

LEAP External Examiner Guidance

Overview

1. LEAP External Examiners play a vital role in the maintenance of academic standards for the Leadership in Education Awards Programme (LEAP) and in ensuring the rigorous but fair assessment of students.
2. LEAP External Examiners are full voting members of all LEAP examination boards (LEAP Recognition Panel). They may advise the Panel on the general standard of student performance in relation to those elements of assessment that they have scrutinised. They should be made aware of the outcome of any previous meeting to consider mitigating circumstances. They should be satisfied that all decisions are appropriate and consistent, and that the management of the assessment and the decision-making process is appropriate and consistent.
3. The Chair of the LEAP Recognition Panel should invite the LEAP External Examiner to comment generally on their view of the examining process once the detailed discussion of cases has been completed. This oral report must be recorded in the minutes of the Recognition Panel.

Period of Engagement

4. The period of engagement for LEAP External Examiners is four years from the date of appointment. This timeframe enables LEAP External Examiners to be involved in assessments and examinations and to deal with re-sits.

Role Description

5. The duties of a LEAP External Examiner are:
 - a. to review and provide feedback on submitted applications as required. These will primarily be applications for Principal Fellow which require one external examiner but may include applications for other pathways as required;
 - b. to submit their feedback and recommendations to the LEAP lead assessor by the date determined by the LEAP lead assessor;
 - c. to review the recommendations and feedback put forward by the LEAP assessment teams and to advise the LEAP Recognition Panel accordingly (see point [Overview](#), point 2).
 - d. To make a brief oral report to the Recognition Panel (see [LEAP External Examiner Reports](#)).

Appeals and Mitigating Circumstances

6. On rare occasions, a LEAP External Examiner may not be prepared to endorse the outcome of the examination process or the decision of a Recognition Panel. If such occasions do occur, then every attempt should be made to resolve the conflict through discussion and negotiation. If such attempts are not successful, then the Chair of the Recognition Panel should contact the Vice-President (Teaching, Learning and Students) who will review the circumstances and attempt to broker an agreement between the Chair of the Recognition Panel and the LEAP External Examiner, who shall have powers to sign on behalf of all internal members of the Panel and LEAP External Examiners, respectively.
7. Under the University's Policy on Mitigating Circumstances (<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=4271>), Mitigating Circumstances Panels consider requests for mitigation submitted by students and make a decision as to whether to accept the request and, if accepted, what recommended mitigation should be applied by the LEAP Recognition Panel.

LEAP External Examiner Reports

8. LEAP External Examiners should be asked to make a brief oral report to the Recognition Panel. This report should include the LEAP External Examiner's opinion of:
 - a. the assessment process including its fairness, accuracy and efficiency;
 - b. the academic quality of the cohort(s) examined;
 - c. the effectiveness of the teaching (as judged by the performance of the students);
 - d. any recommendations to the Panel for improvements in the teaching or examination process;
 - e. good practice;
 - f. whether any recommendations made in previous year have been acted on properly.
9. A record of this oral report must be recorded in the formal minutes of the Recognition Panel and approved by the LEAP Management Group and the LEAP External Examiner.
10. LEAP External Examiners are also required to make an annual report to the LEAP Programme Director using the pro-forma report form (<https://bit.ly/2THs2CV>), no later than four weeks after the final LEAP Recognition Panel meeting has taken

place. Receipt of the report will trigger the fee payment. Names of all students and staff must be omitted from reports, to maintain confidentiality, except to recognise and disseminate good practice.

11. The LEAP Programme team is responsible for ensuring that any issues identified by a LEAP External Examiner in reports or during Recognition Panels are considered and addressed in the appropriate forum. A formal response to each report should be sent, preferably by email, by the programme team to the LEAP External Examiner within four weeks of receipt explaining the outcome of any such considerations.
12. The LEAP programme team pursues the non-submission of a LEAP External Examiner's report. If the report has not been received, the programme team will contact the LEAP External Examiner on three separate occasions via email to request it, and should then establish why the report has not been received and, based on the outcome, whether the LEAP External Examiner has the capacity to carry out their role and whether any further action is required. If a LEAP External Examiner cannot send in a report for reasons such as sickness or maternity leave, the LEAP Programme team should be informed immediately to prevent the External Examiner from being chased unnecessarily.

Resignation and Early Termination of Engagement

13. LEAP External Examiners who wish to resign before the end of their normal period of engagement should write to the LEAP Programme Director giving at least four months' notice to allow for a replacement to be identified. A LEAP External Examiner must resign from their External Examiner post if they take up other employment at The University of Manchester.
14. In exceptional circumstances, the LEAP Programme Director may recommend the early termination of a LEAP External Examiner's engagement. Such circumstances may include:
 - a. failure to attend specified Recognition Panels without good cause. The LEAP programme recognises that it must give sufficient advance warning of the dates of Recognition Panels so that LEAP External Examiners are able to confirm their attendance and carry out their responsibilities;
 - b. failure to submit an annual report within three months of the Recognition Panel. The LEAP programme values and requires full and informative reports which follow the guidelines provided;
 - c. failure to undertake the LEAP External Examiner duties to the satisfaction of the LEAP programme by providing inadequate scrutiny

of proposed assessment tools and/or assessment outcomes and/or an unacceptable delay in corresponding with the LEAP programme team on matters concerning examinations and assessment;

- d. cessation of, or non-recruitment to, the programme;
- e. unprofessional conduct;
- f. failure to disclose a relationship, contractual or otherwise, which may impair the integrity of the assessment process and the independence of the LEAP External Examiner.

15. Before a recommendation for the termination of a LEAP External Examiner's engagement is brought forward, strenuous attempts should be made by the programme team to work with the LEAP External Examiner to identify and address the underlying issues. Should this fail, the LEAP Programme Director should write to the LEAP External Examiner and request that they resign. This request should be accompanied by a full account of the issues encountered and their impact on the student experience.
16. Should no response be received to the resignation request, or if the LEAP External Examiner does not agree to resign from their post, the LEAP Programme Director should then inform the Head of Academic Policy in the Teaching and Learning Support Office that the engagement be terminated. This must be endorsed by the Vice-President (Teaching, Learning and Students) and must include all the information that has been collected and considered relating to the underlying reasons and the impact on the student experience. The Vice-President (Teaching, Learning and Students) will write formally to the LEAP External Examiner to terminate their engagement. Such recommendations will be given full and careful consideration.

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2.0	September 2020	Updated – programme expanded and role responsibilities changed.