

Examining Board– Code of Practice

Student and Academic Services

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Introduction

Every module and award is the responsibility of an examining board.

Each examining board is accountable to Academic Board which may prescribe the examining board terms of reference and composition. Examining boards must also:

- have the constitution approved by or on behalf of Academic Board;
- include, or have consulted with, the external examiner(s) approved by Academic Board;
- provide examining board meeting minutes which are an accurate and comprehensive record of the meeting and the approved results and decisions. Student and Academic Services will produce and retain the minutes.

Examining Board membership

- The College Dean of Learning and Teaching, or authorised nominee, of the College holding academic responsibility for the modular scheme (Chair);
- The School Directors of Learning and Teaching and/or designated members with responsibility for the undergraduate, postgraduate taught and/or research award(s);
- Relevant Chief External Examiner;
- For awards carrying professional recognition or accreditation, other external examiners as are approved to represent the relevant professional body(ies) for awards under consideration by the board;
- Representation, as appropriate, from academic partners.

In attendance:

For apprenticeship awards, External Assessors may be invited to be 'in attendance' as stipulated by the External Quality Assurance requirements for apprenticeships.

The College Dean of Learning and Teaching may invite other persons internal or external to the University to be 'in attendance' in order to assist a board in the exercise of its responsibilities.

International Partnership Board membership

- Chair
- Partner Module Leaders (or nominee/s)
- Link tutor/s
- External Examiner/s

Avoiding potential conflicts of interest

No student shall be a member of an examining board, and a student will only attend an examiners' meeting if they are a candidate for assessment. No member of staff who is enrolled on a module or registered for an award under consideration by the board shall be a member of the board whilst the module or award is under discussion.

External Examiners

The Academic Board shall establish procedures relating to the selection, approval, appointment, roles and responsibilities of field and chief external examiners. The full details of external examiner appointments and responsibilities are set out in the [External Examiner Operational Guide](#) available on the University web pages.

The contribution of the external examiner for all boards of which they are a member must be reflected in the minutes.

Examining Boards Quorum

- All members of the examining board should attend meetings of the board (see below about exceptions to this). By prior agreement from the Chair, a nominee may act as a representative.
- An examining board meeting is quorate if at least two-thirds of the members eligible to attend are present. This includes engaging in the board virtually where appropriate.
- In exceptional circumstances, and if approved by the Chair, a nominee may act as a representative. Members may nominate a colleague to attend in their place provided that person is able to fully participate in the business of the board with regard to the module/s, award/s they are representing.
- An examining board must normally include an external examiner, in order to have the authority to grant credit or an award to students.
- If a designated member with responsibility for an award has already confirmed the student profiles to an Examining Board and there are no other issues for discussion then, at the discretion of the Chair, they are not required to attend the Examining Board and will be excluded from the quoracy.
- In regard to all examining boards, in order that an accurate list of attendees is prepared and quoracy is maintained it is important that members confirm their attendance/engagement virtually (or that of their nominee) to the relevant Student and Programme Support Team 48 hours in advance of the meeting/s.

Confidentiality

All discussion at an examining board is confidential to its members, to a panel of its members or to a review panel authorised by Academic Board for the purpose of considering an application for review of a decision of an examining board (an appeal), or to such officers as may be authorised by the Vice-Chancellor for the purpose of considering an application for review of a decision of an examining board.

Examining board preparation

In advance of the Examining Board, the School Director of Learning and Teaching and the Module Leaders are responsible for determining in relation to all modules within the field(s):

- a. that all assessments undertaken for modules, PGR progress points and PGR final assessment are properly scrutinised and marked;
- b. that all assessments are properly conducted;
- c. the impact, if any, of adverse circumstances affecting the delivery or assessment of a module on the performance of an identifiable cohort or an identifiable sub-group within a cohort on an assessment task or a module as a whole;
- d. the impact, if any, of adverse circumstances affecting the assessment of a PGR student on an assessment is considered;
- e. the mark or decision to pass/not pass made in respect of each student for assessment, resit or retake on each module or PGR assessment attempt;
- f. the award of credit to a student where assessed performance meets the minimum threshold required for a pass in each module in accordance with the Academic Regulations;
- g. if there are any changes to marks resulting from the analysis of assessment data for modules

Examining Board Terms of Reference

An Examining Board is responsible for the following in relation to all taught and postgraduate research awards within a school and/or college:

- a. recommendations for named awards within the jurisdiction of the board;
- b. eligibility of a student for an interim, default or other award within the jurisdiction of the board;
- c. whether compensated credit can be offered for failed modules in accordance with [academic regulation D8](#);
- d. the progression of a student to further study on an award;
- e. the classification for honours or any other differential level of an award as provided for in the [Academic Regulations](#) taking account of a student's overall assessment profile;
- f. whether a student has satisfied any additional requirements as specified for awards carrying professional recognition or accreditation for employment or practice;

- g. to note all assessment offence penalties imposed, and as required, to act in relation to the recommendation for an award;
- h. any matters arising from consideration of assessment practice and data within the board's jurisdiction which it wishes to draw to the attention of appropriate bodies.

The confirmation of an interim award will take place whether or not the student is proceeding directly to a further award.

* For example, used for Initial Teacher Education programmes resulting in recommendations for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) or Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status.

No recommendation for the grant of an award may be made without the written consent of the approved external examiner(s).

Disagreements at examining boards

Where there is a disagreement between the external examiner(s) and the internal examiners which cannot be resolved through discussion, the collective decision of the examining board shall normally be accepted as final.

Any unresolved disagreement between external examiners and the examining board shall be referred to the Chair of the Academic Board for determination.

Review of assessment decisions

Review of a decision

If an examining board is required to review its decision, there are two circumstances in which it may delegate its responsibility to a sub-committee with terms of reference limited to the review in question:

- when required to do so under the academic regulations for an academic appeal, and by the Deputy Registrar or by an Academic Board Review Panel;
- or where an error or other procedural irregularity which may materially affect the integrity of the board's decisions is brought to the attention of the Chair after a meeting of the full board.

The following are not reasons for reviewing a decision of an examining board:

- changes to unconfirmed marks or grades;
- how a mark relates to the final outcome or the credit awarded.

Sub-committees of examining boards

At each full meeting, the examining board must confirm authority for a sub-committee to act on its behalf if required.

The quorum for a sub-committee of an examining board is three, and normally at least two members must have been present at the original meeting, one of whom should be the Chair or their nominee.

Where possible, an external examiner will be a member of the sub group, but, if this is not possible an external examiner should normally be consulted in advance. If the decision relates to an award, the chief external examiner should either be a member of the sub group or be consulted in advance.

The discussions of a panel of examining board members or of officers considering an application for the review of a decision of an examining board are confidential.

Annulment of an examining board decision where there has been a material and significant administrative error or other material irregularity

Academic Board may annul a decision of an examining board where there has been a material and significant administrative error or other material irregularity, or where it is not possible to reconvene an examining board. If the error or irregularity is found to have affected more than one student, the Academic Board may annul all or part of an assessment.

Annulment of an examining board decision following an academic appeal

Following consideration of an appeal by an examining board, if Academic Board is of the opinion that the examining board did not take proper account of the factors for review, it may annul the decision of the board.

Annulment of an examining board decision for an award of the University offered at an affiliated institution

If an original decision has not been modified following review (either due to an irregularity or an academic appeal), the Principal of the affiliated institution or equivalent may recommend to the Academic Board that the decision of the examining board be annulled if, in their opinion, the examining board did not take proper account of the factors for review. The recommendation of the Principal must be made in writing to the University.

Appointment of an examining board following the annulment of a decision

Where a decision has been annulled, the Academic Board shall appoint an examining board with the power to make decisions on students' progress and/or awards, including, if necessary, the appointment of new external examiners.

Process for withholding awards from students

Introduction

Allegations of breaches of the [Student Conduct Policy](#) may be dealt with through an informal or a formal process. In cases where a student becomes the subject of a formal allegation of a breach of the student conduct policy, the Student Casework Team Manager, shall notify the Deputy Registrar so that the following process may be undertaken.

Before the meeting of the relevant examining board(s) an appropriate officer of Student and Academic Services shall warn students who have outstanding obligations to the University or who are the subject of allegations of breaches of student conduct of the following:

- their award may be withheld;
- they will not be permitted to re-register for the same or another award;
- they will not be permitted to enrol on other modules or other study.

Students who are not yet eligible for the highest level award

A student with outstanding obligations to the University or who is the subject of an allegation of a breach of the Student Conduct Policy shall be assessed in the normal way. The examining board will not be informed of their status until after the deliberative process is complete. The examining board's decision shall then appear on the results list but with an indication that any award for which the student is eligible shall not be conferred until outstanding obligations or allegations have been discharged.

If the outstanding obligation is not discharged or the allegation of a breach of Student Conduct Policy has not been concluded before the next point of re-registration or enrolment, the student will not normally be permitted to re-register for the same or any other programme or award, or to enrol for any module or other study. However, the University may permit re-registration or re-enrolment where the outstanding obligation is a debt at or below a sum to be determined by the Vice-Chancellor or their nominee.

Students eligible for the highest level award

If the outstanding obligation or allegation of a breach of the Student Conduct Policy has not been cleared by the time of the meeting of the examining board at which eligibility for or recommendation for conferment of an award is due to be made, the board shall not be told of the outstanding obligation until after it has concluded its decisions on all candidates.

The Deputy Registrar or designated person shall ensure that the secretary to the examining board:

- records the academic decision in the normal way;
- notifies the examining board that the award will be withheld after it has made its decisions on all candidates;
- records the student's name and results on the results list in the normal way but with an annotation to indicate where appropriate that an award will not be conferred. This annotation shall be in a form prescribed by the Deputy Registrar;
- prepares a supplementary results list in the prescribed format showing the academic decision of the examining board but with no date of publication, undertakes the normal checking and approval procedure, and lodges the signed list with the Deputy Registrar

After the examining board, the Deputy Registrar or designated person shall ensure that the student is notified in writing of the decision to withhold the award. The notification shall be in a form prescribed by the Deputy Registrar.

Actions once a student has discharged any outstanding obligations to the University

When the obligation is discharged in full including clearance of cheque(s), the Head of Financial Services or other appropriate University officer shall inform the Deputy Registrar immediately, who shall ensure that:

- the supplementary results list is dated, countersigned and authorised for publication by the College;
- arrangements are made for the grant of an award for which the student has qualified.

Actions following the resolution of an allegation of a breach of the Student Conduct Policy

When the allegation has been determined and any consequential action disposed of, the Deputy Registrar shall arrange for the publication of the decision of the examining board. If the outcome of the allegation is that the student is dismissed from the University, the Vice-Chancellor may decide whether the award should be conferred or continue to be withheld for six years from the date of the examining board's decision, after which, if any obligation outstanding to the University has not been discharged, the examining board's decision shall be annulled.

Appendix 1 Field Boards

For programmes operating a two-tier examining board structure, a Field Board is responsible for considering and approving module marks and awarding credit and an Examining Board is responsible for determining eligibility for awards.

Field Board Terms of Reference

A Field Board is responsible for determining in relation to all modules within the field(s) assigned to the board:

- a. that all assessments undertaken for modules are properly scrutinised and marked;
- b. that all assessments are properly conducted;
- c. the impact, if any, of adverse circumstances affecting the delivery or assessment of a module on the performance of an identifiable cohort or an identifiable sub-group within a cohort on an assessment task or a module as a whole;
- d. the mark or decision to pass/not pass made in respect of each student for assessment, resit or retake on each module;
- e. the award of credit to a student where assessed performance meets the minimum threshold required for a pass in each module in accordance with the Academic Regulations;
- f. any matters arising from the analysis of assessment data for modules within the board's jurisdiction including discussions on module quality and enhancement.

Field Board membership

- the College Dean of Learning and Teaching, or nominee (Chair)
- the Module Leader, or nominee, for all modules within the jurisdiction of the board under consideration at the meeting*;
- the Field External Examiner(s) responsible for modules within the jurisdiction of the board under consideration at the meeting;
- the School Director of Learning and Teaching, or authorised nominee, of the school holding academic responsibility for the field);
- representation, as appropriate, from academic partners.

Field Boards Quorum – additional note

- When a Field Board is considering results for a module, if the Module Leader has already confirmed the marks in writing and there are no other issues for discussion then at the discretion of the Associate Director for the subject, they are not required to attend the board. The Associate Director will provide the necessary assurances to the Chair. The Module Leader should send their apologies to the relevant Student and Programme Support Team in advance of the meeting and they will be excluded from the quoracy.