

# UNIVERSITY of STIRLING



## Boards of Examiners Policy

### VERSION CONTROL STATEMENT

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## Purpose

1. The purpose of Boards of Examiners is to oversee formal assessment/examination, progression and awards processes, in line with the University's [Undergraduate Regulations](#) and [Postgraduate Taught Regulations](#) and associated policy and procedure such as that relevant to Assessment and Determination of Degree Classifications. The University's arrangements for assessment/examination, progression and awards are underpinned by statutory quality assurance requirements including those specified through the [Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework \(SCQF\)](#) and the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#).

## Scope

2. Decisions of Boards of Examiners are made under authority delegated from Academic Council.
3. All members of a Board of Examiners have the responsibility to ensure that they have a thorough understanding of University regulation, policy and procedure, and any other information (such as programme structures, requirements and learning outcomes) that is relevant and applicable to the Board's remit, the considerations the Board will undertake, and the decisions it will make.
4. Boards of Examiners comprise: Extenuating Circumstances Sub-Boards; Module Boards; Awards Boards; Progression Boards; and Faculty Boards. Through all these component Boards, the Boards of Examiners are required to:
  - make decisions and/or recommendations on Extenuating Circumstances requests;
  - ratify student module marks;
  - make decisions on awards and honours classifications;
  - make decisions on student progression from one level/stage of study to the next;
  - review and evaluate the soundness and fairness of the assessment process;
  - ensure External Examiners comment upon academic standards and the carrying out of correct processes, and that these comments are considered and acted upon as appropriate;
  - confirm all University policy and regulations that are applicable have been correctly adhered to.
5. The Academic Panel (Taught) and the Academic Panel (Research) exist as panels of the Education Committee. The purpose of the Academic Panel (Taught) is to consider: Academic Appeals confirmed as having both right and grounds for appeal; variances to specified University regulation, within the scope and remit of the Panel as set out in its Terms of Reference. In respect of Progression Boards, in exceptional circumstances where a Board concludes that it is not possible for it to make a decision on a student's progression within the scope of its responsibilities, the case can be referred to the Academic Panel (Taught) for consideration and decision-making. Where this is the case, the Progression Board will be required to provide the Academic Panel (Taught) with concise detail on its consideration of the matter, its views on a potentially appropriate decision, and the reasons for the referral.

## Points of Policy

6. Extenuating Circumstances Sub-Boards; Module Boards; Progression Boards; Awards Boards; and Faculty Boards operate as an integrated set of Boards to ensure that the outcomes of student assessments, awards and progression are appropriately considered, confirmed and decided upon. Together they make up the Boards of Examiners with each having a specific membership, remit and responsibility. This process represents an essential element of the University's arrangements for quality assurance and academic standards.
7. The relevant Board of Examiners must take place and operate in line with this policy and with specified timelines, and in a sequential manner that ensures the availability of the information that each Board requires to undertake its responsibilities. In respect of the sequential process of Boards of Examiners activity:
  - a. Extenuating Circumstances Sub-Boards must be held where extenuating circumstances requests have been submitted and require to be considered (paragraphs [20 – 37](#) provide detail on Extenuating Sub-Boards);
  - b. Module Boards must be held where a student or group of students has completed the assessments associated with a module and there are marks to consider. To operate, a Module Board must have available to it both marks and any Extenuating Circumstances Sub-Board outcomes (paragraphs [38 - 51](#) provide detail on Module Boards). See also paragraph 9 regarding the release of marks to students;
  - c. Awards Boards must be held where it is necessary for award decisions to be made as part of the annual cycle of awards confirmation and conferment. An Awards Board must have marks ratified by a Module Board available to it (paragraphs [52 – 68](#) provide detail on Awards Boards);
  - d. Progression Boards must be held at the end of each academic year, and after both main assessment and resit assessment periods. Progression Board must have available to it all module marks and grades that are within scope of the decisions it is required to make, and all relevant Extenuating Circumstances request decisions/outcomes in order to make progression decisions (paragraphs [69 – 88](#) provide detail on Progression Boards);
  - e. Faculty Boards provide quality assurance at the faculty level by undertaking scrutiny of the outcomes and outputs of the faculty's assessment arrangements ensuring consistency of practice and taking steps to enhance assessment arrangements or practice in response to any outcomes of the scrutiny. Faculty Boards do not make decisions on marks or awards and do not replicate the business of either module or awards boards. Faculties are required to convene a meeting of the Faculty Board at least once per year (paragraphs [89 – 94](#) provide detail on Faculty Boards).
8. Boards of Examiners meetings must be scheduled in line with the academic and operational cycle and institutionally agreed periods and timelines for the finalisation of marks, the conferment of awards, and the confirmation of student progression outcomes.
9. All final module marks attained by students must be considered and ratified by a Module Board prior to their being notified to students. Where it is necessary to provide a module mark to a student prior to it being ratified by the Module Board, it must be clearly stated that the mark is provisional and therefore not final.

10. Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught module marks can be considered at the same meeting of a Module Board, there is no requirement to consider these marks in separate meetings but the faculty can decide to do as appropriate. Where this is the case, the meeting agenda can be structured to reflect the fact that the student information provided to the Board will be separate for UG and PGT cohorts. Likewise, there is no requirement to consider main and resit module marks at separate Boards, where timing allows these can be considered together.
11. External Examiners, in line with their role and remit as set out in the External Examining Policy, provide an essential contribution to the Boards of Examiners process. Final decisions of Boards of Examiners, however, are the responsibility of the University of Stirling.

## **Conduct of Boards of Examiners**

12. Boards of Examiners meetings can take place in-person, online or on a hybrid basis, but the format adopted must enable the meetings to take place fully and effectively in line with the requirements of this policy.
13. Boards of Examiners members and any others attending a meeting of a Board of Examiners are obliged to declare any personal interest, involvement or relationship with a student being assessed/considered, or other conflict of interest, and meeting agendas will include this topic to ensure it is consistently addressed. Where any kind of personal or conflict of interest is declared, the Chair of the Board will ensure that the relevant individual withdraws from the relevant discussion/consideration/decision-making, and a suitable alternate attends or contributes as required.
14. The Chairs of all Boards of Examiners are required, in addition to the specific responsibilities of the Board, to seek to confirm that the relevant underlying University policies and procedures have been adhered to in the assessment/examination processes undertaken prior to the Board's considerations.
15. The student information provided to and used by Boards of Examiners within their meetings, considerations and decision making is not anonymised.
16. Boards of Examiners make decisions collectively, with no individual member having primacy. However, in cases where there is a lack of consensus, the Chair will have the casting decision.
17. Appropriate professional services staff, as determined by Student, Academic and Corporate Services, may be in attendance at Boards of Examiners meetings to provide administrative support and guidance on workflow/process and consistency of practice as required. However, these staff members will not be Board members and will not make decisions. Only members of the Board take part in decision making.
18. Minutes and records from Board meetings are managed by Student and Faculty Operations and retained in a central repository to which Academic Registry staff also have consistent access. Specific requirements regarding Boards of Examiners Records are set out in paragraphs [95 – 101](#).
19. In exceptional circumstances, where it is not possible for a Board to meet, its responsibilities should be undertaken by the Faculty Chief Examiner and/or Dean of Faculty/the Dean of Faculty's suitable nominee, in appropriate consultation with relevant colleagues and following the underlying process and principles of this policy. Decisions taken in such circumstances should be reported to the next meeting of the Board.

## Extenuating Circumstances

20. The University recognises that during the course of their studies, a student may encounter personal difficulties that are out with their control, have a defined period of impact and which have a negative effect on their ability to study and/or complete assessments. In order to ensure appropriate support for students in such circumstances, the University provides a number of potential routes to assist the student in terms of their studies, in addition to the pastoral and academic advice and support that is routinely available. The most appropriate route will depend on the circumstances.
21. The University's 'Extenuating Circumstances' arrangements set out the provisions the University makes for a student's particular personal circumstances to be taken into account within the assessment process, as one potential route to assist the student where personal difficulties are experienced. These arrangements specify that all Extenuating Circumstances Requests must be submitted as soon as possible and no later than three working days following the last day of the relevant exam/assessment period. It is not normally possible for requests submitted after this date to be considered. However, where it is possible for a late request to be considered prior to the Module Board taking place, the Sub-Board will endeavour to ensure that it is appropriately considered in line with this policy. Detailed information on Extenuating Circumstances are available here: [Extenuating circumstances | About | University of Stirling](#)

### Extenuating Circumstances Sub-Boards

22. Extenuating Circumstances Sub-Boards can be held at faculty, division or subject level with the level being clearly recorded in the records of the meeting. The Sub-Board is the first step in the Boards of Examiners process and is therefore held prior to each subsequent Board in the process.
23. Extenuating Circumstances Sub-Boards may be held, as required, throughout each semester, to ensure that requests are considered in a timely manner. However, the final Extenuating Circumstances Sub-Board of each semester must take place after the relevant examination/assessment period and prior to the Module and/or Awards Board.
24. All members of the Sub-Board must have access to the information necessary to undertake its responsibilities. This information may include module learning outcomes and module marks achieved by students whose extenuating circumstances are to be considered by the Sub-Board. Some of this information will be accessible as required through University systems or documentation (e.g. module learning outcomes), and some will be provided directly to the Board meeting. As set out in paragraph 3, all members of a Board of Examiners have the responsibility to ensure that they have a thorough understanding of University regulation, policy and procedure, and any other information (such as programme structures, requirements and learning outcomes), that is relevant and applicable to the Board's remit, the considerations the Board will undertake, and the decisions it will make.
25. All decisions made by the Sub-Board are formal decisions and should be appropriately acted/followed up on at the point they are made.
26. The Sub-Board will retain a note of all of the decisions of all its meeting held during semester and deal with outstanding applications submitted within the time limit specified in the Extenuating Circumstances Procedure.

27. The Chair of the Sub-Board has authority where required on the basis of exceptional circumstances and the timely decision-making in support of the student experience, to take Chair's action to consider and decide on extenuating circumstances requests, or to conduct Sub-Board activity through email circulation. However, all decisions must be made in line with the provisions of this and other relevant University policy and any decision taken in these ways must be formally reported and noted at the next meeting of the Sub-Board.

### **Extenuating Circumstances Sub-Board Membership**

28. An Extenuating Circumstances Sub-Board must normally include the following staff as members:
- a) The Faculty, Divisional or Subject Chief Examiner as Chair, as appropriate to the Board level.
  - b) At least two Subject Examiners.
29. If the relevant Subject Chief Examiner or Divisional Chief Examiner is unavailable, the Dean of Faculty or the Faculty Chief Examiner will appoint an alternate appropriate staff member to Chair the Board.
30. The Dean of Faculty, the Faculty Chief Examiner, University Chief Examiner, Deputy Principal (Education) and Deputy Principal (Student Experience) are all further ex-officio members of Extenuating Circumstances Sub-Boards. None are routinely expected or required to attend meetings of the Board but have the discretion to attend as they wish. Where any choose to attend a meeting of the Board, they will do so as members and will therefore contribute to decision-making.
31. Other staff members from either academic or professional services areas may be invited to contribute to the discussion of the Sub-Board as required, at the discretion of the Chair.
32. A meeting of the Extenuating Circumstances Sub-Board is quorate if the Chair and at least one other member is present.
33. A member of Student and Faculty Operations (SFO), Faculty Professional Services staff will provide administrative support, workflow management and guidance on consistency of Board practice. As with all Boards of Examiners attendees and members, they must have an appropriate understanding of relevant academic regulations, policy and procedure in order to fulfil their role. However, the SFO staff attendee is not a member of the Board and will not provide advice to the Board on decisions or participate in decision-making. The Faculty Professional Services staff representative may or may not be present at meetings of the Extenuating Circumstances Sub-Board as required.

### **Extenuating Circumstances Sub-Board Remit and Responsibilities**

34. The Extenuating Circumstances Sub-Board must ensure that all Extenuating Circumstances Requests submitted by students within the specified timeline are considered objectively, in line with this procedure, and therefore in a manner that is consistent across faculties and supports the overall assessment process.
35. Extenuating Circumstances requests will be judged at the discretion of the Sub-Board, which will seek to determine whether, and to what extent, they have affected academic performance, and what action, if any, might be taken in response. In assessing the significance of extenuating circumstances the Sub-Board will normally take into account;

- the severity of the issue and the length of time involved;
  - any supporting documentary evidence;
  - whether it is possible to gauge the effect of extenuating circumstances upon academic performance.
36. The Extenuating Circumstances Sub-Board may decide on the following outcomes:
- Provide an extension longer than the standard extension, or as provided under an ARUAA. However, the new submission date should provide sufficient time for marking and grade upload, before the upload deadline immediately prior to the next progression date. For example, for a spring assessment, the assessment grade should be uploaded, before the spring grade upload deadline.
  - Provide an appropriate extension to a dissertation submission timeline to take account of an extenuating circumstance.
  - Provide a Deferred Examination opportunity based on circumstances out with University policy, where this is possible and appropriate to take account of an extenuating circumstance.
  - Remove or reduce late penalties incurred because of an extenuating circumstance where there was good reason that appropriate extension requests were not made, or where an extension request was granted but the submission was late.
  - Where a student has not yet met all the learning outcomes nor completed all the assessment elements the Sub-Board may recommend an alternative assessment, to enable the student to do so, in agreement with the Module-Coordinator.
  - Allow the student to take a resit, with an uncapped grade, where the original assessment was impacted by an extenuating circumstance.
  - Remove a grade cap incurred because of an extenuating circumstance.
  - Reduce the relative weighting of an assessment that was impacted by an extenuating circumstance, taking into account the need for the student to assure that they have met the learning outcomes of the module.
  - In exceptional circumstances which affect a cohort of students but which are out with their control, other outcomes as are reasonable and appropriate in the circumstances.
  - If a number of assessments are affected by extenuating circumstances then different outcomes may be appropriate for each, depending on the nature of the assessment.
  - Make recommendations as appropriate to an Awards Board and/or a Progression Board that extenuating circumstances are considered in an award or a progression decision. Paragraphs [69 – 88](#) provide detail on Progression Boards and Progression Pre-Boards.
  - In exceptional circumstances, and for PGT students only, allow the student to have a further assessment opportunity, where the current assessment opportunity was impacted by an extenuating circumstance and they have exhausted their assessment opportunities under the [Assessment and Marking Policy and Procedure](#). However, the additional assessment must be taken, and grade uploaded, by the upload deadline prior to the next Progression Board.



37. Where the circumstances affecting the student are not within the parameters of Extenuating Circumstances, or where the Sub-Board deems it appropriate in addition to deciding on an outcome, Sub-Boards may refer students to relevant support services such as Accessibility and Inclusion or the Personal Tutor, or recommend a leave of absence be taken, or where it is felt the student may not be fit to continue with their studies at the present time, make a referral of the student's case to Academic Registry for potential consideration in line with the University's Fitness to Study policy and procedure.

## Module Boards

38. Where a student completes the assessments associated with a module, the mark/grade to be awarded must be ratified through the Boards of Examiners process, prior to being notified to the student. The point of approval is the Module Board which is expected to meet after each examination/assessment period. (See paragraph 9 regarding release of marks prior to ratification.)
39. Module Boards can be convened at division or subject level with the level being clearly recorded in the records of the meeting.
40. All members of the Board must have access to the information necessary to undertake the Board's responsibilities. As set out in paragraph 3, all members of a Board of Examiners have the responsibility to ensure that they have a thorough understanding of University regulation, policy and procedure, and any other information (such as programme structures, requirements and learning outcomes), that is relevant and applicable to the Board's remit, the considerations the Board will undertake, and the decisions it will make.
41. The Chair of the Module Board has authority to take decisions on particular cases where all the information is not available at the time of the meeting. However, all decisions must be made in line with the provisions of this and other relevant University policy and any decision taken in these ways must be formally reported and noted at the next meeting of the Board.

## Module Board Membership

42. A Module Board will normally include the following staff as members:
- The Divisional/Subject Chief Examiner as Chair, as appropriate to the Board level.
  - The Divisional/Subject Chief Examiner(s) if not acting as Chair
  - The Module Co-ordinator(s)\*
  - The External Examiner(s) for the module(s) on which the Board is ratifying marks

\*Where modules are taught overseas an appropriate Stirling based representative should be nominated by the Programme Director to attend in the place of the overseas Module Coordinator.

43. The Dean of Faculty, the Faculty Chief Examiner, University Chief Examiner, Deputy Principal (Education) and Deputy Principal (Student Experience) are all further ex-officio members of Module Boards. None are routinely expected or required to attend meetings of the Board but have the discretion to attend as they wish. Where any choose to attend a meeting of the Board, they will do so as members and will therefore contribute to decision-making.

44. Programme Directors and/or members of teaching staff involved in the assessment of the module, as considered appropriate to inform discussion and decision making may be invited to be in attendance at the Module Board at the discretion of the Chair.
45. External Examiners can attend either in person or remotely through the submission of written comments which must be submitted to the Chair prior to the meeting for consideration and discussion by the Module Board.
46. A meeting of the Module Board is quorate if the Chair and at least two other internal examiners are present and the External Examiner is present or has submitted written comments that can be considered by the Module Board.
47. All members of the Board should have access to the information necessary to make the decisions specified below. This information must include all module marks achieved by students whose module performance is to be determined by the module board.
48. A member of Student and Faculty Operations (SFO), Faculty Professional Services staff will be present at Module Board meetings. Their role is to provide administrative support, workflow management and guidance on consistency of Board practice. As with all Boards of Examiners attendees and members, they must have an appropriate understanding of relevant academic regulations, policy and procedure in order to fulfil their role. However, the SFO staff attendee is not a member of the Board and will not provide advice to the Board on decisions or participate in decision-making.

## **Module Board Remit and Responsibilities**

49. Module Boards are responsible for considering and ratifying all module marks/grades and uploading all ratified module marks/grades to the student record for all modules owned by the division/subject, by the grade upload deadline. The Board will:
  - i. consider the marks and the spread/profile of marks/grades, including in comparison with previous iterations;
  - ii. consider External Examiners' comments;
  - iii. consider internal moderators'/module coordinators' comments on the module and its assessments, and any changes or adjustments that may be appropriate for future iterations;
  - iv. note the decisions and recommendations of the Extenuating Circumstances Sub-Board and any appropriate adjustments;
  - v. note the outcome of any academic misconduct processes and the adjustment of marks as appropriate;
  - vi. ratify final module marks/grades and the nature of any re-assessment offered, where applicable;
  - vii. note any late marks, the reason for lateness (as per the specified codes) and when the marks will be available.
50. Module Boards are also responsible for ensuring that following resit examinations and coursework reassessments, and when late marks/grades become available, these resit and late marks are considered and ratified by a Module Board, in line with the requirements and approach set out in this policy.

51. Once approved, marks should be uploaded to the University's student record system\*, via the portal. The Chair of the Module Board is required to confirm the ratification of marks at the point of upload and confirm that all outcomes from the Board have been reflected correctly within the upload by verifying these details on the portal, by the required deadline date.

\*In the case of INTO UoS student this is recorded on INTO Stirling's system, although the principles of the management of marks is identical.

## **Awards Boards**

52. Faculties should operate separate Awards Boards for undergraduate programmes and for postgraduate taught programmes. Awards Boards can operate at either faculty, division or subject-level with the level being clearly recorded in the records of the meeting.
53. Awards Boards should meet after the relevant Module Boards are completed and awards algorithms have been run; and in time to meet the required deadline for the return of award decisions.
54. Students are formally notified of award decisions only on formal award dates which are set by Student and Faculty Operations, in consultation with the Assessment and Attainment Sub-Committee.
55. All members of the Board must have access to the information necessary to undertake the Board's responsibilities. As set out in paragraph 3, all members of a Board of Examiners have the responsibility to ensure that they have a thorough understanding of University regulation, policy and procedure, and any other information (such as programme structures, requirements and learning outcomes), that is relevant and applicable to the Board's remit, the considerations the Board will undertake, and the decisions it will make.
56. The Chair of the Awards Board has authority to take decisions on particular cases where all the information is not available at the time of the meeting. However, all decisions must be made in line with the provisions of this and other relevant University policy and any decision taken in these ways must be formally reported and noted at the next meeting of the Board.

## **Awards Board Membership**

57. All members of the Awards Board should have access to such information as is necessary to undertake its responsibilities. This information must include all module marks achieved by those students whose overall performance or degree classification is to be determined by the Board.
58. An Awards Board should normally include the following staff:
- A Chair, appropriate to the level at which the Board is operating, as determined by the Dean of Faculty.
  - The Faculty Chief Examiner, if determined by the Dean of Faculty as being required
  - Divisional/Subject Chief Examiners, as determined by the Dean of Faculty as being required
  - The Programme Directors for the programme(s) on which the Board is taking decisions
  - For Awards Boards taking decisions on combined awards, a representative from each relevant division (or equivalent)
  - The External Examiner(s) for the programme(s) on which the Board is taking decisions.

59. The Chair of the Board may at their discretion invite any person who has been involved in the teaching or assessment of the work under consideration by the Board to be present on an 'in attendance only' basis where this is required for the purposes of the required decision-making.
60. The Dean of Faculty, the Faculty Chief Examiner, University Chief Examiner, Deputy Principal (Education) and Deputy Principal (Student Experience) are all further ex-officio members of Awards Boards. None are routinely expected or required to attend meetings of the Board but have the discretion to attend as they wish. Where any choose to attend a meeting of the Board, they will do so as members and will therefore contribute to decision-making.
61. In exceptional circumstances, and where it is essential in terms of progressing Board of Examiner business, a member may contribute to the meeting through the provision of written comments prior to the meeting.
62. A meeting of the Awards Board is quorate if the Chair and at least two other internal examiners are present and the External Examiner is present or has submitted written comments that can be considered by the Board.
63. A member of Student and Faculty Operations (SFO), Faculty Professional Services staff will be present at Awards Board meetings. Their role is to provide administrative support, workflow management and guidance on consistency of Board practice. As with all Boards of Examiners attendees and members, they must have an appropriate understanding of relevant academic regulations, policy and procedure in order to fulfil their role. However, the SFO staff attendee is not a member of the Board and will not provide advice to the Board on decisions or participate in decision-making.

## **Awards Board Remit and Responsibilities**

64. The Awards Board is responsible for all programmes owned by the faculty/division/subject-area as appropriate to the level of the Board, and for determining final award outcomes for students who have completed their programme of study.
65. The Awards Board is further responsible for recording all decisions on the Examiner Report Form, and submitting this by the advised upload deadline date.
66. Awards Boards are required to:
  - i. confirm awards and classifications determined through the University algorithm unless any concern exists or is raised;
  - ii. consider comments from the external examiner(s) on the assessment process and standards of student attainment;
  - iii. consider comments on the programme(s) and recommendations to the programme director(s) for the future shape of the programme(s);
  - iv. in exceptional circumstances consider recommendations from an Extenuating Circumstances Sub-Board, where it was not possible for the relevant extenuating circumstances to be fully considered and responded to by the Module Board.
67. At postgraduate level the awards are defined by the University's Postgraduate Taught Regulations
68. An Awards Board can recommend to Academic Council that an aegrotat or posthumous award be conferred in respect to an undergraduate or taught postgraduate programme. Such recommendations must be determined and made in line with the academic regulations on aegrotat and posthumous awards as appropriate.

## Progression Boards

69. Progression Boards can operate at either faculty, division or subject-level and the level must be clearly recorded in the records of the meeting. Progression Boards are responsible for making decisions on student progression for all students undertaking a programme of study owned by the division/subject area and are therefore required to review progression of students on different degree programmes.
70. Progression Boards are required to meet as required following both main and resit examination/assessment diets, to ensure that all students' progression is considered and decided upon in a timely manner.
71. For each meeting of a Progression Board, a **Progression Pre-Board** must also be held to prepare for the meeting, undertake an initial review of the student cohort, consider any advice that may be required in advance from specialist University services, and otherwise plan for the meeting to ensure it proceeds as effectively as possible.
72. For combined degree programmes, including joint degrees, the owning Faculty for the programme has responsibility for the Progression Board.
73. The consideration of a student's progression encompasses the consideration as appropriate of:
  - a. The requirements of the degree programme, as set out in the programme structure and content which is captured in the Curriculum Management System and the Degree Programme Tables;
  - b. Academic Regulations, including (but not limited to) the regulations relevant to:
    - (i) duration of study;
    - (ii) change in programme of study;
    - (iii) leave of absence
    - (iv) module selection
    - (v) compensation
    - (vi) progression to next year of study
    - (vii) awards
    - (viii) termination of studies; and
    - (ix) any exceptions to regulations that are applicable to a particular programme.
  - c. Relevant policy and procedure, including (but not limited to) that relevant to Assessment and Marking, and Mitigation.
74. All members of the Board must have access to the information necessary to undertake the Board's responsibilities. As set out in paragraph 3, all members of a Board of Examiners have the responsibility to ensure that they have a thorough understanding of University regulations and policy and any other information (such as programme structures, requirements and learning outcomes), that is relevant and applicable to the Board's remit, the considerations the Board will undertake, and the decisions it will make.
75. In making progression decisions, it is essential that the Board maintains balance between the vital importance of academic standards, and appropriate opportunity for students to progress fully through a programme.

## **Progression Board Membership**

76. The membership of a Progression Board is designed to ensure that the required knowledge and understanding of both the programmes and institutional regulation, policy and procedure is available within the Board's discussions, considerations and decision-making.
77. It is essential that all Progression Board members proactively maintain a full and current understanding of all relevant academic regulation, policy and procedure as is required to underpin their decision-making responsibilities.
78. A Progression Board will include the following staff as members:
  - A Divisional Chief Examiner (Chair)
  - The Programme Directors for all the programmes on which the Board is taking decisions
  - The Chair of the Extenuating Circumstances Sub-Board (where it is not possible for the Chair of the EC Sub-Board to attend, the Chair of the Progression Board must consult with them in advance of the Progression Pre-Board to ensure that all relevant information is then made available to the Progression Board)
  - The further academic staff who will be required to participate as members of the Board to ensure it has all the information available to it that is necessary, including in respect of individual students. These further staff will be determined by the Faculty Dean and the Chair of the Board and may include, for example, module coordinators, personal tutors and/or others as appropriate.
79. In advance of each meeting, the Dean must confirm the membership, therefore confirming its appropriateness. The membership will then be captured in the Progression Board Schedule.
80. The Dean of Faculty, the Faculty Chief Examiner, University Chief Examiner, Deputy Principal (Education) and Deputy Principal (Student Experience) are all further ex-officio members of Progression Boards. None are routinely expected or required to attend meetings of the Board but have the discretion to attend as they wish. Where any choose to attend a meeting of the Board, they will do so as members and will therefore contribute to decision-making.
81. Progression Pre-Board meetings should be attended by the Chair and the Programme Directors, with other members of the Progression Board also attending at the discretion of the Chair.
82. A member of Student and Faculty Operations (SFO), Faculty Professional Services staff will be present at Progression Board and Progression Pre-Board meetings. Their role is to provide administrative support, workflow management and guidance on consistency of Board practice. As with all Boards of Examiners attendees and members, they must have an appropriate understanding of relevant academic regulations, policy and procedure in order to fulfil their role. However, the SFO staff attendee is not a member of the Board and will not provide advice to the Board on decisions or participate in decision-making.

## **Progression Board Remit and Responsibilities**

83. Student Administration produces a standardised Progression Board Schedule for each Progression Board. Provisional decisions already identified will be recorded on the Schedule prior to it being provided to the Board.

84. Progression Boards are required to: confirm that there are no apparent issues identified with the ratified marks awarded to students; review the provisional progression decisions and decide if they should be confirmed; and consider and make progression decisions on students who have not achieved a pass mark on all their modules and/or have not met all the applicable module and programme requirements. For students who have achieved a pass mark on all the modules they have undertaken/had Standard Compensation applied, and met all the applicable module and programme requirements, their progression to the next level of their studies is automatic and will be confirmed through this process.
85. Fundamentally, each Progression Board is required to make decisions for all students being considered, on whether or not they can progress to the next year of study. However, in considering these progression decisions, Progression Boards are required to decide on all of the following as appropriate to each student:

**a) The Application of Discretionary Compensation:**

In line with the Assessment and Marking Policy and Procedure, for undergraduate students in Year 1 or Year 2 of their studies, the Board has the authority to consider and decide on the application of 'Discretionary Compensation'. Discretionary Compensation of up to a further 20 credits in addition to Standard Compensation may be considered where all of the specified policy conditions are met and the Board considers that the student has demonstrated sufficient positive academic attainment overall, particularly in their compulsory modules.

**b) Carrying Outstanding Credit:**

Where a student has failed one or more modules which cannot be compensated, the Progression Board is required to decide whether or not the student can progress to the next year of study, and if so, when any outstanding credit will be required to be completed. These decisions require to be taken in line with academic regulations, including the regulation that a maximum of 80 credits may be attempted during one semester (including modules being undertaken on the basis of assessment only and those being repeated in their entirety).

**c) Variation to a Student's Route through the Degree Programme**

Where a student has failed one or more modules, or they change programme, this may result in it being necessary for a variation to the standard route through the programme being agreed for the individual student. The Board is required to decide on the variant route that is necessary to ensure the student continues to undertake all of the modules that form part of the programme and the required volume of academic credit to remain on track to have been able to achieve all the requirements of the programme/qualification/degree award.

**d) Exceptional Assessment Attempt or Module Attempt**

Where a student has completed both assessment attempts on a module and has not achieved a pass, or they have completed two attempts of a module, the Board has authority to decide to take action out with regulation and provide the student an exceptional third attempt of an assessment or of an entire module.

The student should be given a minimum of two weeks to complete the exceptional third attempt of an assessment in line with the [assessment and marking policy \(point 103\)](#). Academic judgement, practical considerations, the student's overall workload, and ARUAA requirements should be considered when setting deadlines for submission. The overall final module mark will be limited to the pass mark (40/50/pass). The grade should be uploaded by the next available grade upload deadline, or sooner where practical.

**e) Termination of Studies**

It is set out within academic regulation: that students are required to make adequate academic progress and complete their studies within the specified maximum duration of study; and that at least two-thirds of required credits must be passed in a year to allow them to progress to the next year; and that where a student has not passed at least half of the credits in any year of study, the University is likely to terminate studies. Where a student has not passed at least half of the credits in the year of study, the Board is required to decide on whether or not the student's studies should be terminated. A Progression Board has the authority to decide to take action outwith regulation and permit a student who has not passed at least half of the credits in the year to continue studies.

**f) Exit Awards**

Where a student's studies are to be terminated or it is confirmed by a student that they do not want to take another assessment attempt or otherwise continue with their studies, the Progression Board is required to decide on any exit or sub-honours award that will be applicable, in line with academic regulations.

**g) Duration of Study**

Where a student has reached the maximum duration of study allowable for their programme, the Board has the authority to decide to take action out with regulation and allow an exceptional, appropriate extension to this duration.

## **Post-Progression Board Resolution**

86. During periods in which Progression Boards are taking place, meetings of the Academic Panel (Taught) take place at least weekly. These meetings enable consideration and decision-making in respect of recommendations made by Progression Boards.
87. Where a progression consideration is exceptionally complex and the Progression Board concludes that it cannot make a decision within the scope of its responsibilities, it may refer the matter to the Academic Panel (Taught) for decision-making. Where this is the case, the Progression Board will be required to provide the Academic Panel (Taught) with concise detail on its consideration of the matter, its views on a potentially appropriate decision, and the reasons for the referral.
88. The Terms of Reference for the Academic Panel (Taught) set out that in circumstances where a matter is exceptionally complex and the Panel is unable to make a decision, the matter will be decided upon by the Academic Registrar and/or the Deputy Principal (Education).



## Faculty Boards

89. Faculty Boards provide quality assurance at the faculty level by undertaking detailed scrutiny of the outcomes and outputs of the faculty's assessment arrangements ensuring consistency of practice and taking steps to enhance assessment arrangements or practice in response to any outcomes of the scrutiny. Faculty boards do not make decisions on marks or awards and do not replicate the business of either module or awards boards. Faculties are required to convene a meeting of the faculty board at least once per year.

### Faculty Board Membership

90. The Faculty Board should normally include the following staff:
- The Dean of Faculty or Faculty Chief Examiner (Chair)
  - The Faculty Chief Examiner if not included as (i) above
  - All Divisional Chief Examiners for the Faculty
  - The Faculty Associate Dean of Learning and Teaching
91. The University Chief Examiner, Deputy Principal (Education) and Deputy Principal (Student Experience) are all further ex-officio members of Faculty Boards. None are routinely expected or required to attend meetings of the Board but have the discretion to attend as they wish. Where any choose to attend a meeting of the Board, they will do so as members and will therefore contribute to decision-making.
92. A member of Student and Faculty Operations (SFO), Faculty Professional Services staff will be present at Faculty Board meetings. Their role is to provide administrative support, workflow management and guidance on consistency of Board practice. As with all Boards of Examiners attendees and members, they must have an appropriate understanding of relevant academic regulations, policy and procedure in order to fulfil their role. However, the SFO staff attendee is not a member of the Board and will not provide advice to the Board on decisions or participate in decision-making.
93. All members of the Board should have access to the information necessary to fulfil the remit specified below. This information may include, but not be limited to, extenuating circumstances, assessment and award trend data.

### Faculty Board Remit and Responsibilities

94. Faculty Board will:
- review and evaluate the decisions of the faculty's Extenuating Circumstances Sub-Board, Module, Awards and Progression Boards to consider consistency in assessment and award and the impact of the University's assessment and policy regulations.
  - consider the External Examiners' reports, and responses, in order to identify patterns or points of recommendation.
  - agree arrangements to share best practice across divisions/subject areas.
  - consider factors external to the institution that may impact on the business of the Boards of Examiners.

- Submit an annual report on the assessment process and practice within the faculty to the Faculty Education and Student Experience Committee and the University Assessment and Attainment Sub-Committee for consideration.

## **Boards of Examiners Records**

95. The Faculty Professional Services representative supporting the Board of Examiners will be responsible for preparing the agenda and minute for meetings, and ensuring that records of meetings are robust, and in line with University requirements set out in this policy and the institutional templates for agendas and minutes.
96. The Chair of a Board of Examiners is required to work collaboratively with the Faculty Professional Services representative in ensuring that robust records are prepared for each meeting and that as the Chair, they are content for follow-up action to proceed as appropriate on the basis of the decisions and outcomes captured in the records.
97. Agendas and minutes for Boards of Examiners meetings must be prepared in line with the University templates to consistently ensure all items of business that are required to be covered are documented and recorded appropriately.
98. The minute of each meeting should formally capture that the Chair of the Board, and in respect of Awards Boards at least one External Examiner, confirm that decisions have been reached in accordance with the policies and regulations of the University. If an External Examiner is unwilling to endorse the decisions of an Awards Board, a written statement from the External Examiner citing their reasons for this should be sent to Academic Registry via [quality@stir.ac.uk](mailto:quality@stir.ac.uk). The minute of each meeting should be noted at the next formal meeting of the relevant Board, along with any matters arising from or action taken since the previous meeting.
99. Immediately on completion of a Board of Examiners meeting, the decisions made should be submitted as appropriate via the relevant report/schedule/process to ensure that required follow-up action can be expedited.
100. Minutes from Boards of Examiners meetings are stored confidentially in a central electronic repository managed by Student and Faculty Operations, to which nominated members of Academic Registry staff have consistent access. Other records are retained within University systems with all relevant staff members having access as appropriate to their role.
101. All records submitted must be stored confidentially and in accordance with the relevant records retention policy. Such records are strictly confidential and not disclosable under Freedom of Information.