Briefing for Chairs and Deans Reps at Boards of Examiners

March 2023
Aim

• Chairs of Boards and Deans representatives

• Clerks and Administrators

• Regulation A5: “Irrespective of designation, all Chairs shall attend one of the ‘Examination Board Chairs’ training sessions”

• Live briefing sessions:
  • Revised regulations and policies
  • Discussions and questions (real case studies)
Structure

- Boards of Examiners: types, roles, compositions
- Chair
- External Examiner
- Dean / Dean’s Representatives
- Clerk
- Regulations, Policies and Procedures
- Live briefing session
- Key contacts
Governance

- Regulations
- Policies
- Procedures and Guidelines

https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/about/profile/governance/ordinances-regulations.htm

https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/academic-registry/quality/qa/exam-guidelines.htm
Boards of Examiners

- Regulation A5 Decision Making Boards
  - Course Assessment Board
  - Progression Board
  - Award Board
  - Mitigating Circumstances Board
Mitigating Circumstances Board

• Held prior to Progression or Award Board
• Considers the impact (and extent of impact)
• Can recommend mitigating action
• Composition (from the Primary Academic unit):
  o Chair - Director of Academic Quality (or nominee)
  o At least two other academics
• Recommendations recorded for consideration

https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/students/studies/examinations/mitigating-circumstances.htm
Course Assessment Board

- Convenes after appropriate examination diet
- Confirms course assessment results
- Before and separately from Progression and Award Boards
- Composition
  - Head of Primary Academic Unit or approved nominee (Chair)
  - Academic staff for courses for reviewed
- Decision-making by consensus
  - Voting is by exception - all members entitled to vote
  - Chair has a deliberative vote and casting vote
Course Assessment Board

- Decisions based on a report from each course
- Shall not delegate decisions for ratification
- Shall agree action to mitigate against future adjustments

https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/docs/academic-registry/as-examboards-staff.pdf
Progression Board

• Convenes when progression decisions required

• Composition:
  o Head of Primary Academic Unit or approved nominee (Chair)
  o Academic staff (courses within programme)
  o Examination Officer (Clerk)

• Quorum – 3 members or one third of the membership (academic)

• Decision-making by consensus
  o Voting is by exception - all members entitled to vote
  o Chair has a deliberative vote and casting vote
Progression Board

- Confirms grades determined by the Course Assessment Board
  - Adjust only in exceptional circumstances
- Considers recommendations of the MC Board in relation to final outcomes
- Considers requirements for progression inline with approved programme regulations
- May act with authority of an Award Board in the case of exit awards (if constituted accordingly)
Award Board

- Convenes after the end of the programme
- Quorum: 3 members or one third of membership (academic)
- Composition:
  - Head of Primary Academic Unit or approved nominee (Chair)
  - External Examiner
  - Academic staff (courses within programme)
  - Examination Officer (Clerk)
  - A Dean, Associate Dean or representative
Award Board

- Decision-making by consensus
  - Voting is by exception - all members entitled to vote
  - Chair has a deliberative vote and casting vote

- Considers requirements for award (Regulation A7 Awards)

- Confirms grades determined by Course Assessment Board
  - Adjust only in exceptional circumstances

- Considers recommendations of the MC Board in relation to final outcomes
  - Award outcome adjustments are justified and recorded

https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/docs/academic-registry/as-examboards-staff.pdf
## Decision Codes

### Part One: Progression Decision Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>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>
</tbody>
</table>

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

#### 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>32</td>
<td>Ordinary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>with distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Master of Engineering (MEng) [undergraduate]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Master of Biology (MBiol) [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>98</td>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma with merit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chair

- Head of Primary Academic Unit or approved nominee
- Must attend Examination Board training
- Recommended good practice:
  - Not the Programme Director
  - Independent from Discipline/Programme
- Full member with both a deliberative and casting vote
- Authority to suspend: Managing Suspended Examination Boards

https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/academic-registry/quality/qa/exam-guidelines.htm
External Examiner

- Recommendations for award of degree
- Full member of Board
- Same status as other members; not a ‘super member’
- Decisions are for the Board
- If unavoidably absent:
  - Submits written comments
  - Board must be attended by a Dean or Deans’ representative
- Chief External Examiner – moderation procedures

https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/academic-registry/quality/ga/external-examiners.htm
Dean / Deans’ Representative

- Attend all taught Award Boards (Regulation A5 Decision Making Boards)
- Observer (not a member)
  - Fair and consistent consideration of students
  - University and programme regulations
  - Provides guidance
- Authority to suspend
-Completes a post-board report

https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/academic-registry/quality/qa/exam-guidelines.htm
Clerk

- Member of the Academic Operations Support Team
- Works directly with the Chair of the Board to create the agenda and proceedings
- Prepares and provides paperwork for the Board of Examiners
- Records decisions and minutes relevant discussions
- Provides paperwork for approval of decisions by the Chair of the Board (or their nominee)
- Follow's up with Chair's Actions
Regulations, Policies, Procedures

- Suite of Examination Assessment Procedures
- Re-published annually
- Standard and thematic policies, procedures and guidance
  - Undergraduate and Postgraduate Assessment procedures
  - Decisions and Decision Codes
  - Guidelines on Discretionary Credits
  - Complying with SCQF
  - Borderline cases
  - Mitigating circumstances
  - Managing suspended Boards
- Regulation A10: Authorities in Exceptional Circumstances
- Academic Decision-Making 2022/23
- Policy on Mitigating the Impact of Industrial Action on Assessment, Progression and Award

https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/academic-registry/quality/qa/exam-guidelines.htm
https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/docs/learning-teaching/policies/industrialaction-policyassessment.pdf
Live Briefing Sessions

- Annual sessions (March/April)
- All participants of a Board:
  - Chairs
  - Deans / Deans’ Representatives
  - Clerks
  - Academic staff
- Current and key policies/procedures
- Real-life situations
- Academic Quality SharePoint:

  https://heriotwatt.sharepoint.com/sites/registry-qualityassurance/SitePages/Briefings-and-Inductions.aspx
Key Contacts

- **Iain Mackay**  Deans’ Admin Assistant

- **Dr Amanda Lyness**  Manager, Academic Operations and Deputy Head of Academic Operations

- **Helen Crosby-Knox**  Quality Assurance Manager and Deputy Head of Academic Quality

- **Prof Fiona Waldron**  Chair to UCQS/ORC

- **Deans of the University**  *(contactable via the Deans’ Admin Assistant)*