

Conduct of Undergraduate Exam Boards in the context of a marking and assessment boycott

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This guidance has been produced to help those conducting exam boards deal with issues raised in relation to the marking and assessment boycott. It is intended to support Chairs of Boards of Examiners in the conduct of boards and to deal with the main anticipated concerns that might be expressed.

Further guidance on general principles on the role of examiners and the function of exam boards is set out in Part 18 of the [Guide to Assessment](#).

1. Departmental/School Exam Board (or Module Board) - approval of module marks

The purpose of this board is to finalise and approve module marks following processes of moderation and after an external examiner has had an opportunity to review marks completed.

1.1 Adjustments to assessment processes due to the marking and assessment boycott that have been put in place in line with the guidance issued by the University, , and the revised progression and award rules approved by the University Board of Examiners, do not have to be approved by the Departmental/School Board..

1.2 Any concerns about the impact of marking and assessment boycotts adjustments on marking or moderation practices and academic standards, whether they are expressed by external examiner or internal examiner (i.e. member of university staff), should be minuted.

1.3 The Board's discussion of module outcomes should rather relate to identifiable concerns about actual grades or distributions of marks. Where such "standard" concerns are deemed to be valid after any such discussion, adjustments to the grades should be agreed following the usual process.

1.4 Please ensure that all observations by external examiners are included in their written reports. *Approval* of module marks by external examiners is not required: they make recommendations about mark adjustments and provide feedback on processes conducted rather than validate marks.

2. Programme Exam Board (or Ratification Panel) - approval of progression and awards

2.1 The purpose of this board is to ensure that module outcomes have been correctly entered in SITS. There should not be any discussion of the validity of marks awarded, as that is the business of the Module Board.

2.2 If there are copies of the mark profiles available to those in attendance (on paper or virtually), the Board should focus on students whose situation needs discussion. Although approval should relate to all students in each cohort, this does not require detailed consideration of every student on every list.

2.3 The Board should be conducted efficiently (i.e. by focussing time and scrutiny on more complicated outcomes and situations) and all members in attendance can be expected to support the Chair and other relevant members of staff in doing so. The Chair might, for example, identify a range of students (e.g. 'students in rows 1-37') whose situation is not complicated and deal with them briefly and as a group rather than looking at each individually so as to focus attention on cases that are particularly in need of discussion.

2.4 The primary aim is to ensure that students who may be in need of particular support or information will get it and that no mistakes have been made in relation to any particular situation. To this end, the Board should assume that marks have been validly entered, and processed, unless a specific identifiable reason for questioning a mark is raised.

2.5 Insofar as any discussion about the overall profile of cohort grades takes place, any conclusions should be noted but should not change outcomes for any individual student or group of students.

3. Attendance by external examiners at boards and issues of quoracy

3.1 Please note that the quoracy requirement is for three members of staff, at least one of whom should be an external examiner.

3.2 The external examiner may attend in person or virtually if necessary.

3.3 The external examiner for a particular module or programme does not necessarily have to be in attendance for related module or programme decisions to be made so far as there is one external examiner related to that Board in attendance.

4. External signatures and approval

4.1 For the purposes of progression and awards, the signature of a single external examiner is required. This is not to validate the assessment practices or approve processes across the year but to record that there has been a programme board/ratification panel and that the board has undertaken its process of review of student results.

4.2 Such an external examiner does not need to evaluate or understand all aspects of all assessments so long as they were in attendance, and can confirm that the board was conducted in a way that has reviewed progression and award decisions.

4.3 If it is not possible to get progression or award sheets approved by an external examiner, please contact your faculty's Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning and Students so that

such approval can then be made by a Faculty Board in line with the University's [Contingency Framework](#).

5. Release of results post boards

5.1 Please anticipate that students may have more than the usual number of questions following release of results given adjustments that have been made.

5.2 While the university has provided general messaging and will continue to do so, it may be necessary to ensure that individual students know how, and where, to raise questions about specific assessment outcomes.

5.3 Their first contact point should generally be their academic supervisor so please do ensure that all such members of staff (and anyone else who may need to field questions in your department) are aware of what adjustments have been made in relation to the marking and assessment boycott and are otherwise in a suitable position to answer questions from students about progression, awards and reassessment requirements.