



2020

Board of Examiners and External Examiners (HE06)



TEC Partnership
Training • Education • Careers

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Description:

Whilst taking into account the regulations of partner Universities, this code of practice makes clear the practices and processes that must be adopted in relation to the Board of Examiners and External Examiners. The code of practice reflects the TEC Partnership’s commitment to ensuring governance over academic standards and that judgments relating to results and awards are carried out with rigour, fairness and probity. The Code of Practice is not at any point intended as a substitute for the regulations of awarding institutions; in every instance the TEC Partnership fully acknowledges such organisations as the governing body responsible for the appointment, approval and oversight of matters relating to its external examining processes. However, this Code of Practice is intended to enhance established regulations and make explicit the rights and responsibilities of all those involved in the external examining process within the TEC Partnership.

If you need any further advice on how the regulations work, you should contact the HE Quality Office.

HE Quality Office heqa@grimsby.ac.uk

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This document is available in alternative forms

Version Control

Number	
1.0	New
1.1	Removal of reference to GIG and replacement with TEC Partnership Updating of job roles Addition of processes for non-attendance of external examiners at exam board Change of Deliberative Committee titles Inclusion of Removal of EE contract

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Code of Practice makes clear the TEC Partnership's expectations regarding administrative conduct and preparation leading up to and upon completion of a board of examiners. It also builds on the regulations and policies set by awarding institutions and/or partner Higher Education institutions (HEIs) that govern matters relating to the External Examiners process at the TEC Partnership. These awarding institutions and/or partner HEIs include:

- i) Grimsby Institute of Further & Higher Education
- ii) University of Hull
- iii) Pearson Edexcel

1.2 As TEC Partnership works in partnership with numerous awarding bodies, variable terms may be used to describe a board of examiners. Within this Code the term 'board of examiners' is used to describe any board with a remit for confirming module marks for student output and/or the progression of students between stages and/or the determination of award classifications.

1.3 The Code has been developed as a result of the TEC Partnership's own review processes and analysis of key sources such as external examiner reports.

1.4 The Code is underpinned by the following key principles.

- i) Rigour, probity and fairness
- ii) Timeliness
- iii) Coherency
- iv) Accountability
- v) Consistency
- vi) Accuracy
- vii) Confidentiality

1.5 The Code applies to the range of processes leading up to, including and upon completion of a board of examiners. These include:

- i) the setting of pre-board and board of examiners dates
- ii) the nomination of a HE Data Administrator responsible to a board of examiners;
- iii) the preparation of reports, results grids, agenda and minutes;
- iv) timescales;
- v) minuting of board of examiners' meetings;
- vi) accuracy and availability of records;
- vii) confidentiality and data protection; and
- viii) production of results letters and transcripts.

1.6 The Code, whilst existing in its own right, aligns itself with institutional and other relevant codes and regulations including those belonging to partner awarding bodies.

1.7 The Code does not take into account matters relating to the jurisdiction or operation of boards of examiners which must at all times operate within the regulatory framework of the relevant awarding body.

1.8 Any queries relating to boards of examiners should be referred to heqa@grimsby.ac.uk.

2.0 Preparation of Reports, Results Grids and Relevant Documentation

2.1 The HE Management Information Systems team (HE MIS) must ensure careful and timely preparation of reports, results grids and relevant documentation required for a board of examiners.

2.2 The Degree Compliance Officer must nominate a HE Data Administrator to support the administration of the boards of examiners and take in to account:

- i) the number of boards of examiners within their remit of responsibility.
- ii) the dates relevant boards of examiners are scheduled to convene.
- iii) the dates pre-boards are scheduled to convene.

2.3 It is good practice for the Degree Compliance Officer to develop a calendar of scheduled boards (and other meetings and deadlines) at the start of each academic year.

2.4 HE MIS must inform programme teams at the start of each semester, of the date by which all student results must be entered into the recording system.

2.5 The Degree Compliance Officer will be responsible for liaising with the partner universities regarding confirmation of board of examiners' dates. The HE Data Administrators will be responsible for liaising with the external examiners and TEC Partnership teaching teams, providing board of examiners' dates for the academic year and to invite them to boards. A record of acceptance or apology for external examiners must be logged on the Invite Tracker located on OneDrive.

2.6 HE MIS must use the definitive validation/approvals document for preparing results grids and relevant documentation; such a process will require HE MIS to annually collect the latest version of all relevant validation/approval's documents being mindful of any minor or major amendments that may have been made to the programme during each academic year. Where a module requires all assessments to be passed this must be clearly shown on the relevant module grid.

2.7 Student names must not appear on the agendas and minutes and must be shown as student numbers in line with GDPR.

2.8 HE MIS should refer to formal notification provided by the TEC Partnership's HE Quality office throughout the year for outcomes of Accreditation of Prior Learning and academic misconduct before entering information onto the management information system; any queries should be addressed to the department in a timely fashion.

2.9 The programme leader must ensure that a curriculum report for each programme, including relevant, accurate and reliable information is provided and/or confirmed to HE MIS annually. This includes details of the:

- i) full programme title;
- ii) accurate module titles;
- iii) module credits;
- iv) module levels;
- v) numbers of assessments per module and type i.e. case study, essay;
- vi) assessment weighing;
- vii) the requirement to pass a specific element in order to pass the module overall; and
- viii) module tutors.

2.10 HE MIS must triangulate any information provided by a programme leader/module tutor to information from relevant validation/approvals documents. Any anomalies must be raised and rectified with the module tutor and chair of the board prior to a board of examiners convening.

2.11 Programme leaders/module tutors must enter on to the management information system a timely, exact, accurate and complete list of student results for each assessment taken within each module. Aggregate results should not be calculated by the module tutor.

2.12 HE MIS is not responsible for ensuring student results provided for a board of examiners is complete in instances where a programme leader/module tutor fails to provide requested results in the first instance.

2.13 Should a programme leader/module tutor fail to respond to a HE MIS direct request to provide timely and complete student results, HE MIS must immediately report the delay or omission to the relevant Curriculum Manager, Associate Principal and chair for immediate action.

2.14 In the event of a chair's action the Degree Compliance Officer will complete a chair's action form (HE06A) with the reason for the amendment(s), chair's signature and HE Quality office signature. This will be sent HE MIS to complete a new results grid; this will be signed by the chair and external examiner. This process will be tracked on the chair's action tracker on OneDrive. These chair's actions will then be added to the next board of examiners agenda by the secretary to the board.

3.0 Timescales

3.1 Results grids must be prepared and completed by HE MIS prior to a board of examiners convening.

3.2 Results grids will be prepared before a scheduled board of examiners to allow faculties to convene a pre-board; HE areas should operate pre-boards as a process through which to 'iron out' any procedural errors, difficult cases, omissions or inconsistencies in the presentation of results grids before a formal board convenes.

3.3 In respect of University of Hull provision, the HE Data Administrators must liaise with the relevant University Faculty Administrator to ensure that information regarding students being presented to the board of examiners is forwarded prior to the board.

4.0 Accuracy and Availability of Records

4.1 HE MIS and HE Data Administrators must keep clear and appropriate records relating to any board of examiners. Clear and rigorous record keeping permits the TEC Partnership to assure itself that:

- i) it is operating consistently with the framework of relevant codes, policies, regulations and PSRB requirements
- ii) it is able to recall and inform itself of relevant details in the advent of complaints and/or appeals.

4.2 Records within the confines of this code include:

- i) provisional results grids;
- ii) approved results grids;
- iii) Attendance list (HE06B);
- iv) board agendas (HE06C) adhering to the standard format as defined by the relevant awarding body;
- v) provisional and a full set of approved minutes of board of examiner (HE06D) proceedings (adhering to the standard format as defined by the relevant awarding body);
- vi) Signed Confirmation of Endorsement and Attendance form (HE06O)

4.3 HE Data Administrators must ensure they arrive at the meeting venue at least 20 minutes prior to the board start time. To ensure the room is set appropriately, the computer and projection screen are on with relevant grids opened and that paperwork is ready to be distributed.

4.4 HE Data Administrators must ensure that upon the collation and preparation of relevant material, sufficient copies are available for all members prior to the start of board of examiners meeting. Below is a checklist of what should be provided for each member. Previous exam board minutes will be shown on the smartboard.

- i) Chair - module and programme agenda and a full set of all module and progression grids relevant to the board.
- ii) External Examiner - module and programme agenda and a set of module and progression grids relevant to the external examiner (Confirmation of Endorsement and Attendance form (HE06O)).
- iii) Programme Leaders - module and programme agenda and a copy of Progression grids relevant to the programme leader and module grids of any taught modules.
- iv) Module Tutor - module and programme agenda and a copy of module grids relevant to the module tutor.
- v) All other members should have a module and programme agenda.

4.5 HE Data Administrators must ensure that records of all decisions and any revisions to results made during a board of examiners meeting are accurately recorded.

4.6 HE Data Administrators must ensure that, upon the completion of a board of examiners:

- i) results are signed by the chair, external examiner and nominated University representative at the time of the board. In the absence of an EE paperwork must be emailed within 24 hours of the board;
- ii) Confirmation of Endorsement and Attendance forms (HE06O) are signed by the External Examiners;
- iii) Confirmation of Endorsement and Attendance forms (HE06O) emailed to absent External Examiners for their signature within 24 hours of the board or before if known; and
- iv) minutes are prepared within 10 working days of the board and sent to HEQA for the Degree Compliance Officer and Chair to audit.

4.7 Electronic records for example results, transcripts and minutes must be kept indefinitely. These should be saved in the HE Results Folder located on SharePoint.

4.8 The HE Data Administrators must complete the Exam Board Tracker to confirm each stage of the board of examiners procedure, to ensure timeliness and completeness of paperwork.

4.9 The Degree Compliance Officer will be responsible for checking the process is being adhered to and recorded as set out.

5.0 Confidentiality and Data Protection

5.1 HE MIS and the HE Data Administrator are responsible for preparing and/or ensuring the maintenance of appropriate records for a board of examiners respect absolute confidentiality at all times by following GDPR.

5.2 Where ICT is used to project results onto a screen during a board of examiners meeting, HE Data Administrators must ensure that results are not visible to students or third parties for example, through windows or glass doors.

5.3 No copies of records from a board of examiners must be retained by any member. Upon completion of a board the HE Data Administrator must collect all records from other members, leave no evidence in the vacated room where a board has convened and shred records no longer needed.

5.4 Details of results and decisions confirmed during a board of examiners must not, without a chair of the board giving prior permission within the framework of awarding body regulations, be disclosed to any student or third party. Students will receive their transcripts via Pro-Portal.

5.5 Board of examiners' records must be filed for record keeping with reference to the programme and/or board and not any individual(s) discussed or considered. Grids must be filed by programme and minutes must be filed by board.

5.6 Disclosure of results must occur in accordance with the relevant awarding body regulatory framework, within the provisions of the GDPR and not over the phone.

5.7 HE MIS and HE Data Administrators must ensure that disclosure of approved results and decisions do not result in the disclosure of sensitive information relating to the privacy of students. This refers to results, transcripts and minutes. Examples of sensitive information includes matters such as mitigating circumstances, academic misconduct, professional unsuitability and disciplinary matters.

5.8 All enquiries relating to access to any boards of examiners' records by a student or third party must be referred to the TEC Partnership's HE Quality office.

5.9 All signed papers must be scanned and saved in the HE Results SharePoint folder as soon as practicably possible and all paper copies shredded.

5.10 Students must be referred to by student number throughout the boards, results grids, agendas and minutes.

6.0 Production of Results Letters and Transcripts

6.1 The TEC Partnership must ensure that information provided to students across its programmes of higher education provision via results letters and transcripts, is consistent and accurate.

6.2 The format and presentation of results letters and transcripts must be approved by the TEC Partnership's HE Quality office who will work within the framework and requirements of awarding body regulations. A Terminology Guide is available for secretaries to the boards to use when completing minutes. This must be used at all times to ensure consistency.

6.3 All results letters and transcripts prepared by HE MIS must be approved by the TEC Partnership's HE Quality office prior to release.

6.4 Where anomalies are reported the HE Quality office will contact HE MIS and a new transcript produced as appropriate.

6.5 Where partner institutions require oversight of transcripts, the Degree Compliance Officer, following internal moderation, must send relevant batches of transcripts to the associated partner's Quality departments.

6.6 Transcripts will be made available to students online via Pro-Portal. HE Data Administrators/HE Quality office staff will be responsible for printing only the final transcripts which will be given to students at graduation or via the post.

7.0 Purpose and Function of External Examiners

7.1 In common with awarding institutions and partner HEIs, the TEC Partnership recognises in every instance the functions of the External Examining process as defined by the QAA. External Examining processes assist the TEC Partnership in ensuring that:

- i) threshold academic standards of each award and its component parts is set and maintained at the appropriate level;
- ii) standards of student performance are properly judged against the appropriate level;
- iii) academic standards and the quality of the student experience are properly judged against relevant external reference points such as the components of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education including the framework for higher education qualifications, and/or the requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRB);
- iv) assessment process measures student achievement appropriately against the intended outcomes of the programme, and is rigorous, fairly operated and in line with the awarding institution's regulations and policies;
- v) the TEC Partnership is able to compare the standards of programmes it delivers with those of other higher education or similar institutions, though their content may vary; and
- vi) good practice is captured and disseminated.

8.0 Appointment of External Examiners, Rights and Responsibilities

University provision

8.1 The appointment period and External Examiners role is defined and regulated by the relevant awarding institution and/or partner HEI. Programme teams within the TEC Partnership should in every instance refer to the awarding institution/partner HEI's regulations or policies appertaining to external examiners for further information.

Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education provision, criteria and process for appointment

8.2 The appointment period and External Examiners role is defined and regulated by the TEC Partnership in accordance with QAA requirements.

8.3 Nominations for the appointment of External Examiners reports must be received by the HE Quality Officer on the proposal form (HE06H).

8.4 The nomination for the appointment of an External Examiner will be considered and approved by the TEC Partnership Academic Authority and Standards Senior Committee (AASSC). This 'approvals process' includes consideration of appropriate documentation/ evidence in support of the nomination. All decisions must be based upon principles of integrity and objectivity and judged against the TEC Partnership criteria for the approval of External Examiners.

8.5 Any nomination for an External Examiner appointment must be able to satisfy the following criteria.

- i) Academic, currently teaching and where appropriate other professional expertise, experience and qualifications appropriate to the award being examined, with both level and the subject(s) of those qualifications generally matching those to be examined.
- ii) The External Examiner is able to command 'respect' which may be demonstrated through academic expertise and/or professional achievement.
- iii) The External Examiner has expertise and experience in assessment at the appropriate level. If the nominee has no previous external examining experience, s/he will be expected to have extensive internal examining or other relevant experience.

- iv) The External Examiner is 'impartial' which may be demonstrated through no prior involvement with the TEC Partnership during the last five years.
- v) The incoming External Examiner must not be from the same institution as the outgoing External Examiner.
- vi) The External Examiner can satisfy any requirements laid down by relevant professional, statutory or regulatory bodies where appropriate.
- vii) The External Examiner must not normally hold more than two external examiners appointments for taught programmes at the same time.

8.6 Where an External Examiner fails to attend a board of examiners without the prior approval of the Curriculum Manager, provides false information, fails to produce written reports or fails to act in accordance with this Code of Practice, the TEC Partnership reserves the right, with four weeks' notification, to withhold payment of fees or terminate the appointment.

9.0 Communication with External Examiners

9.1 The HE Quality office will issue the following to an External Examiner upon approval of their appointment to their position.

- i) Letter of Engagement for Service as an External Examiner (HE06I) for signing and return to the HE Quality office.
- ii) Reply slip (HE06J) for signing and return to the HE Quality office.
- iii) Information regarding their role and remit (HE06K).
- iv) Information on payment and expenses (HE06L).
- v) Validation document upon receipt of the above signed paperwork

9.2 Whilst all External Examiners will receive information regarding their role and remit from the awarding institution and/ or partner HEI, the TEC Partnership's HE Quality office must also ensure all External Examiners receive a welcome and orientation to the TEC Partnership. This will include:

- i) an introduction to the TEC Partnership's HE Quality office;
- ii) a copy of the TEC Partnership's boards and committee structures;
- iii) a copy of the TEC Partnership's structures and its portfolio of programmes; and
- iv) how to access the TEC Partnership's handbook for quality and standards.

9.3a The Degree Compliance Officer must also ensure that External Examiners on appointment are:

- i) sent copies of the validation document

9.3b The academic team must ensure that External Examiners on appointment are;

- i) sent copies of programme and module handbooks;
- ii) provided with marking schemes/criteria;
- iii) sent a copy of any external PSRB requirements (if applicable);

- iv) provided with dates for forthcoming examination and assessment deadlines and dates for boards of examiners meetings; and
- v) clearly communicated with to establish and ensure agreement over how arrangements will occur for matters relating to the External Examining process such as receipt and return of student assessment, attendance at boards of examiners.

9.4 The TEC Partnership's HE Quality Officer is responsible for maintaining a live register of External Examiner appointments. This must include:

- i) the External Examiner's name and home institution (if applicable);
- ii) programme(s) and/or modules of responsibility and awarding institution;
- iii) date of appointment;
- iv) length of period of appointment;
- v) date of receipt of the External Examiners Report; and
- vi) date of School/programme leader's response to the External Examiner's Report.

10.0 External Examiners and Assessment Procedures

10.1 For University provision, the External Examiner's role in relation to assessment is defined by the awarding institution and/or partner HEI.

10.2 For Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education's provision External Examiners and staff within the TEC Partnership must comply with expected roles and responsibilities as defined in HE06I.

10.3 In every instance it is the right of the External Examiner to see and approve the form and content of all summative assessment's tasks/briefs in accordance with programme regulations and before assessment tasks/briefs are published to the student.

10.4 Prepared examination papers must in every instance be seen and approved by an External Examiner before release to any student.

10.5 External examiners must be invited, and are expected, to attend where practicable all relevant Module and Programme Boards being given sufficient notice of the dates of meetings.

11.0 Receipt of External Examiner Reports

11.1 All External Examiner reports must be initially received from the awarding institution and/or partner Higher Education Institution via the TEC Partnership's Academic Registrar. If in any instance the External Examiner's report is sent directly to the programme team or TEC Partnership faculty, this must be forwarded to the TEC Partnership's Quality office without delay.

11.2 Grimsby Institute of Further and Education programme External Examiner reports must be completed on form HE06M.

11.3 External Examiners must submit their report by 31st August of the academic year in question.

11.4 All External Examiner's reports must be scrutinised by the Academic Registrar and HE Quality Officer and an institutional analysis produced by October of the following academic year.

11.5 The institutional analysis will be reported on via the TEC Partnership's annual Quality Enhancement Report. Institutional governance of themes and trends arising from External Examiners reports will be reported and considered at the TEC Partnership's Academic Authority and Standards Senior Committee (AASSC) and Higher Education Quality Assurance Committee (HEQAC) and reported through to the HE Oversight Committee.

11.6 Full and serious consideration in all instances will be given by the TEC Partnership to the comments and recommendations contained within External Examiners' reports and the outcomes arising from those comments. Planned actions and outcomes will be recorded at institutional level in the Quality Enhancement Report, at school level in Self Evaluation and Enhancement Documents and at programme level within the annual programme monitoring report.

12.0 External Examiner Reports and Quality Enhancement

12.1 External Examiners' reports must be circulated to the Associate Principal, Curriculum Manager and relevant programme team.

12.2 External Examiners' reports must be circulated to all staff responsible for teaching, learning and assessment on the relevant programme and be discussed at programme team meetings which will normally be before the start of the next academic year to allow appropriate planning and to ensure enhancement led activities inform the quality and standards agenda.

12.3 Student groups must be made aware of how to access the relevant External Examiners' report and where practicable, external examiners reports should be discussed with students in staff-student/programme committees.

12.4 The name, position and institution of External Examiners must be included in programme handbooks provided to students.

12.5 The programme leader must respond to all External Examiners' reports in written format as defined by the awarding institution or within six weeks of its receipt for Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher

Education and Pearson Edexcel provision. This should normally include a letter of acknowledgement and details of how External Examiner comments have been or will be acted upon. Comments may include details of the programme teams' response to the External Examiner's comments and any planned actions for enhancement of quality and standards.

12.6 Responses must be copied to the TEC Partnership's HE Quality Officer.

12.7 External Examiners' reports must also be discussed with PSRBs in instances where External Examiners' comments/reports may be requested or are relevant.

12.8 External Examiners reports must, in every instance, be used to share good practice with other programme teams.

13.0 Termination of External Examiner Contract

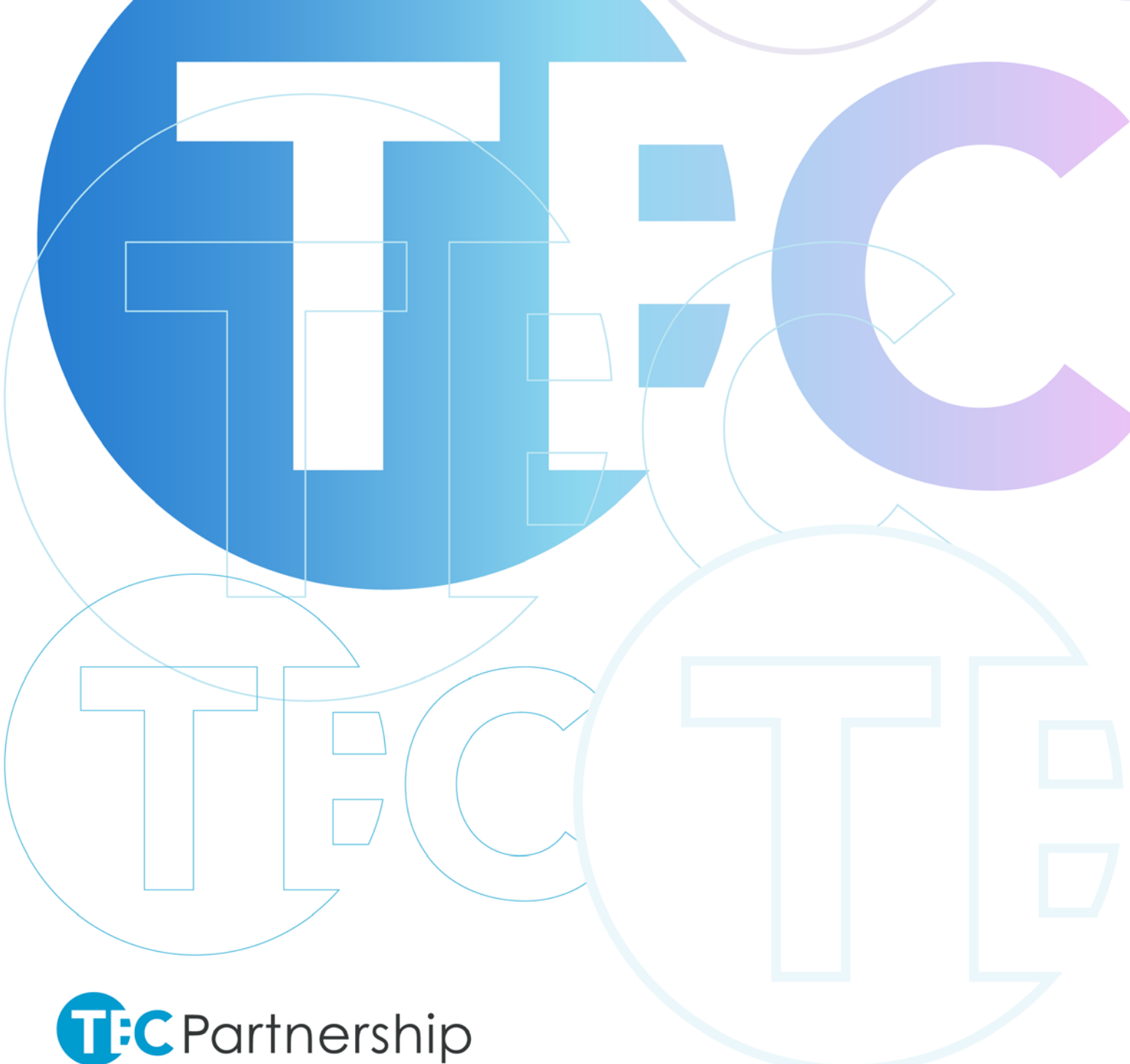
13.1 The Academic Authority and Standards Senior Committee (AASSC) has delegated powers to terminate the contract of an external examiner under the following conditions:

13.1.1 The external examiner has failed to provide their annual report;

13.1.2 The external examiner has ceased to make contact with TEC partnership for a significant period of time;

13.1.3 The external examiner no longer teaches in a UK Higher Education institution;

13.1.4 Information comes to light which could call into question their impartiality.



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