
The Role of the Internal and External Evaluators in Student Assessment

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Outline

- The Context
 - The main purposes of Evaluation
 - Seven Steps illustrating the roles
 - Some Issues
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The Context

- Institutions are responsible for the academic standards of their awards
 - The shift of emphasis from “control” to “quality assurance”
 - The priority attached to the level of confidence in academic standards
 - The identified need to improve methods and procedures for the assessment of students’ performance and achievements
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Main Purposes of Internal and External Evaluation: Part 1

- To verify that academic standards are appropriate for the award
 - To verify that the assessment instruments fairly assess the range of specified Intended Learning Outcomes
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Main Purposes of External Evaluation:

Part 2

- To help universities to assure and maintain academic standards across higher education awards
 - To help universities and faculties to ensure that their assessment processes are sound, fairly operated and in line with the university's policies and regulations
 - To inform key stakeholders of the rigour of assessment and the level of achievements
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Before the Assessment Takes Place

Step 1: Internal design and evaluation

- Assessment criteria and task produced by Faculty
 - For example, conventional task i.e. Unseen time-limited written examination
 - Contribution to question bank and marking scheme
 - Internal Evaluation carried out
 - Pilot testing may be employed with marking compared to establish a consistent standard
 - Final faculty version agreed
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Step 2: External evaluation

- Assessment tool sent to External Evaluator (EE)
 - EE considers design and content of assessment tool
 - Checks for
 - Appropriateness of relationship with ILOs
 - Including subject content and level of intellectual skills required
 - i.e. Understanding, Analytical etc
 - EE accepts or proposes amendments to Faculty
 - Faculty accepts or rejects proposals
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Step 3: Role of External Evaluator

- EE's responsibility is to ensure that
 - All ILOs are assessed
 - Appropriate levels of intellectual and practical skills are assessed
 - Assessment methods are appropriate (valid)
 - EE submits written report
 - Faculty's responsibility is to consider EE's recommendations
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Assessment takes place

Step 4: Role of Internal Evaluator

- Conduct of assessment is verified
 - Initial marking of completed assessments takes place
 - Internal evaluation of marking takes place.
 - Double, Blind and Anonymous marking
 - Sample double marking
 - Disagreements between markers resolved in discussion
 - Final internal marks agreed by markers
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Before Examination Board

Step 5: Role of External Evaluator

- Mark list sent to External Evaluator
 - Sample of marked scripts and marking schemes also sent to EE
 - EE has the opportunity to inspect all marked scripts and supporting material.
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Examination Committee

Step 6: Approval of outcomes and procedures

- The marks and grades **must be formally approved by the Committee**
 - The Committee consists of Dean, Vice Dean(s) HOD(s) faculty members contributing to the assessments, and External Evaluator(s).
 - Agreement is reached after any necessary discussion
 - External Evaluator gives an oral report
 - Discusses his opinion of the quality of the assessments
 - The acceptance or otherwise of his recommendations by the Faculty
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After the Examination Committee

Step 7: Reporting

- The External Evaluator(s) write their annual report on the conduct of the year's assessment of the programme to the University President, including the appropriateness of the grades awarded.
 - The Faculty considers the report and makes a response to the EEs and to the President.
 - All of these documents for all programmes should be included and discussed in the Faculty Annual Report
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Issues to be addressed – I

Operational Considerations

- Strengthening the role of the Examination Committee
 - Avoiding conflicts of interest
 - The clarity of the brief given to internal and external evaluators
 - The criteria for nomination, selection and appointment
 - The degree of specialisation required in a programme
 - The clarity of the academic standards specified for the award
 - The supply of timely and adequate evidence
 - The procedures for appointment and management
 - The procedures for using the reports generated.
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Issues to be addressed – II

Policy Considerations

- The locus of responsibility for developing, establishing and monitoring a robust and efficient evaluation system rests with the University
 - The locus of responsibility for applying the system rests with the Faculty
 - The quality of the decision-making in addressing appropriately any matters reported by the external evaluator and providing feedback on action taken
 - Developing a culture of shared responsibility for assessment and its evaluation.
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Conclusion

- Evaluation plays a part at every stage of assessment from design to final approval of the outcomes
 - Internal and External evaluation need to be an integral part of the total quality assurance system and process
 - The roles of internal and external evaluation, together with the powers of the examinations committee, play an important part in quality assuring academic standards
 - The internal quality assurance system and procedures already being developed in institutions capture the evaluation process and report it
 - The University's responsibilities are to put in place the system and receive reports that satisfy it that the system is effective
 - The Faculty's responsibilities are to make it work and report on it.
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