

# SENATE REGULATION 4: Assessment of Students on Taught Programmes

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### **Prefatory Note:**

*Senate Regulation 6 covers matters relating to student misconduct, including plagiarism and other academic offences.*

*This regulation applies only to summative assessment, defined as “any assessment which is taken into account when considering progression or award”.*

## **SECTION A: ASSESSMENT**

1. Each student shall be assessed in accordance with the approved programme specification and associated modular/assessment block outlines.
2. Students are expected to present themselves for all summative examinations and tests and submit all other summative assessments which contribute to a modular/assessment block grade according to the published schedule.
3. Departments should refer to the Senate-approved generic grade descriptors and relevant learning outcomes when developing assessment criteria and examination guidance for student work, which must be published to both students and staff and made available to External Examiners.
4. All summative assessments shall be subject to the approval of the appropriate Panel of Examiners, following scrutiny by a group designated by the Panel. With the exception of reassessments, approval of an External Examiner must be sought for all assessments which contribute to the classification of an award, including any relevant pass/fail assessments. However, the External Examiner's approval is required for Level 4 assessments in case of new programmes. Changes proposed by the External Examiner(s) should only be rejected with good reason after discussion with him/her. The Panel should seek assurance that assessments:
  - a) are expressed clearly;
  - b) adequately assess the intended learning outcomes;
  - c) are in accordance with the overall assessment strategy for the programme;
  - d) are of an appropriate standard;
  - e) are associated with appropriate assessment criteria.

### **Coursework**

5. Coursework, including the Dissertation and Final Year Project, shall be completed by the student in accordance with the requirements published in the approved programme specification and associated modular/assessment block outlines and to notified deadline(s).
6. Where a summatively assessed task requires a student to engage in groupwork, the summative assessment shall be of each individual student's achievement of the defined learning outcomes. Guidance on the design and implementation of summative assessment in groupwork is provided by the University.
7. Wherever possible and appropriate, candidates shall be identified on all assessed work by student number, and not name, in order to preserve anonymity.
8. A student who fails to submit any required coursework by the defined deadline shall be subject to the penalties as defined in the University's Policy for Coursework Submission.

### **University scheduled examinations**

9. Examinations, which may include practical work conducted under examination conditions, shall be held according to a timetable which shall be available to students normally not less than four weeks before the main examination period is due to begin. The timetable shall show the date, time, duration and location of each examination.
10. Examination papers and all examination stationery shall be held in a secure environment until the time for their release to the candidates.
11. An authorised member of staff shall be responsible for notifying candidates of any materials and equipment that are permitted in the examination room. This shall also be specified in the rubric of the examination paper. Candidates are required to provide their own writing implements.
12. The author(s) of an examination paper shall normally be available at the examination venue for immediate consultation before, and for at least the first half-hour of, the examination. The author(s) shall further remain contactable for the duration of the examination.
13. Examinations shall normally be supervised. Invigilation arrangements are set out in the University Examinations Policy. Candidates who fail to comply with the instructions given by the invigilator or who otherwise disturb or impede the examination may be required to leave the examination room by the invigilator who shall submit a report to an authorised member of staff. Such a candidate may be subject to disciplinary action under Senate Regulation 6.
14. Candidates shall be identified on examination scripts by student number, and not name, to preserve anonymity.
15. A student who does not undertake any test or examination indicated in the published schedule, shall be deemed to have failed the assessment(s), in the absence of accepted extenuating circumstances.

### **College-scheduled examinations**

16. Colleges shall publish a schedule of examinations and other assessment events which are not scheduled within the University examination sessions. Any such examinations and assessments shall comply with this Regulation and the University Examinations Policy.

### **Viva Voce**

17. Unless approved as part of the assessment method for an individual modular/assessment block, a viva voce may not be used during either undergraduate or taught postgraduate programmes to determine progression or award classification. A viva voce may be used as part of the procedures for determining whether a piece of work is that of the student.

### **Reassessment**

18. An authorised member of staff shall be responsible, in accordance with the decision of the Board of Examiners, for notifying students in good time of the arrangements for any reassessments and for making provision for such arrangements as the setting of questions, location, invigilation and marking of work.

## **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 Associate Director (Education Operations)/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 accepted extenuating circumstances by Boards of Examiners should ensure that students are as far as possible not disadvantaged in their

assessment as a result of the event which occurred, while also preserving the integrity of standards and awards.

**27.** Submissions from students concerning extenuating circumstances are reviewed by an Extenuating Circumstances Panel, normally chaired by a Senior Tutor. The Chair and members (minimum 3) of the Panel shall be appointed by the Head of Department, and supported by a secretary.

**28.** An Extenuating Circumstances Panel shall determine whether a submission made by a student concerning extenuating circumstances should be accepted. Where extenuating circumstances are accepted, the Panel will report to the relevant Board(s) of Examiners (with the student's name anonymised) the assessments affected, and the likely impact on the student's performance.

**29.** An Extenuating Circumstances Panel may exercise discretion to a considerable extent in determining whether submissions concerning extenuating circumstances should be accepted. In reaching a decision they should operate according to the following principles:

- An acceptable extenuating circumstance should be unforeseen;
- Students should provide as much supporting evidence as possible;
- Students are required to describe the impact of the extenuating circumstance on them and on the assessment concerned ;
- Students who submit retrospective extenuating circumstances are required to set out their reason(s) for attempting the assessment(s) in question; +
- Requests for extenuating circumstances to be considered shall normally be submitted through the defined process.

**30.** The adjustment of deadlines for the submission of assessed work affected by extenuating circumstances shall be determined in accordance with the University's Policy for Coursework Submission.

**31.** All information of a personal nature relating to a student and disclosed to an Extenuating Circumstances Panel is confidential to the Panel. All documentation should be kept in line with the University's Records Management Policy.

### **Responsibilities of students relating to extenuating circumstances**

**32.** Responsibility for notifying the University of possible extenuating circumstances lies with the student, who should make their submission in written form to an authorised member of staff, normally **not later than five working days after the assessment event or assessment submission deadline to which it pertains.**

**33.** Students should not wait until grades or marks have been issued to them before submitting a case for extenuating circumstances as neither the Board of Examiners nor the Academic Appeals Committee is bound to take into account extenuating circumstances submitted more than five working days after the assessed activity to which they refer.

**34.** Submissions by students concerning their extenuating circumstances should, wherever possible, be supported by documentary evidence which can be verified by the University through contact with a third party. The University may routinely determine to confirm the authenticity of documents by contacting directly the organisation which issued

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 OF EXAMINERS**

### **Meetings of Panels and Boards of Examiners**

**43.** Each meeting of a Panel or Board of Examiners shall have a formal agenda, which should normally be circulated in advance, together with the minutes of the previous meeting. The relevant Senate Regulations and any regulations approved by Senate for individual programmes shall be available at the meeting.

**44.** The Chair of the Panel or Board of Examiners shall be responsible for ensuring that the Panel or Board has available to it full and clear documentation, as defined by the University, to allow the meeting to conduct its business effectively. Grade/mark sheets shall identify individual students by student number only; the names of students shall not be included on the paperwork for either Panels or Boards. The Chair and the Chair of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel, or in their absence a named Panel representative, may have grade/mark sheets that contain student names.

- 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 comments on the performance of candidates and the overall standard of the programmes or modular/assessment blocks, prior to the relevant meeting, so that his/her views may be taken into account. The paperwork for the meeting shall be sent to the External Examiner for information after the meeting.
- 50.** In reaching its decisions and recommendations, the Panel or Board shall pay particular regard to the views of the External Examiner(s) in any discussion regarding grades/marks or awards. Final responsibility for any decisions or recommendations rests with the Panel or Board as a whole.

### **Panels of Examiners**

- 51.** The Dean of College shall be responsible for establishing appropriate Panel(s) of Examiners for each subject grouping or cognate group of modular/assessment blocks contributing to a programme leading to an award of the University. The relevant Panel is responsible for determining the grades/marks to be assigned to individual students who have attempted the assessment for each assessment block.
- 52.** Each Panel shall comprise a Chair and Deputy Chair appointed by the Vice-Provost and Dean of College from among the academic staff; internal examiners (relevant modular/assessment block leaders); internal moderators; and External Examiner(s) appointed by Senate. The Panel is quorate and competent to transact its business with representation as described above.
- 53.** The Panel of Examiners shall be responsible to Senate for:
- a) notifying all relevant Boards of the date by which recommended grades/marks will be available;
  - b) considering the academic performance of students on each modular/assessment block within its purview;
  - c) confirming the integrity and fairness of the assessment process, including the marking/grading and moderation, for the modular/assessment blocks within its purview, taking into account records and reports of the assessment process;



- 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 accepted extenuating circumstances, undergraduate progression between Levels and recommendations for award.

**57.** Each Board shall comprise a Chair independent of the delivery of the programme(s) under consideration; the Chair or nominated member of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel; the Chair or Deputy Chair of all relevant Panels; relevant Programme or Course Directors; and one or more External Examiners appointed by Senate. The Board is quorate and competent to transact its business with representation as described above.

**58.** The Board of Examiners shall be responsible to Senate for decisions to be taken about the academic performance and progression of students, including, where appropriate, recommendations to Senate for awards and their classification in accordance with relevant Regulations and approved programme specifications. Senate, or its Academic Appeals Committee or a Misconduct or Professional Suitability Panel may require a Board of Examiners to reconsider a decision or recommendation in respect of a student or students.

**59.** The Board of Examiners shall meet as required, but at least annually, to consider the progress of all students registered for its programmes and, as appropriate, their progression, reassessment and award.

**60.** A Board of Examiners may:

- in light of the report of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel, take action under Regulation 4.41 or 4.45 above in respect of accepted extenuating circumstances;

- 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;
- 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 with the proceedings or decisions or recommendations of the Board, as soon as possible after the meeting of the Board.

**62.** Decisions of Boards constitute the recommendations to Senate for awards and shall be recorded by the Board. This list shall be the definitive record against which results are entered into the Student Record, and notified to students. A record of the meeting of a Board of Examiners shall be lodged with the Chair of the Board and the Department and must be presented to members at the next meeting.

**63.** Recommendations to Senate, or other decisions about the performance and progress of students, may normally only be made at a meeting of the Board, but the Board may empower the Chair, in consultation with the appropriate External Examiner(s), to take such action as he or she sees fit at a later date where decisions are deferred in accordance with these Regulations.

**64.** Where a student is eligible for an intermediate award, the decision to make such a recommendation to Senate may, if no meeting of the Board is scheduled within a reasonable time, be made by the Chair of the appropriate Board of Examiners and reported to the next meeting of the Board.

**65.** The proceedings of a Board of Examiners shall be confidential to members of the Board, the Senate and other members of staff permitted to attend the meeting concerned. The Academic Appeals Committee, appointed by Senate and the Misconduct and Professional Suitability Board appointed by Senate in accordance with Senate Regulation 6 may require that any material presented to the Board, or any notes or record of its proceedings, be made available to their members to assist in the academic appeals or the misconduct and professional suitability processes.

### **Publication of results**

**66.** An authorised member of staff shall notify each student of his or her confirmed results for each modular/assessment block and the decisions or recommendations of the Board, as soon as possible after the meeting of the Board.

## **SECTION D: EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

### **Appointment**

**67.** Senate shall appoint at least one External Examiner for any credit-bearing programme offered by the University under the Senate Regulations. The number of External Examiners appointed to a programme or group of programmes and associated awards shall be determined by the need to provide adequate external scrutiny across the range of subjects within a programme.

**68.** An External Examiner shall normally be appointed for a period of four years, but the appointment may be extended by Senate for one further year. An extension would be appropriate if, for example:

- a) the programme is new;
- b) the programme has alternate year intakes;
- c) some overlap between incoming and outgoing External Examiners would be helpful.

### **Criteria for appointment**

**69.** Each External Examiner shall normally be a senior member of the academic staff of another higher education institution, member of a professional body with appropriate standing, or member of another recognised authority in the appropriate discipline. External Examiners should be drawn from a wide variety of institutional or professional contexts and traditions in order that the University's programmes benefit from wide-ranging external scrutiny.

**70.** All academic External Examiners should have recent learning, teaching and assessment experience relevant to the level of the programme for which they are being appointed, and an understanding of academic standards in other institutions sufficient to enable them to assist with national comparisons of standards.

**71.** There must be at least one academic External Examiner appointed for each undergraduate or taught postgraduate programme. Where necessary, External Examiners with professional expertise and experience should be appointed to ensure that the team as a whole is able to discharge their duties.

**72.** In considering nominations for appointment as External Examiners, Senate shall also have regard to the following criteria:

- a) External Examiners may not be current students or members of staff of the University nor lecturers at the University for the subject(s) or programme(s) to which they are appointed. Former staff of the University may not be appointed as External Examiner for the University within a period of five years immediately following the cessation of their contract of employment with the University. Former students of the University may not be appointed as External Examiner for the University within a period of five years from completion of their studies at the University;
- b) Examiners should not be over-extended by their external examining duties;
- c) If the proposed examiner has no previous examining experience at the appropriate level, the application should provide evidence of external examining experience at another level, extensive internal examining experience, or other relevant and recent experience likely to support the External Examiner role;
- d) The proposed External Examiner should present evidence of relevant current expertise in the subject and a current understanding of quality and standards issues in higher education which is commensurate with the role;

- e) An interval of at least five years must separate any two periods of appointment as an External Examiner to the University.

**73.** Normally Senate will not approve a nomination where it would result in:

- a) there being more than one examiner from the same institution in the team of External Examiners;
- b) reciprocal external examining between programmes or Departments in two institutions;
- c) replacement of an outgoing External Examiner by an individual from the same institution or an External Examiner from an institution which has been the source of Examiners for taught programmes in the subject area in the recent past (normally five years).

### **Process for appointment**

**74.** The proposed External Examiner should be consulted informally by the Head of Department before a nomination is submitted, or an extension to a period of service is proposed, to the Chair of the College Education Committee.

**75.** Formal recommendations for the appointment of External Examiners, or for the extension of a period of service, should be submitted by the Chair of the College Education Committee on the appropriate nomination form to the Quality Assurance Office at least three months before the start date.

**76.** Nominations are considered in the first instance by the Registrar (or equivalent officer) or their delegated nominee, and then if deemed appropriate submitted to the Provost for approval on behalf of Senate.

**77.** Following Senate approval, the Registrar (or equivalent officer) or their delegated nominee will write on behalf of Senate formally appointing the External Examiner.

**78.** Departments are required to make available to newly appointed External Examiners subject and programme specific information, to include:

- a) information about the Department e.g. staff roles and responsibilities, list of programmes, noting those that are accredited, students numbers etc.;
- b) relevant handbooks;
- c) programme specifications and modular/assessment block outlines;
- d) the most recent programme annual monitoring review and Academic Programme Review report for the programme and Department;
- e) the name, details and responsibilities of other external examiners appointed to the programme if applicable;
- f) a set of examination papers and coursework titles for previous session;
- g) generic grade descriptors and assessment criteria/mark schemes;
- h) the previous External Examiners' report for the programme(s);

- 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 examiner has experience.

**81.** The University also expects External Examiners to provide informative comment and recommendations on:

- a) Good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment;
- b) Opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students.

**82.** External Examiners should have access to any available material they deem necessary to reach the judgments required by their position. External Examiners are requested to discuss the type of information or materials they would need with an authorised member of staff in the Department at an early stage.

### **External Moderation of student assessments**

**83.** Departments must agree a schedule for the scrutiny of assessment with the External Examiner(s). With the exception of reassessments, the following should be made available to the External Examiners, ensuring sufficient time for external scrutiny:

- A sample of assessed student work for blocks which contribute to the classification of an award, including any relevant pass/fail assessments.
- A sample of Level 4 assessments in case of new programmes.
- Full set of provisional grades/marks for all students attempting the assessment;
- All internal moderation or double marking records.

- 84.** External Examiners are not required to study each piece of work in detail, but are required to satisfy themselves that the work is of the appropriate standard, comparable with that of other United Kingdom higher education institutions and that the marks assigned reflect the published marking criteria and intended learning outcomes.
- 85.** The total number of sample pieces of assessed work sent to an External Examiner in each academic year should not exceed 320 individual pieces. Departments will normally make no less than 10% of assessments for each modular/assessment block available to the External Examiner(s) except where the sample size would result in a sample size less than ten, where everything would be made available. Samples of work made available to the External Examiner(s) for a modular/assessment block should represent the full range of student achievement.
- 86.** The External Examiner(s) should review no less than 20% of the postgraduate taught dissertations or undergraduate final year project reports, unless the cohort size is 10 or fewer, in which case all assessments should be made available. The sample should represent the full range of student achievement.
- 87.** External Examiners should be consulted about the external moderation of non-written assessments. They should be invited to attend any live assessment events, displays etc., or should be offered the opportunity to see video recordings. External Examiners should receive proper briefings and explicit marking criteria/schemes for such assessments.
- 88.** An External Examiner may be required to moderate the assessment of students' performance during their assessed school experience, clinical or other professional work-placement, irrespective of the location.
- 89.** All assessed material should be available to the External Examiners on the day of the meeting of the Panel, or on request.
- 90.** Examiners may also be:
- a) consulted about proposed changes to the curriculum or the Department;
  - b) invited to visit the Department to talk to staff and students outside the examination periods.

### **The role of External Examiners at Panels and Boards**

- 91.** Each External Examiner shall be notified in advance of, and are expected to attend, meetings of any Panel or Board of Examiners of which he/she is a member, and are entitled to take part in any vote(s) that should arise as part of the business of the meetings. Final responsibility for any decisions or recommendations rests with the Panel or Board as a whole.
- 92.** The responsibilities of an External Examiner at a meeting of a Panel of Examiners are to:
- a) fully participate in discharging the responsibilities of the Panel as set out in 4.56;
  - b) comment on specific assessment tasks;
  - c) contribute to the quality assurance of the assessment process as it relates to individual modular/assessment blocks.

**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.

### **Reporting**

**98.** External Examiners are required to submit a report annually to the Vice-Chancellor using the approved form. Departments are required to respond formally to External Examiners reports, through the approved process.

**99.** A scale of fees for External Examiners' duties is issued periodically by Senate. No payment of fees due shall be made until the annual report has been received by the Vice-Chancellor.

**100.** An External Examiner may also write in confidence to the Vice-Chancellor at any time during his or her period of appointment about any matter relating to his or her duties.

### **Termination of Appointment**

**101.** An External Examiner may terminate their appointment at any time by writing to the Vice-Chancellor.

**102.** The Vice-Chancellor may terminate the appointment of an External Examiner at any time. Premature termination of the appointment may take place if the External Examiner fails to fulfil the responsibilities of the role of the External Examiner as defined by the University. A letter terminating the appointment will be sent by the Registrar.

**103.** Termination of appointments will be reported to Senate at the next opportunity.

## **APPENDIX A: MBBS Programme**

- A1.** As noted throughout this Regulation, paragraphs identified with a + do not apply to the Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) programme. This Appendix defines specific regulations relating to the MBBS.
- A2.** All references in these regulations to Head of Department apply to the Dean of Brunel Medical School.
- A3.** Brunel Medical School will have an Academic Progress Panel in place of a Panel of Examiners. All references in these regulations to Panels of Examiners will apply to the Academic Progress Panel.
- A4.** The Dean of Brunel Medical School shall be responsible for establishing an Academic Progress Panel for each cohort of students. The Panel is responsible for determining the grades/marks to be assigned to individual students who have attempted the assessment for each assessment block.
- A5.** Each Academic Progress Panel shall comprise a Chair and Deputy Chair appointed by the Dean of Brunel Medical School from among the academic staff; internal examiners (relevant modular/assessment block leaders); internal moderators; and External Examiner(s) appointed by Senate. The Panel is quorate and competent to transact its business with representation as described above.
- A6.** All reference in these regulations to the Senior Tutor apply to the Director of Medical Education.
- A7.** In the case of accepted extenuating circumstances, the Board of Examiners will normally only allow a new attempt for the relevant assessment in order to avoid a repeat year or withdrawal from the course, not to improve the academic profile of the student.
- A8.** Extenuating circumstances do not apply to team-based learning (TBL); any absences are subject to the BMS Attendance and Leave of Absence policy.

*(Updated September 2024)*