

## Part 4: Assessment Boards for taught courses

### Section 14: The operation of Assessment Boards

#### Principles

- 14.1 The University operates a single tier assessment board structure, whereby each board confirms both student module marks and results, and progression between levels of courses and/or the conferment of University awards. Such single tier boards are known as Progression and Award Boards.
- 14.2 There shall be a Progression and Award Board established for each academic School and at each of Undergraduate and Postgraduate level. Each Progression and Award Board will be responsible for all modules and courses owned by that School. The Head of College is responsible for ensuring that Progression and Award Boards are appropriately established and for determining the appropriate Progression and Award Board arrangements for their College.
- 14.3 Exceptionally, where a module is not owned by a single academic School module results and outcomes for that module will not be considered by a Progression and Award Board and will be considered instead by a Module Board. A Module Board is responsible for confirming student module marks and results only. It shall be for the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Students) to determine those modules to be considered by a Module Board (which would typically include Westminster Plus Elective modules), and to determine the number and composition of such Module Boards. Module Boards will normally be scheduled to take place before Progression and Awards Boards, and the decision of the Module Boards will be reported to the relevant Progression and Award Board by way of the student profile.
- 14.4 Progression and Award Boards are formally established on behalf of Academic Council and are accountable to Council for the fulfilment of their terms of reference through the relevant Head of College.
- 14.5 Progression and Award Boards must consider student results in accordance with the University and course assessment regulations and make recommendations to Academic Council, or to any external validating body, in relation to any student who, in the judgement of the Board, has fulfilled the objectives of the course and achieved the standard required for the award.
- 14.6 For all collaborative courses:
- i. specific arrangements for the operation of Progression and Award Boards will be set out in the Memorandum of Collaboration and/or Administrative Annex;
  - ii. where the University acts as the sole awarding body, and retains sole responsibility for the standard of the award, the Progression and Award Board will be chaired by a member of academic staff from the College in which the course is located, as nominated by the Head of College.  
  
 Note: The nominated chair should only be the Liaison Tutor where that tutor has had no involvement with the moderation or marking of the work being assessed.
  - iii. where awards are shared between the University and another awarding body, or the University does not have sole responsibility for both the standard of the award and all assessment which may contribute towards it, Progression and Award Board arrangements will be those most appropriate to the course in question. Where a Progression and Award Board is chaired by a member of staff from a collaborative partner, the Head of College will provide formal written confirmation on the following to the Campus Registry Manager

- i. the identity of the Chair of the Progression and Award Board;
- ii. that the University is represented at all meetings of the Board;
- iii. the external examiner arrangements for the Board.

- 14.7 The Head of College is responsible for ensuring:
- i) that procedures are followed with regard to the consideration and approval of the form and content of all summative assessment that count towards the assessment of the course and its modules
  - ii) the completion of the marking and moderation process
  - iii) that marks achieved by students for each summative assessment are finalised and available by the published deadline
  - iv) the involvement of the approved External Examiners in the moderation process.

### **Appointment of external examiners**

- 14.8 The nomination of external examiners to a Progression and Award Board is the responsibility of the relevant Head of College, in consultation with the Head of School and/or Course Leader(s). All external examiner appointments must be approved in accordance with the University procedures for the appointment of external examiners (see Section 13).

Note: For full details on the appointment of an external examiner please refer to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook.

### **Membership of Progression and Award Boards**

- 14.9 The membership of a Progression and Award Board is as follows:
- a) the Chair, who shall be the Head of School, or nominee;
  - b) the Course Leader(s) for all courses being considered by the Board (including Liaison Tutors where appropriate);
  - c) the School Director of Teaching and Learning, or equivalent
  - d) the approved external examiner(s) currently appointed to that Board;
- 14.10 The quorum for a Progression and Award Board shall be 75% of the members and must normally include the Chair and at least one external examiner.

Module leaders are not members of the Progression and Award Board but will be invited to attend meetings.

- 14.11 The College Teaching Committee is responsible for determining annually, at the start of each academic year, the membership of each Progression and Award Board within their College in accordance with these regulations.

### **Terms of Reference for Progression and Award Boards**

- 14.12 A Progression and Award Board has oversight of all results at all levels and modes of study in respect of those modules which are identified for consideration by that Board, and of all progression and award decisions in respect of those courses identified for consideration by that Board: A Progression and Award Board is responsible for:
- a) ratifying the assessment component marks and final module marks, results and outcomes in accordance with the academic regulations, including the award of Referral, Deferral and Retake opportunities;
  - b) confirming decisions on condoned credit, where applicable, in accordance with the academic regulations;

- c) confirming progression and award decisions based on a student's module results, in accordance with the academic regulations and any course specific regulations, for all students registered for the named awards for which the Board is responsible;
- d) confirming where a student's progress is such that the student should be excluded from the course on academic grounds in accordance with the academic regulations;
- e) confirming degree classification or the award of merit or distinction, where relevant, in accordance with the academic regulations;
- f) ensuring academic standards are appropriately maintained, including ensuring that marking and moderation processes have been followed correctly, that the spread of marks is appropriate, and that student performance outcomes on each module are considered in line with outliers at both the high and low end. ;
- g) reviewing matters arising from the Subject Area meetings and the consideration of the module performance statistics presented at that meeting.
- h) ensuring that the integrity of the academic standard of the award is observed;
- i) in discussion with the Chief External Examiner, reviewing the distribution of results across classifications and the comparability of awards with past cohorts in the courses under scrutiny, and similar programmes in other UK HEIs;
- j) making recommendations to the College Teaching Committee on any matters relating to the assessment of the course;
- k) any other matters assigned to it in the relevant course assessment regulations or referred to it by or on behalf of Academic Council.

### **Membership of Module Boards**

14.13 The membership of a Module Board is as follows:

- a) the Chair, who shall be a Head of College nominated by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Students);
- b) an approved external examiner(s) (for modules at Credit Levels 5, 6 and 7);
- c) the Module Leaders of all the modules being considered by the Board;

14.14 The quorum for a Module Board shall be 75% of the members and must normally include at least one external examiner.

### **Terms of Reference for Module Boards**

14:15 A Module Board has oversight of all assessments at all levels and modes of study in respect of those modules which are identified for consideration by that Board. The Module Board is responsible for:

- a) ratifying the assessment component and final module marks for each student in accordance with the academic regulations;
- b) ensuring academic standards are appropriately maintained, including ensuring that marking and moderation processes have been followed correctly, that the spread of marks is appropriate, and that student performance outcomes on each module are considered in line with outliers at both the high and low end.

### **Requirements for All Assessment Boards**

14.16 Progression and Award Boards will be serviced by the Academic Registrar's Department. In addition to the secretary to the Board, representatives from the Academic Registrar's

Department may attend to provide regulatory advice to the Board and to ensure that due process is followed.

- 14.17 No individual studying for a module or for an award to be considered by a Progression and Award Board may attend a meeting of that Board.
- 14.18 Where a student is known to a member of staff other than in their professional capacity, that staff member must declare an interest to the Chair of the Board.
- 14.19 Any member of the University Executive Board may attend a Progression and Award Board as an observer.
- 14.20 If a Progression and Award Board is inquorate, the Vice Chancellor, as Chair of Academic Council, may act to ratify all results recommended by the inquorate Board, provided that they are satisfied that the assessment process was undertaken appropriately.

### **Dates of meetings**

- 14.21 Undergraduate Progression and Award Boards will normally meet at least twice per academic year, once during the Main assessment board period and once during the Referral/Deferral Progression and Award Board period, in accordance with the academic regulations and published academic calendar.
- 14.22 Postgraduate Progression and Award Boards will normally meet twice in each academic session, at the end of Semester 2 and immediately prior to or during the autumn term following completion of the project or dissertation. In Colleges where there is a January intake of students Progression and Award Boards will also meet following the main semester one assessment period.
- 14.23 Progression and Award Boards will be scheduled by the relevant Campus Registry, and dates will be published at least six months in advance.

### **Delegation of authority (Chair's Action)**

- 14.24 A Progression and Award Board may delegate its responsibilities in relation to recommendations on students' results to the Chair.
- 14.25 The endorsement of the external examiner(s) for a Board should be sought before the Chair assumes any of the responsibilities of the Board.
- 14.26 The Chair of the Progression and Award Board should exercise delegated authority only in exceptional cases, in correcting errors in the records presented to a Progression and Award Board, in considering academic appeals, in approving changes to students' marks as the result of an academic appeal or other similar investigation, and in cases where it is not practical to reconvene a Board in order to consider a very small number of students' results.
- 14.27 All decisions taken by Chair's Action must be formally recorded and reported to the next meeting of the relevant Progression and Award Board.

### **Confidentiality**

- 14.28 While the formal decisions of Progression and Award Boards will be published under the provisions of Section 15, the proceedings are confidential.

**Note:** Reports of Progression and Award Boards and communications relating to the assessment of individual students shall be circulated under confidential cover. Those privy, in any capacity, to the deliberations of the Progression and Award Board shall not discuss the Board's work with any other person, except where required to do so by the Deputy Registrar (Quality and Standards) in relation to a formal request for review of a Progression and Award Board decision.