



BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

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Introduction

1. The University's Code of Practice for the Conduct of Boards of Examiners has been designed to set out clear procedures and guidance for internal and external examiners in such a way as to secure fairness and consistency for students in decisions regarding marks/grades, progression and awards. It has been designed to meet the requirements contained in the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*, specifically *Chapter B6 – Assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning [2013] (2015)*, Indicators 15, 16 and 17.
2. The University's Code of Practice for the Conduct of Boards of Examiners should be read in conjunction with the regulations governing undergraduate or postgraduate programmes, the Code of Practice for External Examining the Code of Practice for Extenuating Circumstances and the Code of Practice for Assessment of Students.
3. The University normally operates a two tier system whereby a Module Board is followed by a Programme Board. This code covers the conduct to be followed regardless of the level of the board.

Membership of Boards of Examiners

4. A Head of School or a senior member of staff nominated by the Head, shall act as the Chair for each Board of Examiners. In all cases, the Chair shall normally be independent of the programme for which assessments are to be considered and should have attended relevant training.
5. The membership of the Board shall comprise the Head of School as Chair, the Academic Coordinators and all external and internal examiners for the relevant programme or programmes including examiners from partner institutions where relevant. External examiners are approved by the University through the procedures currently in force. Meetings shall normally be serviced by a member of professional support staff as required.
6. External examiners are full members of the relevant Board of Examiners and have the right to attend all meetings at which significant decisions are to be made regarding the programme or subject for which they have responsibility. They are required to be present at the meetings of the Board of Examiners at which degrees are awarded and degree classifications agreed. If an external examiner, exceptionally, cannot attend a meeting where their presence is formally required, they should be available for consultation by e-mail or telephone. The attendance of the external examiner is not required at Retrieval Boards, including those at which awards are to be made, provided that the remit of the Retrieval Board in that respect has been agreed at the previous meeting of the relevant Board of Examiners. The External Examiner shall, however, be required to confirm the awards made at the Retrieval Board by signing the pass list.
7. The University does not have a formal quorum governing the attendance of internal examiners at meetings of Boards of Examiners. Heads of School should, however, be aware that there is a clear expectation that, in addition to the Academic Coordinator, at least one internal examiner (normally the designated module leader) should be present from the respective teams responsible for the delivery and assessment of each module for which



marks will be presented to the Board. It is recommended that at least three quarters of the internal examiners associated with the programme should attend and at least one representative from any partner institution where relevant.

Preparation for Boards of Examiners

8. The date of the meeting of the Board of Examiners shall be agreed by the Student Administration Manager and Heads of School and published in the University Calendar. All internal and external examiners shall be notified of the date. The date of meetings at which degrees are to be awarded should be scheduled to allow the outcomes to be processed in time for the degree awards ceremony.
9. The relevant Head of School shall monitor the assessment schedule for each programme to ensure that the date by which the assessed work will be ready for dispatch to the external examiner. This will enable them to examine the work and agree the marks with the internal examiners in time for the confirmed marks to be entered onto the mark matrix for the Board of Examiners.
10. In order to secure the efficient discharge of business at the Board, to achieve consistency of approach across Boards, and to protect the confidentiality of students, the Registrar and Secretary will establish a panel, consisting of academic staff from a number of programmes to consider extenuating circumstances presented by students. The panel shall convene at the end of each semester as a minimum before the meeting of the Boards of Examiners to consider all such cases. The recommendations of the panel with regard to whether claims relating to extenuating circumstances should be accepted shall be communicated by the Student Administration Manager to members of the Board. It is expected that the Board will normally accept the panel's recommendation; however, the final decision rests with the Board. The relevant papers will be available at the Board for scrutiny by the external examiner if required but individual cases will not normally be discussed in open session.
11. The Head of School and a member of Quality Assurance and Student Data shall be jointly responsible for the preparation of the material for the Board in the agreed format. This shall include a matrix showing in the case of each candidate, the mark awarded for each module or other unit of assessment, the mark for any component of a module or other unit of assessment which must be passed or for which a minimum mark must be awarded, and a pass list. The matrix of marks will normally be available in an appropriate format.

Remit of the Board of Examiners

12. Module Boards of Examiners shall be responsible for the confirmation of module grades. The Board shall also determine the conditions which students must fulfil in order to retrieve failure in any element of their module and the terms under which such retrieval work may be undertaken. Decisions taken by the Board must be in accordance with the University regulations currently in force.
13. Programme Boards of Examiners shall be responsible for the confirmation of programme grades, the status of students with regard to progression, awards and the classification of Honours degrees. The Board shall also determine the conditions which students must fulfil in order to retrieve failure in any element of their programme and the terms under



which such retrieval work may be undertaken. Decisions taken by the Board must be in accordance with the University regulations currently in force.

Conduct of Meetings

14. Boards shall be conducted in accordance with standard agendas. See Appendices 1 & 2
15. The Chair shall confirm the status of the regulations under which candidates have been assessed.
16. The Chair shall formally advise members that the deliberations of the Board of Examiners are confidential and should not be disclosed outside the meeting.
17. The Chair shall ensure that all candidates are treated fairly and consistently in accordance with the regulations governing the programme and that sufficient time is allowed for the full consideration and discussion of exceptional or borderline cases. The Chair shall require members of the Board to declare any personal interest, involvement or relationship with a student being assessed.
18. It is expected that programme teams with the advice of their external examiner will have resolved all difficult cases and borderline marks before the Board meets. The Board shall normally determine the outcomes for individual students on the basis of the marks presented to it and by the application of the regulations governing the programme. Details of how final marks are calculated are provided within the Regulations for the relevant programme.
19. The proceedings of the Board shall be minuted and the minutes confirmed by the Chair. The Minutes shall include a record of:
 - a. the members in attendance;
 - b. all decisions made by the Board regarding exceptional or borderline cases;
 - c. the consideration and outcome of any extenuating circumstances (see below);
 - d. the names of candidates who are referred and/or deferred and the terms on which they are able to retrieve failure;
 - e. the names of candidates who have failed any module or the award irretrievably.
20. The outcome for each candidate shall normally be recorded by appending the pass or progression list and mark matrix to the minutes. Any changes made to the list shall be clearly marked and the decision recorded in the minutes of the meeting. The minutes, mark matrices and pass or progression lists shall constitute the definitive record of the Board and the outcomes. Any changes to marks (for example, arising from an administrative error discovered after the Board) must be authorised by the Chair and reported to the external examiner. Such changes must be made by completion of the appropriate pro forma. See Appendix 3.



21. A list recording the award, including degree classification, where appropriate, shall be approved by the Board and signed by the Chair and, in the case of final awards, by at least one of the external examiners for the award.

Consideration of Extenuating Circumstances

22. If a student is completing the final year of their programme of study and have within that academic year applied for their full profile of marks to be considered as part of the extenuating circumstances process, the Board may decide to award a classification higher than that which would result from the standard arithmetical calculation. In this exceptional circumstance, the overall profile needs to be considered and evidence presented to prove there are exceptional reasons to believe that the classification has been lowered by one or more modules or other units of assessment being affected by adverse circumstances.

APPENDIX 1

AGENDA FOR MEETING OF MODULE BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

1. Apologies
2. Confirmation of the regulations in operation
3. Confidentiality of proceedings
4. Declaration of personal interest
5. Confirmation of marks
6. Eligibility for in-course retrieval (if applicable)
7. Signing of the pass list
8. Notification of results to students (if applicable)

APPENDIX 2

AGENDA FOR MEETING OF PROGRAMME BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

1. Apologies
2. Confirmation of the regulations in operation
3. Confidentiality of proceedings
4. Declaration of personal interest
5. Minutes of the previous meeting
6. Matters Arising
7. Confirmation of marks
8. Confirmation of awards (items 7 & 8 are normally taken together)
9. Signing of the pass list
10. Notification of results to students
11. Report by the External Examiner(s)
12. Any other business
13. Date of the next meeting

APPENDIX 3

CHANGE TO A MARK OR GRADE WHICH HAS BEEN CONFIRMED BY THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS

This form must be used in all cases where it is necessary to change a mark which has been confirmed by the Board of Examiners. The form must be completed by the tutor and signed by the relevant Head of School, External Examiner and Chair of the relevant Board of Examiners. The completed form must be returned to QASA where the necessary change will be made to the student's record.

Student Name:							
Student ID Number:	B						
Title of the student's programme:							
Full title of the module affected:							
Mark/grade approved by the BoE:							
Correct mark/grade:							
Explain the reason for the change and indicate how it is proposed to strengthen the system to ensure that in future the correct mark is presented to the Board of Examiners							
Change Approval Signatures							
Academic Coordinator						Date:	
Head of School						Date:	
External Examiner						Date:	
Chair, Board of Examiners						Date:	
Date received by QASA:		System record amended:	<i>Date/Officer Initials</i>				