

Regulations for the Organisation and Conduct of Assessment Boards

Issued by the Standards and Enhancement Office

Scope

1. Constitution of Assessment Boards

- 1.1 The Senate shall constitute such Assessment Boards as may be required with
For this reason Assessment Board outcomes are normally referred to as decisions. Formally, however, assessment board decisions are always recommendations to Senate, with ratification by that Assessment Board occurring automatically unless a decision becomes subject to appeal.
- 1.2 All Assessment Board meetings and decisions will be conducted in accordance with
levant Academic Regulations and with such course regulations as may have been approved by the Senate for a particular programme of study and with relevant PSRB requirements.
- 1.3 No other body has authority to recommend to the Senate the conferment of an award, nor to amend the decision of a properly constituted Assessment Board acting within its terms of reference and in accordance with the relevant University regulations.
- 1.4 Notwithstanding 1.3, in cases of procedural or other irregularity, or where it is impossible to reconvene an Assessment Board, the Senate shall have the power to annul a decision of the Assessment Board without making a prior request for reconsideration. If an error or irregularity is found to have affected more than one candidate, the Senate may annul the whole examination or any part of it.
- 1.5 When a decision has been annulled, the Senate may take action which, if necessary, may include the appointment of new external examiners and the appointment of Senate representatives to a reconstituted Assessment Board.
- 1.6 The Chair of the Senate (or a nominee) shall have the right to attend and address any meeting of any Assessment Board of the University.

2. General responsibilities of Assessment Boards

- 2.1 All Assessment Boards will conform to relevant University policies, regulations and procedures. In doing so, Assessment Boards shall;
- i. ensure that assessment is fair and equitable and;
 - ii. that academic standards are maintained and;
 - iii. that justice is done to individual candidates and;
 - iv. that the assessment process and communication of outcomes is conducted in a timely and effective manner and according to prevailing procedures and;
 - v. that there is opportunity for School oversight of the comparability of candidate achievement and the academic standards of awards in programmes and subject areas within the School.
- 2.2 In exercising their powers, Assessment Boards may use their academic judgement and discretion to make decisions in individual cases in accordance with the principles outlined in 2.1.
- 2.3 Meetings of Assessment Boards will be held during the periods designated each year in the published academic calendar for the programmes concerned, and at other times if necessary.

- 2.4 All assessment information pertaining to individual students will be treated in such a way as to meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act, the Freedom of Information Act and other relevant legislation in force at the time.
- 2.5 All members of Assessment Boards are required to conduct themselves according to the Nolan Principles and relevant University codes of conduct for staff. Any Assessment Board member having a personal relationship or other potential conflict of interest bearing upon any candidate for assessment, progression or award should make this known to the Assessment Board ahead of any meeting. The Assessment Board will decide whether the member should absent themselves from all or part of the Assessment shall abide by any decision made.

3. Frequency of Assessment Board meetings

- 3.1 Each Assessment Board shall normally meet at the end of an academic cycle, in accordance with the published academic calendar, in order to ratify marks, make progression and

- 4.4 To receive and record the decisions of RPL Panels and, in accordance with relevant regulations and procedures, the award of credit exemption and/or transfer against any modules and programmes assigned to the Assessment Board.
- 4.5 To make progression, academic standing decisions for those candidates continuing on programmes assigned to the Assessment Board.
- 4.6 To determine the interim and/or final award and classification (where applicable) for those candidates who are assigned to the Assessment Board.
- 4.7 To keep under review the comparability of assessment results, progression, award, classification and academic standing outcomes for those modules and programmes assigned to the Assessment Board and to take and/or seek such action as the Assessment Board se

- 5.6 An Assessment Board Chair may declare any meeting of the Assessment Board to be inquorate if s/he decides that attendance is such as to jeopardise the soundness of the Assessment B

6 Operation of Assessment Boards

- 6.1 All Boards must have access to all necessary information relevant to the performance of individual candidates in the modules and programmes within their remit.
- 6.2 Each Assessment Board shall normally reach decisions by consensus, taking into account the input and views of External Examiners. Exceptionally, if it proves necessary to vote on any matter, the outcome shall be determined by a simple majority, each member present has a single vote and, in the case of a tie, the Chair has an additional casting vote.
- 6.3 External examiners should ensure that any reservations which they may have on the academic standards of a programme, the fairness and appropriateness of the assessment, the level of marks awarded, and the procedures followed in the assessment process should, wherever possible, be expressed at the meeting of the Board of Examiners, before a final decision on marks is made. The signature of an external examiner on a mark-sheet shall be taken to signify that the external examiner assents to the marks given.
- 6.4 Marks approved by the Assessment Board and the Senate may not be subsequently reconsidered unless so agreed by the original Assessment Board or Senate.
- 6.5 All Assessment Boards, but not the Assessment Board sub-committee, have the authority to require a candidate to terminate their registration on a programme or to transfer to a different programme.

7 Delegation of Functions

- 7.1 In order to expedite specific categories of business or decisions on individual cases which an 595dite specific categories of business or decisions o. Exceptionally, if it proveses of essme

7.4 In all cases, decisions taken under 7.1 and 7.2 should be ratified by the relevant External Examiner(s) in writing. Further, these decisions and approvals should be reported at the next full meeting of the Assessment Board.

8. Record of Proceedings

8.1 Formal written records of the proceedings and decisions of Assessment Boards will be maintained by the Secretary or other appointed person. All written records of decisions will be subject to confirmation by the Chair of the Assessment Board. The written records of the meeting shall be presented at the next meeting of the Assessment Board.

8.2 The complete record of Assessment Board proceedings shall consist of the following:

- i. The agreed marks, grades and results for each candidate.
- ii. The decisions and/or recommendations made in respect of each candidate.
- iii. The outcome of any vote taken at the Assessment Board.
- iv. A note that any claims made by candidates for mitigating circumstances have been considered by the relevant body, whether or not the relevant module,

- 10.2 External Examiners appointed by the University have responsibilities encompassing both subject module and award standards and aspects of the quality of provision. They are expected to attend the relevant Assessment Board. In addition, the Chief External Examiner is required to confirm the decision of the Assessment Board in writing, customarily during their presence at the Board or, in exceptional circumstances only, through separate correspondence.
- 10.3 The primary roles of all External Examiners approved by the University are to ensure that:
- i. The standard of awards is maintained (with particular reference to standards in UK higher education, to national benchmark statements and qualifications frameworks, to programme specifications and, where relevant, to PSRB requirements).
 - ii. The assessment and examination process is fair, reliable and valid.
 - iii. Justice is done to the individual student.
- 10.4 External Examiners are also invited, as a secondary element of their duties, to comment on the quality of provision (curriculum content, learning and teaching, assessment processes, quality of learning opportunities, overall student achievement) insofar as they are able to make such comments from the evidence with which they are provided. They may also be asked to comment from time to time on new, revised and reconfigured curricula, learning, teaching and assessment strategies and methods. They may also be consulted by the Chair of the relevant Assessment Board about requests from students for reviews of the Assessment Board and about any investigations undertaken by the Assessment Board during the External Examiner's period of office which relate to alleged or proven use of unfair means in assessment.
- 10.5 The above responsibilities encompass all provision leading to University awards, whether delivered at the University or through collaborative arrangements.
- 10.6 In order to carry out these responsibilities, External Examiners will¹:
- i. Have the right to request access to and to approve all assignment tasks and examination papers and associated assessment criteria and marking schemes.
 - ii. Be able to judge each student impartially on the basis of the work submitted for assessment, without being influenced by any previous association with the programme, the staff, or any of the students.
 - iii. Be able to compare the performance of students with that of their peers on equivalent or collaborative partners or elsewhere.
 - iv. Have the opportunity, on request, to communicate with students about the conduct of the assessment;
 - v. Approve the assessments that count towards the award, in order to ensure that all students will be assessed fairly in relation to the programme curriculum documents and regulations and in such a way that External Examiners will be able to judge whether they have fulfilled the learning outcomes of the programme and reached the required standard.

¹ Where a module is co-credited to more than one programme, moderation of module assessment shall be the responsibility of the External Examiner for the programme to which the module is assigned as the Host Programme

- vi. Be consulted about and agree to any proposed changes to the approved, programme-specific course regulations which will directly affect those students currently on programme and be asked to comment upon other proposed changes.
- vii. Attend meetings of the Assessment Board

of programmes in other UK higher education institutions, with which the Examiner is familiar.

- iii. Judging whether the University's processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards are sound and fairly conducted.
- iv. Forming an overview of the key characteristics of those programmes assigned to the Assessment Board.
- v. Where necessary and as agreed, coordinating the work of the team of External Examiners.
- vi. Where agreed, acting as mentor to new and/or inexperienced External Examiners appointed to the team.
- vii. Contributing as required to responses made by the Chair of the relevant Assessment Board to requests from students for reviews of the Assessment Board to any investigations undertaken by the Assessment

or proven use of unfair means in assessment.

10.8 The manner in which the above responsibilities are implemented may vary in the case of the external examination of students undertaking periods of teaching experience or other forms of practical placement or of students following University programmes in partner institutions in the UK or overseas. In such cases additional guidelines for the responsibilities of External Examiners will be agreed with the appropriate School/Division.

10.9 In general, External Examiners will act as moderators of the assessment process and of assessment marks and decisions. They may sometimes find it appropriate to make judgements separately from internal examiners. Only in exceptional cases should they be required to act as additional markers to settle unresolved disagreement between internal examiners.

- ii. To prepare and submit all required assessment task material in a timely manner, for purposes including internal and external moderation, printing, collation, and distribution to students.
- iii. To ensure that accurate and genuine marks for the assessed work for which they are responsible, as moderated (where applicable) by internal and external examiners, and (where appropriate) the assessed work itself, are available to the Assessment Board in the agreed format by the due date as published in the academic calendar for the programme(s) concerned.

12. General Responsibilities in the Assessment Process

12.1 It is the responsibility of Schools:

- i. To ensure that they are aware of the implications of the relevant assessment and other regulations for the assessments for which they are immediately responsible and that these regulations are fairly applied.
- ii. To ensure that adequate notice of the details of assessment arrangements is given to each student.
- iii. To advise students who find themselves in difficulties about their rights or obligations under the assessment regulations and, where necessary, to inform students about the range of options open to an Assessment Board in a particular case where the regulations permit discretion to the Assessment Board.
- iv. To investigate any cases of alleged injustice in the assessment of students and to ensure that such cases are dealt with fairly by internal examiners (excluding matters of academic judgment).
- v. To ensure that any particular arrangements agreed in advance for the assessment of students with special needs are provided as agreed.
- vi. To decide, subject to University regulations and agreement by the Assessment Board, what authorised material and equipment may be brought into an examination room.
- vii. To ensure that a report is made of any incident of alleged academic misconduct procedures.
- viii. To ensure that deadlines for the submission of coursework of all kinds are fairly applied.
- ix. To keep records of coursework submitted for assessment and to make these available as required.
- x. To ensure that the reassessment tasks set for students being reassessed are appropriate for the programme of study as taught to them and that they have access to appropriate facilities and support to prepare themselves for reassessment.
- xi. To arrange oral (viva voce) exam

13. Administrative Responsibilities for Assessment Information

13.1 Role of Student Data Management (in partnership with the Schools, the Academic Office and the Standards and Enhancement Office):

13.1.1 Overall planning and co-ordination of the assessment process, including:

- i. Planning the timing of all Assessment Boards.
- ii. Agreeing and publishing a schedule for the collation and input of assessment data.
- iii. Helping to ensure that all Assessment Board information is prepared and published in standard format.
- iv. Publishing appropriate guidelines and protocols to help ensure a standard approach.
- v. Managing appropriate access to the student record system.

13.1.2 Ensuring the accuracy and integrity of assessment records, including:

- i. Ensuring the accuracy of student, module and programme assessment records.
- ii. Managing the calculation of, and amendments to module results and student profiles for the Assessment Boards.
- iii. Ensuring that rules for awards are specified and kept up to date on the student records system.

13.1.3 Ensuring that appropriate information is available and accessible to all legitimate users, including:

- i. Coordinating the output of data for the Assessment Boards.
- ii. Helping to ensure that results from the Assessment Boards are appropriately prepared and processed.
- iii. Making results and award certificates available according to the agreed formats and timescales.

13.2 Role of the Schools

13.2.1 Carrying out the assessment process in accordance with the timescales agreed with Student Data Management, including:

- i. Organisation of the Assessment Boards in accordance with the schedule agreed with Student Data Management.
- ii. Liaison with External Examiners for the programme(s) and modules.
- iii.

made without the explicit and written approval of an authorised person,

assessment board

- iii. Ensuring that rules for awards are correctly specified and kept up to date on the student records system.

13.2.3 Ensuring that appropriate information is available and accessible to all legitimate users, including:

- i. Managing the output of data for the Assessment Boards.
- ii. Publishing results to students according to the agreed format and timescales.
- iii. Ensuring that results from the Assessment

