# Guidance to Facilitate Meetings between External Examiners and Students

1. External Examiners are encouraged to meet with students at least once during their term of office to inform their practice as external examiners. Meeting with students, either in small groups or individually, provides External Examiners with opportunities to help them understand more about the programmes they have been appointed to examine, the student learning experience and assessment practice.
2. External examiners have reported that they value opportunities to meet with students. Feedback from students also enables External Examiners to provide a more detailed commentary in their annual reports which are a valuable resource for programme teams and assessment leads. In addition, providing opportunities for students to meet with External Examiners makes students aware that assessment is conducted in a fair and rigorous manner and is subject to independent expert scrutiny.
3. Programmes operate in different ways and programme teams need to put appropriate arrangements in place for their particular programme. The purpose of this guidance is to offer guidance on ways in which meetings can be facilitated.
4. If meetings are held, it must be made clear to all participants that discussions with External Examiners will not influence assessment decisions and outcomes taken by Boards of Examiners. Such meetings should also not be used for or construed to be viva voce examinations*. Meetings are not a forum for presenting mitigating circumstances, enquiring about academic appeals or complaints. These matters must be raised through appropriate channels.*
5. All External Examiners are invited to a centrally-organised induction programme when they are appointed. The induction programme includes within in it an opportunity for External Examiners to meet with programme teams and assessment leads. This meeting provides an opportunity for meetings with students to be discussed and arrangements put in place.
6. If Externals Examiners are part way through their period of appointment. Opportunities to meet with students can be discussed during their next scheduled visit to SGUL.
7. External Examiners may have their own preferences for when and how to meet with students and programme teams should accommodate these preferences if it is practical to do so.
8. The following approaches are possible approaches:
* External Examiners meet with students over lunch during the induction event;
* External Examiners attend assessments which can be observed such as OSCEs, presentations and oral examinations which provide opportunities for external moderation as well as meeting students;
* External Examiners are invited to attend meetings with students whilst they are on site for moderation purposes or to attend Boards of Examiners meetings.
* External Examiners may be invited to present a research seminar to which students are invited, again providing opportunities to meet students;
* External Examiners are invited to attend student convened events.
* Where programmes do not involve face to face delivery, or where delivery takes place at partner institutions, face to face meetings between students and External Examiners may not be practical, in such instances, meetings or opportunities for discussion can be arranged in other ways through media such as Microsoft Teams or discussion forums.
1. However, if a meeting is scheduled, the following guidance should be taken into account:
2. Students should be made aware of the purpose of the meeting and the role of the External Examiner (<https://www.sgul.ac.uk/for-students/registry-documents-and-images/documents/Guidance-for-Students-on-External-Examining.pdf>)
3. Discussions will not result in changes to assessment decisions or degree outcomes;
4. Where possible, students should meet with the External Examiner without members of the programme team in attendance;
5. Sufficient notice of meeting dates should be given to ensure that all parties can attend;
6. Student/year representatives should be involved in organising meetings between External Examiners and every effort should be made to facilitate the participation of the reps;
7. Minutes will not be taken of meetings although External Examiners will wish to take notes to help them refer to student comments in their annual reports;
8. There is no recommended duration for meetings. Most meetings will not take more than half an hour;
9. There is no set agenda for meetings although students should be encouraged to prepare questions or themes in advance of the meeting, though the meeting is primarily to seek feedback from the students on their experience as learners. “Non-academic” issues would not ordinarily be discussed;
10. External Examiners are encouraged to discuss with students any relevant issues, but they may wish to consider the assessment-related items referred to in the [briefing note](https://www.sgul.ac.uk/about/our-professional-services/quality-and-partnerships-directorate/documents/quality-manual/Appendix-C2-Periodic-review-briefing-note-for-students.pdf) (C2) available to students who are invited to meet with periodic review panels:
* Are formative assessment opportunities available? Formative assessment allows you to “rehearse” a particular type of assessment before you undertake the “real thing”.
* Does the assessment reflect what you have been taught?
* Are learning outcomes explicitly assessed?
* Are the assessment criteria and marking schemes clear? Do you know why you gained and lost marks?
* What are your thoughts on the amount of assessment that you have to complete?
* Is feedback prompt and useful?
1. Further advice and guidance is available for the Quality and Partnerships Directorate.