

Blackpool & The Fylde College



Mentor Arrangements for New External Examiners

Requirement for the appointment of a mentor

The College recognises that it may, in some circumstances, appoint External Examiners who are undertaking this role for the first time. Whilst the external examiner will be highly qualified to examine with regard to their specialist subject knowledge, they may not have appropriate recent external examining experience.

With this in mind, there may be a risk of limiting the opportunities for those wishing to act as external examiners, notably in specialist areas. However, this can be mitigated by supporting an appointment through development or mentoring by an experienced external examiner who can offer support and guidance in the first year of the external examiner contract on the College's academic processes. The mentor will, in most cases, be an external examiner in the same Curriculum Area and ideally be linked to a similar subject although this may not always be possible.

The College considers each external examiner case individually to decide whether a mentor should be appointed.

Typical circumstances may include:

- Where an examiner is new to external examining.
- Where the External Examiner is an external professional expert of standing in a relevant field but lacking significant experience of teaching and assessing in HE.
- Where the subject area to be examined is a new field in HE, and where there are no examiners of seniority in that field.

Indicative Mentor Appointment Criteria

Mentors would normally:

- Be an experienced external examiner from the College's current external examiners.
- Attend the same board of examiners meeting as the mentee or be from a similar subject area.
- Have recent experience of working in Higher Education.
- Have participated in a least one assessment period at the College.
- Have produced at least one good quality annual report and have submitted it in a timely manner.

Setting up a Mentor Relationship

Wherever possible, the mentor, mentee relationship will operate independently of the College.

On appointment of an external examiner, the HE Directorate will identify where a mentor is required, will find a suitable candidate from B&FC's current external examiners and approach the examiner to ascertain whether they are willing to act as a mentor.

The mentor should:

- establish contact with the mentee.
- wherever possible, arrange to meet the mentee face-to-face, either in person or by video link, but if not possible the mentoring role can be accomplished without face-to-face meetings via email or telephone.
- provide advice and guidance on relevant College external examiner processes and procedures.
- advise on approaches to moderation including applying criteria, assessing consistency of marking, sampling across grade boundaries and dealing with borderlines and fails.
- advise on dealing with draft examination papers, assessing the appropriateness of questions/titles in terms of coverage of topics/learning outcomes, level of challenge, rigour, ambiguity, fairness, etc.
- advise on the role and perspective of the external examiner in board of examiners meetings (in relation to moderation, personal mitigating circumstances, malpractice, etc.
- advise on the role, context and content of oral and written reports.
- clarify details, provide support and build confidence.

Additional

The role of mentor attracts an additional fee of £100 which is paid automatically along with the external examiners annual fee.