



TUS

**Technological University of the Shannon:
Midlands Midwest**

Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Sionainne:
Lár Tíre Iarthar Láir

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**TUS External Examiner's Policy and Procedure for Taught Programmes
2023 – 2026**



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1.0 The Role of the External Examiner

TUS employs External Examiners in the primary role of assurance of the academic standards of its programmes and awards. TUS offers programmes leading to major, minor, special purpose and supplemental awards. Major awards may have embedded awards. The Technological University is also committed to collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards.

The External Examining function assists TUS to ensure that:

- a) The academic standard for each award and award element is set and maintained by the Technological University at the appropriate level and that student performance is properly judged against this;
- b) The assessment process appropriately measures student achievement against learning outcomes, and is fair and fairly operated;
- c) The Technological University is able to ensure that the standards of its awards are comparable with those of peer Higher Education Institutions;
- d) The advice and recommendations offered are considered for integration into assessment processes for the module/programme.

2.0 The External Examiner Process

All Higher Education Institutions use External Examiners to assist them to monitor the standards of their awards except those granted on an honorary basis. TUS recognises the system of External Examiners as an essential element in its quality assurance procedures, in order to provide an objective peer judgement on standards achieved. TUS offers programmes leading to major, minor, special purpose and supplemental awards. Major awards may have embedded awards. The Technological University is also committed to collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards. An External Examiner shall be employed in respect of programme and/or module assessments.

2.1 Principles of External Examining

- a) External Examining is a well-established practice within academia for benchmarking student assessments of the learning outcomes against national and international standards. It is one of the principal means of maintaining standards of autonomous higher education institutions. TUS subscribes to the best practice guidelines as outlined in QQI's Effective Practice Guideline for External Examining (2015). The precepts set out in that document inform TUS's

approach to a quality assurance instrument that is employed to support public confidence in academic qualifications. Central to this, is TUS's responsibility for the assessment of students and the maintenance of programme standards (intended and actual) that accord with the relevant award standards.

External Examining is therefore an integral and very important part of TUS Quality Assurance.

- b) The objective of the External Examiner system is to ensure constant internal and external peer appraisal and review of all programmes, through the use and analysis of the External Examiners report, within the context of TUS's quality assurance feedback mechanisms.
- c) The External examining process offers an objective interface: a principal outcome of External Examining is the introduction of an independent and impartial element into the procedures for the assessment of students.

2.2 The Purpose of External Examining in TUS

The purpose of external examining in TUS is to:

- a) verify that standards are appropriate for the award or award elements which the External Examiner has been appointed to examine, and are consistent with the level indicators of the National Framework of Qualifications and with related standards;
- b) review the appropriateness of the minimum intended programme learning outcomes (i.e. the programmes basic educational goal), and other programme objectives.
- c) probe the actual attainment of students (actual programme learning outcomes) using information agreed with TUS.
- d) assist higher education Institutions in the comparison of academic standards across Higher Education awards and award elements,
- e) ensure that TUS's assessment processes are valid, reliable, consistent, and are fairly operated and in line with the Technological University's regulations.
- f) provide opportunities for Faculty to reflect on their assessment strategy and to learn from best practice in the field.
- g) enhance public confidence in assessment processes.

2.3 Main Functions of the External Examiner

- a) Review the appropriateness of the minimum or threshold intended programme learning outcomes (i.e. the programme's basic educational goal), and other programmes objectives.
- b) Probe the actual attainment of students (actual programme learning outcomes) using information agreed with and supplied by TUS.
- c) Compare and contrast both the minimum intended programme learning outcomes and the actual attainment of students with the relevant awards standards, with the National Framework of Qualifications, and with corresponding data from other programmes in the same discipline in other higher education institutions in Ireland and beyond.
- d) Determine whether or not the applied procedures for assessment are valid, reliable, fair and consistent.
- e) Review the appropriateness of the programme assessment strategy and the assessment procedures and, flowing from this, consider subsidiary module assessment strategies.
- f) Review key assessment tasks prior to their assignment in light of the programme and module assessment strategies and students' prerequisite (prior) learning. Where key tasks include key continuous assessment tasks, it might not be feasible to review them prior to assignment, but they should still be reviewed by the external examiner.
- g) Report findings and recommendations to the Technological University.

These functions are consistent with the QQI Effective Practice Guideline for External Examiners (QQI 2015)¹.

2.4 Subsidiary Functions of the External Examiner

The purview, or scope of operation, of the External Examiner is agreed with the Technological University from the outset. It may be extended, for example, to provide advice and guidance to the programme team. The role of scrutiny and inspection is typically extended to include quality enhancement. The External Examiner normally concentrates on summative assessments. The External Examiner may also review formative and diagnostic assessment strategies. (See TUS Strategy for Learning, Teaching & Assessment 2022 – 2025).

¹ <https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-10/effective-practice-guidelines-for-external-examining-revised-february-2015.pdf>

In addition, they may:

- a) Identify creative and innovative summative, formative and diagnostic assessment strategies and assessment instruments, particularly within the context of active learning.
- b) Be invited to comment on the design, structure and content of a programme and its constituent components.
- c) Identify sustainable, competitive advantages for the programmes. (e.g., professional recognition, prevailing industry standards, joint awards, etc.)
- d) Identify exemplar external or internal subject material.
- e) Be invited to report on the progress in the implementation of programmatic review and institutional review panel reports.
- f) Be invited to participate in programmatic review and institutional review processes.
- g) Be consulted on nominations for student prizes and commendations.
- h) Be invited to consider compensatory education.
- i) Be invited to comment on special assessment arrangements.
- j) Be invited to comment on any externally set and/or assessed assessments which contribute to a TUS award.
- k) Be invited to audit, where appropriate, the distribution of grades for modules over a number of years.

2.5 The Authority of the External Examiner

- a) External Examiners have a right to examine all assessment material. The onus is on TUS to ensure the opportunity to do this before any Board of Examiners considers the material.
- b) An External Examiner appointed by TUS will:
 - Obtain reasonable access to the assessed parts of any programme or module, including evidence about student's performances on placement where this is an assessed part of any programme;
 - Make recommendations with regard to assessments for consideration by the Board of Examiners;

- Review a representative range of student assessments in a cohort before recommending to the Board of Examiners changes to marks by an Internal Examiner;
 - The External Examining process should not advantage or disadvantage any individual student without due consideration on the impact on the cohort as a whole. Adjustments are a matter for the Board of Examiners.
- c) Where Faculty deems it desirable that the External Examiners meet students, this can be provided for in so far as it is reasonably practicable.

2.6 Standards and Affirmation

- a) External Examiners shall ensure that the appropriate standards with regard to Pass, Merit and Distinction and Honours are applied and that comparability of standards between Higher Education Institutions is achieved and maintained.
- b) External Examiners shall determine, in their expert judgement:
- The adequacy of standards at examinations and other assessments;
 - That a typical student's performance in a programme as a whole is properly assessed;
 - That the assessment and determination of awards process have been fairly conducted.
- c) External Examiner reports will be a key component in all programmatic reviews.

2.7 Draft Examination Papers/Assessment Materials Review

- a) Contact between the Technological University and the External Examiner in relation to the level and content of examination papers or other assessment materials shall normally be through the Dean/Head of Department. The associated workload of any External Examiner shall be realistic and monitored for excess. Additional External Examiners can be recruited in cases of work overload. The associated workload should be monitored by the Programme Board and agreed with the Head of Department. The workload of an External Examiner shall not normally exceed the equivalent of 24 modules per academic year. During the appointment process, cognisance should be given by the Programme Board to the number of students being assessed.
- b) It is the responsibility of the Dean/Head of Department to ensure that External Examiners have the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on draft examination papers and other assessment material, continuous assessment

rubrics, model answers as appropriate or other materials including marking and assessment schemes for the module(s) for which they are appointed.

- c) Draft examination papers/assessment materials shall be prepared by the Internal Examiner and submitted through the Examinations/Assessment Administration System.
- d) Draft examination papers shall be released by Faculty Administration to External Examiners through the Examinations/Assessment Administration System within an agreed timeframe prior to the examination date(s). Each paper should be accompanied by a marking scheme/model answers as appropriate.
- e) An External Examiner may make suggestions for deletions, additions, amendments or other as appropriate and shall submit their comments through the Examinations/Assessment Administration System for the attention of the internal examiner.
- f) External Examiner is required to return comments within an agreed timeframe following receipt of draft examination papers and/or assessment material.
- g) The Internal Examiner shall take such proposed amendments into account and shall note any action taken. The updated exam papers/assessment materials shall be submitted through the Examinations/Assessment Administration System for access by the External Examiner.
- h) On completion of this process, exam papers and other assessment materials shall be approved by the Internal Examiner through the Examinations/Assessment Administration System.

2.8 Completed Assessment

Completed assessment materials, including where relevant, final examinations, continuous assessments, practical work and projects should be made available to the External Examiner as requested.

2.9 Reporting Procedure

- a) External Examiners are required to submit a report on programmes with which they are involved to the Vice-President Academic Affairs & Registrar before a date determined by Academic Council of the year of the examinations.

- b) One annual report will be sufficient. The standard report may be completed through the report functionality of the Examinations/Assessment Administration System.
- c) External Examiner Reports are normally submitted via the TUS examinations management system.
- d) The reports of the External Examiners are pivotal for continuous improvement of the academic programmes and modules of the Technological University. If the report from an External Examiner is not received by the Vice-President Academic Affairs & Registrar's Office within one month of the due date without provision of good reason, the appointment as External Examiner may be terminated.
- e) The Vice-President Academic Affairs & Registrar's Office shall provide a copy of the External Examiners Report to the Dean/Head of Department. The Consequent Action section shall be brought to the attention of the Programme Board.
- f) The Dean/Head of Department shall return the completed report to the Vice-President Academic Affairs & Registrar's Office by a date determined by Academic Council, noting any actions taken or other appropriate comments, for the attention of the Academic Council Sub-Committee on Management: Assurance, Enhancement & Integration.
- g) The Academic Council Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance and Enhancement will make a Report to Academic Council. Issues of serious concern will be raised at Academic Council directly.
- h) In cases where the requirements of external professional bodies are the focus of comments, there may be a need to inform those bodies of action taken in response to the External Examiner's report.
- i) The External Examiner shall be provided with a timely, considered response to their comments and recommendations, including information on any actions taken by the Technological University, by the Dean/Head of Department, by a date determined by Academic Council.
- j) The External Examiner report and response shall be available to students of the programme on request and may be discussed at a Programme Board liaison meeting.
- k) The External Examiner report and response may be provided to relevant External Panels and agencies (e.g., Institutional Review Panel). Extracts from

External Examiner Reports may be included in the Annual Faculty Reports to Academic Council.

- l) Material must be made available to the External Examiner prior to the Examination Board as per agreed timeframes.

3.0 Nomination and Appointment of External Examiners

TUS has set specific criteria to support the appointment of External Examiners with appropriate levels of academic and/or professional expertise and experience in relation to the relevant subject area and assessment.

- a) TUS ensures that sufficient External Examiners are appointed so that it can be satisfied that:
 - The standard of its programmes and student performances can be adequately moderated, and
 - The assessment, examination and determination of award processes are being fairly conducted.
- b) TUS determines:
 - The normal number of reappointments and periods between reappointments;
 - How it would normally avoid appointing External Examiners with any direct interest or ties to the Technological University or its staff, programmes or students, and how conflicts of interest will be dealt with where such appointments are unavoidable;
 - The period that should elapse before a former member of staff or student could be appointed as External Examiner.
 - External examiner workload and procedures for reviewing student assessment material;
 - The duration of the External Examiner appointment.
- c) TUS identifies any particular exceptions to their normal policies to allow for subject areas where there are a very limited number of potential External Examiners.
- d) The Academic Council approves nominations for the appointment of External Examiners within TUS and ensures that:

- Criteria for the identification, nomination and appointment of External Examiners are understood and accessible to all staff initiating appointments;
 - Nominations are assessed effectively and rigorously;
 - Criteria are sufficiently inclusive to allow for the nomination of External Examiners with little or no prior experience of External Examining;
 - Criteria and procedures include those for the early termination of an External Examiner's contract.
- e) TUS will publish the name and primary occupation of the External Examiners for each of its Higher Education and Training Programmes. This will be available for the current year and will also be published in the Annual Report. The names of External Examiners (and Internal Examiners) are printed on the examination papers of TUS. They may also be printed on the continuous assessment assignments.
- f) In the implementation of these regulations, TUS monitors the gender balance of appointments of External Examiners. The Vice-President Academic Affairs & Registrar's Office shall produce a summary report for External Examiner reviews.
- g) In the implementation of these regulations, TUS monitors the international perspective obtained. The Vice-President Academic Affairs & Registrar's Office shall produce a summary report for institutional reviews.

3.1 General Criteria for Appointment

- a) External Examiners shall be drawn from persons of standing and experience in the relevant academic field and/or the professional practice of their disciplines in Ireland or abroad. Where possible, each Academic Department should endeavour to source External Examiners from comparable international higher education and awarding institutions, professional bodies and businesses as appropriate.
- b) External Examiners shall be suitably qualified and hold academic qualifications at least to the level they are examining. They should have both current and relevant experience in the areas of Industry, Academia or Professional Practice.
- c) External Examiner nominations and appointments shall be such as to ensure maximum objectivity in relation to TUS.

- d) Normally, an External Examiner should not be nominated/appointed from a department of another Higher Education Institution where a member from a similar department of TUS is serving as an examiner.
- e) Former members of staff shall not be invited to become External Examiners before a lapsed time of at least five years or sufficient time for students taught by that member of staff to have passed through the system, whichever is the longer.
- f) Former consultants, external panel members, or External Examiners shall not normally be invited to become External Examiners before a lapsed period of at least three years.
- g) External Examiners should not normally hold more than two appointments at the same time.
- h) For any one programme, External Examiners should not be appointed consecutively from the same institution - the Technological University obtains nominations from a variety of institutions and avoids multiple nominations from the same institution within a single discipline.
- i) Those registered for an award of TUS, or the relevant awarding body, are ineligible for appointment as External Examiners in any part of TUS.
- j) It is the responsibility of the External Examiner to declare an interest (actual or potential, real or apparent) if placed in a position of making a judgement about any student with whom there is a close tie e.g. as a sponsor, relative or friend, as a close professional colleague, or having been involved with the direct supervision of the student on placement or professional training.
- k) The requirements of professional or accrediting bodies are taken into account, where/as relevant.

3.2 Specific Criteria for Faculties and Departments

In making a nomination for the appointment of an External Examiner, Faculties and Departments other than the School of Art & Design shall have regard to the following:

- a) For Higher Certificate and Ordinary Bachelor Degree (Level 6 and Level 7), each nominated External Examiner shall normally have an honours degree or equivalent in the relevant programme area, plus a minimum of three years practical experience in an area of relevance. Such experience can be in Industry, Academia or Professional Practice.

- b) For Honours Bachelor Degrees programmes (Level 8), each nominated External Examiner shall normally have an honours degree or equivalent in the relevant programme area, and shall normally have a Masters degree or Doctorate or equivalent in an area relevant to the programme being examined, and five years relevant practical experience. Such experience can be in Industry, Academia or Professional Practice.
- c) For a taught Masters Degree or Graduate Diploma (Level 9), each nominated External Examiner shall normally hold a Masters degree or Doctorate in the relevant programme or subject area, and have a minimum of seven years post qualification experience in Industry, Academia or Professional Practice.
- d) For minor, special purpose or supplemental awards, the External Examiner shall normally have relevant academic and/or professional qualifications at honours degree level. The External Examiner shall also have academic qualifications at least at the level of qualification being examined, plus a minimum of three years relevant practical experience.
- e) If the appointment does not comply with above criteria, the following shall apply: In exceptional circumstances, where it is proposed to nominate an External Examiner who does not satisfy the Criteria for Appointment, this shall be clearly noted on the External Examiner nomination form and reasons given for given for the nomination.

3.3 Specific Criteria for the School of Art & Design

In making recommendations for the appointment of an External Examiner, the School of Art & Design shall have regard to the following:

- (a) The Higher Certificate and Ordinary Bachelor Degree (Level 6 and Level 7) as above.
- (b) For the Honours Bachelor Degree (Level 8), each nominated External Examiner shall normally have an honours degree or equivalent in the relevant programme area plus a minimum of five years practical experience in an area of relevance. Such experience can be in Industry, Academia or Professional Practice.
- (c) For a taught Masters Degree and Graduate Diploma (Level 9), one nominated External Examiner shall normally have an honours degree or equivalent in the relevant programme or subject area, shall normally hold a Masters Degree, or Doctorate or equivalent in the relevant programme or subject area, and have a

minimum of five years post qualification experience in Industry, Academia or Professional Practice

- (d) For minor, special purpose or supplemental awards, the External Examiner shall normally have relevant academic and/or professional qualifications at honours degree level. The External Examiner shall also have academic qualifications at least at the level of qualification being examined, plus a minimum of three years relevant practical experience.
- (e) If the appointment does not comply with above criteria, the following shall apply. In exceptional circumstances, where it is proposed to nominate an External Examiner who does not satisfy the Criteria for Appointment, this shall be clearly noted on the External Examiner nomination form and reasons given for the nomination.

3.4 Specific Criteria for Programmes with Professional Examination

Exemptions

TUS values the prestige and the competitive advantage for students of professional examination exemptions. Programmes with professional examination exemptions may, from time to time, seek to appoint an External Examiner who has a minimum of ten years relevant professional experience post qualification and/or a fellowship of a professional body. This External Examiner should be familiar with the Exemption Accreditation Criteria of the relevant professional bodies.

3.5 The Nomination Procedure

- a) The Dean is responsible for co-ordinating the nomination of persons to act as External Examiner for programmes and modules in their Faculty, and seeks recommendations for nominations through the Programme Board, the Department Board and the Faculty Board taking into account the need for continuity in the External Examiner process from one year to the next.
- b) The Dean will provide the Vice-President Academic Affairs & Registrar's Office with nominations for appointment as External Examiner. On occasion, the Vice-President Academic Affairs & Registrar may invite a Dean to supply additional nominations where this is deemed necessary to ensure the necessary quality standards.
- c) From time to time it may be useful to jointly nominate discipline-specific External Examiners consistent with QQI discipline-specific standards.

- d) In exceptional circumstances, where it is proposed to nominate an External Examiner who does not satisfy the Criteria for Appointment, this shall be clearly noted on the External Examiner nomination form and reasons given for the nomination.
- e) The Dean/Head of Department shall consult the person proposed for nomination to seek their consent to be nominated and determine their availability to act as External Examiner. Such consultation shall be without commitment to appointment as External Examiner.
- f) Nomination for the appointment of examiners shall be made via the appropriate system and shall be accompanied by a current CV, and forwarded by the due date each year to the Office of the Vice-President Academic Affairs & Registrar. Following a desk-review by the Quality Office a summary report will be forwarded for consideration by the Academic Council Sub-Committee on Quality Management: Assurance, Enhancement.
- g) The Academic Council Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance and Enhancement shall propose the nomination of such External Examiners as it deems appropriate to the Academic Council for approval and appointment.
- h) Nominations for appointment of External Examiners for externally validated programmes are made in consultation with the Dean/Head of Department and the Vice-President Academic Affairs & Registrar. The appointment is made by the External Awarding/Validating Body.
- i) Gender balance should be a consideration in the nomination of External Examiners. As the student population becomes more diverse, other criteria should also be considered (e.g. ethnic representation).
- j) In the spirit of all island development and cooperation, nominations from Northern Ireland should be considered from time to time. (Historically, the Irish and British system of External Examining developed along common lines.)
- k) External nominations from bodies such as Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), Irish Higher Education Quality Network (IHEQN), European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QQA) (UK), National Student Representative Bodies (e.g. USI) or professional bodies could be requested from time to time.
- l) The nomination of External Examiners should normally be from Higher Education Institutions which are outside the immediate geographical location of the relevant programmes in TUS.

3.6 Number of External Examiners

- a) External Examiners may be appointed on a Departmental basis, programme basis or module basis as determined by the needs of TUS.
- b) External Examiners may be appointed who have expertise in particular module areas, as determined by TUS, and may be involved with particular modules at programme level within a Faculty or Department, or on a TUS wide basis.
- c) It may be necessary to appoint a specialist External Examiner for RPL assessments, advanced entry assessments, work-based learning/placements assessments, Erasmus assessments, alternative provider assessments or blended learning assessments from time to time. Such an External Examiner may need to communicate regarding assessment with an industrial examiner, an overseas examiner or an alternate provider examiner, for example.
- d) The number of External Examiners for a particular programme should be sufficient to cover the range of studies in the programme.
- e) To provide coherency to the external examining process, one external examiner should normally be appointed for a Stage or Stages of a programme up the limit of 24 Modules.

3.7 Appointment

- a) Academic Council appoints all External Examiners.
- b) The Office of the Vice-President Academic Affairs & Registrar shall maintain a register of External Examiners appointments and periods of tenure.
- c) Following approval of nominations by the Academic Council of TUS, the Office of the Vice-President Academic Affairs & Registrar shall issue the appropriate documentation to the External Examiner, including, *inter alia*, current copies of:
 - The Technological University's Academic Regulations
 - TUS's Strategy for Learning, Teaching & Assessment 2022 – 2025
 - TUS's Placement Policy and Guidelines
 - Conflict of Interest Declaration
 - Confidentiality Agreement
- d) The External Examiner shall be appointed from the date of signing of the contract by the External Examiner. Normally, the term of office shall commence on a date determined by the Academic Council.

- e) An External Examiner shall normally be appointed by TUS as programme External Examiner with responsibility for a programme or range of programmes, for a maximum period of five years.
- f) Following appointment, the Dean shall ensure that the External Examiner receives adequate additional documentation to enable them to understand the examination systems operated by TUS. Such documentation shall include, where appropriate:
 - Programme and/or module documentation
 - Schedules for forthcoming Examinations and Board of Examiner meetings
 - Programmatic Review or Validation Report and response
 - Any special arrangements and adjustments for students with additional specified needs.
- g) TUS will facilitate induction/training for External Examiners consistent with the provisions of the QQI Effective Practice Guideline for External Examining (2015).
- h) TUS provides dedicated restricted webpages on External Examining. The site will allow access to the induction material, TUS Library, Moodle at TUS, and other appropriate information.

3.8 External Examiner and Induction

Following induction, the External Examiner should:

- a) Know the Technological University's policy on external examining, including the reporting requirements.
- b) Understand the mission of the Technological University and its context (e.g. The Irish higher education system).
- c) Be able to distinguish how the minimum intended programme learning outcomes and actual learning outcomes attained by graduates compare and contrast with similar programmes with which they are already familiar and with programmes in the same discipline for which suitable benchmarking data has been gathered by the University.
- d) Know the overall structure of the programme.
- e) Be able to evaluate and critique the programme assessment strategy.
- f) Understand how the minimum intended programme learning outcomes relate to the award standard, and how the award standard relates to the National Framework of Qualifications (and, if the examiner is from outside Ireland, how

the NFQ relates to the other HE Qualifications Frameworks in which they may be familiar.

- g) Understand the programme assessment strategy and procedures, the grading system and how awards are classified.
- h) Understand the principles of learning-outcomes criterion-referenced assessment.

The nature of the induction process should be appropriate to the External Examiner's learning needs. These outcomes are consistent with the QQI Effective Practice Guideline for External Examining (QQI, 2015).

3.9 Suspension of Contract

In exceptional circumstances it may be considered necessary by TUS that the appointment of an External Examiner be suspended for a period. For example, suspension may be necessary if the related modules, stages or programme are not on offer in the current academic year.

3.10 Termination of Contract

In exceptional circumstances it may be considered necessary by TUS that the appointment of an External Examiner be terminated before completion of the approved period of office. Academic Council will make the final decision on any termination of contract based on the recommendations of the Vice-President Academic Affairs & Registrar. Circumstances leading to the termination of contract might include the following:

- 1) Non-submission of reports within the specified time without provision of good reason;
- 2) Where TUS considers that the manner in which the External Examiner is fulfilling the function of External Examining, as laid down in these procedures, is not being carried out in the interest of the programme or TUS.
- 3) Any additional circumstance that conflicts with the role and responsibilities of an External Examiner.

3.11 Visiting TUS

- a) The expectation that External Examiners will visit TUS may be set aside due to personal or other unexpected circumstances. In such circumstances, External

Examining will be facilitated remotely and through delivery of assessment material to the External Examiner in digital or physical format.

- b) All External Examiners are expected to visit TUS at least once in each academic year. This visit will normally take place at the time of determination of results at the Board of Examiners, and it should conform to the arrangements made in this regard by TUS. In the event that an External Examiner is unable to attend TUS during normal circumstances, provision may be made to facilitate remote access for the purposes of exam-related meetings and Board of Examiners.
- c) The Examiners of semesterised award stages are normally expected to visit TUS at least twice in the academic year. The use of applicable TUS Online platforms should be utilised as appropriate to support the external examining process.

3.12 Extended Leave

If an External Examiner is on extended leave and are not in a position or do not wish to fulfil the duties of External Examiner they should inform the Technological University at the earliest possible opportunity. The Technological University will appoint a replacement External Examiner for the duration of leave in agreement with the External Examiner.

3.13 Maternity/Adoptive Leave

If an External Examiner is on Maternity/Adoptive leave and are not in a position or do not wish to fulfil the duties of External Examiner they should inform the Technological University at the earliest possible opportunity. The Technological University will appoint a substitute External Examiner for the duration of Maternity/Adoptive Leave in agreement with the External Examiner and TUS.

3.14 Force Majeure

In the case force majeure where an External Examiner is unable to fulfil their duties, and there is insufficient time to appoint a replacement External Examiner, the Head of Department should inform the Vice-President Academic Affairs & Registrar's Office in writing. The Programme Board, with the oversight of the Head of Department, should use their discretion to ensure that the quality and standard of the assessment process is upheld. Quality assurance measures, for example, reviewing of samples, may be undertaken to ensure the integrity of the academic process.

3.15 Conflict of Interest Code

- (a) An External Examiner shall declare any interest, relationship or other circumstances which might constitute a conflict of interest, or which might be seen as inappropriate for the role of External Examiner. Where a conflict of interest is apparent, the Office of the Vice-President Academic Affairs & Registrar in conjunction with the Dean/Head of Department will make such arrangements as are necessary to negate the conflict of interest.
- (b) An External Examiner may have access to commercially sensitive and proprietary information, particularly in student projects and work placements and is obliged to protect such information.
- (c) TUS is committed to best practices and to maintaining the confidentiality of student assessments. External Examiners are required to sign the confidentiality agreement provided by TUS as part of the appointment process.

3.16 Contact by Students

It is inappropriate for individual students to make direct contact with an External Examiner and any such attempt may be deemed an assessment infringement within the terms of the regulations provided in Section 6 (Academic Integrity and Assessment Infringement) of Academic Regulations. Any such approach should be brought to the attention of the Vice-President Academic Affairs & Registrar.