DOCUMENT DETAILS

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Summary	This document sets out the college's procedures for administering boards of examiners for awards validated by the Open University.			

DOCUMENT CONSULTATION & APPROVAL

Consultation person / body	**Date passed**
NA	

Approval body	**Date approved**
HEAB	Oct 25

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A significant negative impact has been identified in the following area and a full impact assessment / risk assessment is available.

Equality & diversity	No
GDPR	No
Health & safety	No
Safeguarding	No

Friendly version of policy available	No

POLICY CHANGES

Key updates	**Impact**	**Section reference**
2024 Job title update.	NA	
2025 No amendments	NA	

Board of Examiners – Terms of Reference and Procedures
(For programmes and awards validated by The Open University)

The purpose of this document is to outline the processes and procedures to be followed in the operation of Boards of Examiners in respect of programmes/awards validated by The Open University.

These procedures allow the College to assure itself that requirements for the conferment of Higher Education awards reflect its commitment to rigorous and ethical practice, as a principle and as a means of maintaining public confidence in the College's Higher Education provision.

Note on terminology:
Historically, the College has tended to use the titles of "Examination Board" or "HE Examination Board" when referring to the body entrusted with conferring Higher Education awards. Any reference to "The Board" or "Examination Board" should be regarded as meaning the Board of Examiners in relation to a programme or award validated by The Open University.

Membership
a. Assistant Principal Higher Education (Chair)
b. Quality Manager HE and Adult (Deputy Chair)
c. Higher Education Business Manager
d. Examinations Manager or deputy
e. Heads of Centre
f. Faculty Area Managers
g. Programme Leaders (or nominated deputy)
h. Internal Assessors for modules under consideration
i. External Examiners
j. Open University Representative
k. PSRB Representative (if appropriate)
l. Recording Officer

A minimum of one representative from the curriculum area is required.
No students may be nominated to, or take part in, any Board of Examiner proceedings.
Members must declare any personal interest, involvement, or relationship with a student under consideration. Attendees declaring such an interest may be asked to withdraw for all or part of the session.

Quorum
For Board of Examiners meetings to be quorate, the following shall be present:
- Chair or Deputy Chair
- Programme Leader
- Open University Representative
- External Examiner(s)
- Recording Officer

Note: at least one teaching member of staff from the curriculum area must attend the Board.

Terms of Reference
The terms of reference of the Board of Examiners are to:
- Consider and approve the assessment marks achieved by students in accordance with Open University (and if applicable any professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB)) regulations.
- Consider and approve formal progression decisions for each student (including continuation or discontinuation on their current programme).
- Recommend the conferment of Open University awards upon students who the Board judges to have fulfilled the objectives of the approved programme of study and achieved the required standard, in accordance with the University's requirements.

- Confirm that the appropriate quality assurance mechanisms underpin assessment practices and the qualification processes.
- Consider and approve recommendations for deferred or referred students.
- Consider and approve recommendations concerning students with mitigating circumstances.
- Consider and approve recommendations made following investigations into academic misconduct.
- Uphold the confidentiality of the proceedings and ensure that all confidential papers are retained by the Recording Officer at the end of the Board.
- Ensure that decisions on module results, grades and degree classifications are accurately recorded and made available to The Open University (MRAQCP) to ratify.
- Action any matters arising.

Chair's Responsibilities
The Chair must:
- Ensure that membership is quorate (including External Examiner representation) to enable the Board to fulfil its Terms of Reference.
- Ensure that all EE's have been notified of their right to attend the meeting and make their recommendations to the Board.
- Ensure that awards are conferred in line with the Open University's conditions of conferment, in line with the Framework for HE Qualifications (FHEQ) and that requirements for appropriate classification are fully met.
- Ensure that appropriate information is available to the Board to ensure that it can exercise impartial judgement regarding student results (such as mitigating or exceptional circumstances).
- Ensure that the minutes reflect a true and accurate record of the Board's decisions.

Chair's Action
If circumstances mean that a Board of Examiners has been unable to make a final decision (or evidence comes to light later which would have resulted in a different outcome) it is possible to use Chair's Action to confirm decisions following the Board. However, this should only be used in exceptional circumstances and in agreement with the Open University's representative.

External Examiners (EEs)
Recommendations for the conferment of an award validated by the University may not be made without the written consent of the approved External Examiner (EE). On any matter which the EE has declared a matter of principle, the EEs decision shall either be accepted as final by the Board of Examiners or referred to the Academic Board.
The EE will present a verbal report during the meeting and submit a written report within one calendar month of the Board sitting.

The EE must be able to confirm, during their verbal report that:
- They have been able to review a sample of student work from the programme under consideration. External Examiners are also asked to comment on the range of assessed material and information provided by the Programme Leader.
- The quality of students' work, their knowledge and skills (both general and subject-specific) are equivalent to their peers on comparable programmes elsewhere.
- The standards set are appropriate for the award, or award element, with reference to any agreed subject benchmarks, qualifications framework, programme specification or other relevant information.

In addition, in their verbal report, the EE may wish to include a comment about other aspects from their written report, including:
- Strengths and weaknesses of the students.

- Quality of teaching and learning, as indicated by student performance.
- Quality of the curriculum, course materials and learning resources.
- Quality and fairness of assessments, in particular:
  - Design and structure
  - Relation to the programme's stated objectives and learning outcomes
  - Marking and feedback
- Where the programme has specific work-related outcomes, comment on the assessment and achievement of these outcomes, including employers' involvement where relevant.
- Administration of assessments, operation of examination boards, access to essential materials, etc.
- Consider if issues identified in the previous report have been addressed.
- Any other comments.

Recording Officer
The Recording Officer must:
Ensure that the final agenda, and a reminder of confidentiality, is circulated at least one working day before the Board. Ensure that an accessible copy is available of:
- Minutes of the previous Board of Examiners
- Reports from the Extenuating Circumstances Committee
- Mark sheets from the Pre-Board meetings
- Relevant trend data
- Programme handbook
- Assessment Guidelines
- Academic Irregularities Policy

The Open University Representative
The primary role of the OU representative is to provide support for Boards of Examiners or their committees in the continued assurance of academic standards. Attendance provides the OU with an important window on assessment processes for its validated awards.

The OU representative will not participate in making academic judgements but bring their own knowledge and experience of the assessment process to the discussion of outcomes.

OU representatives will respect the College's autonomy as it derives from the institutional agreement but will also have concern for the University's obligations and national requirements.

The OU representative will:
- Observe conduct of the Board
- Provide a source of advice on the interpretation and application of university policies.
- Alert the College and/or University to policies, procedures or circumstances which seem likely to impede the effective functioning of the Board, or the discharge of responsibilities by External Examiners.
- Provide feedback to the University which will be included in preparations for institutional reviews.

Assure themselves and the Open University that:
- The regulations of the University and the College's University Centre have been properly observed.
- Assessment and qualification processes have been implemented with appropriate quality assurance procedures.
- There can be confidence that students have met the threshold academic standards required as eligibility for the award of credit and/or qualifications.

- Assessments are moderated internally and externally in accordance with approved regulations, and that reasonable adjustments (where applicable) have been approved and applied.

General guidelines

Board of Examiners schedules
Schedules for the purpose of diary noting and informing External Examiners will be circulated in the new academic year. Programme Leaders should contact their External Examiner to arrange visits and diarise attendance at the Board.

Pre-examination Boards
All curriculum areas are requested to hold pre-examination boards to review student results, including claims for special consideration, intercalations, academic appeals, and cases of possible academic irregularity in preparation for announcing results and recommendations at the Board of Examiners.

A representative from the Quality Team should be invited to the pre-examination board, to provide advice and guidance on OU regulations if required.

Results Spreadsheets – completion by Programme Leaders
Final results for completion by programme leaders on EBS Awards Manager are available on the network in the shared drive provided by the Examinations Manager. Programme leaders should liaise with the Examinations Team regarding access and deadlines for completion.

Programme leaders are to provide electronic/printed copy of results documentation as appropriate to their External Examiner and bring their own copies for announcing results at the Board. Results will be available via the network for Board use and projected on-screen for viewing by attendees. The HE Office will produce hard copies for use by the Recording Officer.

Decision sheets
Documents recording the Board of Examiners' decisions and the conferment of awards will be generated at the Board by the Examinations Manager.

The following documents are required to be submitted:
- F7 sheet, (signed as indicated)
- Award recommendation list (signed as indicated)
- Completed examination board spreadsheet

Special Consideration claims
For recording purposes, evidence of any applications for Special Consideration received during the academic year should be made available to the Examinations Manager and Recording Officer prior to the Board sitting.

Intercalation
Decisions on intercalated students will only be noted where a full audit trail is available following the College's formal intercalation process.

External Examiner non-attendance at Examination Board
External Examiner non-attendance will only be permitted for Board to proceed with the Open University's prior approval. With this agreement:
Prior to announcing results for ratification, the Programme Leader should present to the Examinations Manager *Proforma A: External Examiner Non-Attendance, Confirmation of Results,* for any External Examiner who has notified their expected non-attendance at the Examinations Board. On behalf of the absent External Examiner, the Programme Leader will

also present a brief statement on the outcomes of the summer moderation visit, for records purposes.

Examination Board Decisions - Results notification to students
After approval of all decisions by The Open University's Module Results Approval and Qualifications Classification Panel (MRAQCP) the following can take place:

The HE Team will be responsible for notifying all students of Examination Board decisions. All notifications, for example, Pass and Progress, Pass and Graduate, Referral, will be sent to students within 10 working days of the Examination Board being held. Referred students will be instructed to contact their Course Leader for full details of work outstanding to enable completion by the given deadline.

Any student who has been confirmed to receive a Faculty Prize and/or to receive a Letter of Commendation will be contacted by the Head of Centre or Faculty Area Manager.

Resit and resubmission deadlines
Dates for resit examinations (to be held by arrangement with the Examinations Manager) and for the resubmission of coursework assignments will be agreed at the Board.

The final date for receipt of resubmitted work is normally 12 noon on the Monday - nearest to 15 August - each year. This is designed to allow sufficient time for marking and input to EBS Awards Manager prior to presenting results at the Referral Board.

Frequency of meetings
Boards will meet at least once per academic year (timed to coincide with The Open University's Module Results Approval and Qualifications Classification Panel (MRAQCP)).
In addition, a Referral Board (should it be necessary) will be held in late August/early September. This will normally be the final opportunity for students to be considered eligible for the Graduation Ceremony.

Nottingham College holds Progress Boards (Internal only, attendance not required by The Open University) for each programme to monitor the progress of students against expectations. These are held mid-academic year.

Order of Business
- Chair to welcome attendees
- Invite introductions
- Sign attendance list
- Note apologies for absence
- Present minutes of previous Board for approval
- Declaration of interest – members to declare any personal interest, involvement or relationship with a student being considered, for noting in the minutes.

Minutes
Proceedings of the Board of Examiners will be formally minuted to include:
- a complete list of agreed marks/grades.
- a list of all students considered by the Board showing any decision taken in respect of that student.
- details of any deferral or referral arrangements.
- details of any mitigating circumstances considered by the Board.
- details of any cases of academic misconduct considered by the Board.
- comments by external examiners.
- summary comments from the internal moderator.

Reporting
The Board of Examiners will report its recommendations and decisions along with a complete list of marks and statistical analysis of marks to the Open University cicpexamboards@open.ac.uk within two working days. The HE Academic Board also receives an overall summary of student performance.

The following documents are required to be submitted:

- F7 sheet, (signed as indicated)
- Award recommendation list (signed as indicated)
- Completed examination board spreadsheet

Publication of Results and Transcripts
Results cannot be issued to students until they have been ratified and formal notice received from The Open University that they can be released.