (whether as a member of staff, external examiner or other role).

Comparability focuses on standards and student achievement in one or more of the following:

- across the modules within a single programme
- across programmes within a single subject area in an awarding institution
- across programmes within a single subject area across higher education providers of which the external examiner has experience
- any of the above, across cohorts during the examiner's period of appointment.

Right to raise serious concerns

In exceptional circumstances, an External Examiner may have serious concerns regarding the academic standards or quality of provision at UCQ. An External Examiner has the right to raise such concerns through UCQ's Complaints Procedure, including, where appropriate, by submitting a separate confidential written report.

The Academic Board shall consider any confidential report received and provide a timely, considered response, outlining any actions to be taken. Where the concerns relate to validated provision, UCQ shall inform The Open University, as the validating partner, and involve the University in accordance with the Partnership Agreement and applicable quality assurance requirements.

Where an External Examiner considers that serious concerns relating to academic standards or quality have not been appropriately addressed through UCQ's internal processes, they may raise those concerns directly with The Open University in accordance with the University's procedures for validated provision. Nothing in this procedure prevents an External Examiner from raising concerns with the Office for Students or any other relevant regulatory body where this is considered necessary and appropriate.

The role of the Board of Examiners

As members of the Board of Examiners, External Examiners are rarely considered to be the final arbiter for the award of marks/grades, either within a module or for the final award. Such decisions are the responsibility of the Board of Examiners collectively. All decisions made by the Board of Examiners will be done so through a quorum of members. Exceptionally there may be cases where internal markers and moderators wish to seek the opinion of the External Examiner in an individual case. In such circumstances the final decision would still be made by the Board of Examiners, with the views of the respective moderators made known to the Board.

Moderation of assessment arrangements

As Chair of the Board of Examiners, Michelle Elliott has overall responsibility for the following:

- Arranging the External Examiners' scrutiny of assessment setting
- Arrangements for sampling of assessments in accordance with the rights and responsibilities set out in this document
- Arranging the provision of marking schemes and the internally moderated list of marks for the cohort being assessed
- Arrangements for attendance at Boards of Examiners and any other visits, for example observation in practice, indicating timing and who to contact
- Arranging External Examiner involvement in resit examinations (if applicable), appeals, cases of cheating and plagiarism

External Examiners may request additional samples where they consider this necessary.

14. Use of and requirements for External Examiner reports

External Examiners must submit their report to the Chair of the Board of Examiners within 10 working days of each Board of Examiners meeting. This time limit reflects the nature of UCQ's provision, the duration of teaching and assessment periods, and their timing in the calendar/academic year.

All reports are to be completed using the approved validating body's template. External Examiners' reports should provide clear and informative feedback to UCQ and The Open University on those areas defined under the expectations of the role. In addition the report should:

- confirm that sufficient evidence was received to enable the role to be fulfilled (where evidence was insufficient, please give details)
- state whether issues raised in the previous report(s) have been, or are being addressed to their satisfaction
- address any issues as specifically required by any relevant professional body
- give an overview of their term of office (when concluded)

External examiners are invited to comment on the provider's approach to academic integrity, including policies and responses to suspected academic misconduct, such as plagiarism or contract cheating. Any concerns should be highlighted in the external examiner's report.

UCQ responses

The Chair of the Board of Examiners will issue an official response on behalf of UCQ, within 10 working days of receipt of the report. The Vice Principal has responsibility for:

- considering the reports and, where appropriate, taking action as soon as possible
- ascertaining that subject/programme-level staff have taken account of the reports; for example, by recording the responses from the subject areas concerned and specifying how External Examiners will be informed of actions taken
- ensuring that those responsible for a particular assessment are made aware of the relevant external examiner's report and are monitoring any changes that occur as a result
- deciding how recommendations which relate to organisational-level policies and practices will be dealt with and who will respond to the external examiner on these issues.

15. Professional Development for External Examiners

Part of being an External Examiner is fostering one's own development in the role, taking advantage of the range of support mechanisms available, locally and nationally.

Preparation for the role of External Examiner is part of professional academic practice and may be reflected in development opportunities provided by UCQ for their own staff. Support provided by UCQ will include regular updates on assessment policy and procedures, drawing where appropriate upon national support mechanisms for the external examining process.

External examining depends, nationally, on the availability of staff to take on and fulfil the role. In order to ensure that there is a continuous and sufficiently large supply of External Examiners available, UCQ will support staff who wish to become External Examiners. Primarily, this means ensuring that they are given adequate time to carry out the role, and are enabled to manage and balance the timing and commitments of external examining with coinciding internal duties.

16. Important documentation

The following documentation will be shared with External Examiners in preparation for their role. If the External Examiner feels any information is missing please contact Michelle Elliott: michelle.elliott@ucq.ac.uk

- Student Handbook
- Programme Specification
- Module Specifications
- Assessment Guides
- General Regulations
- Marking, Grading and Moderation Procedures
- OU Handbook for Validated Awards
- Appeals/Complaints

17. Initial Equalities Impact Assessment

Department:
Higher Education

Completed by:
Tara Henderson, Head of Policy & Governance

Date of initial assessment:
17/07/2026

Area to be assessed:
TLA-025 External Examiner Handbook: BA (Hons) Professional Management

Existing or new policy/procedure:
Existing

What evidence has been used to inform the assessment and policy? (please list only)

- Equality Act 2010.
- Higher Education and Research Act 2017.
- Office for Students (OfS) Regulatory Framework.
- The Open University Regulations for Validated Awards.
- The Open University Handbook for Validated Awards.
- UK Quality Code for Higher Education (QAA).
- Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ).
- Relevant Subject Benchmark Statements.
- UCQ Academic Governance Framework.
- UCQ Strategic Plan 2026–2035.
- UCQ Assessment Regulations and related academic policies.

1. Describe the aims, objectives or purpose of the policy/procedure

This Handbook provides guidance for External Examiners appointed to the BA (Hons) Professional Management, validated by The Open University. It sets out the role, responsibilities, appointment arrangements and expectations of External Examiners, supporting the maintenance of academic standards, fair assessment, enhancement of the student experience and the effective operation of UCQ's academic quality assurance processes.

2. Which stakeholders/groups are intended to benefit from this policy/procedure?

- External Examiners.
- Current and prospective students.
- Academic staff.
- Members of the Board of Examiners.
- Academic Board.
- The Open University as validating partner.
- UCQ through the maintenance of academic standards, quality assurance and regulatory compliance.

3. The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups.
- Foster good relations between different groups.

4. Protected Characteristics Assessment

Protected Characteristic	Impact	How the Handbook furthers or prevents the aims	Justification (if applicable)
Age	No effect	Appointment and responsibilities are based on professional competence and experience rather than age.	Not applicable.
Disability	**Low positive**	External Examiners are required to consider reasonable adjustments and alternative assessment arrangements to ensure disabled students are assessed fairly and consistently. The Handbook also supports inclusive participation by External Examiners where reasonable adjustments are required.	Not applicable.
Gender	**Low positive**	UCQ is committed to promoting equality, equity, diversity and inclusion within External Examiner appointments and encourages applications from underrepresented groups.	Not applicable.
Gender reassignment	No effect	Appointment, induction and responsibilities apply equally to all individuals.	Not applicable.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No effect	No differential impact identified.	Not applicable.
Pregnancy and Maternity	No effect	The Handbook does not create any differential treatment relating to pregnancy or maternity.	Not applicable.
Race	**Low positive**	The commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in External Examiner appointments supports broader representation and objective decision-making. External Examiners are also expected to ensure fair and equitable assessment practices for all students.	Not applicable.
Religion or Belief	No effect	No differential impact identified.	Not applicable.
Sexual Orientation	No effect	No differential impact identified.	Not applicable.

5. Has there been any consultation/engagement with the appropriate protected characteristics?

The Handbook has been developed with reference to the Equality Act 2010, Office for Students requirements, The Open University's validated awards framework, the UK Quality Code and UCQ's academic governance arrangements. Equality, diversity and inclusion principles have been embedded

throughout the appointment and operation of the External Examiner role. No adverse equality impacts requiring additional consultation have been identified.

6. What action(s) will you take to reduce any disproportionately negative impact, if any?

- Continue to promote equality, diversity and inclusion in External Examiner recruitment and appointments.
- Ensure External Examiners receive appropriate induction on inclusive assessment practices and reasonable adjustments.
- Review the Handbook periodically to reflect changes to legislation, regulatory expectations and validating partner requirements.
- Monitor External Examiner feedback to identify opportunities to enhance fairness, accessibility and inclusivity within assessment and quality assurance processes.

7. Based on the information in sections 1 to 7, should this policy/procedure proceed to Full Impact Assessment?

No. No high adverse impacts have been identified. The Handbook supports fair, objective and inclusive external examining arrangements and reinforces the consistent application of academic standards and equitable assessment practices. Overall, the anticipated equality impact is positive.

8. Sign off

Assessor signature:	Approved by: Michelle Elliott	Date approved:
		17/7/26