

Operation of Progression/Award Boards (Spring and Autumn 2026) – Guidelines for Academic Deans, Associate Academic Deans and Representatives

Academic Deans or their representatives (Associate Academic Dean or other nominated representative, who should normally be a senior member of academic staff) are required to attend *all* undergraduate and postgraduate taught Award Boards in order to monitor the operation of the Board and to report to University Committees where appropriate. This paper outlines a series of brief guidelines on assessment and examinations procedures, in order to assist the Deans and their representatives in their monitoring role.

1. Reports from Deans

Academic Deans and representatives should complete and submit the 'Operation of Exam Boards' report proforma following each Award Board, making a note of issues raised in connection with assessment and examinations procedures. Reports should be completed via this [Microsoft Form](#). If there are any problems email deansadministrator@hw.ac.uk.

For managing and reporting on suspended Boards of Examiners, please refer to Document 9, "Process for Managing Suspended Boards of Examiners".

2. Mitigating the Impact of the Middle East Conflict and UK Industrial Action

For the 2026 Boards, Academic Deans and their representatives are required to comment on a Board's consideration for the impact of the Middle East Conflict and UK Industrial Action. The report proforma has been updated. Supplementary [guidance](#) for mitigating the impact is available for Boards.

3. Supporting Information

Prior to attendance at Boards, Deans and their representatives should be familiar with the [Examination and Assessment Guidelines](#) and particularly:

- **Document A: Key Points to highlight**, which highlights important updates for **2026**.
- Document B: Academic Decision-Making: Summary of Approach (for Staff)
- Document C: Academic Decision-Making: Guidelines for Boards of Examiners in Maintaining Academic Standards (for Staff)
- Document 1: Undergraduate and Postgraduate Assessment Procedures
- Document 2: Decisions and Decision Codes
- Document 3: Policy on the Discretionary Award of Credits (and associated guidance for PSRBs)
- Document 4: Heriot-Watt University Assessment and Progression System (HAPS)
- Document 6a: Policy for Undergraduate Degree-Classification Borderline Cases
- Document 6b: Policy for Postgraduate Degree-Classification Borderline Cases
- Document 09: Managing Suspended Examination Boards
- Document 11a: Guidelines for Deans, Associate-Deans and Representatives (*this document*)

4. Marks and Grades

The following key points are provided as a reminder:

- Any instances of inconsistent application of HAPS or other aspects of the assessment process should be noted on the Dean's Report Proforma.
- Marks should not be altered whilst mapping onto grades.
- Justification for abnormal mapping of marks onto grades should be recorded.
- Justification for any alteration of grades, including discretionary award of credits, by the Examination Board should be recorded.

5. Re-assessment and Repeat

The following key points are provided as a reminder:

Re-assessment

- Re-assessment should be required for Grade E only for *continuing* courses.
- Only one re-assessment opportunity is permitted for UG courses: all UG re-assessments are to be taken in the May Semester (i.e. August reassessment diet); the decision code should reflect this. January start PGT students may be reassessed at the end of the January Semester (i.e. April/May diet)
- One reassessment opportunity is permitted for non-final year qualifying courses – *for credit points only*, the original mark remains in the calculation of the degree.
- In exceptional circumstances, the Progression Board has the discretion to grant a further reassessment opportunity, the justification for which must be recorded in the Board's Minutes.
- For UG, opportunities up to a maximum of four may be permitted by the Progression Board; fifth opportunities must be considered and approved by a Dean of the University.
- For PG taught programmes, reassessment is permitted in a maximum of three taught courses – this may include re-sit for progression to Masters (if Grade D, E or F has been gained). Clarification on PGT regulations regarding reassessment (including discretion of the Progression Board in permitting more than 3 resits or allowing reassessment in the dissertation/project) should be sought in advance of the Progression Board meeting.
- The Regulations implicitly allow Boards of Examiners the discretion to determine that no further reassessment opportunities are given, in cases where students have a high number of reassessments (e.g. 5). Boards of Examiners are reminded that they have the discretion to reach this decision. (Regulation A6 Progression, para 2.3.5)

Repeat

- Repeat is not an automatic entitlement but is at the discretion of the Progression Board. The justification for repeat must be recorded in the Board's minutes.
- Repeat/Re-attend decision can be made at June or August Progression Boards.
- Repeat means re-attend and retake all assessments – full course fees to be paid.
- The Board can recommend alternative courses, rather than a repeat.

6. Decision Codes

The following key points are provided as a reminder:

- Decision codes entered on Banner should correspond to the decisions taken by the Progression Board.
- UG reassessment, for both continuing and non-continuing courses, should be taken in the May Semester (i.e. August reassessment diet); only in exceptional circumstances should students be permitted to defer until the next academic session and a justification for such decisions should be provided.