External Examiners can be viewed as advisors, recruited by a School for generally four years. External Examiners look into degree programmes that they have experience of and make annual comments on areas including teaching, procedures and policies explained in more detail below:

**Figure 1: What Does an External Examiner look at?**

External Examiners are NOT...

- ...involved in marking any work submitted by students or able to change an individual’s marks.
- ...to be contacted directly by students.
- ...entitled to the final say in whether a student can progress or what degree they are awarded.
- ...able to insist any action they feel needs to be taken (but they can make suggestions).

But, External Examiners ARE...

- ...listened to by the School and any comments and or recommendations they make are taken seriously.
- ...have appropriate background to have a credible ‘second opinion’ on academic aspects of the course.
- ...highlight areas of great achievements, and areas they feel need to be improved.
- ...able to contact the Vice Chancellor regarding any serious concerns they might have.

**So how do External Examiners express their views?**

External Examiners use report forms and make comments at the Board of Examiners meetings to show their findings.

**What parts of the report are relevant to me?**

The report structure is made up of three main areas. These areas mostly contain questions where the University requires responses, plus an area dedicated to additional comments the person may wish to make.

Typical characteristics of these sections can be explained by the figure below.
**Why Should I be concerned with External Examiners' opinions?**

Staff of the degree programmes are given copies of reports. These are shared with student representatives and also considered by staff in Faculty and central University services. These are taken seriously in order to improve teaching to students. So how does this impact you directly?

1. **It is Necessary**- Your Student Charter states students want a course that is dynamic and constantly changing to improve individual experiences.
2. **Fairness**- Students want to know that their assessments are marked fairly and consistently relative to their peers.
3. **Assurance**- External Examiners making positive comments about the School ensures Students feel more confident in the programme they have chosen and are receiving a high standard of education.

**Building up the picture- What are the key things I should remember from this document?**

You can find details of the External Examiner(s) for your course in your Degree Programme Handbook.

You can request the External Examiner’s report for your course by emailing ext.examiners@ncl.ac.uk

Further information is available at https://www.ncl.ac.uk/epgs/policies-and-procedures/external-examiners/