Briefing for Examination Board Chairs and Deans’ Representatives
May 2022

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Elaine Hammond, Deans’ Administrator
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Aim of Briefing

- Guidance and training for new Chairs of Boards and Deans representatives
  - Regulation A5: “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
- Guidance for administrators and clerks
- Opportunity for questions and discussions
Structure of the Briefing

Part One
1. Regulations and Guidelines
2. Role / Authority of the Examination Board
3. Mitigating Circumstances Board
4. Examination Boards
   4a) Course Assessment Board
   4b) Progression Board
   4c) Award Board
5. Role of the Chair of the Exam Board
6. Role of the External Examiner / Chief External Examiner
7. Role of the Dean and Deans Representatives
8. Regulation Matters
9. Key Assessment Policies
10. Examples of Good Practice

Part Two
1. Key Information for Boards of Examiners related to Exceptional Situations

Contact Information
1. Regulations and Guidelines

Ordinances

Regulations

Policies and Guidelines

https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/about/profile/governance/ordinances-regulations.htm
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>C</td>
<td>This is a summary of COVID-related information that the BOE may find useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Guidance for implementing this is within Document D below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Undergraduate and Postgraduate Assessment Procedures</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 (on behalf of Senate) for progression from one stage to the next
  - Consider and make recommendations (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
3. Mitigating Circumstances Board

- Must be constituted and held prior to any relevant Assessment, Progression or Award Board

- Shall determine the impact of mitigating circumstances affecting one or more students and shall
  - Agree on the extent of the impact; and
  - Make (and record) recommendations on mitigating action to be taken to the relevant Course Assessment, Progression and Award Board

- Shall consist of the following members:
  - The Chair who shall be the Director of Academic Quality of the Primary Academic Unit or their nominee; and
  - At least two other members of the Academic Staff from the Primary Academic Unit
3. Mitigating Circumstances Board (cont’d)

• The role of the Examination Board
  • Consider the recommendation of MC Committee and make decision regarding credit, progression and award
  • MC Board needs to provide sufficient information for the Examination board to make a decision

• Confidentiality of Evidence
  • Ensure compliance with GDPR
  • MC evidence is not shared with the Exam Board
  • Recommendation of Best Practice
3. Mitigating Circumstances Board (cont’d)

- Assessment opportunities
  - No assessment undertaken
    - Assessment at first attempt (at the next suitable diet)
    - Award appropriate grade if able to evidence
  - Part or all assessment
    - Take into account part assessment in determining grade
  - Students must be offered opportunity to be reassessed if they wish to improve the recommended grade
4a. The course Assessment Board

- Meets after the appropriate diet of examinations
  - To be held before and separately from Progression and Award Boards
- Confirms the results of course assessment
  - Returns and marks and grades for all Student
  - Commentary on Student performance
  - Commentary on any unusual results
  - Recommended adjustment of grades
    - Justify for recommendation
    - Agree appropriate remedial action
- The Course Assessment Board shall not delegate the decision for ratification to the course team.
4a. The course Assessment Board (cont’d)

- Responsible for the preparation of a report for consideration by the Progression or Award Board

- Composition
  - The Chair (Head of Primary Academic Unit or nominee as approved by UCQS)
  - The members of Academic Staff involved in the teaching and assessment of each course under consideration
  - No requirement for a Dean or Dean’s representative
4b. The Progression Board

- Considers the requirements for progression in conjunction with the decisions of the Course Assessment Board,
  - Only in exceptional circumstances, adjust these grades,
  - Consideration the recommendation of Mitigating Circumstances Board in relation to students’ final outcome.

- Considers progression at each stage (as per the approved programme regulations)

- Considers Exit Awards and award at an intermediate level

- Decisions of the Progression Board
  - Regulation A6 Paragraph 4
    - Decision codes
# 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 – <em>Postgraduate Research Only</em></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>
4b. The Progression Board (cont’d)

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

• Composition
  • The Chair (Head of Primary Academic Unit or nominee as 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 of the course.
  • The Examination Officer
  • No requirement for Dean / Dean’s representative
4c. The Award Board

- Considers and makes recommendation for Award in respect of each student, in conjunction with the outcomes of the Course Assessment Board.
  - Only in exceptional circumstances, adjust these grades,
  - Consideration the recommendation of Mitigating Circumstances Board in relation to students’ final outcome.

- Consider requirements for award and degree classification (as per the approved programme regulations)

- Decisions of the Award Board
  - Regulation A7
    - Decision codes
# Decision Codes

## Undergraduate Award Decisions

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

## Postgraduate Award Decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Decision (short form)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>PhD - to be input by Student Records &amp; Awards team (SRA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>MPhil - to be input by SRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Master with distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Master with merit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma with distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma with merit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Postgraduate Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Certificate in Foundation English (for Graduate Purposes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Graduate Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>Graduate Diploma with distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>Graduate Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Master - to be input if the award is being made by a Partner Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>Master with distinction - to be input if the award is being made by a Partner Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>PhD Awarded Jointly with another Institution - to be input by SRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>EngD - Awarded by another Institution - to be input by SRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>PhD Awarded by another Institution - to be input by SRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>MPhil - Awarded by another Institution - to be input by SRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>PGDip - Awarded by Partner Institution - to be input by SRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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>
4c. The Award Board (cont’d)

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

- **Composition**
  - The Chair (Head of Primary Academic Unit or nominee as 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 of the course.
  - The Examination 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*
5. Role of the Chair of the Exam Board

- Nominated by the School's Executive Dean
  - Approved by UCQS
  - Must attend training
  - Suggested good practice – independent from Discipline/Programme
    - A Programme Director should not Chair a board they have responsibility for

- 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

- Signs off ARR - final grades; progression/award decisions

Regulation A5 Academic Decision Making Boards
5. 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
  - Recommendations from Mitigating Circumstances Board have been considered
  - University values are maintained in the operation of exam board business
6. 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
7. Role of the Dean and Deans’ Representative

- Required to attend all undergraduate and postgraduate taught 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*)
7. Regulation Matters

• Regulation A10
  - Authority of School's Executive Dean and Examiners in Exceptional Circumstances invoked by Senate
    - The COVID-19 pandemic
    - Industrial action (UK focus)
    - The situation in Ukraine and Russia
    - The cyberattack

• 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 Boards are authorised to make judgement and decisions on the basis of information made available to the Board
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.

- Discretion within an entire programme of study:
  - UG: 30 credits (45 for Combined Studies)
    - Award and progression (but not for prerequisites)
  - PG: 15 credits
    - Award only. Cannot be used for progression

- The discretionary award of credits shall not be applied to a dissertation, project or any other supervised research work.

- The Student shall have taken all the assessment opportunities in the course in question and have obtained a grade F in the assessment(s).

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

Discretionary Award of Credits

• Exceptional Circumstances
  • Award of DC for ABS
    • Regulation A7 Awards, Paragraph 5.6.
  • Should not be used as an alternative to an MC (MC process to be applied)

• Example
  • An undergraduate student is being considered for the award of ordinary degree but is 15 credits light The Award Board is confident that the student has fully met the programme’s learning outcomes. The student has no courses with a grade F against which a DC can be awarded as they have taken one course less than required in their earlier years.
  • The Board has the discretion to award the DC if it is content that there is full justification to do so. The justification must be recorded in the examination board minutes. Academic Operations can advise on the correct procedure for ensuring the DC is added to the student’s record.
8. Key Assessment Policies

Policy for Degree-Classification Borderline Cases

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Undergraduate</th>
<th>Postgraduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70% average or above</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Class (or Distinction)</td>
<td>Postgraduate masters with Distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69.4%</td>
<td>2 (1)</td>
<td>Postgraduate masters with Merit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59.4%</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
<td>Postgraduate masters with Merit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49.4%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma - <em>Refer to programme approvals doc</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.4% or lower</td>
<td>No honours recommended</td>
<td>Refer to programme approvals doc</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)
9. 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:
  - Perceived 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
  - Dealing with extenuating circumstances (eg discretionary credits)
  - Recording decisions – COVID mitigation policies
  - Notification / publication of results
  - Confidentiality issues
Part 2:

Key Information for Boards of Examiners related to Exceptional Situations
Regulation A10: Authorities in Exceptional Circumstances is currently in place for four situations. SCIBE has approved its use for each:

1) The COVID-19 pandemic
2) Industrial action (UK focus)
3) The situation in Ukraine and Russia
4) The cyberattack

Regulation A10 allows Boards of Examiners the authority to make decisions in the absence of complete information, or where there has been an extraordinary impact of a situation, on learning, teaching and assessment.
Boards of Examiners

Key Points to highlight:

• **Specific Guidance for Boards of Examiners**

• Focus on mitigating the impact of COVID (and now, also, the other 3 A10 situations)

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

• Continuing emphasis at the Board on managing grade inflation/degree classification inflation
Summary

This paper sets out HWU’s approach in 2021/22 to mitigating the continuing impact of COVID-19 on assessment, progression and award, referred to as the “Academic Safety Net”. At its meeting on 20 October 2021, the Learning and Teaching Academic Year Group (LTAYG) agreed that the Academic Safety Net, which was introduced in 2020/21, should remain in place for 2021/22. This Academic Safety Net is a representation of the previous session’s version and continues to be a summary of the University’s existing policies and procedures, rather than a set of special measures introduced specifically in response to the pandemic.

Although there are no policy changes specified, the overall approach was forward the Senate Committee for Interim Business and Effectiveness (SCIIE) for information. 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

Award Boards

(see Regulation 45, para 6: The Award Board; see also Section 1.5: Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Assessment Procedures). Regulations set out the composition and function of Award Boards.

Award Boards consider and confirm the results recommended by (Course) Assessment Boards, across all modes and locations, and make decisions on awards.

The following diagram illustrates the Award Board process.

The Award Board considers each student’s performance over all stages contributing to award, including weighting of contribution from non-final year courses. The Board also takes into account individual mitigating circumstances (based on recommendations from the Mitigating Circumstances Board and Course Assessment Board) as well as circumstances affecting the whole cohort such as the impact of COVID-19. Performance is reviewed across different modes and locations.

Key Information

- The Award Board confirms the marks and grades put forward by the (Course) Assessment Board.
- Only in exceptional circumstances can the marks and grades recommended by the (Course) Assessment Board be adjusted and the justification for any modifications must be recorded in the minutes/record of the Award Board meeting.
- The Award Board can use Discretionary Award of Credits (DAC) where UC or UCST students have insufficient credits.
Withdrawal of 2019/20 Emergency Measures as 2020/21 and 2021/22 allowed a more planned approach to assessment and examination:

To highlight the following:

- No automatic progression for specific year groups;
- No use of P (pass) grade for individuals or for whole year groups;
ACADEMIC SAFETY NET

• No specific adjustments re: weighting/best performance: the 2021/22 Academic Safety Net
• Continued focus on no academic disadvantage and maintaining academic standards
• 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
• 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) Use of Regulation A10
4) Academic Safety Net: Maintaining Academic Standards
5) Reports from Chief/Externals
6) Contact Details
10. Key Contacts

- **Elaine Hammond**  Deans’ Administrator
- **Amanda Lyness**  Manager, Academic Operations
- **Helen Crosby-Knox**  Quality Assurance Manager and Deputy Head of Academic Quality
- **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)
Questions....