Briefing for Examination Board
Chairs and Deans’ Representatives
April 2021

Dr Amos Haniff, Dean of the University (Pan Dean)
Jill Bowie, Deans’ Administrator
Dr Maggie King, Head of Academic Quality
Prof John Sawkins, Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life)
Amanda Lyness, Manager, Academic Operations
Helen Crosby-Knox, Quality Assurance Manager
Aim of Briefing

• Guidance and training for new Chairs of Boards and Deans representatives

  • Regulations 3 (13.2) & 48 (13.3)
    – “…Irrespective of designation, all Chairs shall attend one of the ‘Examination Board Chairs’ training sessions”

• Guidance on revised regulations and policy for experienced Chairs of Boards and Deans representatives (particularly COVID-19)

• Guidance for administrators and clerks

• Opportunity for questions and discussions
Structure of the Briefing

Part One
1. Examination and Assessment Guidelines
2. Role / Authority of the Examination Board
3. Examination Boards
4. Role of the Chair of the Exam Board
5. Role of the External Examiner / Chief External Examiner
6. Role of the Dean and Deans Representatives
7. Regulation Matters
8. Key Assessment Policies
9. Examples of Good Practice

Part Two
1. Key Information for Boards of Examiners related to COVID-19

Contact Information

Questions
1. Examination and Assessment Guidelines

Comprehensive Suite of documentation, including:

- Key Points to Highlight
- Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19
- Key University Assessment Policies
- Assessment Procedures

Guidance for examination boards

Exceptional arrangements are in place to manage Semester 2 assessments and the operation of examination boards. As a result, new guidance has been produced and existing guidance updated. Please refer to the 'Key points to highlight' document for a summary of recent changes and introductions. All examination board guidelines and assessment procedures (UG and PGT) are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Number</th>
<th>Document Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Key Points to Highlight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 on Examinations and Assessment: Guidance for Boards of Examiners in 2020/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This is a summary of COVID-related information that the BOE may find useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guidance for implementing this is within Document D below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This is guidance for implementing Document C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/academic-registry/quality/qa/exam-guidelines.htm
2. Role of the Examination Board

- Examinations Boards serve as the mechanism through which a School makes decisions regarding progression and award of individual students.
  - Receive and confirm course assessment marks
  - Consider and make recommendations \((\text{on behalf of Senate})\) for progression from one stage to the next
  - Consider and make recommendations \((\text{on behalf of Senate})\) for award
  - Consider extenuating circumstances

- Any award or progression decision is a matter for the academic judgement of the Board of Examiners and must be
  - Evidence based
  - Transparent
  - Consistent
  - Recorded
2. Authority of Board of Examiners
3a. The Assessment Board

- Confirms the results of course assessment
  - Returns an appropriate decision in the form of a grade for each student
  - Justification for any unusual mapping of grades
    - Agree appropriate remedial action
- May incorporate the programme review
  - Course team responsibility
- There should be no joint Assessment/Exam Board
  - Assessment boards should meet after the appropriate exam diet and be held before and separately from Progression and Award boards

- Composition
  - The Head of School, or nominee, as Chair
  - The members of academic staff involved in the teaching and assessment of each course under consideration
    - No requirement for Dean / Dean’s representative

Regulations 3 (12.2) & 48 (13.2)
3b. The Progression Board

- Considers and makes recommendations in respect of each student
  - Considers progression at each stage
    - In accordance with programme guidelines
  - Re-assessment in one or more courses
  - Award at an intermediate level

- Consideration of mitigating circumstances
  - Recommendation from the Mitigating Circumstances Board

Regulations 3 (12.3) & 48 (13.3)
3b. The Progression Board (cont’d)

• Quorum
  – Three members of the board or one third of its membership, whichever is larger.

• Composition
  • Chair (HOS, DoLT or nominee approved by UCQS)
  • At least one representative of the academic staff involved in the teaching and the setting and marking of examinations and assessment of each course
  • The School Examinations Officer
  • Dean, Associate-Dean or Dean’s representative (as an observer and who does not count towards the quorum).

Regulations 3 (12.3) & 48 (13.3)
# Decision Codes

## Part One: Progression Decision Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAS Code</th>
<th>Decision (short form)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1A</td>
<td>Proceed to next year of study/part of programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1B</td>
<td>Proceed to next year of study with attend or re-attend courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1D</td>
<td>Proceed to next year of study with reassessment/resubmission in next Academic Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1E</td>
<td>Proceed to next year – continued affiliation – Postgraduate Research Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1F</td>
<td>Proceed to next year of study – transfer to different programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2A</td>
<td>Continue in the same year/part of programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2B</td>
<td>Cannot Proceed – Repeat/Re-attend programme or courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2C</td>
<td>Continue in same year – Reassessment may be required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2D</td>
<td>Continue in same year with reassessment/resubmission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2E</td>
<td>Continue in same year – continued affiliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2H</td>
<td>Continue to dissertation in the next Academic Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2X</td>
<td>Continue in same year – no progression decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3C</td>
<td>Cannot continue – reassessment/resubmission required before next Academic Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3D</td>
<td>Cannot continue – reassessment/resubmission required in next Academic Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3F</td>
<td>Cannot continue on current programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4A</td>
<td>Confirmation of results – no progression decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4C</td>
<td>Reassessment required for award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4D</td>
<td>Deferred decision – reassessment/resubmission required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4G</td>
<td>Deferred decision – awaiting outcome of Discipline Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4H</td>
<td>Continue to dissertation/project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4X</td>
<td>Decision pending further consideration of additional assessment information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3c. The Award Board

- Considers and makes recommendation for Award in respect of each student
  - Requirements for award
  - Degree classification

- Consideration of mitigating circumstances
  - Recommendation from the Mitigating Circumstances Board

- Quorum
  - Three members of the board or one third of its membership, whichever is larger.

Regulations 3 (12.4) & 48 (13.4)
3c. The Award Board (cont’d)

• Composition
  • Chair (HOS, DoLT or nominee approved by UCQS)
  • At least one representative of the academic staff involved in the teaching and the setting and marking of examinations and assessment of each course
  • The School Examinations Officer
  • Dean, Associate-Dean or Dean’s representative (as an observer and who does not count towards the quorum).
  • External Examiner(s).
    • In absence of External Examiner, a Dean shall be present

Regulations 3 (12.4) & 48 (13.4)
### Decision Codes

#### Part Two: Award, Completion, Exit and Non-graduating Decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undergraduate Award Decisions</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Decision (short form)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>With Honours of the First Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>With Honours of the Second Class (Upper Division)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>With Honours of the Second Class (Lower Division)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>With Honours of the Second Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>With Honours of the Third Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>With Honours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Ordinary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>With distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>With merit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Master of Engineering (undergraduate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Certificate in Foundation English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Postgraduate Award Decisions</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Decision (short form)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>PhD - to be input by Student Records &amp; Awards team (SRA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>MPhil - to be input by SRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Master with distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Master with merit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma with distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma with merit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Postgraduate Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Certificate in Foundation English (for Graduate Purposes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Graduate Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Graduate Diploma with distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Graduate Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Master - to be input if the award is being made by a Partner Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>91</td>
<td>Master with distinction – to be input if the award is being made by a Partner Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>92</td>
<td>PhD Awarded Jointly with another Institution – to be input by SRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>93</td>
<td>EngD – Awarded by another Institution – to be input by SRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>94</td>
<td>PhD Awarded by another Institution – to be input by SRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>95</td>
<td>MPhil – Awarded by another Institution – to be input by SRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>96</td>
<td>PGDip – Awarded by Partner Institution – to be input by SRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>97</td>
<td>PhD Awarded jointly with another Institution – to be input by SRA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Completion and Non-graduating Decisions (No Award)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Decision (short form)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Examination and Assessment Guidelines: Document 2, “Decisions and Decision Codes”
4. Role of the Chair of the Exam Board

- Designated by Head of School
  - Must attend training
  - Approved by UCQS
    - Regulations 3 (13.3.2a) & 48 (13.3.2a)
- Moderates the meeting
- Is a full member of the Exam Board
- Has both a deliberative and casting vote
- Has the authority to suspend the Board

Regulations 3 (13.3.2a) & 48 (13.3.2a)
4. Role of the Chair of the Exam Board (cont’d)

• Ensures
  • The Agenda is followed
  • University Regulations, Policies and Procedures are followed
  • All students are considered fairly
  • Decisions are transparent and consistent
  • Mitigating circumstances are considered
  • University values are maintained in the operation of exam board business

Regulations 3 (13.3.2a) & 48 (13.3.2a)
5. Role of the External Examiner

- Are full members of the Exam Board
  - But note they are NOT ‘super members’ (they do NOT have a casting vote)
  - Should not adjudicate on borderline cases (these are matters for the whole Board)

- Entitled to comment on marks and recommend an alteration
  - As is any other member of the Board
  - This refers specifically to whole groups/sets of marks, not an individual student's marks

- The Board should consider the External’s recommendation, but is not duty bound to accept any alterations
  - The decision is for the Board. Schools would defend any such collective decision if the External commented negatively in the end of year External Examiner report

- Chief External Examiner has oversight of the effectiveness of School's moderation procedure, with comments to the Board of Examiners
6. Role of the Dean and Deans’ Representative

• Required to attend all undergraduate and postgraduate taught Progression/Award Boards

• ‘Observer’ *(not a member of the Board)*
  • Considers the efficiency of the board and that fair and consistent consideration of students has taken place in accordance with University and Programme Regulations
  • Provides guidance to the Board

• Has the authority to request that the Chair suspends the Board

• Submits a Report to Academic Quality *(13b. Proforma)*

Document 13: Guidelines for Deans, Associate Deans and Representatives
7. Regulation Matters

• Regulation 31
  – Authority of Heads of Schools and Examiners in Exceptional Circumstances invoked by Senate

• Exceptional Circumstances
  – *In which a full range of examination mark, result or coursework evaluation, normally taken into assessment is not available, excluding mitigating circumstances applying to individual students*

• Exam Board are authorized to make judgement and decisions on the bases of information made available to the board

• Board of Examiners Quorum
  – Approved Chair, External Examiner Dean or Representative
8. Key Assessment Policies

Discretionary Award of Credits

- A student who has not achieved the minimum number of credit points necessary to qualify for consideration of award or progression may be awarded the requisite credit points at the discretion of the Progression Board (UG only) or Award Board, as appropriate.

- Detailed application criteria applies:
  - For progression *(UG only)*
  - For award *(UG; PGT and excluding MBA)*

- Guidelines on Discretionary Award of Credits: Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Programmes *(Document 3)*

- The justification for allocating additional credits shall be recorded in the minutes of the Examination Board
8. Key Assessment Policies

Policy for Undergraduate Degree-Classification Borderline Cases

- Marks range between *8.5 - *9.9%
  - *9.5 - *9.9 rounded up

| Percentage Range          | Classification |
|--------------------------|----------------
| 70% Average, or above    | 1st Class, or Distinction |
| 60 - 69.4%               | 2 (1)           |
| 50 – 59.4%               | 2 (2)           |
| 40 - 49.5%               | 3               |
| Less than 39.4%          | No honors recommended |

- Award Board has discretion to consider students falling below boundaries for receipt of higher award
  - Discretion zone – average of *8.5% (but no lower)
Policy for Postgraduate Degree-Classification
Borderline Cases

• Marks range between *8.5 - *9.9%
  • *9.5 - *9.9 rounded up

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Degree Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70% Average, or above</td>
<td>Postgraduate Masters with Distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - 69.4%</td>
<td>Postgraduate Masters with Merit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 59.4%</td>
<td>Postgraduate Masters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 49.5%</td>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma (refer to Programme guidelines)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 39.4%</td>
<td>Refer to Programme guidelines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Award Board has discretion to consider students falling below boundaries for receipt of higher award
  • Discretion zone – average of *8.5% (but no lower)
8. Key Assessment Policies

Mitigating Circumstances in Relation to Assessment

• The Role of Mitigating Circumstances Committee
  • To determine the impact of mitigating circumstances affecting one or more students, with the authority to agree on the extent of the impact and to advise the exam board on the action to be taken.
  • **Makes recommendation** and rationale to Examination Board and Courses mitigation applies to *(if MC should be considered)*

• The role of the Examination Board
  • Consider the recommendation of MC Committee and make decision regarding credit, progression and award

• Confidentiality of Evidence
  • Ensure compliance with Data Protection law
  • Supporting documents should not be sent to Exam Board
8. Examples of Good Practice – Managing Boards via Teams

- State your name when you wish to speak (only a few faces will be visible on the screen at any time);
- Use the ‘Conversation’ window within the Teams call to alert the Chair (via the Clerk if needs be) that you wish to make a contribution;
- When making a contribution speak clearly and more slowly than in normal conversation, keeping your comments concise and to the point;
- Keep rustling of papers / other background noise to a minimum when your mic is unmuted;
- Always mute your microphone when not speaking;
- Do not speak over other contributors – especially the Chair – except briefly to indicate that you wish to speak;
- During discussions, please clearly state any proposed actions, indicating that it is an action. At the end of each item the Chair should summarise the actions to ensure these are captured correctly;
- Remember that this may be a novel experience for other participants (including the clerk) and so please be patient.
8. Examples of Good Practice – Organisation of the Board

- Clear Agenda
- Quorum of Board members are present
  - Interests declared
- Appropriate papers provided
  - Progression/Award criteria available to all members
- Information to be presented in a clear and consistent way
- Complete and correct marks provided
  - Ensure each student has a full set of marks
  - Chair must have confidence in the marks presented
- Board proceeds at an appropriate pace (due care and attention, not too long / too short)
- Check that decisions reached have been recorded correctly
  - Chair responsibility
- After board, papers are collected and destroyed
8. Examples of Good Practice - Procedures

• Moderation of courses has taken place before the assessment board
  – Report from Course team

• Use of pre-meetings to discuss:
  • Difficulties to ensure efficient and effective operation of Board
  • Recommendations on mitigating circumstances made to Board
  • Issues that Deans / Deans’ Representatives should be made aware of before meeting

• Board members to have clear understanding of procedures for:
  • Considering marks
  • Dealing with borderline cases – HAPS 6a and 6b
  • Dealing with extenuating circumstances
  • Recording decisions – COVID mitigation policies
  • Notification / publication of results
  • Confidentiality issues
Key Information for Boards of Examiners related to COVID-19
Learning and Teaching AY Group

All COVID-policies etc developed consultatively by the Learning and Teaching Academic Year Group, with decisions approved by SCIBE

- Chaired by Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life)
- 70+ members, all campuses, all Schools, all Professional Services, all Student Representative Bodies
- Weekly meetings
- Decisions and Actions communicated each week (Academic Quality SharePoint)
Covid-19: Boards of Examiners

Key Points to highlight:

• Specific Guidance for Boards of Examiners

• Focus on mitigating the impact of COVID

• Academic Safety Net documents and also guidance on implementing Academic Safety Net

• Greater emphasis at the Board on managing grade inflation/degree classification inflation:

• Regulation 31: Authority of Boards of Examiners in Exceptional Circumstances remains in place

https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/docs/academic-registry/examdocB.pdf
Covid-19 guidance: ACADEMIC SAFETY NET

Summary

This paper sets out HWU’s approach in 2020/21 to mitigating the continuing impact of COVID-19 on assessment, progression and award, referred to as the “Academic Safety Net”. HWU’s previous approach in 2019/2020 was taken into account, which put in place a range of measures to ensure that both continuing and graduating students were not unfairly disadvantaged because of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the global pandemic.

The paper was produced by the Head of Academic Quality and supported by the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching), the three Student Presidents and the five School Directors of Learning and Teaching on behalf of the Learning and Teaching Academic Year 2020/21 Group (LTAYG). Although there are no policy changes specified, the overall approach was endorsed by the Senate Committee for Interim Business and Effectiveness (SGIBE) at its meeting on 18 January 2021. This Academic Safety Net approach is available on the Learning and Teaching Policy Bank here.

- Summary of Academic Safety Net
- Guidelines on Implementation: Focusing on Academic Standards

https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/docs/learning-teaching/policies/assessment-2021-safetynet-examboardguide.pdf
Withdrawal of 2019/20 Emergency Measures as RBL allowed a more planned approach to assessment and examination:

- No wholesale cancellation of exams for specific year groups;
- No automatic progression for specific year groups;
- No use of P (pass) grade for individuals or for whole year groups;
- No postponement of exams to a later date for specific groups.

All Exams have remained in Take-Home Format
Covid-19 guidance: ACADEMIC SAFETY NET

- HWU did not introduce a rules-based “No Detriment” Policy in 2019/20; rather, the focus was on ensuring no academic disadvantage

- No specific adjustments re: weighting/best performance: the 2020/21 Academic Safety Net

- Continued focus on no academic disadvantage

- Preserving academic judgement and decision-making of Boards

- Managing grade inflation/ degree class inflation (quality and academic standards): role of Course Assessment Board and Award Board. Data provided by Planning Office

- Student (as well as Staff) Guides explaining the Academic Safety Net and how Boards of Examiners reach decisions
Covid-19 guidance for chief/external examiners

Guidance document covers:

1) Responsive Blended Learning (RBL)

2) Endorsement of HWU’s approach to quality during the pandemic

3) Academic Safety Net

4) Academic Safety Net: Maintaining Academic Standards

5) Reports from Chief/Externals

6) Contact Details

Briefing session held on 29 March for Chief/External Examiners

https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/docs/academic-registry/externalexaminers-covid-19-note.pdf
10. Key Contacts

- **Jill Bowie**, Deans’ Administrator
- **Helen Crosby-Knox**, Quality Assurance Manager
- **Amanda Lyness**, Manager, Academic Operations

- **Dr Amos Haniff**, Dean of the University (Pan-Dean)
- **Professor Scott Arthur**, Dean of the University (Humanities and Social Sciences)
- **Dr Mathini Sellathurai**, Dean of the University (Science and Engineering)
10. Contact Details

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Questions....