

If you are looking for the Code of Good Practice for 2014-15, please see the [‘Handbook for Assessment, Progression and Awarding: Taught Programmes 2014-15’](#)

Code of Good Practice: Boards of Examiners for Taught Programmes of Study

[TQA Manual - Introduction and Contents](#)

[Implementation: for all with immediate effect]

[Partner Institutions: All partner institutions delivering programmes validated by the University of Exeter are required to observe this code of good practice.]

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The procedures outlined in this document are applicable only to taught programmes of study.
- 1.2 The responsibilities of Boards of Examiners are set out in the [Ordinances](#) of the University. The Ordinances are made by Council to amplify the meaning of the Statutes which sit above them.

2 Membership and responsibilities of the Board of Examiners

- 2.1 In accordance with Ordinance 5 every examination for a Degree, Diploma or Certificate of the University, whether taken at one sitting or in parts, is directed by a Board of Examiners.
- 2.2 In accordance with Ordinance 5 para 2, the membership of every Board of Examiners must include at least one member of the academic staff of the University and at least one External examiner.
- 2.3 External examiners must be appointed for all programmes delivered by Colleges. External examiners are formally responsible to the Senate of the University.
- 2.4 In accordance with Ordinance 5, paras 3-4, Boards of Examiners are appointed each year by the Senate on the recommendation of the Board of the Faculty of Taught Programmes.
- 2.5 In accordance with Ordinance 5, para 1, the members of the Board of Examiners are jointly responsible for the setting and marking of papers in their own subject or subjects.

- 2.6 It is the responsibility of the Board of Examiners to make recommendations relating to the marking and classification of awards. Boards of Examiners should confirm all marks received but should not alter marks as a result of discussions at the meeting. The Board will classify awards in accordance with the [Undergraduate Degrees and Awards Assessment Procedures](#).
- 2.7 Exceptionally, Mitigation Committee may recommend to the Programme Board of Examiners, for reasons fully minuted, and where none of the stated options open to the Mitigation Committee apply, that it might wish to use its discretion to recommend a classification higher than that indicated by the marks. This is permitted in the current Degrees and Awards Assessment Procedures (Undergraduate, para 8.3, Postgraduate, para 6.3)
- 2.8 The external examiner is expected to confirm the decisions taken and awards recommended by the Board of Examiners by either signing the minutes of the Board of Examiners or verbally in their report to the Board, and an appropriate minute made

3 Meetings of Boards of Examiners

- 3.1 The external examiner(s) is/are expected to be present at any meeting of the Board at which recommendations are made for the award of degrees, diplomas or certificates. This includes November Boards where only the dissertation mark has not already been received by an earlier Board meeting. When, exceptionally and for good reason, this is not possible, the external examiner's absence must be approved by the Dean of Faculty. Under such circumstances, the Chair shall ensure that the external has been fully involved in agreeing marks and that there is at the meeting a written record of the external's marks and recommendations on classifications and failures.

Absence from Board of Examiners Request Forms can be obtained by contacting Quality Review and Enhancement: qrs@exeter.ac.uk

- 3.2 If absent, the external shall be consulted by video-conference, skype, telephone or some other effective means about distinction, first class, and failing decisions.
- 3.3 Normally only duly appointed members of the Board and its Secretary may be present at a meeting of a Board of Examiners. However, with the approval of the Chair of the Board other members of the University staff may be present for the purposes of administrative support or observation.
- 3.4 The quorum for the attendance of members at a meeting of a Board of Examiners shall be observed as follows:
- (a) The quorum for a meeting shall be half the appointed internal members, rounded up, plus an external examiner. Quoracy should be clearly demonstrated in the attendance list noted in the minutes of the meeting.
 - (b) Colleges shall decide on those staff involved in the assessment of a module/programme to be nominated for membership of a Board.

- (c) The full Board at its principal end-of-year meeting(s) may delegate subsequent action to a group smaller than the Board. This group shall always include the relevant external examiner(s).
- (d) The delegation of such powers in respect of referred and deferred examinations shall be a default item on the main Board's agenda.
- (e) Board members not present at a meeting shall make a contact point available.

3.5 Meetings of Boards of Examiners should carry the following minimum default agenda:

- Attendance
- Apologies for absence
- Minutes of the previous meeting
- Matters arising on the minutes
- Receipt of University and College assessment conventions
- External examiners' reports and associated correspondence/action from the previous year
- Declarations of interest
- Assessment issues (arising from internal/discipline level meetings)
- Progression and classification lists.
- Delegation of powers
- Oral review by the external examiner(s)
- Sign off by External Examiner
- Details of modules taken at other colleges (where relevant)

3.6 A default agenda is not exclusive and further items should be added for a particular meeting as Board business requires.

3.7 The University considers anonymity at Boards of Examiners to be desirable. Since decisions on the treatment of mitigating circumstances are made by mitigation committees anonymity of students should be observed when Boards are considering marks. Boards may consider students by name once marks have been agreed as a further means of checking prior to final decisions.

3.8 All Boards of Examiners are required to keep formal minutes of their proceedings, recording results (as an attachment if more appropriate) and the reasons for recommendations relating to cases requiring discussion, including reference to any documentary or other evidence as appropriate (see also section 8.3 of the [Undergraduate Degrees and Awards Assessment](#) procedures). A template for Boards of Examiners minutes can be found [here](#).

3.9 End of year Boards of Examiners meetings must be held before the end of the summer term. Exceptions to this must be approved by the Dean of the Faculty in consultation with the Student Guild.

3.10 It is not the responsibility of a Board of Examiners to make recommendations about the consequences of failure; this is the responsibility of the Deans(s) of the College(s) involved, who shall, after due consultation within the College(s), submit

recommendations to the Faculty Board. [This formulation reflects a legal judgement which required that processes of academic assessment should be clearly separated from those concerning the consequences of failure.]

- 3.11 Where a postgraduate programme involves both the examination of work arising from the programme and a dissertation, the Board shall recommend in respect of the course work, but the recommendation in respect of the dissertation may be made without a formal meeting of the Board of Examiners, but must be considered by both the internal supervisor, external examiner and of the Chair of that Board.
- 3.12 In the case of a referred examination a recommendation may be submitted without a formal meeting of the Board of Examiners, but must be considered by both the internal marker, external examiner and the Chair of that Board.
- 3.13 It is the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that all evidence relevant to any decision of the Board is available to the Board in documentary form; mitigating evidence considered by a mitigation committee or equivalent should only be presented to the Board with the explicit permission of the relevant student.

4. **Examination Boards for Flexible Combined Honours (FCH)**

- 4.1 The Board of Examiners is nominated by the FCH Board of Studies and appointed by the Board of the Faculty of Taught Programmes on behalf of Senate.
- 4.2 The Board of Examiners is chaired by the FCH Director.
- 4.3 The FCH Board of Examiners consists of academic staff representatives from each subject area teaching FCH students. Other members of staff who are members of the Board of Studies may attend as observers without voting rights. The Chair of the FCH Board of Studies is an ex officio member.
- 4.4 FCH will have an External Examiner appointed by Senate who will have experience of the operation of Modular/Flexible Combined Honours systems. The function of the External Examiner will be:
 - to be a member of the FCH Board of Examiners
 - to advise on the conduct of the Board of Examiners and on the operation of the conventions
 - to advise on the regulations and processes of the degree

The FCH Board of Examiners processes confirmed final marks for modules. Hence Colleges must ensure that the mark recorded in SITS when the FCH Board meets is final and agreed by the relevant subject Examination Board. The mark will not be subject to revision at the FCH Board of Examiners. Nevertheless, the FCH Board of Examiners reserves the right to make an award higher than that indicated by a student's profile of final marks, provided there is mitigation and/or other exceptional circumstances. All such cases should be fully documented and minuted.

5 Viva Voce Examinations

- 5.1 Where Colleges and their Boards of Examiners wish to hold *viva voce* examinations, they must publish in their examination conventions a written policy on the use of such examinations in taught programmes, including details of how the viva will be conducted, who will attend and details of operational standards
- 5.2 The policy must be included in a College's student handbook(s) or otherwise drawn to the attention of students.

PROFESSOR J M KAY
Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor

September 2011

¹The handling of Board of Examiners business by telephone or video-conferencing is permitted within the terms of the Data Protection Act. If in so doing the transactions are recorded for future reference, the recording must be stored securely.

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