

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.
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 exceptional 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 Assessment and Curriculum Office (AC)/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: EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

This section should be read in conjunction with the detailed guidance issued to students (Exceptional Circumstances – Guidance for Students) and staff (Exceptional Circumstances – Guidance for EC Team 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.

An 'exceptional 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 exceptional circumstances by Boards of Examiners should ensure that students are as far as possible not disadvantaged in their result of the event which occurred, while also preserving the integrity of standards and awards.

26. Submissions from students concerning exceptional circumstances are reviewed by an Exceptional Circumstances Team.

27. An Exceptional Circumstances Team shall determine whether a submission made by a student concerning exceptional circumstances should be accepted. Where exceptional circumstances are accepted, the Team 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.

28. An Exceptional Circumstances Team may exercise discretion to a considerable extent in determining whether submissions concerning exceptional circumstances should be accepted. In reaching a decision they should operate according to the following principles: • An acceptable exceptional circumstance should be unforeseen;

- Students are required to describe the impact of the exceptional circumstance on them and on the assessment concerned;
- Students who submit retrospective exceptional circumstances are required to set out their reason(s) for attempting the assessment(s) in question; +
- Requests for exceptional circumstances to be considered shall normally be submitted through the defined process.

29. The adjustment of deadlines for the submission of assessed work affected by exceptional circumstances shall be determined in accordance with the University's Policy for

Coursework Submission.

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

Responsibilities of students relating to exceptional circumstances

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

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

Submissions by students concerning their exceptional circumstances do not need to be supported by documentary evidence. Where a student wishes to provide such evidence, this might 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.

33. Students whose exceptional circumstances are private and sensitive, are encouraged to discuss their situation a member of the Exceptional Circumstances Team, in confidence, who will advise on the appropriate course of action.

Procedures of Boards of Examiners relating to Exceptional Circumstances

34. Full consideration shall be given to reports on accepted exceptional circumstances referred by an Exceptional Circumstances Team 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.

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

36. The existence of exceptional 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)

37. The Board of Examiners may determine to take any of the following actions in respect of accepted exceptional 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. If the reassessment is to be taken as a return in the following academic year, the attempt is to be uncapped, with all assessment elements to be taken and the new attempt, not the best attempt, will be the grade conferred;
- e) Exceptionally, the Board may assign grades to elements of assessment where exceptional 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.

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

39. 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

Panels and Boards of Examiners

40. Colleges shall appoint Panels of Examiners for a programme or group of programmes which shall be responsible for determining the grades/marks to be assigned to individual students who have attempted the assessment for each assessment block. Each Panel of Examiners shall operate in accordance with the University's Panels and Boards of Examiners Protocol.

41. The University shall appoint Boards of Examiners for a programme or group of programmes which shall be responsible to Senate for decisions to be taken about the academic performance and progression of students. Each Board of Examiners shall operate in accordance with the University's Panel and Board of Examiners Protocol.

Publication of results

42. An authorised member of staff shall be responsible for ensuring that students are notified of their 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

- 43.** 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.
- 44.** 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.
- 45.** The criteria for the appointment of External Examiners, and their roles and responsibilities can be found in the University's External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy.
- 46.** 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).
- 47.** Following Senate approval, the Associate Director of Academic and Student Administration (or equivalent officer) or their delegated nominee will write on behalf of Senate formally appointing the External Examiner.
- 48.** 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.
- 49.** 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.

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 exceptional circumstances, the Board of Examiners may allow a new attempt for the relevant assessment.
- A8.** Exceptional circumstances do not apply to team-based learning (TBL); any absences are subject to the BMS Attendance and Leave of Absence policy.

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