

External Examining Summary Report 2024-25

Background

1. External examiners are appointed by Queen Mary at SEB level to comment on issues of academic content, standards, and process. The review assessment design, marking and module results. They are a member of, and expected to attend, the Subject Examination Board (SEB). At the end of the academic cycle, each external completes the report template to outline their experiences that year. This report gives a high-level summary of those formal reports.
2. The consideration route for external examiner reports is as follows:
 - i. Individual reports are sent to SEBs for consideration and action within the School/Institute.
 - ii. Consideration of all reports by School/Institute through Annual Programme Review/Education Committees.
 - iii. Identification of any institution-level issues and statistics in the Summary Report (this present report).
3. Reports are received and formally acknowledged by the Directorate of Governance and Legal Services (DGLS). DGLS reads and highlights key issues requiring a response before forwarding reports to the associated SEB. SEBs are not required to respond to all external examiner reports, formal responses are only required where comments/feedback has been identified. DGLS will note where a formal response is required and SEBs are asked to respond, in writing, within 30 days and to send a copy to DGLS.
4. All reports and SEB responses are used in the Annual Programme Review process and summaries are discussed at School/Institute Education committees and Student Voice meetings.
5. In addition to SEB level external examiners, Queen Mary also appoints an External Member to review and oversee the final UG Degree Examination Board (DEB) process. The report of the External Member was received and considered by EQSB at its September 2025 meeting.
6. External examiners have the right to raise any matter of serious concern with the Principal via a confidential report.
7. There were no institutional concerns raised in the 2024/25 reports.

Part 1 - Statistical data as of 10/12/25.

EQSB is reminded that:

- i) the usefulness of the examiners annual report loses currency if submitted too late, as this doesn't provide Schools/Institutes time to reflect and act on recommendations.
 - ii) new external examiners are provided with a guidance document which outlines their role and responsibilities. DGLS sends an email in May and September with a reminder of our processes for the submission of reports, fee payment and expenses claims.
 - iii) SEBs remain the main point of contact for external examiners and conduct an induction to outline the programmes and modules under their review.
8. The number of outstanding reports has increased; 49 reports are yet to be submitted this year compared to 21 missing at this point last year. This figure is similar to the number of missing reports noted at this point in 2022/23. A reminder was once again sent by DGLS in November and SEBs should also be sending reminders as part of their usual communications with its external examiners.

9. For the second year running the amount of outstanding SEB responses has increased, with 54 responses outstanding this year compared to 49 at this point in 2024. 34 SEB responses were outstanding at this point in 2023.
10. The late and non-submission of external examiner reports remains a concern. Submission of the annual report is only one part of the external examiner role and, although there is no suggestion that externals are not carrying out their duties, the annual report is a qualitative resource that provides evidence for Institutional consideration beyond the SEB. Externals are not paid if they do not submit the report, but the fee is often nominal and is generally not a major motivator for academics / specialists to seek the role.

Total number of external examiner reports and SEB responses, by level for 2024/25 (2023/24 for comparison):

	UG	<i>(23/24)</i>	PG	<i>(23/24)</i>
Expected Reports	155	152	125	125
Actual received	134	140	101	106
Total of missing reports	21 (14%)	12 (8%)	24 (19%)	9 (7%)
Expected SEB responses	92	103	62	62
Actual responses received	66	77	34	41
Total of missing SEB responses	26 (28%)	26 (25%)	28 (45%)	23 (37%)

Total number of external examiner reports and SEB responses, by Faculty and level for 2024/25 (2023/24 for comparison):

	FMD				HSS				S&E			
	UG (23/24)		PG (23/24)		UG (23/24)		PG (23/24)		UG (23/24)		PG (23/24)	
Expected Reports	29	26	49	49	82	84	52	54	44	42	24	22
Actual received	24	23	35	38	71	77	43	47	39	39	23	21
Total missing	5	3	14	11	11	7	9	7	5	3	1	1
Expected SEB responses	20	16	16	16	39	53	29	31	33	34	17	15
Actual SEB responses received	3	10	5	9	35	43	18	25	28	24	11	7
Total missing	17	5	11	7	4	10	11	6	5	10	6	8

Summary of External Examiner comments 2024/25

11. The challenge of AI remains a predominate factor in many external examiner reports. Noting this is a challenge across the sector, externals are keen to acknowledge or see further evidence of action taken to meet OfS conditionB4; ensuring work submitted is that of the student and that assessment design reduces the opportunity for academic misconduct.
12. Although very few externals expressed concern about the overall levels of achievement, many noted variation in levels of achievement at module level. No issues were raised concerning design or marking and SEBs were advised to undertake further analysis and monitoring.
13. Once again, our external examiners remain complimentary of programme and assessment design, noting the work of colleagues to provide clear and comprehensive feedback. Externals continue to highlight variation in the amount and style of feedback provided by internal markers.