

# Boards of Examiners requirements

## 1. The role of the Board of Examiners

- 1.1. Boards of Examiners have delegated powers from Academic Board for the determination of academic awards to students, and for decisions about the progression of students.
- 1.2. It is the duty of board members to uphold the confidentiality of all of its meetings.

## 2. Membership

- 2.1. A Board of Examiners should comprise:
  - a chair (normally a senior academic member of the School, for example a Head of Department);
  - a secretary;
  - the course leader (collaborative academic lead for a collaborative partner);
  - module leaders (or their representatives);
  - the external examiner(s);
  - the Academic Liaison Tutor for courses operating under a Validation Service agreement.
- 2.2. A progression board may be chaired by a member of academic staff below Head of Department level with appropriate experience, expertise and independence, and appointed by the Executive Dean. An external examiner is not required to attend.
- 2.3. An external examiner who is unable to be present at a board meeting should subsequently indicate by written notification, via the course leader, their involvement in the assessment process and their agreement to the decisions made at the board. An external examiner need not attend progression boards and referral boards. In the latter case they should be involved in the process.
- 2.4. All members must uphold the confidentiality of all meetings of the board.
- 2.5. A member of the board is required to declare any personal interest, involvement or relationship with a student being assessed. This includes where courses are delivered in collaboration or partnership where members may have a line management relationship with a student being considered.

- 2.6. A student cannot be a member of a board or attend a meeting other than as a candidate for assessment (i.e. where a viva voce is held).
- 2.7. A board should meet:
  - a. at the key stages in order to determine student progress or awards;
  - b. to consider referrals;
  - c. to consider - as required - any case of student progress that is giving cause for concern and is likely to lead to the termination of a student's study on the course (in these circumstances it will be the responsibility of the course leader, or equivalent person, to notify the Academic Registrar or his/her nominee of the need to convene such a meeting);
  - d. when required by Academic Board to reconsider any recommendation regarding student assessment.

### **3. Terms of reference**

- 3.1. The terms of reference for a Board of Examiners are as follows:
  - a. To confirm that the student assessments have been conducted in accordance with the appropriate Common Assessment Regulations (and any special validated dispensations).
  - b. To ensure that appropriate moderation arrangements are in place and have been used in the setting and marking of assessment tasks.
  - c. To receive and consider agreed grades and all other information pertinent to student assessment and to make decisions on the progress of or the conferment of the award on each student accordingly.
  - d. To exercise academic judgment upon individual matters concerning student assessment arising.
  - e. To act on extenuating circumstances and/or academic irregularities, and – in rare situations – academic appeals.
  - f. To confirm the procedures to be followed in notifying students of its decisions.
  - g. To consider any special issues concerning student assessment brought to its attention by an external examiner or member of the board.
  - h. To consider any matter referred to it by the Academic Board.
- 3.2. It is the responsibility of key members of the board to ensure that board decisions are recorded accurately, and communicated to students as soon as possible.

### **4. Types of board**

- 4.1. Boards normally meet shortly after the end of the academic year, with a referral board in September (for full-time courses following the conventional academic year).

### **Award Boards**

- 4.2. Award Boards determine overall results and agree award classifications where appropriate. Award Boards may be responsible for just one course or a group of related courses.

### **Subject Boards**

- 4.3. In the case of some courses, a two-tier board structure may be adopted, comprising a Subject Board and an Award Board. A Subject Board has responsibility for approving grades of modules in that subject. The Subject Board should not make judgements about an individual's overall progression and award; this is a matter for the Award Board.
- 4.4. Where Subject Boards take place, it is essential that the subject leader is present for the whole of the associated Award Board. There should also be representation from within the team of the Subject Board's external examiners present at the Award Board.

### **Progression Boards**

- 4.5. Progression Boards confirm results at levels and stages that do not constitute the final award stage, e.g. Level 4 on a Foundation Degree, Levels 4 and 5 on an Honours Degree and often, but not in every case, at stages on a master's course. Such boards also determine whether, and on what basis, a student should progress to the next level / stage.
- 4.6. It is not necessary for an external examiner to be present at a Progression Board. If such a board makes a recommendation for an interim award (e.g. CertHE, DipHE or Higher Certificate) the external examiner need not be consulted unless the course leader and external examiner agree that this is necessary – this should be agreed at the beginning of the academic year when the scope of the involvement of the external examiner in the moderation of the course is agreed. The external examiner will, however, need to sign the conferment statement if an award is made. On staged master's courses, where the Postgraduate Certificate / Diploma are routinely awarded it is expected that the external examiner will be involved in the decisions taken.

### **Explanatory note**

- All phase one assessment results (including referral results) for Professional Doctorates are considered and agreed by a School Research Degrees Committee.

### **Half-year Boards**

- 4.7. A board (or sub-group of it) may be held following first half-year assessments to consider the performance of students and make provisional decisions about individual students – these are a form of Progression Board and do not require the attendance of the external examiner. The purpose of these boards is to facilitate some feedback to the students on their progress thus far and to allow non-final year students, who have marginal failures, possibly to make good their deficiencies before the end of the year.

- 4.8. Such boards should be conscious not to overload students with referred work during the second half of the year and it is recommended that most referrals be undertaken in August / September.
- 4.9. It should be stressed that decisions made by these boards are provisional and have to be ratified by the full Board of Examiners at the end of the year.
- 4.10. Decisions to terminate a student's study can only be taken by an end of stage Board of Examiners.

### **Referral Boards**

- 4.11. The Referral Board is responsible for the referred or deferred assessment of students. The board may delegate that responsibility to a smaller Referral Board, which must involve at least one external examiner in the process but not necessarily through attendance.

### **Module Assessment Panels**

- 4.12. Module Assessment Panels are held regularly to make decisions about student progression between modules that are delivered sequentially on a block delivery model.
- 4.13. A Module Assessment Panel (MAP) meets (following moderation) to make recommendations about whether students who fail a module should be allowed to undertake remedial work and / or referred work alongside their next module(s).
- 4.14. In reaching its recommendation, the MAP should take into account the number and extent of the module failure(s) and the student's profile so far.
- 4.15. The MAP membership comprises:
  - a. the course leader;
  - b. module leaders;
  - c. a secretary.
- 4.16. All MAP recommendations are subject to ratification by the chair of the Board of Examiners.
- 4.17. Where a student's performance and / or commitment is giving concern, the MAP may defer a decision until the next Board of Examiners meeting.

### **Explanatory notes**

- The frequency of MAP meetings will depend on the requirements for the course and module structure. They may meet after every module and should not wait for more than two modules to complete before meeting.
- The MAP will decide the student referral period taking into consideration the course assessment and feedback plan so not to overload the student.

## **5. Chair**

- 5.1. It is the duty of the chair to ensure that:

- a. attendance at the meeting enables the board to fulfil its terms of reference and is quorate (the majority of members are in attendance). Where this is not the case it is the chair's responsibility to determine a course of action.
- b. Board members have all the information necessary for them to exercise a judgement, including student results and the outcome of the consideration of exceptional circumstances and/or academic irregularities.
- c. assessments have been conducted in accordance with the appropriate Common Assessment Regulations (and any special validated dispensations);
- d. the board takes into account all information pertinent to student assessment and that the board's decisions in respect of progression and the conferment of the award result from informed and impartial academic judgement;
- e. proper procedures are in place to notify all students of the board's decisions and that – in cases of student referral or failure – immediate and appropriate actions are taken to notify students of the decisions;
- f. together with the external examiner, sign the conferment statement or annotated results sheet;
- g. grades and award recommendations as confirmed by the board are prepared and checked in close collaboration with the minute-secretary;
- h. following the board that the minutes are checked and approved as a true record of the proceedings;
- i. feedback is provided to School Executive in accordance with School procedures on any issues arising from the board to inform the monitoring and enhancement of practices and processes associated with the work of boards.

## 6. Course leader

- 6.1. The course leader is responsible for ensuring that:
  - a. assessment activities are planned, including the dates of board meetings and the moderation procedures, and this is agreed with the external examiner;
  - b. the membership of the board is agreed annually with the chair, and that the membership list is accurately maintained for the course and that the external examiner appointment(s) is valid to cover the appropriate assessments;
  - c. the business of the board is well defined and appropriate agendas are prepared (in conjunction with the chair and secretary);
  - d. all information necessary for the board to fulfil its duties has been collated, scrutinised and agreed before the meeting and that copies of this information are available to all members;
  - e. the final decisions are accurately recorded and the board's decisions are carried out efficiently and effectively.

## 7. Secretary

- 7.1. The secretary will be expected to:

- a. make all the administrative arrangements for the effective operation of the board, e.g. the notification of dates and times, room booking, the circulation of papers;
- b. record all decisions accurately;
- c. ensure all the necessary administrative actions are carried out following the meeting.

<b>Policy owner</b>
CADQ

<b>Change history</b>			
<i>Version:</i>	<i>Approval date:</i>	<i>Implementation date:</i>	<i>Nature of significant revisions:</i>
Sept 2016	30.09.16	01.10.16	Updated reference to 'extenuating circumstances' Inclusion of requirement that BoE is quorate
Sept 2017	12.09.17	01.10.17	Inclusion of section 4 – Types of Boards Clarification of what constitutes 'personal interest' (2.5)
Sept 2018	12.09.18	01.10.18	None
Sept 2019	11.09.19	01.10.19	None
Sept 2020	16.09.20	01.10.20	Inclusion of module assessment panels Updated reference to SRDC governance of phase one assessment results for ProfD courses
Sept 2020	13.05.21	13.05.21	Correction to para 4.6 so that it aligns with BoE guidance (QHS 15E, paragraph 23)
Sept 2021	07.09.21	01.10.21	None

<b>Equality Analysis</b>		
<i>Version:</i>	<i>EA date:</i>	<i>Completed by:</i>
Sept 2016	12.09.16	CADQ