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Boards of Examiners for Taught Awards

Procedure statement

Boards of Examiners are the primary decision-making body to determine student progression, award and classification decisions for all students studying taught awards, ensuring that all decisions are in accordance with the University's regulations. This procedure outlines the approach the University will take to organise and deliver Boards of Examiners.

Who needs to know about the procedure

- Deans of School
- Deputy Deans of School
- Associate Deans of School
- School Leadership Teams
- Course Directors
- Module Leads
- All teaching Staff
- Professional Services Staff
- Assessment Management Team Staff
- Students
- Partners

Purpose of the procedure

To confirm the requirements for the operation of Boards of Examiners for Taught Awards to confer a student with an academic progression or award decision.

Contacts

The University's Assessment Management Team is responsible for:

- Providing advice and assistance
- Guidance and templates
- Providing training

The team can be contacted by emailing: assessments.management@canterbury.ac.uk.

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1. General Information

- 1.0. Boards of Examiners and associated procedures have an essential role in ensuring all awards meet the University's academic standards. No student may be awarded a University qualification or progress from one academic level / stage to the next without their achievement considered and approved by a Board of Examiners.
- 1.1. All Boards of Examiners will ensure that the assessment process is operated in a fair and reliable manner, making use of agreed assessment criteria and in line with the University's Regulations and appropriate policies and procedures.
- 1.2. The procedure set out in this document applies to all taught awards and to the taught stage of a research degree.
- 1.3. The University operates a formal two stage process overseen by the Progression and Award Board of Examiners. The two formal stages include a Module Ratification Process (MRP) and a Progression and Award Board.

2. Membership of Progression and Award Boards of Examiners

- 2.0. Each Board of Examiners must have the following membership:
 - Chair
 - External Examiner
 - an academic representative from each School where any courses are under consideration by the Board to present the students for consideration
 - A representative from the Assessment Management Team to advise on University Regulations, Policy and Procedures
 - A Board secretary.
- 2.1. Membership of the Board of Examiners is limited to:
 - Those academic or professional services staff with a permanent, fixed or fractional contract;
 - Those who are able to participate as affiliate examiners;
 - Approved External Examiners;
 - Representatives from partner organisations;
 - Relevant professional services staff.
- 2.2. No-one may be a member of a Board of Examiners if they are registered as a student on any course being considered by that Board of Examiners.
- 2.3. All members of the Board of Examiners must be mindful of all appropriate University Regulations and/or University Procedures related to the progression and award of students.

3. Progression and Award Boards

- 3.0. All courses will be allocated to a Progression and Award Board of Examiners which will meet, as set out in the appropriate University Calendar, to consider the progression and/or award of students. Boards of Examiners will be held to consider courses with exemption from the University's main Academic Calendars at other times, as appropriate to the structure of the course.
- 3.1. For courses with more than one year's duration, a Board of Examiners will be convened formally at least once a year to make decisions about student progression (or continuation) and to provide an adequate opportunity for the External Examiner to confirm that the student academic performance is judged appropriately and fairly.
- 3.2. A Board of Examiners will be convened formally for cohorts of students at the stage of completing their course of study to make award decisions and to provide an adequate opportunity for the External Examiner to confirm that the University's qualifications are of a suitable standard and the student academic performance is judged appropriately and fairly.
- 3.3. A Board of Examiners will convene to consider student outcomes for reassessment and deferrals.
- 3.4. The Assessment Management Team are responsible for the organisation and scheduling of all Progression and Award Boards.
- 3.5. Progression and Award Boards will be presented with student profiles that have been confirmed as accurate and complete by the academic School, through Profile Review Meetings, in advance of the Board. This is to enable efficient and effective consideration of profiles by the Board, ensuring discussion of individual student outcomes is only required by exception.
- 3.6. Acting within the framework of the relevant Regulations, the key responsibilities of the Progression and Award Boards are to:
 - 3.6.0 Consider, the overall profile of marks for each student and recommend students for awards or make recommendations for a course of action in the case of failure;
 - 3.6.1 Make recommendations about students, not in their final year, regarding progression or make recommendations for a course of action in the case of a student who cannot continue;
 - 3.6.2 Confirm the outcomes for students within the borderline zone as per the regulations.
 - 3.6.3 Consider any issues referred to the Board through the Module Ratification Process.
 - 3.6.4 Confirm that the assessment processes have operated in a fair and reliable manner, making use of agreed degree classification criteria and in line with the University's Regulations and assessment procedures;
 - 3.6.5 Assure the appropriate standards for the awards;

3.6.6 Progression and Award Boards do not have the authority to change assessment and module marks previously confirmed by the Module Ratification Process prior to the Board. The Progression and Award Board will confirm any changes made to assessment marks through the application of the Scaling of Marks policy. In exceptional situations, should accepted evidence be provided to the Board of a process failure, the Chair may agree to a mark change in consultation with the Assessment Management Team.

3.7. The Board may determine that a student profile be removed from consideration to allow for further checks into the accuracy of marks and for corrections to be undertaken, before the student can be considered by a Board for an outcome.

4. Chair of the Progression and Award Board of Examiners

4.0. The Chair of a Board of Examiners will normally be the Dean of School, Deputy Dean of School, Associate Dean of School- Education, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic Registrar, Dean of Education & Student Success, or nominee.

4.1. The Chair of the Board of Examiners must not be involved in a way which constitutes a conflict of interest. Where there has been any direct involvement with a course, such as being a Course Director or having taught or assessed students on this course or having a personal relationship with any of the students, the Chair must declare the conflict of interest. Where students on the relevant course are being discussed, the Chair must relinquish that role to another senior staff member in attendance for the portion of the meeting of the Board that is considering the relevant students. Where the role is relinquished to another senior staff member in attendance, this staff member must also have not been involved in any way which constitutes a conflict of interest.

4.2. In the case of provision taught at or in collaboration with a partner, no person who has any personal or private connections with the partner organisation may Chair the Board of Examiners.

4.3. The Chair of the Board of Examiners will ensure that:

4.3.0 The proceedings of the Board are conducted in a fair and impartial manner, with all due diligence;

4.3.1 The Board of Examiners follows all regulations including all Additional Course Regulations;

4.3.2 The Board is quorate, with sufficient attendees to ensure that we have sufficient membership to enable the board to operate fairly and a minimum of one academic representative in attendance;

4.3.3 Where an academic representative is unable to attend the Board that approval has been provided in advance of the meeting to enable the board to proceed with the profiles presented should the Chair of the Board determine that the absence of an academic representative will not make a material difference to the deliberations of the Board;

- 4.3.4 A decision is confirmed for all students presented on the profiles provided by the Assessment Management Team unless the Board determines a profile is removed from consideration by the Board;
 - 4.3.5 No anecdotal information that is irrelevant to the decision-making of the Board is raised in discussion;
 - 4.3.6 A clear record is kept of consideration of any evidence, together with the reason why the evidence was treated in a particular way, with all decisions of the Board properly recorded;
 - 4.3.7 Due process is followed in the case of posthumous or aegrotat award or where Academic Board is asked to exercise its discretion for the recommending of an award “notwithstanding the Regulations”
- 4.4. To conclude the operation of the Board, the Chair will verbally confirm their agreement of the student profiles and ensure that the External Examiner has endorsed the outcomes of the Board of Examiners before results can be issued to students.

5. Declarations of Interest

- 5.0. The Chair will ask members of a Progression and Award Board of Examiners to declare any conflicts of interest in the proceedings. Examples of interest include:
- 5.0.0 Any relationship with a student, or a close relative of a student, being considered;
 - 5.0.1 Any individual contract with a partner institution or sponsoring body for the course;
 - 5.0.2 Any outside involvement that might be construed as a conflict of interest.
- 5.1. It is the responsibility of all members of a Board of Examiners to declare any conflict of interest they may have in the proceedings, in line with the above at the start of the meeting. Where a conflict of interest is declared, the Chair of the Board of Examiners will decide whether the member should be excluded from any part of or all of the meeting and whether the business of the meeting or the agenda should be amended.
- 5.2. A note of any declaration and the actions taken should be included in the record of the meeting.

6. The role of Assessment Management Team representatives

- 6.0. Each Board of Examiners will be attended by a member of the Assessment Management Team who will:
- 6.0.0 Advise the Chair on issues relating to the business of the Board, in advance of the meeting;
 - 6.0.1 Advise the Board on the application of University Regulations.

7. The role of the secretary

- 7.0. The Secretary of each Board of Examiners will be identified by the Assessment Management Team.
- 7.1. It is the role of the Secretary to:
 - 7.1.0 Ensure that a record of decisions is taken in a suitable manner for each student under consideration;
 - 7.1.1 Produce an accurate record of the meeting and circulate to the Board members after the Board;
 - 7.1.2 Undertake administrative duties in respect to Board of Examiner meetings.

8. Attendance of academic representatives

- 8.0. Where it is not possible for an alternative academic representative to be identified, the Chair of the Progression and Award Board of Examiners will determine whether the absence of the academic representative will make a material difference to the deliberations of the Board. If, in the view of the Chair, the absence of the academic representative will make a material difference to the deliberations of the Board, the course will be removed from consideration by the Board. The Chair of the Board, in conjunction with the representative from the Assessment Management Team, will determine what steps will be taken to ensure that due process is followed.

9. Attendance of External Examiners at Progression and Award Boards

- 9.0. All External Examiners are full members of the Board of Examiners and their involvement is crucial to the Board process. It is expected that there will be an External Examiner at each meeting of the Board of Examiners, except where a Board is only considering student reassessment or where the Board has delegated responsibility to confirm student outcomes from the appropriate Progression and Award Board.
- 9.1. No meeting of the Board of Examiners that considers student progression or award outcomes shall take place in the absence of an External Examiner, unless the Academic Registrar authorises the meeting to proceed as scheduled, in which case a report outlining these instances will be submitted to Academic Board.

10. Chair's Action

- 10.0. The Progression and Award Board of Examiners will delegate authority to the Chair to take Chair's Action outside the meeting where:
 - 10.1. This has been authorised by the Board of Examiners;

- 10.1.0 Information is provided verbally to the Board by a member of the Board, that requires further confirmation, to allow a decision after the meeting;
- 10.1.1 Accuracy of the presented information requires confirmation prior to confirming an approved outcome;
- 10.1.2 Following the meeting it is determined that a factual error requires correction or that there are circumstances that were not known to the Board of Examiners;
- 10.1.3 A student has been missed for consideration by their scheduled Board of Examiners;
- 10.1.4 A student has submitted an upheld appeal;
- 10.1.5 It has been identified that there is an urgent need to confirm a student outcome before a Board of Examiners meeting is scheduled to convene.
- 10.2. In these circumstances the student may be referred for consideration by another Progression and Award Board of Examiners meeting or the Chair may authorise appropriate action to resolve the matter through Chairs Action.

11. Board Documentation for Progression and Award Boards

- 11.0. The following arrangements pertain to Board Meeting Papers:
 - 11.0.0 All documentation will be provided to the Board of Examiners in electronic format only;
 - 11.0.1 A record shall be available of all Chair's Actions;
 - 11.0.2 Where available, reports should be provided to the Board with updated statistical data regarding achievement or award;
 - 11.0.3 Where required, documentation that confirms successful completion of any additional Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) or End Point Assessment (EPA) requirements.
- 11.1. It will be the role of the secretary to ensure that a full set of documentation which forms the record for each Board of Examiners shall be produced within a reasonable timeframe and stored as per the Assessment Management Team operational guidance. This documentation serves to:
 - 11.1.0 Provide evidence that meetings were conducted in line with the University's Regulations, and attended to all necessary business;
 - 11.1.1 Record clearly the decisions taken and where appropriate the reasoning for those decisions;

11.1.2 Report actions recommended for the future and issues course teams or others are to address;

11.1.3 Enable review and audit of Board of Examiner decisions.

11.2. The core documentation forming the record of the meeting will be:

11.2.0 The agenda

11.2.1 The student profiles

11.2.2 Records of Registrant or End Point Assessment (EPA) or Independent Assessor confirmation where required

11.2.3 Minutes of the meeting, including a record of the comments from the External Examiner.

11.3. The minutes must not:

11.3.0 Name individual members of the Board either by title or role, except where it is necessary to refer to the Chair or to the External Examiner;

11.3.1 Record the views of individual Board members, or any generic comments, other than is necessary to demonstrate due process, and record the reasoning behind a decision;

11.3.2 Name individual students, except where necessary and in these instances only refer to the Student ID number or reference any individual student personal circumstances;

11.4. The Chair of the Board of Examiners will confirm, within a reasonable timeframe of the Board, that the documentation provides a fair and accurate record of the meeting.

11.5. The Assessment Management Team will ensure that all records are kept securely in electronic format and these are made available on request, in line with University's Document Retention Policy.

12. Module Ratification

12.0. The Module Ratification Process (MRP) will act to ratify student assessment and module outcomes through a confirmation of the accuracy of marks process.

12.1. The Module Ratification Process will involve the relevant:

12.1.0 Head of Subject or nominee (acting as Chair)

12.1.1 Module Leader

12.1.2 Course Director

12.1.3 Representative from the Assessment Management Team

12.1.4 External Examiner.

12.2. The Module Ratification Process (MRP) will confirm

12.2.0 All assessment marks are entered correctly;

12.2.1 Module marks calculated correctly;

12.2.2 Missing marks have a reason indicated and an expected date is known;

12.2.3 The Module Leader has confirmed that the profile is correct;

12.2.4 That appropriate assessment samples have been shared with a Module External Examiner.

12.3. Should the Course Director or Module Leader be unable to confirm that the work sample has been shared with a Module External Examiner, a meeting will be convened to investigate the issue prior to any data being shared with the Module External Examiner.

12.4. Where Module Profiles are confirmed and there are no complex cases which need additional consideration, the Assessment Management Team will notify the External Examiner, sharing the Module Profiles and providing the External Examiner the opportunity to raise specific concerns via a Module External Examiner Exception form.

12.5. The Module External Examiner Exception Form should be used to alert the Course Team to any issues identified by the External Examiner in the marking and moderation of the module or any potential misapplication of University Regulations or Procedures.

12.6. An Extraordinary meeting of the relevant members of the Module Ratification Process including the Chair, a representative from the Course Team, a representative from the Assessment Management Team and normally the External Examiner will be required before Ratification where there are complex cases which need further consideration, for example:

12.6.0 The External Examiner raises concerns via a Module External Examiner Exception Form;

12.6.1 There are special or complex individual cases;

12.6.2 Any specific administrative issues which impact on a whole cohort.

12.7. Where the Module External Examiner has raised any issues through the Module External Examiner Exception Report Form process an appropriate academic staff member will be identified by the School to investigate the issues raised. Where appropriate the Module External Examiner will be asked to provide further details.

12.8. Where a Module External Examiner is unable to attend a meeting to consider a complex case but has provided input via other means then the External Examiner will be provided information about the issues raised and the outcomes from the appropriate investigations.

- 12.9. A formal record will be kept of the Extraordinary Module Ratification Meeting, including final decisions and the reasons in support of those decisions. The formal record will be shared with all MRP panel members.
- 12.10. Following the MRP, Ratified module outcomes will be formally released to students, and where appropriate, will confirm reassessment or deferred assessment opportunities.

13. Profile Review Meetings

- 13.0. A Profile Review Meeting (PRM) will be held normally prior to each Progression and Award Board to:
 - 13.0.0 Ensure all students have full and accurate mark profiles and identify any appropriate actions to resolve data discrepancies prior to the Progression and Award Board;
 - 13.0.1 In the case of any incomplete student mark profiles which cannot be resolved prior to the Progression and Award Board, required actions and timelines will be confirmed including any decision required regarding the allocation of students to alternative Boards of Examiners;
 - 13.0.2 Confirm the accuracy of provisional outcomes in accordance with appropriate University regulations.
- 13.1. One additional Profile Review Meeting will be held during the academic year (usually halfway through the year) to maintain oversight of student progress and assessment profiles. Profile Review Meetings may take place more than twice a year where appropriate.
- 13.2. The attendees of the Profile Review Meeting should normally be
 - 13.2.0 Course Director
 - 13.2.1 Relevant Course team members
 - 13.2.2 A representative from the Assessment Management Team.

14. Action following an appeal

- 14.0. Where an Academic Appeal is upheld and this requires a change to a previously approved decision of a Board of Examiners, the Board must confirm a new, appropriate outcome as a result of the appeal decision either through a meeting of the Board or through Chairs Action as appropriate, ensuring the appeal is considered in a timely manner.
- 14.1. A record will be kept of new outcomes agreed by the Board as a result of the upheld appeal outcome and all actions taken in respect of an upheld Academic Appeal.

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