

External Peer Review Models for Coursework Degrees

	Quality Verification System (G08 and IRU)	Inter-Institutional Review Project	Achievement Matters Accounting Project	UK External Examiner System
Intent	1. Quality assurance 2. Quality enhancement	1. Quality assurance 2. Quality enhancement	1. Quality assurance 2. Quality enhancement	1. Quality assurance 2. Quality enhancement
Authority	Institutional	Institutional	Disciplinary	Institutional
Discipline focus	Multiple disciplines across universities in one mission group	Multiple disciplines across multiple university mission groups	Single discipline across multiple higher education institution mission groups	All higher education institutions
Method: key points of similarity and difference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> de-identified unit materials provided to peer reviewer stratified sample of graded assessments (maximum 5 items per 5 grade bands for G08; 12 items for IRU) grades and comments provided peer reviewer verifies (or disagrees with) grade allocated by home university peer reviewer recruited with demonstrated understanding of academic standards in similar universities ongoing system for bachelor degrees, in fourth year of operation in 2014 for G08 IRU in second year of a trial for undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> blind peer review, de-identified unit materials using feedback form stratified assessment samples (1 item per 4 grade bands) all grades and comments removed peer reviewer grades 4 items of work using home university criteria judgements in the context of external reference points (eg discipline standards, Australian Qualifications Framework) but these are not made explicit two year project for bachelor degrees completed in 2013 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> double-blind peer review, de-identified assessment samples and input materials assessment items sampled randomly from all grades for tasks evidencing published discipline standards all grades, markings, identifiers removed two peer reviewers rate task and if valid rate 5 items of work reviewers explicitly guided to use nationally agreed published discipline threshold standards in judgements in groups prior to review, calibration occurs to achieve consensus on assessment design validity and items (not) meeting published standards practitioner participation in calibration professional bodies participation in governance four year project for bachelor and coursework masters completing in 2014 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> external examiner reviews assessments on multiple later units in discipline external examiner sometimes verifies proposed exams and may propose changes while all graded assessments and dissertations available after exams, examiner samples all grade bands examiner verifies marks, grades and award class allocated by home university and can propose class-wide changes before institution confirms based on prior UK institutional experience institution coordinates examiners examiners may be practitioners national system, embedded in culture and process explicitly articulated by regulator (QAA) in code 1
Unit and mode of comparison or benchmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> G08: two final year units of study level, ideally one capstone IRU: capstone units in final year of study grade verified not re-marked implicit degree standards (HD, D, C, P, F) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> one unit of study level assessment items re-marked (re-graded) implicit national bachelors standards (D, C, P and F) but using home criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> selected tasks aligned to published discipline standards (from multiple final units of study) explicitly rated for validity against published national standards assessment items re-marked against explicit national standards (ie. continuum not meeting to meeting threshold standard) home criteria prompt but not summative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> multiple coursework units of study and dissertations in discipline assessment items reviewed in context of overall grading for award class implicit national standard (1, 2i, 3, F) benchmarked to prior experience informed by various standards and requirements
Sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> stratified random sampling of assessments from final year students in selected unit of study, preferably a capstone G08: 5% (max 5) per grade band maximum 25 items from large classes IRU: 12 samples of student work across grade bands for each unit of study. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> stratified random sampling of assessments from final year students in selected unit of study 1 item per grade band for one assessment task (total of 4 items) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> institution nominates final-year task that best demonstrates published discipline standards, project manager nominates random sample for review tasks typically cover multiple discipline standards 5 random assessment items sampled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all graded coursework assessments from multiple units of study and dissertations available but typically stratified sampling no minimum or maximum sampled but external examiner typically considers all Firsts and Fails

¹ UK Quality Code for Higher Education – External Examining (2012) See <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/B7.pdf>

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Peer reviewers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go8: one academic reviewer per discipline specified as Level D or above (not always) secretariat selects and assigns randomly from a panel paid an honorarium IRU: one academic reviewer per unit of study specified as level C or above home university involved in selection of reviewer from IRU database paid an honorarium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> two partner institutions review same material reviewers to be experienced in the discipline, not sessional staff, preferably unit coordinator blind assignment of reviewers by project officer paid an honorarium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> two reviewers with substantial experience and third if first two disagree one home academic also reviews (often different to original coordinator/grader) all reviewers calibrated to national standard, with practitioner participation in calibration workshops blind assignment of reviewers, once calibrated, by project manager unpaid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> one external examiner per discipline (e.g. BA Accounting) although sometimes narrower (e.g. Financial Accounting & Taxation Law sub-disciplines) or broader (e.g. award) recruited within or beyond academia by institution via established networks tenure typically 4 years (plus 1 year extension option) examiners limited to two institutions
Basis of comparison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> teaching and learning standards reviewed through guided feedback form – feedback on unit content, assessment design, criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> teaching standards reviewed through user guide and feedback form – feedback on unit content, assessment design, criteria learning standards reviewed – grades allocated by two partners for the purposes of comparison, with rationale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> teaching and learning standards reviewed through online feedback form with justification and recommendations benchmarked to published standards rating allocated by two, unknown, calibrated external reviewers and one calibrated reviewer from home institution third external reviewer moderates consensus if first two disagree on rating assessment task validity or an item of student work meeting standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> examiner judgement on achievement and comparable standards based on prior UK institutional experience implicitly informed by thresholds in published national qualifications frameworks, benchmark statements and requirements of any professional, statutory or regulatory body general comments on unit content, assessment design, criteria
Result of comparison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> teaching and learning standards reviewed against targeted questions grades verified or not – distribution of agree/too high/too low per grade level no impact on student grades reviewer makes overall judgement as appropriate/ some risks/ immediate action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> home university receives graded assessment items and feedback on teaching standards from two partner universities/peers on 4 items of work no impact on student grades identity remains unknown unless partners agree to discuss outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> home university receives feedback in report (and online) on tasks from three peers, and if tasks valid, grades and feedback on 5 items of work feedback in context of meeting or exceeding published discipline standards no impact on student grades identities remains unknown peer reviewers conduct home calibration events using national project exemplars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> external examiner recommends action for band or cohort if disagreement exceeds approximately 10% sampled external examiner attends exam board where any recommendation for overall grade changes considered external examiner completes a formal report that includes a question about national comparison of results and a question if adequate responses to previous external examiner comments

Mark Freeman (updated 17 July 2014) adapted from Krause, K., Scott, G., Aubin, K., Alexander, H., Angelo, T., Campbell, S., Carroll, M., Deane, E., Nulty, D., Pattison, P., Probert, B., Sachs, J., Solomonides, I., Vaughan, S. (2013). *Assuring final year subject and program achievement standards through inter-institutional peer review and moderation*. Available online: