Academic Registry

Operation of Progression/Award Boards (Spring and Autumn 2018) – Guidelines for Deans, Associate Deans and Representatives

Deans or their representatives (Associate Dean or other nominated representative, who should normally be a senior member of academic staff) are required to attend all undergraduate and postgraduate taught Progression/Award Boards in order to monitor the operation of the Board and to report to the Learning and Teaching Board and to the Quality and Standards Committee 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

Deans and representatives should make a note of issues raised at Progression Boards in connection with assessment and examinations procedures. A form, “Operation of Exam Boards – Dean’s Comments 2017/18”, is available to assist in identifying issues, although Deans and representatives may prefer to make their own notes. Representatives should forward their observation notes to Gill McAdam (ext 8057), email: Gillian_Louise.McAdam@hw.ac.uk) and highlight any pertinent issues. Reports should be forwarded within two weeks of the Board taking place.

For managing and reporting on suspended Boards of Examiners, please refer to Document 10, "Process for Managing Suspended Boards of Examiners".

2. Supporting Information

Prior to attendance at Boards, Deans and their representatives should be familiar with the following:

(a) The relevant policies and procedures, particularly:
   i. The Heriot-Watt University Assessment and Progression System (HAPS)
   ii. Guide to Medical Certificates under HAPS

(b) Document 1: Undergraduate and Postgraduate Assessment Procedures

(c) Document 2: Decisions and Decision Codes 2018

(d) Document 3: Guidelines on Discretionary Award of Credits

(e) Document 12: Guidelines for Deans, Associate-Deans and Representatives (information provided below).

3. Marks and Grades

The Deans and representatives should note the following:

- Confirmation that the HAPS is being operated, particularly by PGT Boards; any instances of inconsistent application of HAPS or other aspects of the assessment process should be noted on the Dean’s Report Proforma.
- Confirmation should be received that marks have not been 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 Progression Board should be recorded.
- Discretionary award of credits on undergraduate programmes can be used at the point of award or as a means to enable progression from one stage to another stage for students registered on any stage of an undergraduate programme and progressing to the next stage. DC for progression can only be used AFTER a student has taken the re-assessment. DCs can be awarded normally for up

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1 Progression/Awards Boards include boards for graduating students and continuing students in the spring and the re-assessment boards in August, and the Boards for taught PG programmes. The term “Progression Board” is used here in reference to all exam boards.
to two courses or 30 credits (normally up to three courses or 45 credits for Combined Studies degrees).

- Discretionary award of credits on postgraduate/graduate taught programmes should be used only at the point of award (and not for progression through the programme), and DC can be applied in a maximum of 1 taught course (c.15-20 credits); it cannot be applied to dissertations.
- In exceptional circumstances students (normally those studying independently or through ALPs) may be considered by the Chair of the Studies Committees for the Award of RAY discretionary credits, normally up to a maximum of 20 credits. Individual requests must be submitted to the Chairs (refer to guidelines on discretionary award of credits).

4. Re-assessment and Repeat

The Deans and representatives should emphasise the following, if required:

Re-assessment
- Re-assessment should be required for Grade E only for continuing courses.
- Only one re-assessment opportunity is permitted for courses: all re-assessments are to be taken in the Autumn diet; the decision code should reflect this (section 5).
- One re-assessment 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 re-assessment 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 the Undergraduate Studies Committee.
- For PG taught programmes, re-assessment 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 re-assessment (including discretion of the Progression Board in permitting more than 3 resits or allowing re-assessment in the dissertation/project) should be sought in advance of the Progression Board meeting.

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 means re-attend and retake all assessments – full course fees to be paid.
- The Board can recommend alternative courses, rather than a repeat.

5. Decision Codes

The Dean and representatives should take note of any comments made with regard to the list of decisions and codes. The Dean and representatives should remind School Examinations Officers that the codes entered on Banner should correspond to the decisions taken by the Progression Board (this should be emphasised especially for PGT programmes).

The Dean and representatives should remind the Progression Board that UG re-assessment, for both continuing and non-continuing courses, should be taken in the autumn 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.

6. Assessment Results Reports

The Dean and representatives should remind the Progression Board that Assessment Results Reports (ARR) should contain all course grades (including service courses) and a progression or award decision for each student. No blanks should remain on the ARR.

7. Deadlines

The Dean and representatives should be assured by the Chair of the Progression Board that the deadlines for inputting confirmed grades and decision codes and the return of signed ARRs to the Academic Registry can be met (See section 5 of Document 1: Undergraduate and Postgraduate Assessment Procedures).