

# SENATE REGULATION 4: Assessment of Students on Taught Programmes

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### Students with Additional Needs

19. Students shall normally notify an authorised member of staff in good time and in writing, normally five weeks prior to the assessment, of any disabilities that may require reasonable adjustments to be made for the conduct of any assessment. The advice of a professionally qualified assessor and the University's Disability and Dyslexia Service should be sought where appropriate. The Department should then notify Academic Services so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

20. The arrangements to be made in light of information submitted by students in this manner shall be considered by an authorised member of staff on behalf of the relevant Panels and Boards of Examiners. The nature of the assessment task should be taken into account when determining the arrangements to be made for an individual student.

### Grading/Marking/Moderation of Work

21. Assessors shall assign either provisional marks or grades to student work in accordance with Department/Division policy, that are aligned with the standards set out in the relevant University Grade Descriptors, and the assessment criteria.

22. Heads of Departments are responsible for ensuring that all Assessors are fully informed of relevant grading/marketing criteria and standards when assessing or internally moderating work, and that appropriate reference is made to generic or specific criteria.

23. All assessed work on all taught degree programmes shall be internally moderated or blind double-marked in accordance with the Policy for Internal Moderation and Double-Marking. Departments should maintain full records of the moderation and double-marking process and outcomes and provide these to the External Examiners.

### Feedback to students

24. Provisional grades shall be released to students once the process for internal moderation or blind-double assessment has been concluded. The College Education Manager/Head of Department is responsible for ensuring that provisional grades are released to students in a timely manner. Students shall be advised that such provisional grades are subject to moderation and ratification by Panels of Examiners and as such may change before they are confirmed.

25. Feedback on all assessed coursework shall be provided to students, in accordance with the University guidelines. Oral feedback shall be provided to students on all formal written examinations on request.

## SECTION B: EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

This section should be read in conjunction with the detailed guidance issued to students (Extenuating Circumstances – Guidance for Students) and staff (Extenuating Circumstances – Guidance for EC Panels and Boards of Examiners). For coursework extensions, please see the Coursework Submission Policy. For guidance in relation to Brunel Medical School, please see equivalent BMS documents.

26. An 'extenuating circumstance' is a significant event which negatively affects a student's ability to submit work, attend an assessment or perform to their usual standard in an assessment of any type. It should be unavoidable, unexpected and beyond the control of the student. Actions taken in response to



the document concerned. The provision of non-authentic documents by students may be subject to action under Senate Regulation 6.

35. Students whose extenuating circumstances are private and sensitive, are encouraged to discuss their situation with the Chair of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel, in confidence, who will advise on the appropriate course of action.

36. Students should be advised that reluctance to provide supporting evidence in a timely manner, or the inability of the University to verify the authenticity of documents submitted, may mean that the Extenuating Circumstances Panel has insufficient information either to accept extenuating circumstances or judge fully their severity.

#### Procedures of Boards of Examiners relating to Extenuating Circumstances

37. Full consideration shall be given to reports on accepted extenuating circumstances referred by an Extenuating Circumstances Panel at the meeting of the relevant Board of Examiners. Where a student's performance was affected in a range of subjects, the Board of Examiners for the award is also responsible for ensuring that due account has been taken of the student's situation overall in determining any decision on progression or recommendation for an award.

38. The anonymised report of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel relating to each accepted instance of extenuating circumstances shall be available to the Board. Full details of all student submissions concerning extenuating circumstances shall be available to the Chair and the External Examiner(s) in attendance at the meeting of the Board.

39. The existence of extenuating circumstances for a student must be clearly shown on the grade/mark sheet presented to the Board (for example by the letters EC). Instances of extenuating circumstances at all previous Levels of study leading to the award must also be indicated to the Board of Examiners when making recommendations for an award.

For students studying under SR3 (2006-2012) and SR3 (2013 onwards) only (4.40 to 4.42)

40. The Board of Examiners may determine to take any of the following actions in respect of accepted extenuating circumstances:

- a) Where a student has failed one or more affected assessments, the Board may set aside any grade/mark already assigned, and allow the student a new attempt in the relevant assessment(s) according to an appropriate schedule to be determined by the Board. If the assessment(s) affected was a first attempt, the student will be eligible for an uncapped grade or mark in the affected block;
- b) Where a student has failed the affected assessment(s), the Board may determine to waive the affected assessment(s), but only if the programme learning outcomes have been met through the student's other assessments;
- c) Where a student has passed the affected assessment(s), the Board should note the ECs and at the final Board where the student's award is considered, the ECs should be taken into consideration when determining the classification of the final award, and if appropriate, use SR4.41 to agree an increased classification; +

- d) Exceptionally, where a student has passed the affected assessment(s) and the Board has determined that there has been a significant impact of the ECs, the Board may set aside any grade/mark already assigned and allow the student a new attempt in the relevant assessment(s) according to an appropriate schedule to be determined by the Board. If the assessment(s) affected was a first attempt, the student will be eligible for an uncapped grade or mark in the affected block; +
- e) Exceptionally, the Board may assign grades to elements of assessment where extenuating circumstances have been accepted. Guidance on arriving at an appropriate grade is provided. Grades will not normally be assigned in this manner unless there are result(s) available in at least one other element of assessment in the same assessment block to guide the Board, and only if the programme learning outcomes have been met through the student's other assessments. Grades will not normally be assigned by Boards in this manner in assessment blocks totalling more than one third of the credits at any given Level;
- f) Where a student is discontinuing with a programme and neither a new attempt nor the assigning of a grade is appropriate or possible, the Board may assign a grade P in element(s) of assessment in order to enable a student to achieve an aegrotat award of a CertHE, DipHE, PGCert or PGDip, or an unclassified degree award. Proceeding in this manner should reflect the judgement of the examiners that, on the basis of the evidence available to them, the student would have achieved at least a threshold standard in the relevant elements of assessment had these not been affected by extenuating circumstances. Credit assigned a P grade will normally not be recognised by the University as part of an application for admission with accreditation of prior learning. Aegrotat awards shall be clearly presented as such and will not be assigned a classification where this is normally available.

41. Where a Board considers that, in the light of the extenuating circumstances, the constraints set out in this Regulation are not appropriate, the Board should present its recommendations to the Chair of the University Education Committee for consideration and approval on behalf of Senate.

42. Grades assigned due to extenuating circumstances or credits assigned to enable an aegrotat pass shall be indicated as such in student transcripts.

## SECTION C: PANELS AND BOARDS

45. All papers giving grades/marks or recommendations or other information about a student's performance shall remain confidential, unless the Chair authorises otherwise, and shall be returned at the end of the meeting. All papers from Award Boards shall be stored centrally by the Awards team on behalf of Senate.
46. A record of the decisions and/or recommendations of a Panel or Board of Examiners shall be made by the Chair or his/her nominee.
47. A meeting of a Panel or Board shall be adjourned if it is established that the members present at the meeting collectively do not have sufficient expertise to enable the Panel or Board to discharge all of its duties, as set out in these Regulations. All such adjournments shall be reported to the Academic Registrar (or equivalent officer) by the Chair of the Panel or Board.
48. Where none of the External Examiners appointed for a subject or programme is able to attend a scheduled meeting of a Panel or Board, the Chair may allow the meeting to proceed, provided that full moderation of the assessments by the External Examiner(s) has taken place and any formal approval required by an External Examiner is to be obtained.
49. Where an External Examiner is unable to be present at a meeting of a Panel or Board he/she is required to submit written



- d) submitting to the appropriate Board(s) of Examiners confirmed grades/marks for each student in each modular/assessment block, together with such other information, as the Board(s) may require by the due date.

54. A Panel of Examiners shall not confirm grades/marks for modular/assessment blocks until it is satisfied with the integrity and fairness of the assessment(s) leading to the grades/marks. Where the Panel of Examiners has insufficient confidence in the integrity and fairness of the outcomes of an assessment, it shall take appropriate action in order to achieve sufficient confidence. The Panel of Examiners may require the reconsideration by assessors of the grades/marks for the complete cohort of students taking an assessment. Only in very exceptional circumstances may the Panel scale grades/marks for a particular assessment and must then record the justification and rationale for the adjustment. Grades/marks for an individual student may not be adjusted, unless they have been wrongly recorded or additional information is presented.

55. The Chair of the appropriate Panel(s) of Examiners shall be responsible for publishing the schedule for the release of grades/marks to each appropriate Board of Examiners and for presenting all recommended grades/marks and other paperwork, and an account of the proceedings of the Panel which shall indicate how and whether special circumstances were taken into account by the Panel in relation to particular students or particular assessments. The Chair is also responsible for ensuring that an appropriate record of the proceedings is promptly placed on file.

#### Boards of Examiners

56. A Board of Examiners shall be constituted by the Vice-Provost and Dean of College for a programme or groups of programmes leading to awards of the University to consider the status and confirmed grades of students, actions to be taken in respect of ac ted

- x not adjust the grade/mark assigned to any student by a Panel of Examiners, except for assigning grades in the case of accepted extenuating circumstances under Regulation 4.41 or 4.45 above;
- x defer making a progression decision or award recommendation if it has insufficient evidence about a student's performance available to it.

61. The Chair shall ensure that the proceedings of a Board of Examiners are carried out in accordance with Senate Regulations and the approved programme specification. The Chair will report to Quality Assurance in any case where irregularities occurred in the Board's procedures and which were not remedied at the time, or where the External Examiner was absent, or where one or more External Examiners expressed dissatisfaction<sup>6</sup> (he a)10.5 (ppr

68. An External Examiner shall normally be



- i) the schedule of examinations and other assessments, meetings and dates when work will be sent out for the first year;
- j) copies of the appropriate sections of the University regulations and associated policies.

Role and responsibilities

79. The roles, powers and responsibilities of an External Examiner shall be as specified by Senate from time to time.

80. The role of the External Examiner(s) is to provide informative comment and recommendations whether:

- a) An institution is maintaining the threshold academic standards set for its awards in accordance with the frameworks for higher education qualifications, applicable subject benchmark statements and relevant professional and statutory bodies;
- b) The assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the programme(s) and is conducted in line with the institution's policies and regulations;
- c) The academic standards and the achievements of students are comparable with those in other UK higher education institutions of which the external

examination standards are used.

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93. The responsibilities of an External Examiner at a meeting of a Board of Examiners are to:

- a) fully participate in discharging the responsibilities of the Board as set out in 4.61;
- b) comment and give advice on the structure, content and assessments of programmes as they deem appropriate;
- c) comment on the overall conduct of the assessment process, the performance of candidates and matters relating to the programme as a whole.

94. External Examiners do not have the power to raise or lower individual or group marks/grades. They should however, raise any concerns regarding the integrity or fairness of the assessment process and/or outcomes, and make any recommendations to, the Panel or Board of Examiners as appropriate.

95. Each External Examiner present at a meeting of a Board of Examiners shall report to the Board, as per the University's External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy.

96. Where an External Examiner has serious concerns about the decisions of a Panel or Board, he or she should make the reasons for concern clear to the Chair and write to the Vice-Chancellor.

97. Departments are expected to provide External Examiners with opportunities for meetings with staff. External Examiners have the right to meet groups of students by request.

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APPENDIX A: MBBS Programme

A1. As noted throughout this Regulation, paragraphs identified with a +