

External Examining: Using Data to support Effective Quality Assurance and Enhancement at the University of Edinburgh

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University Background

- Founded in 1583
- Three Colleges
- 20 Schools
- Wide range of subjects
- ~40,000 students
- ~14,000 staff
- Russell Group
- LERU





What is External Examining?

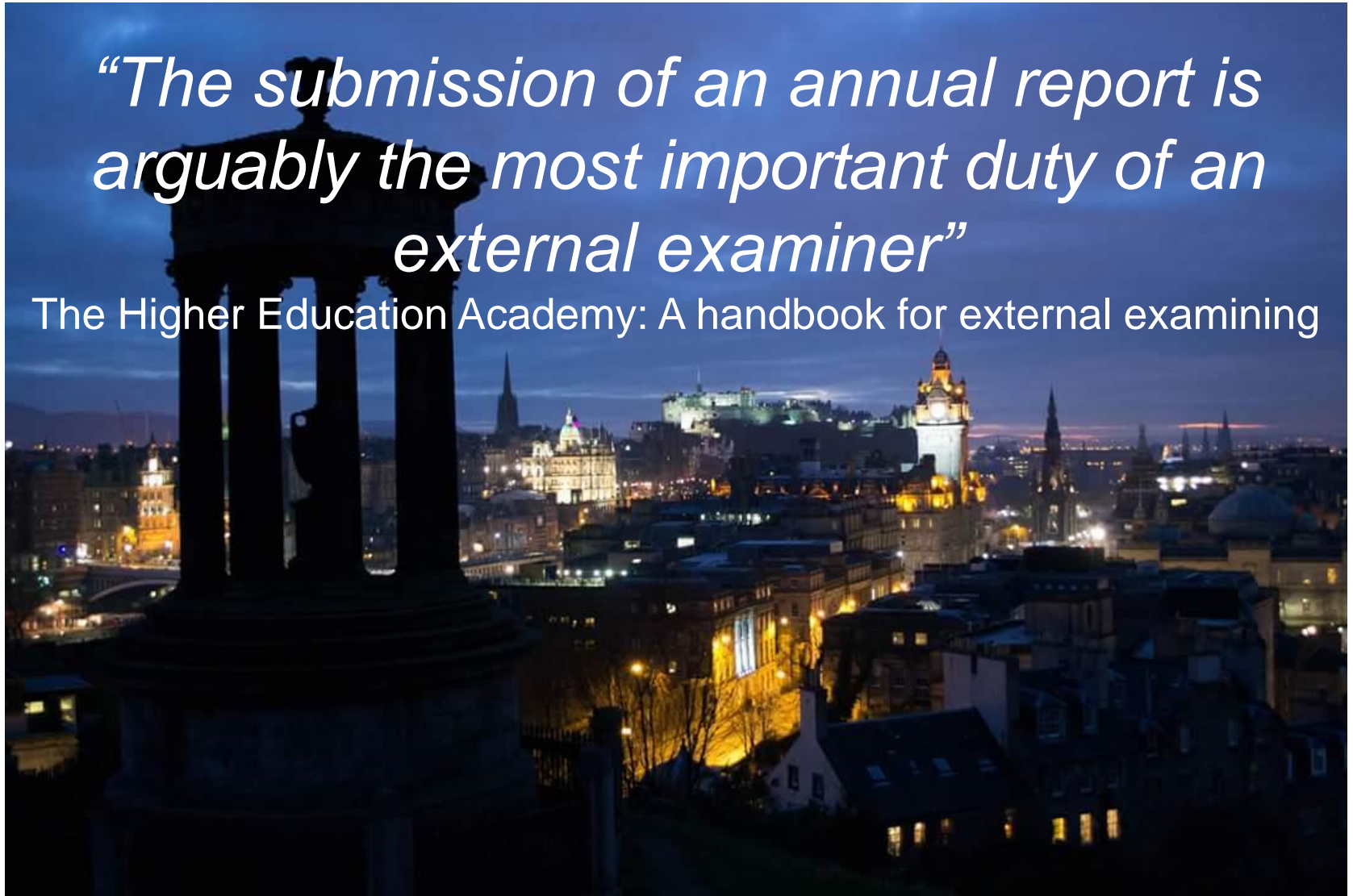
- Used in the UK to maintain academic standards
- Comparability of standards across the UK
- Operation of the assessment process
- Advise on quality and enhancement
- Key part of quality assurance and enhancement processes at the University
- Governed by UK Quality Code for Higher Education Chapter B7



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*“The submission of an annual report is
arguably the most important duty of an
external examiner”*

The Higher Education Academy: A handbook for external examining





External Examiner Reports Challenges

Institutional oversight

Extracting themes and issues

Responses

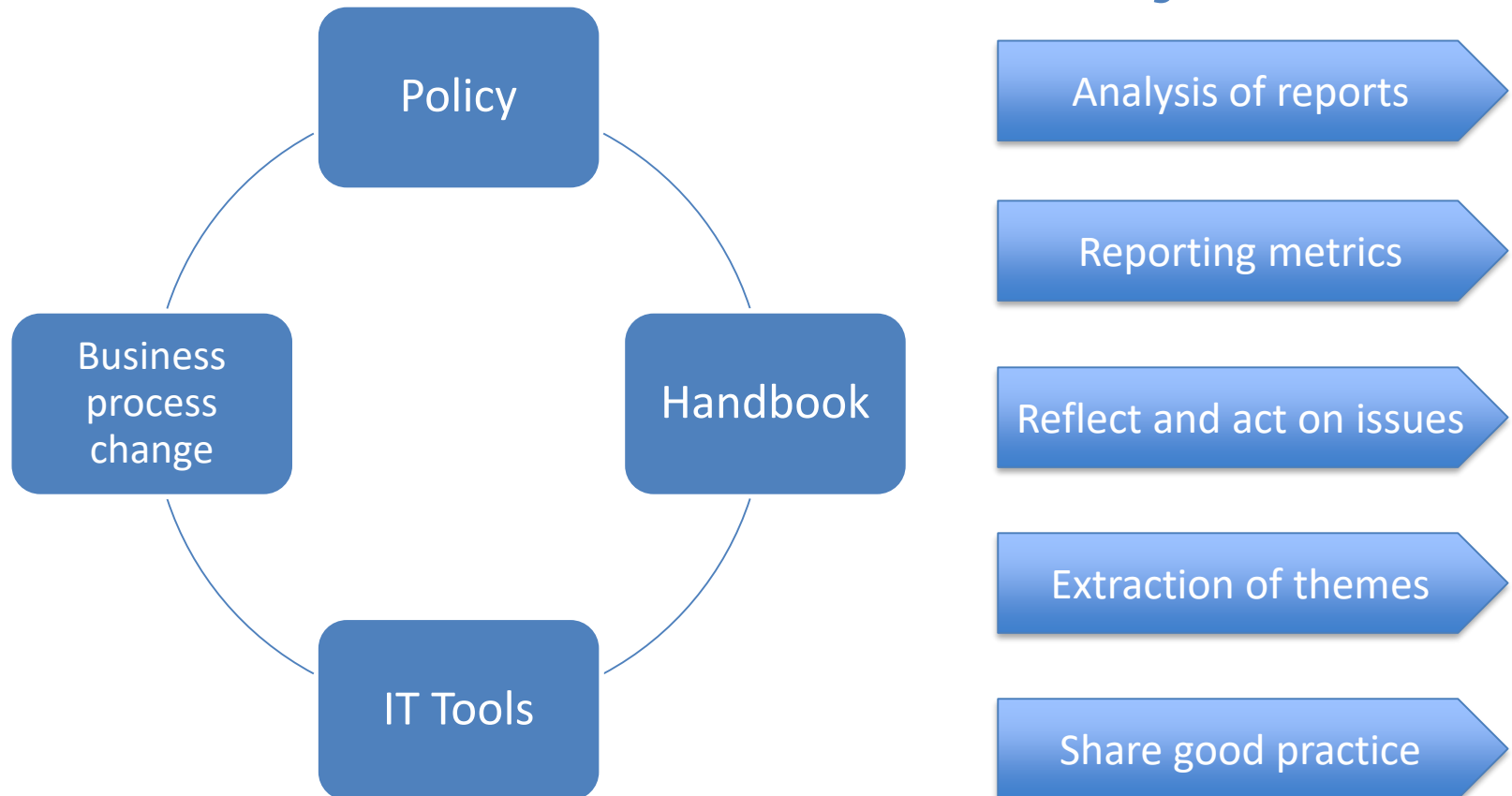
Paper reports

Variety of
templates

Manual
distribution

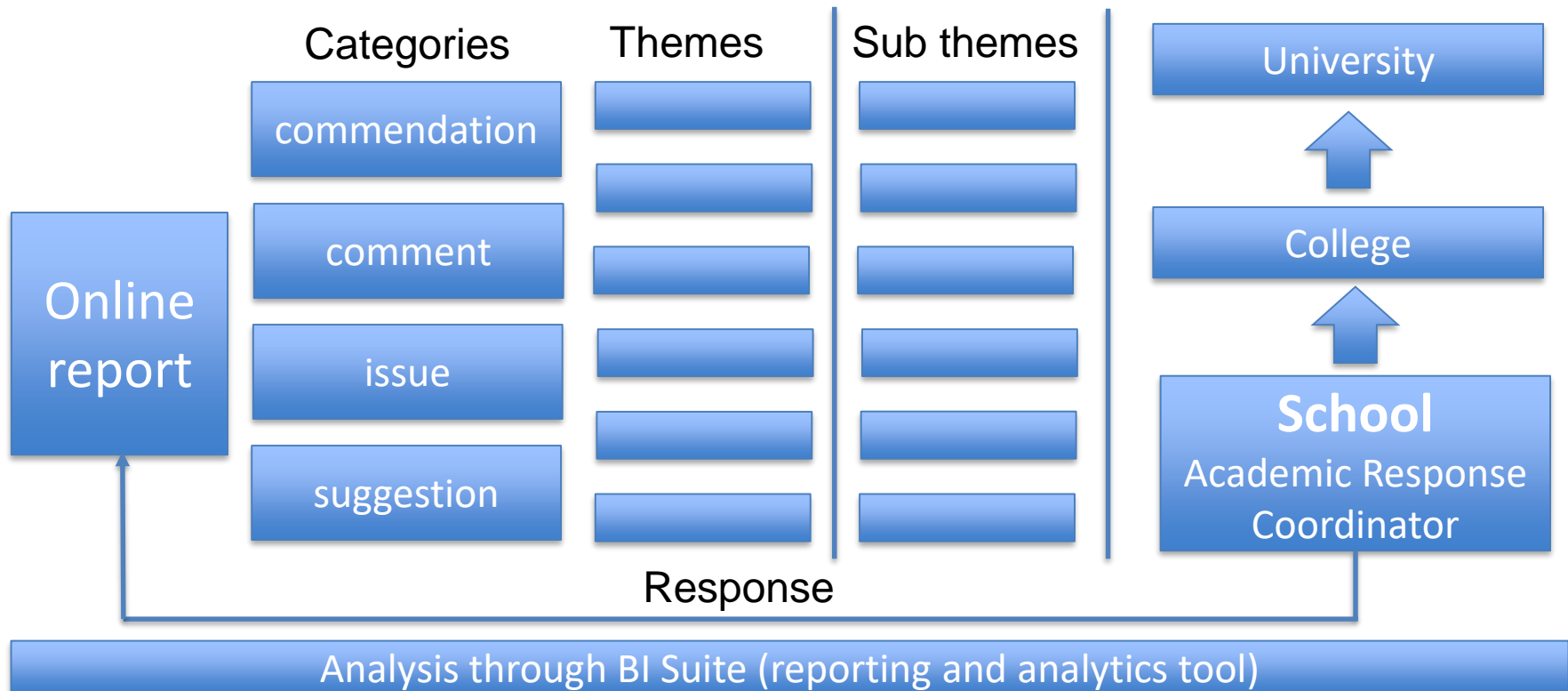


External Examiner Project





External Examiner Reporting System (EERS)





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www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services

Impact



2014/15 and 2015/16 = 811 reports



Impact

Commendation
(3380)

Category

The assessment
process (926)

Theme

Theme level (222)

Sub theme



Impact

Issue (248)

Category

Provision of
information (75)

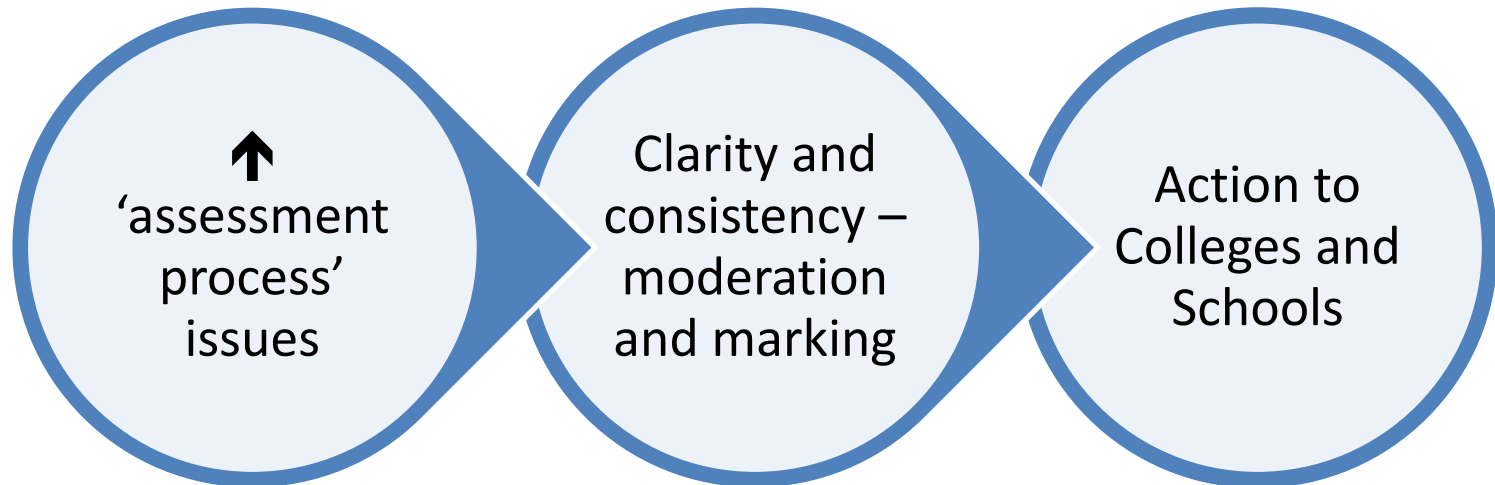
Theme

Assessed work
examples (32)

Sub theme



Impact – November 2016





Evaluation

- All project aims met

Staff Survey

- 75% - system had/somewhat achieved effective qualitative and quantitative analysis of reports
- 67% - system had/somewhat made it easier to process and analyse reports



Evaluation - positives

- Easily accessible repository of reports
- Less paperwork and chasing
- More efficient and streamlined
- Professional system
- More reports completed on time



Evaluation - challenges

- Difficult to make system changes
- No easy system interaction
- Not full lifecycle
- Duplication when sharing outside system
- Multiple course external examiners





Successes

- Accessibility of data
- Institutional oversight
- Evidence base
- Sector good practice





Challenges

- Implementing change
- Structure of the report
- Thematic analysis

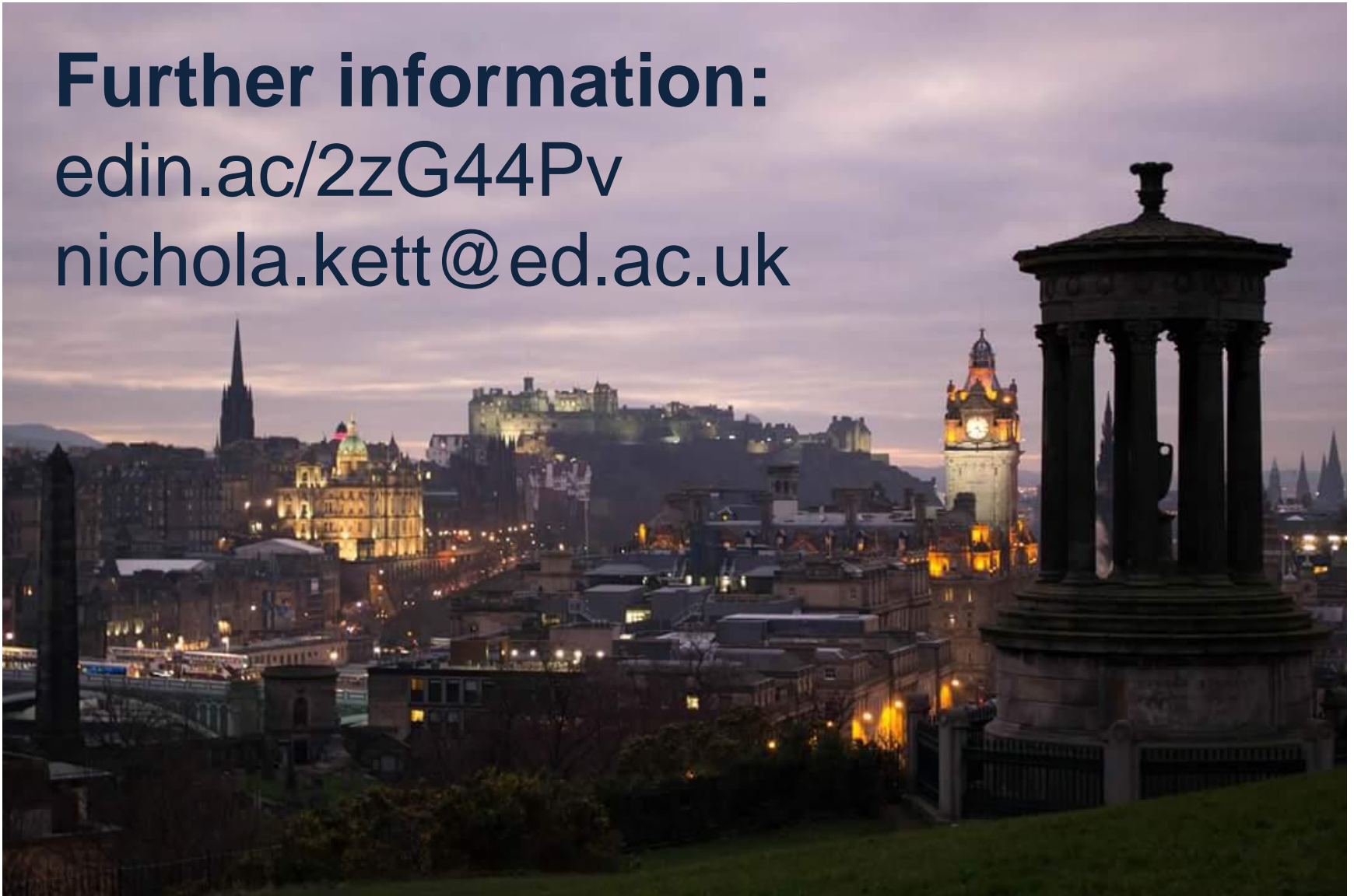




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www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services

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Discussion questions

- How is external examining (or equivalent/related practices) managed within your institution?
What works well? What are the challenges?
- What aspects or approaches outlined in the paper would be relevant/helpful within your institution?