

**Academic Quality
Registry and Academic Support Directorate
Process for Managing Suspended Boards of Examiners**

Background

In June 2012, the Quality and Standards Committee¹ approved a proposal to introduce a formal process for managing and reporting on Boards of Examiners which had been suspended at the request of the Chair and/or the Dean of the University (or representative). The process is not only to assure quality and standards, but also to have in place an equitable, transparent and consistent process. The process should be applied only where Boards have begun operating and issues have arisen which consequently prevents the Board from effectively conducting its business.

Suspension of Different Types of Boards of Examiners

The process is differentiated according to type of Board of Examiners (Assessment, Progression and Award) and severity of issue.

1. *Assessment Boards*

Schools will have in place arrangements for managing suspended Assessment Boards, which are internal meetings to consider course-level results. In most cases, there will be no need for the School to provide a report to the Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life) on such suspensions (eg where marks for elements of assessment are not yet available). However, if the suspension has been caused by a serious matter, such as malpractice or breach of exams procedures, then the Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life) must be notified.

2. *Pre-Meetings of Progression or Awards Boards*

Schools often have a pre-meeting of Progression/Award Boards in order to discuss and resolve issues in advance of the formal meeting featuring the External Examiner and the Dean of the University (or representative). In most cases, suspensions are likely be managed within the School, eg where results for one or more courses are not yet available. However, where a major issue has contributed to the suspension of the Board, eg an instance of malpractice, a breach of exam procedures or missing exam scripts, then the Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life) must be notified.

3. *Meetings of Progression or Awards Boards*

All instances of suspensions of Progression or Award Boards, where decisions on progress and/or award are being made, must be reported to the Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life). The Dean of the University should notify the Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life) immediately following the suspended Board. If a representative of the Dean is in attendance, then he or she should report the matter immediately to the appropriate Dean, who should in turn inform the Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life). A formal report will be required from both the Chair and the Dean of the University (or representative).

¹ Now University Committee for Quality and Standards

Reporting to the Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life)

Where the Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life) has been notified of a suspended Board of Examiners in one of the three categories above, a written report must be provided. The report should include core information (title and type of Board; date of meeting; persons in attendance; name of Chair) and should set out: the reasons for the suspension; action taken subsequent to the suspended Board; the progress of the reconvened Board; plans for longer term action (if appropriate); recommendations for future preventative measures (if appropriate). In the case of Category 1 and 2 suspensions, the Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life) will request a report from the School's Executive Dean (likely to be produced by the Chair of the Board). In the case of Category 3 suspensions, a report will be required from the School's Executive Dean and the Dean of the University (to be channelled via the Dean if a representative was in attendance at the Board); the External Examiner will also be expected to comment on the suspension in his/her formal report to the University. The Dean's Report, which will be in the standard *Operation of Progression/Award Boards – Dean's Comments report* format², will be sent directly to the Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life), and not in this case via the Academic Quality.

Consideration of Reports

All reports will be considered by the Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life), the relevant Dean of the University and the Head of Academic Quality.

If, following consideration of the report(s), it is deemed that the contributing factors were relatively minor and/or have been satisfactorily resolved, the matter will be regarded as closed. The instance will be reported in a generic way (without identification of the Board or School) in the annual Report on Deans' Representatives at Examination Boards, which is produced by Academic Quality for consideration by the University Committee for Quality and Standards.

If, following consideration of the report(s), it is agreed that the issues are of a significantly major nature, the Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life) will progress the matter with the School's Executive Dean and the Dean, and will engage the appropriate University committees and/or Senior Officers as required. A formal report will be required at relevant stages and on resolution of the issue in question.

In the case of major incidents, if the standards of awards or progression decisions have not been compromised and are still secure, then the instance will be reported in a generic way (without identification of the Board or School) in the annual Report on Deans' Representatives at Examination Boards, which is produced by Academic Quality for consideration by the University Committee for Quality and Standards. In the case of major incidents, if the standards of awards or progression decisions have been compromised and/or regarded as being not robust, then the instance will be reported immediately by the Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life) to the University Committee for Quality and Standards, with a recommendation for action.

Approval of Process

The process will be submitted to the University Committee for Quality and Standards for approval, and, thereafter, incorporated into the examinations policies, guidelines and procedures which are produced (and updated and re-issued annually) by Academic Quality.

31 May 2012

Approved by QSC, 29 June 2012

Last reviewed for accuracy January 2025

² Use of the existing Dean's report template means that the Deans or their representatives are not required to produce a separate report covering similar topics.