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External Practitioners Policy

(External Practitioners – External Experts – External Advisors)

Location	Oxford Campus, c/o Activate Learning, Jericho Building, Oxford OX1 1SA
Monitoring	The Principal and Head of Quality Assurance
Overall responsibility	Academic Board
Author	Shane De Fonseca, Head of QA and Accreditations
Created	15/03/2023
Last review date	13/05/2025
Next review date	June 2026

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that EM Normandie UK Limited (EMN UK) upholds high academic standards and maintains the quality of its programmes through the engagement of External Practitioners, experts, and advisors. This engagement aligns with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and other regulatory requirements to ensure academic integrity, fairness, and comparability with national standards.

Definition

- External Experts: evaluate course design, learning outcomes, and resources.
- External Practitioners: review assessment instruments, student performance, and threshold academic standards.
- External Advisors: provide strategic insights on course and programme relevance to industry and sector needs

Hereafter referred to as “External Practitioners”.

Scope

The scope of this policy covers External Practitioners.

The policy applies to all programmes offered by EMN UK and ensures that the roles and responsibilities of External Practitioners are transparent, impartial, and consistent with institutional and national guidelines.

General Principles

The engagement of External Practitioners provides an important and necessary means for EMN UK to have assurance that its academic standards and quality meet UK national frameworks and regulatory requirements.

The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is the definitive reference source for EMN UK’s policy on external examination including the use of External Practitioners.



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EMN UK will provide clear and transparent information on the roles of External Practitioners, engaged to assure its academic standards and a high-quality student learning experience.

EMN UK's external examiner policy covers scrutiny by external experts who will evaluate the suitability of courses (suitability and coverage of learning outcomes, level, quality and credits) [external expert feedback for courses], External Practitioners who evaluate assessment instruments and assessment decisions and External Advisors who will advise EMN UK in terms of the currency and strategic fit of courses and programmes (as part of the programme steering committee).

Impartiality

External Practitioners must be impartial and arrive at judgements independently of EMN UK and any partners. In addition, they will not benefit from any student outcomes, nor have any connection to any student being assessed.

EMN UK will deploy a systematic approach to recruiting External Practitioners to be assured of their independence and impartiality of the external examiner and the avoidance of conflicts of interest.

Selection and appointment of External Practitioners, External Advisors and External Experts

- must demonstrate subject expertise and knowledge of quality assurance in higher education.
- must have experience to contribute to programme design and assessment at the award level.
- should have sufficient academic experience to assess standards, identify good practice, and recommend improvements.
- appointments will aim to include diverse institutional or professional backgrounds for broader scrutiny. new External Practitioners without prior experience will be assigned a mentor.
- should typically hold no more than two external examiner roles.
- appointments will consider any specific requirements from Professional, Statutory, or Regulatory Bodies (e.g., CMI).

1. External Practitioners – duties

Their duties are to review and comment on

- standards and student performance in relation to threshold standards. This will require them, inter alia, to assess the standard of academic awards and student performance with regard to EMN UK's regulations and external reference points including Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications, subject benchmark statements and any appropriate Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements
- the comparability of student performance and standard of awards with regard to their professional experience of other comparable programmes of UK higher education elsewhere
- the appropriateness of proposed examination papers, programme work and other assessments which count towards an EMN UK award including the intended learning outcomes to judge whether they enable students to meet the required threshold standard
- any proposed changes to assessment regulations which could affect students currently on the programme including new modules and modifications to existing modules of a programme



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- assessed student work to ensure that student work is fairly assessed in relation to their cohort. External Practitioners will be provided with, assessment instruments including examination papers
- assessment briefs, marking criteria and a representative sample of student assessments within the range of grades and have access to all assessed work if necessary
- identification on any examples of good practice and recommendations for improvements/enhancements
- the internal moderation of student work: External Practitioners have the right to moderate the marks awarded by internal examiners. Exceptionally, an external examiner may propose to the adjustment of marks for a student cohort with regard to maintenance of academic threshold standards. Such adjustment must apply to the whole cohort and not used to adjust the marks of individual students.
- Equity and Accessibility: Review assessment practices to ensure they are equitable, accessible, and inclusive, promoting fair treatment of all students, including those with diverse backgrounds and needs.
- Alignment with Sector Standards: Assess whether the programme and assessments are aligned with sector-recognised standards and benchmarks, including relevant PRSB requirements, ensuring that the academic provision meets national and professional expectations.
- EDI and Inclusivity Good Practice: Identify and report on any examples of good practice related to EDI and inclusivity within assessments, making recommendations for enhancement where necessary.

1.1. Attendance at Exam Boards

External Practitioners may be invited to participate in EMN UK's Exam boards and/or any board/committee that is empowered by the exam board (including exam commission meetings), at which decisions are made with regard to student progression and confirmation of marks and grades.

1.2. Student Contact with External Practitioners

Students are prohibited to contact External Practitioners. Any such contact will be treated as misconduct and addressed in line with the Student Disciplinary Policy. External Practitioners should inform the Principal of any such an occurrence.

An informal meeting between students and the external examiner may be held at the request of the External Practitioners by arrangement and with the agreement of EMN UK.

1.3. External Experts - duties

The purpose of having external experts is to ensure that the courses including course resources are accurately presented to the students. External experts will be asked to review all the course's resources (including a sample of assessment instruments where available) for evaluation and feedback.

External experts will provide EMN UK with a feedback report and may be consulted for follow-up discussions with the module team in order to implement the prescribed changes.

The External examiner (courses) report will specifically cover the following points

- course syllabus (including learning outcomes, assessments and resource materials)
- lesson plan or Scheme of work
- course material (including copyright issues, coverage of learning outcomes, volume)



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- assessment instruments
- overall suitability of the course including compliance with any PSRB requirements, ECTS or equivalent FHEQ credits (amount), level of the course and their recommendations
- copyright concerns, EDI aspects and accessibility recommendations

1.4. Annual Report

Designated External experts are required to report at least annually to EMN UK. We recommend that the reports be submitted within six weeks of the date of the relevant Assessment Board.

The purpose of the report is to assure EMN UK that the academic standards of its awards are appropriate, to satisfy EMN UK that programmes are meeting stated objectives and to facilitate any necessary improvements

A template will be provided to experts for reporting on

- Academic threshold standards with regard to appropriate external reference points.
- Student achievement and its comparability to similar provision elsewhere.
- The rigour and fairness of the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards including the application of procedures relating to mitigating circumstance.
- Academic integrity
- Curriculum aims, content and mode of delivery
- Learning outcomes in relation to the level of the Award and teaching methods
- The quality and consistency of internal marking practices
- Resources.
- Any Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies' (PSRB) requirements (if applicable)
- Examples of good practice
- The operation and outcomes of the Exam Board

The reports will also state if External Practitioners have received sufficient evidence to fulfil their role effectively and how issues raised in previous reports have been addressed.

External Expert reports will be reviewed by the Head of Programme who will propose changes to be agreed with the course leader. Any changes made have to be recorded by the Head of Programme and reported to EMN UK Academic Board and the Board of Directors.

Reporting by External Experts will ensure that any concerns or recurring recommendations are addressed by EMN. Where improvement is required action plans will be developed with a defined timeframe for implementation.

External experts may be provided with a written response to their comments and recommendations where appropriate. They may submit a confidential report directly to the Chair of the Academic Board where appropriate.

Induction of External Practitioners and External Experts

EMN UK will provide programmes of induction for External Practitioners to ensure that they are prepared and supported to fulfil their duties and roles prior to undertaking any external examination duties. Instructions on data security, confidentiality and adherence to the UK's data protection act will also be discussed at this stage.



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2. External Advisors (Programme Advisory Board)

The purpose of appointing External Advisors is to ensure that the courses and programmes offered by EMN UK are kept under consistent review, update and they are fit for purpose in terms of catering to the latest industry / sector needs. The External Advisors can either be individuals with a proven track record of industry experience within their area of specialisation or be a committee that comprise of more than one external advisor (referred to as a programme advisory committee).

Period of involvement of External Practitioners with EM Normandie

External Practitioners will usually be asked to do work for EM Normandie over a period of four consecutive years and replacement appointments will usually overlap.

In exceptional circumstances, for example to ensure continuity or where a programme is no longer recruiting, an external practitioner may be asked to do work during one additional year.

Contracts for External Practitioners will be renewed every year unless any of the following applies:

- non-fulfilment of duties
- failure to provide an annual report within the required timescale
- unprofessional conduct
- breakdown in relationship with EMN UK

Resources for External Practitioners

If necessary, newly appointed External Practitioners will be invited to visit EMN UK in person before attendance at their first Exam Board.

EMN UK will provide new External Practitioners with the following information when appointed

- Programme Handbook(s)
- Programme specifications
- Module descriptors
- EMN UK assessment policies
- Previous External Practitioners' final report and the EMN UK response (if available)

Useful resources

The QAA's advice and guidance for external expertise ([external link](#)).

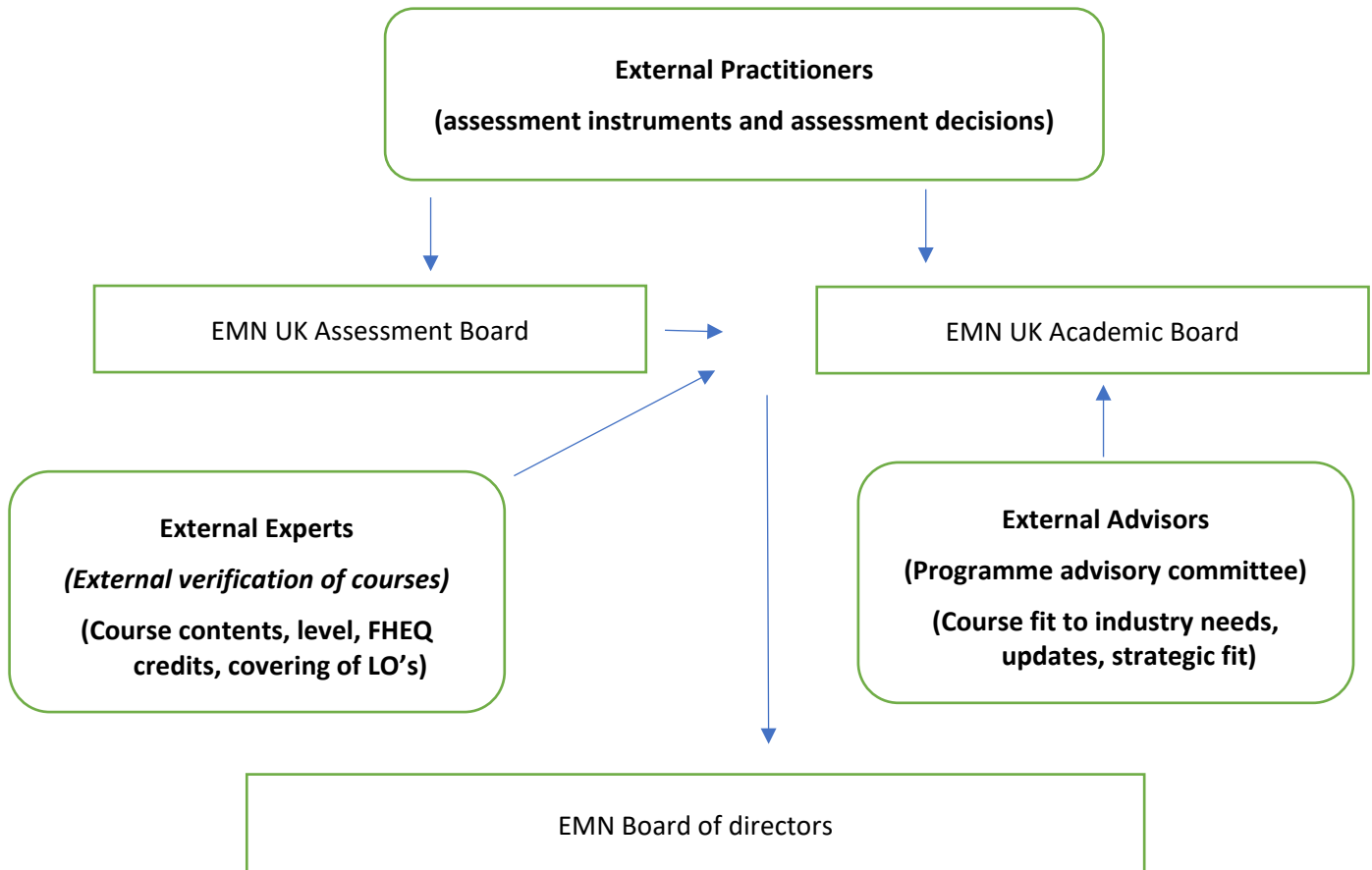
The OFS's sector recognised standards ([external link](#)). Paragraph 342 ([external link](#)).

Framework for higher education qualifications ([external link](#)).

Subject benchmark statement for business and management masters ([external link](#)).

Subject benchmark statement for finance ([external link](#)).

External Practitioners - reporting lines (EMN UK)





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Version control table

Version	v1	Name	Role	Date
Created by:		Shane De Fonseca	UK Head of QA&A	06/11/2024
		Reciprocal arrangements removed. Reference to sector standards and FHEQ added. Verifiers amended to examiners and experts for better alignment with QAA's terminology. Hyperlinks added under section 12.		
Approved by:		EM Normandie UK Academic Board		13/11/2024
Version	v2	Name	Role	Date
Amended by:		Shane De Fonseca	UK Head of QA&A	12/02/2025
		Minor amendments and inclusion of scope and purpose		
Changes approved by:		EMN UK Academic board		14/05/2025
Version		Name	Role	Date
Amended by:				
Changes approved by:				