

Chapter 7

Assessment: Taught Programmes

7. ASSESSMENT: TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

7.1 Introduction

- (1) This chapter sets out the University's approach to the assessment of students on taught programmes of study and on the taught element of research programmes of study. The regulations and procedures described take into account the Expectations and Indicators of Chapters B6, B7 and B9 of the *UK Quality Code*. They are reviewed and, where appropriate, amended on an annual basis as part of the annual review of the Academic Quality Handbook.
- (2) The chapter is organised into several broad sections as follows:

Sections 7.2-7.13 set out the University's general approach to assessment and the regulations governing matters such as marking and the provision of feedback.

Sections 7.14-7.15 set out the regulations governing External Examiners and Examining Boards.
- (3) Regulations relating to extenuating circumstances, compensatory measures, unfair practice, academic appeals and other matters relating to the assessment of individual students are provided in Chapter 13 of this Handbook.

7.2 Principles

- (1) Rigorous assessment procedures are essential for the maintenance of appropriate academic standards.
- (2) Assessment is used to provide feedback to students on their performance, to promote learning and to determine performance. All modules have an element of assessment to determine performance.
- (3) Assessment methods and strategies are designed to ensure that achievement of the learning outcomes of the module/programme can be demonstrated, and that all students are provided with equal opportunities to demonstrate such achievement.
- (4) Modules and programmes have aims which reflect the appropriate academic level, and have clearly stated learning outcomes specifying what the student should be able to do or understand on successful completion of the module/programme. The level of the programme and qualification awarded is consistent with the guidance outlined in the *UK Quality Code*. The level of the module is consistent with level descriptors specified in the *Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales*.
- (5) Assessment methods and strategies are designed to motivate students by providing them with opportunities to review, demonstrate and consolidate what they have learnt at particular stages of their programme of study. Students are provided with opportunities to experience a range of different kinds of assessment. Feedback on assessment performance provides students with information on their strengths and weaknesses, with the aim of helping them to improve the quality of their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- (6) Assessment methods have assessment criteria which are used to measure student achievement and which demonstrate reliability and fairness in the allocation of marks and grades.
- (7) Students are provided with a clear statement of the assessment methods and criteria for each module on which they are enrolled.

- (8) Assessment is undertaken only by appropriately qualified staff who have been adequately trained and briefed, and given regular opportunities to update and enhance their expertise.
- (9) External examiners are appointed for all provision that leads to an award.
- (10) Assessment regulations are published in a full and accessible form within the Academic Quality Handbook and are made available to students, staff, collaborative partner institutions and external examiners.
- (11) Assessment regulations include regulations to deal thoroughly, fairly and effectively with individual student needs in relation to assessment and with problems that arise during the assessment process.
- (12) The suitability of assessment methods is monitored annually as part of the Annual Programme Review process. The validity of assessment regulations is monitored annually as part of the annual review of the Academic Quality Handbook.
- (13) Where programmes are offered in partnership with other institutions, memoranda of agreement confirm that assessment and examination arrangements are the responsibility of the University.

7.3 Responsibilities

Responsibilities in relation to assessment are as follows:

(1) Responsibilities of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) carries overall responsibility for ensuring that the University's approach to assessment is appropriate, enabling students to demonstrate achievement at the required level and the University to demonstrate that academic standards are set and maintained. Within this overall remit, specific responsibilities are to ensure that:

- i) The University's assessment regulations are published.
- ii) Key dates relating to assessment and the publication of results are published.
- iii) Staff are familiar with the assessment regulations and are briefed on key changes.
- iv) Arrangements are made to facilitate the assessment of students with a disability or long-term impairment.
- v) In cases where tutors have a personal or professional association with a student, arrangements are made to ensure that this does not in any way create an advantage or disadvantage to the student in any part of the assessment process.
- vi) Students are made aware that all marks are provisional until confirmed by a Progression/Award Examining Board.
- vii) Students have access to their results in a timely manner.
- viii) Following successful completion of a programme of study, students are provided with a certificate documenting their award.
- ix) Assessment feedback reports and samples of coursework and examination scripts are archived in accordance with the University's policy.
- x) There is full consideration of, and response to, written reports of all external examiners.

(2) Responsibilities of Deans of Faculty

The Deans of Faculty are responsible for ensuring that assessment is carried out appropriately and that the University's assessment regulations are implemented in full across their respective Faculties. Within this overall remit, specific responsibilities are to ensure that:

- i) All students within the Faculty are provided with the information listed in Section 7.4.
- ii) Assessment is undertaken only by appropriately qualified staff, with new tutors receiving guidance and support, through mentoring, in order to conduct assessment appropriately.

- iii) Assessments are prepared in accordance with the University's requirements.
- iv) The Faculty Board receives, considers and, if necessary, amends, annual agreements with module external examiners concerning external examination tasks to be undertaken during the academic year. Marks or other assessment outcomes are allocated in accordance with clear and consistent assessment criteria, classification descriptors and marking schemes.
- v) The University's regulations on marking are implemented consistently.
- vi) The process of considering and responding to written reports of all external examiners is completed in accordance with the regulations.
- vii) There has been confirmation of who will undertake the responsibilities assigned to Heads of School and/or Programme Directors (see Section 7.3 (3)).

(3) Responsibilities of Heads of School/ Programme Directors

Heads of School/Programme Directors are responsible for ensuring that the University's assessment regulations are implemented in full at programme level and in particular that:

- i) All students on the programme are provided with the information listed in Section 7.4.
- ii) Assessment tasks are in accordance with the Programme of Study Handbooks and are scheduled with due regard to student workload.
- iii) Arrangements are made with the relevant module external examiner(s) to agree and carry out the external examination tasks for the academic year.
- iv) Draft assessment tasks at every level that contributes towards an award are sent for approval by the relevant module external examiner before their distribution to students; and that there is an appropriate response to any comments made by the module external examiner.
- v) Appropriate arrangements are made for assessment of the work of students in circumstances where, by reason of illness or other absence, a tutor is unable to meet the deadline for return of work.
- vi) The University's regulations on marking are implemented and appropriate moderation arrangements are in place.
- vii) Samples of assessed work are selected for scrutiny by the module external examiner(s); and that a full list showing all the marks awarded for the module for each assessment component for every student is provided with the sample.
- viii) All marks are submitted to Registry in accordance with the University's published deadlines and in the required format.
- ix) Appropriate arrangements are in place for feedback to students on assessed work.
- x) Requests by students for credit exemption are processed in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 10 of this handbook.
- xi) There is appropriate liaison with Student Services in respect of students with a disability or long-term impairment, the regulations for which are set out in Section 13.1 of Chapter 13 of this handbook.
- xii) Potential module external examiners are approached for possible future nomination and service.

Where appropriate, a Dean of Faculty may determine that the above responsibilities of Heads of School/Programme Directors are undertaken by other designated officers within the Faculty.

(4) Responsibilities of Tutors

Tutors are responsible for ensuring that they adhere fully to the University's assessment regulations and in particular that:

- i) Students' work is marked and feedback is given in accordance with the timescale specified by the University (see 7.12); and that written permission is sought from the

Head of School in the event that marking and feedback cannot be completed within this timescale.

- ii) Assessment tasks, including those for re-assessment, are submitted to the Registry on the template provided for that purpose and in accordance with the published deadlines; and that the Head of School is informed in writing in the event that any difficulty in adhering to the deadlines is foreseen.
- iii) Clear guidance is given in advance to students, where appropriate, regarding the use of dictionaries or any other additional material and equipment in examinations and that this information is included on the relevant examination paper.
- iv) Samples of assessed work are selected and kept for moderation by the relevant module external examiner in advance of the relevant Examining Board, and for subsequent archiving.
- v) They attend Examining Boards as required.

(5) Responsibilities of Students

Students are responsible for ensuring that:

- i) They are correctly enrolled on their programme of study (including re-enrolment for each academic year after initial enrolment).
- ii) They read and understand the information provided about how they will be assessed, how their final award will be determined, and the action to take in the event that they experience difficulties relating to assessment.
- iii) They attempt every assessment component of a module.
- iv) They attend examinations and other assessment events, including re-examination and re-assessment events, as required; and that they are available to attend oral examinations if required to do so within the published dates of terms or semesters, or other date notified to them in advance.
- v) They submit work for assessment as required and in accordance with the required format and deadline.
- vi) They inform their School or Student Services of any disability or long term impairment which might require special provisions for assessment.
- vii) They familiarise themselves with the University's definition of unfair practice and undertake assessments in a manner that does not attempt to gain unfair advantage.
- viii) They follow the prescribed procedures in the event that they experience extenuating circumstances or wish to appeal against the decision of an Examining Board.
- ix) They keep a copy of work submitted for assessment wherever feasible.
- x) They make their work available for sampling for external examining purposes and for archiving.

7.4 Information to be provided for students

All students must be provided with information relating to assessment as follows:

- i) The regulations relating to assessment are to be found in the Academic Quality Handbook
- ii) The learning outcomes to be assessed in each module.
- iii) The assessment criteria to be used, including descriptors of expected standards of student achievement, what is expected in order to pass, and what is expected for the award of a particular grade or classification.
- iv) The methods and dates of assessment tasks, including information about the format of examination papers, and the structure and length of written and other assignments.
- v) Where group working is to be assessed, the information about the methods to be used to apportion marks must be provided.
- vi) A schedule of assessment tasks.
- vii) An indication of how and when marking will take place.
- viii) An indication of how they will receive feedback.

7.5 Assessment Submission

- (1) Faculties must explain clearly to students the arrangements for submission of work for assessment and the deadlines by which submission is required. Unless specified otherwise, the deadline for submission will be 23:59 (time zone where the assessment is set) on the submission date.
- (2) Faculties must ensure that student work that is submitted for assessment is kept in a secure and safe environment until after the meeting of the relevant Examining Board and thereafter is archived in accordance with University policy (see Section 7.13).
- (3) All assessments except formal examinations and assessments of a practical nature must be submitted electronically, normally through the University's VLE. Tutors must ensure that all involved with the assessment process have sufficient knowledge to enable them to use the electronic submission facilities, together with the facilities for grading and feedback. Where submission cannot be via electronic methods or where there are other reasons for alternative submission, the actual method of submission must be clearly stated in the assessment specification or module handbook, including details of where and how to submit. Where students submit work for assessment in hard copy, they must be given a receipt. The receipt must be signed and dated by an authorised member of the Faculty and a copy must be retained by the Faculty.
- (4) In the event that the University formally announces that the electronic submission system is not available on the submission date, the submission deadline will be extended by 24 hours. In such cases, students must not use alternative methods to submit their work. In the event that the University formally announces that one or some or all of the University's campuses are exceptionally closed due to extreme weather conditions or other reasons, students will be informed of any adjustments to submission deadlines or to arrangements for formal examinations and assessments of a practical nature. The University's approach to assessments due during religious festivals is set out in the University's Guidance on Assessment during Religious Festivals, which is published on the student-facing policy section on MyDay.
- (5) Late submission penalties must be applied to work that is not submitted by the published deadline. Work which is submitted up to 1 week late will be capped at the minimum pass mark for the Level for first attempts and will be awarded a mark of 0% for re-assessment. Late submission penalties may be lifted only with the approval of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel (see Chapter 13 of this handbook).
- (6) Work submitted more than 1 week after the submission deadline will be considered as an invalid submission, will not be marked, and must be recorded as a non-submission.

7.6 Marking

(1) Marking principles

- (i) Marks for individual assessment tasks that contribute to an award must be expressed as a percentage or as a pass/fail grading. Any other scheme of marking must be approved explicitly at validation.
- (ii) Marks are awarded to students on an individual basis irrespective of the nature of the assessment task.
- (iii) Marks are provisional until confirmed by a Progression/Award Examining Board.

(2) Marking processes (undergraduate programmes and the taught element of postgraduate programmes)

- (i) The University uses a variety of marking processes to reflect the varying demands of different disciplines and the different requirements of various types of assessed material. Faculty Boards must determine the most appropriate processes for their Programmes of Study and must use agreed criteria. The chosen processes and criteria must be published, and any subsequent changes must be approved by the Faculty Board following consultation with the relevant module external examiner(s).
- (ii) In determining its marking processes and their operation, the Faculty Board must refer to the guidance and restrictions published as Appendix GA22.
- (iii) All assessments which contribute to a final award/degree classification must be subject to moderation. At their discretion, Faculties may use double-marking in place of moderation.
- (iv) Where moderation is used, a representative sample of at least six pieces of work will be selected and should include:
 - examples of work in the first class category (or equivalent for other awards);
 - examples of work in the fail category;
 - examples of work from each classification;
 - examples of work within 2% of a classification boundary (or equivalent for other awards);
 - any work on which the marker wishes for a second opinion.
- (v) Where moderation is used, a Moderation Report Form (Appendix GA28) should be completed.
- (vi) If the moderation process identifies concerns relating to the marking in one or more categories, all work in the identified category must be reviewed and any differences must be resolved by means of discussion and negotiation. If such resolution is not possible, the work must be marked by an additional marker identified by the Chair of the relevant Progression/Award Board. The marks awarded by the additional marker are final. The process by which a final mark is agreed must be carefully documented so that the module external examiner is able to follow that process.
- (vii) If double marking is used and the markers cannot reach agreement the process will be as set out in (vi) above.
- (viii) All formal written examinations at the University must be marked in the anonymous state. Candidates in such examinations must be identified only by their student number until such time as both first marking and moderation or second marking have been completed. There is no requirement that assessments other than formal written examinations be marked in the anonymous state as the University recognises that the preservation of anonymity may be either impossible or pedagogically undesirable. However, assessments will be marked in the anonymous state where this is deemed appropriate for a particular assessment and this is clearly indicated in the relevant documentation for the assessment.

(3) Scaling of marks

- (i) If, due to academic discipline, a Faculty wishes to adopt a system of the scaling up or down of marks, the proposal must be approved by the relevant module external examiner(s), the Faculty Board, and the Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

Students must be given full written information about any such system at the start of the module.

(4) Marks obtained during study abroad

- (i) The University accepts marks obtained during a period of study at another institution only where specifically approved at validation. Students choosing to spend a period of study abroad must be informed that all assessment undertaken during that period will be reviewed at the University and, except where specified otherwise in the Programme of Study Handbook, marked in accordance with the University's systems. Before entering an exchange arrangement, students must sign a declaration stating that they accept that the marks awarded by the University will be the ones recorded on their transcript and used to calculate their degree classification.
- (ii) At the end of the study abroad period, the student must supply the Faculty with all relevant assessment materials for marking. The Faculty must send the final marks to the Registry for consideration at the next relevant Examining Board.

(5) Allocating a mark for lost student work

- (i) Students must, whenever possible, keep a duplicate copy of work submitted for assessment.
- (ii) In the event that work that has been submitted for assessment is irretrievably lost and the nature of the work is such that it was not feasible to make a duplicate copy, or in the event that an examination script or a class test is irretrievably lost, the following rules apply:
 - The student must be informed by the Faculty that s/he has the option of either being re-assessed without penalty or choosing to accept a mark, allocated as follows, for the lost work:
 - In the event that the assessment task is one of several assessment components for the module, the student is allocated a mark for the missing component that is based on a weighted average of the marks available for the module's other assessment components. The relative weighting of the components used is the same as the relative weighting of these components for the whole module.
 - In the event that the assessment task is the entire assessment for the module, the student is allocated a module mark equal to his/her weighted average in the best 60 credits of modules completed at the same level.
 - If no response is received from the student by the specified deadline, a mark for the lost work must be allocated in accordance with the rules above.

7.7 Language of delivery and assessment

- (1) The expectation is that the language of study of the University's programmes will be Welsh or English (or other language where this has been specifically agreed as part of the approval and validation of a particular programme), except where study of another language contributes to the academic content of a programme (see paragraph 7.7 (2) below). The language of delivery and the language of assessment will normally be the same. In the event that a student asks permission to be assessed in a language other than the language of delivery, the request must be considered and a decision made with reference to the aims and intended learning outcomes of the programme.

- (2) Where study of another language does contribute to the academic content of a programme, a minimum of at least half of the programme must be completed in English or Welsh. For programmes which include a dissertation or project module with a credit value of at least 60 credits, the written and oral parts to that module must be in English or Welsh.

7.8 Assessment through the medium of Welsh where the medium of delivery is English

- (1) Paragraph 7.7 (1) above notwithstanding, the University is committed to promoting the Welsh language and to encouraging students to develop their skills in its use. All requests from students following English-medium modules to undertake assessments through the medium of Welsh must be accommodated where these are made in a timely manner and are not inconsistent with the programme aims or the module Learning Outcomes. Heads of School/Programme Directors must make arrangements for the translation of the necessary assessment materials and are responsible for ensuring that the student is not unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged.
- (2) Whenever possible, Welsh-medium assessments must be marked by a Welsh speaking tutor with appropriate academic qualifications and experience in the subject being assessed, and with experience of Welsh-medium assessment at a similar level. Such a tutor must also mark assessments written in English as part of a process of moderation.
- (3) If it is not possible to find a suitable Welsh speaking assessor, then the student's work must be translated into English for marking purposes. In such an event, translators must be instructed to translate without changing the meaning of the argument that is being presented or improving the clarity of expression.

7.9 Setting tasks for re-assessment

- (1) Where an Examining Board has determined that a student is to be re-assessed and capped at the minimum pass mark for the Level:
 - (i) The type of the re-assessment task must be identical to the original assessment task except where the nature of the original assessment task makes this impossible. This regulation may be varied only with the approval of the Dean of Quality and Standards.
 - (ii) Where the re-assessment task takes the form of a timed examination, the examination questions must differ from those set in the original examination. The same questions must not normally be used on more than one occasion over a period of three years. Exceptions may include generic questions that are applied to different contexts.
 - (iii) Where the re-assessment task takes the form of an assignment, case study or other form of project, the student will normally be given the opportunity to re-work and re-present the original assignment if the original attempt gained a mark of greater than 0%. If the original attempt gained a mark of 0%, then the student will normally be set a new topic.
- (2) Where an Examining Board has determined that a student is to be given the opportunity to repeat a module or a period of study for an uncapped mark:
 - (i) The nature of the repeat assessment task may differ from the original assessment task providing that the nature of the assessment has been approved by the Faculty Board and the relevant learning outcomes are fully assessed.
 - (ii) Where the repeat assessment task takes the form of a timed examination, the examination questions must differ from those set in the original examination. The same questions must not normally be used on more than one occasion over a period of three years. Exceptions may include generic questions that are applied to different contexts.

- (iii) Where the repeat assessment task takes the form of an assignment, case study or other form of project, the normal expectation is that a new topic will be set.

7.10 Personal or professional links with students

- (1) The University's approach to personal or professional links between staff and students is set out in the Policy Governing Professional Relationships in the Workplace, which is published on the Human Resources section on MyDay.

7.11 Disclosure of marks/grades

- (1) Unconfirmed or provisional marks or grades are those which have yet to be presented to a Progression/Award Examining Board.
- (2) Confirmed marks or grades are those that have been agreed by a Progression/Award Examining Board having been endorsed by the relevant module external examiners.
- (3) Students must be made aware that any marks and grades released prior to endorsement by a module external examiner and formal approval by a Progression/Award Examining Board are provisional.
- (4) Decisions of the Progression/Award Examining Board are communicated to students by the Registry normally no more than 10 clear working days after the relevant Board has met.

7.12 Feedback and the return of work

- (1) For undergraduate programmes and the taught elements of postgraduate programmes, marking of students' work must be completed no later than 20 clear term-time working days after its submission and students must be provided with provisional feedback within the same time scale. For taught master's dissertations the marking must be completed and students provided with provisional feedback within 30 clear working days. Where appropriate (for example, in respect of end-of-term formal examinations) the feedback may be provided at the start of the following term. Staff must seek written permission from the Head of School in the event that marking and feedback cannot be completed within this timescale and students must be notified accordingly.
- (2) The University recognises that feedback to students may take many forms, such as immediate diagnostic feedback on individual and/or group tutorials. Formal written assessment feedback reports must be prepared for every piece of assessed work that contributes to the formal assessment of an individual student's performance. The Faculty must provide the student with a copy of every report and retain a copy for its records.

7.13 Assessment Archive

- (1) The University maintains an assessment archive for the purposes of providing:
 - (i) evidence that the assessment enables the student to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the learning outcomes associated with a module;
 - (ii) a means of demonstrating the progression between the years of study within a programme;
 - (iii) evidence that expectations are consistent between modules and between programmes;
 - (iv) a means of demonstrating that standards are consistently maintained between years.
- (2) The requirements in respect of the assessment archive are specified in the University's records management policy.

7.14 External Examiners

7.14.1 Purposes of External Examiner

- (1) The principal purposes of the University's external examiner system are to ensure that:
 - the standard of each award is maintained at the appropriate level;
 - the standards of student performance are comparable with standards on similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions with which they are familiar;
 - the processes for assessment and the determination of awards are sound and fairly conducted.
- (2) The University will appoint at least one module external examiner for all taught provision which leads to an award of the University. In addition the University will appoint a procedural external examiner for each Progression/Award Examining Board. In exceptional circumstances, where the Senate acts in the capacity of a Progression/Award Examining Board, a Senate External Examiner may be appointed.
- (3) The University recognises the importance and mutual benefit of the work undertaken by its own staff as external examiners for other institutions and where possible will approve requests from staff to undertake external examining duties at other institutions.

7.14.2 Role of Module External Examiner

- (1) The University expects a module external examiner to:
 - (i) Assist the University in the comparison of academic standards across Higher Education awards, including those offered in collaborative partnerships, and verify that standards are appropriate for all modules for which the module external examiner is responsible, providing advice and guidance on any changes which she/he considers necessary at a module or programme level.
 - (ii) Approve and, if necessary, suggest amendments to draft examination papers, coursework assessment tasks and the associated assessment criteria prepared by internal examiners for all assessments in modules which contribute to a final award (and in some cases, approve assessments which do not contribute to the final award).
 - (iii) Review, evaluate and moderate the marking of assessment in modules which contribute to a final award (and in some cases, moderate the marking of assessments which do not contribute to the final award).
 - (iv) Provide an independent view of the operation and effectiveness of each module she/he has been appointed to scrutinise and thereby on any programme to which the modules contribute.
 - (v) View a sample of students' assessed work from all levels of performance that contribute towards an award to ensure that the internal marking has properly assessed student performance against the appropriate standards.
 - (vi) Provide feedback to management on the performance of students in comparison to their peers on comparable modules and programmes elsewhere.
 - (vii) Be a member of, and fully contribute to, appropriate Initial Examining Boards to ensure fairness and consistency in the decision-making process, and to ensure that the assessment process is in accordance with the University's academic regulations.

- (viii) Ensure that the assessment process is fair and equitable in the marking, grading and classification of student performance and endorse the outcomes of the assessment processes that she/he has been appointed to scrutinise.
- (ix) Present written reports to the University that include commentary and judgements on the validity, reliability and integrity of the assessment process and the standards of student attainment.
- (x) Work as appropriate with other module external examiners appointed by the University.
- (xi) As appropriate, provide advice on proposals for any exchange opportunities developed by Schools/Faculties in terms of their appropriateness in meeting the Learning Outcomes of the student's Programme of Study for programmes that they have been appointed to scrutinise.

7.14.3 Nomination, Selection and Appointment of Module External Examiners

- (1) Nominations of module external examiners are made using the Module External Examiner Nomination Form (Appendix GA2). The External Examiner Nomination Panel is responsible for considering all nominations and making recommendations to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee in respect of the nomination of module external examiners and related issues. The Academic Quality and Standards Committee makes decisions on the appointment of module external examiners on behalf of the Senate.
- (2) The Terms of Reference and Membership of the External Examiner Nomination Panel are set out in Appendix GA20.

7.14.4 Person specification

- (1) Module external examiners must show appropriate evidence of the following:
 - (i) knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality;
 - (ii) competence and experience of assessing in the fields and at the levels covered by the programme of study, or parts thereof;
 - (iii) relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate;
 - (iv) competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures;
 - (v) sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command the respect of academic peers and, where appropriate, professional peers;
 - (vi) a thorough knowledge and understanding of the standards to be expected of students in order to achieve the award that is to be assessed;
 - (vii) fluency in English, and where programmes are also delivered and assessed in Welsh, fluency in Welsh (in the event that it is not possible to appoint an individual fluent in Welsh with sufficient knowledge and experience to satisfy the requirements of the module external examiner role, the University shall endeavour to appoint an associate external examiner who is fluent in Welsh to work alongside a non-Welsh speaking module external examiner who meets the other criteria);
 - (viii) meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies;
 - (ix) awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula;

- (x) competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.
- (2) Not every module external examiner will necessarily meet all the criteria. Where an individual does not meet all the criteria, the nomination will be carefully considered by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, and the appointment will only be approved where appropriate arrangements for providing support to the individual are put in place. Support arrangements may include the appointment of a team of external examiners (so that all the above criteria are met across the team), or use of another experienced module external examiner to act as a mentor (particularly for individuals who are new to external examining).

7.14.5 Conflicts of interest and impartiality

- (1) The University requires that module external examiners should be able to exercise impartial judgement and requires that they should not therefore have any potential conflicts of interest (either professional or personal) which might compromise objectivity.
- (2) To avoid potential conflicts of interest an individual shall not be appointed as a module external examiner if:
 - (i) she/he is a member of the governing body or of one of the committees of the University or one of its collaborative partners, or a current employee of the University or one of its collaborative partners;
 - (ii) she/he has a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme or with a student currently on the programme (a close relationship is one where there is a degree of relationship beyond intermittent association; examples of a professional relationship are: co-authorship of publication, co-investigator on project, joint supervision of research student, graduate advisee/advisor relationship - including former research degree supervisor where such supervision ended less than three years previously; an example of a contractual relationship is co-owner of outside business interest; examples of a personal relationship are: family relationship - by marriage or blood, current or former intimate relationship - including marital, sexual, romantic, emotional whether heterosexual or same sex relationship, close friendship/social relationship, personal animosity);
 - (iii) she/he is required to act as module external examiner for member(s) of staff at his/her own organisation who are students on the programme of study;
 - (iv) she/he is, or knows she/he will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study due to any position she/he may hold other than as module external examiner at the University;
 - (v) she/he is significantly involved in recent (within the last 5 years) or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme(s) or modules in question;
 - (vi) she/he is a former member of staff or student of the University unless a period of 5 years has elapsed and all students taught by or with him/her have completed their programme(s);
 - (vii) her/his appointment would create a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at his/her institution;
 - (viii) she/he is employed in the same department and institution as her/his immediate predecessor(s);

- (ix) her/his appointment would result in more than one module external examiner from the same department of the same institution (where “department” should not be seen as directly corresponding to a particular term within a particular institution’s academic structure, but with the relevant subject area. However, in making this distinction, consideration must also be given to the size of each subject area within the other institution’s academic structure);
 - (x) her/his appointment would result in him/her holding external examiner appointments for taught programmes at more than two institutions in total;
 - (xi) she/he has been involved in the development of modules or the programmes which those modules contribute to as an external consultant;
 - (xii) she/he has acted as a member of the validation process which approved a programme to which the modules contribute (although in certain circumstances, where it can be shown that there is demonstrably no risk to the individual’s ability to provide a fully independent perspective, such an individual may be appointed);
 - (xiii) she/he has previously acted as an external examiner for the University, unless there are exceptional circumstances and the previous appointment ended no less than 5 years ago.
- (3) Where there are changes in the circumstances of a module external examiner or where circumstances which were previously unknown become known which may lead to conflicts of interest, the University should be notified as soon as possible so that the Academic Quality and Standards Committee can make a decision on the individual’s suitability to continue as a module external examiner.

7.14.6 Duration of appointment

- (1) Module external examiners shall normally be appointed for a period of 4 years, with the possibility of extending the appointment for a further year where an exceptional case can be made that satisfies the Academic Quality and Standards Committee. No further extension is permitted.
- (2) New module external examiners should take up their appointments on, or before, the end of the appointment period of their predecessors. Module external examiners should remain available after the last assessments with which they are to be associated in order to deal with any subsequent reviews of decisions.

7.14.7 Termination of Module External Examiner contract

- (1) The contribution of the module external examiner to all stages of the assessment process is a crucial element of the University’s quality assurance processes. It is sometimes the case that, for a variety of reasons, a module external examiner finds that she/he is unable to provide the commitment necessary to fulfil the requirements of the role. In the event that a module external examiner is unable to fulfil the requirements of the role, the module external examiner should give the University notice of 1 month to allow a new module external examiner to be identified and appointed.
- (2) Exceptionally a Head of School or Programme Director may consider the actions, requirements or reporting of a module external examiner to be unreasonable, unfair, not in line with the requirements for external examining, or contrary to the regulations of the University. In such cases the Head of School or Programme Director may refer such concerns to the relevant Dean of Faculty in writing. The Dean should then review the matter and make every effort to resolve the concerns in consultation with the module external examiner, the Head of School and the Programme Director.

- (3) Should it become evident that concerns, which have been raised cannot be resolved, then the matter shall be referred to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) who may make a recommendation to the Senate that the module external examiner's appointment should be terminated.
- (4) The University also reserves the right to terminate a module external examiner appointment at any time if a conflict of interest arises that cannot be satisfactorily resolved.

7.14.8 Induction and annual briefing

- (1) All new module external examiners shall be required to attend a University induction session for module external examiners which clearly outlines the University's regulatory framework and assessment procedures, how these link to the national expectations as stipulated in the QAA UK Quality Code, and highlights the crucial value of the critical approach of external examiners to the University. This will ensure that new module external examiners are fully aware of all relevant information relating to their role. Module external examiners should be aware that they are part of the broader organisational system of quality assurance. All other module external examiners shall receive a University briefing annually to update them on any modifications to the University's regulations and procedures and other relevant issues.
- (2) All new module external examiners shall be provided with information on the modules for which she/he is responsible and shall receive a briefing from the Head of School and/or Programme Director. All other module external examiners shall be provided with information on the modules for which they are responsible annually and shall be informed of any modifications to these programmes and modules.

7.14.9 Module External Examiner's Report

- (1) Each module external examiner is required to complete an annual report on the Module External Examiner's Report pro-forma (Appendix GA3) following the last relevant Examining Board of the academic year and return it to the Academic Office electronically. A separate report has to be completed for each appointment.
- (2) A module external examiner is not restricted to the suggested areas and can comment on any appropriate matter. Constructive suggestions for future action are particularly helpful, and a list of the main issues on which the University would welcome feedback is also provided on the pro-forma.

7.14.10 Content of the Report

- (1) The primary role of the Module External Examiner's Report is to provide independent assurance of the academic standards and quality of the student's learning experience for the provision for which she/he is appointed to scrutinise. Other key purposes of the report are to enable the University to judge whether modules are meeting their stated aims and outcomes in order to contribute to the achievement of Level and Programme Learning Outcomes and to provide guidance on any necessary improvements, either immediately or at the next review of the programme(s).
- (2) Names of all students and staff must be omitted from reports, to maintain appropriate confidentiality.
- (3) The report should provide clear and informative feedback to the University on whether or not:
 - the University is maintaining the threshold academic standards set for its awards in accordance with the frameworks for Higher Education qualifications and applicable subject and other benchmark statements;

- the assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the modules and programme(s) and is conducted in line with the University's policies and regulations;
 - the academic standards and the achievements of students are comparable with those in other UK Higher Education Institutions of which the module external examiner has experience.
- (4) The report should also provide informative comment and recommendations on:
- good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment observed by the module external examiner;
 - opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students.
- (5) In addition, in the report the module external examiner should:
- confirm that sufficient timely evidence was received to enable the role to be fulfilled (where evidence was insufficient, they give details);
 - state whether issues raised in the previous report(s) have been, or are being, addressed to their satisfaction;
 - address any issues as specifically required by any relevant professional body;
 - give an overview of their term of office (when concluded).
- (6) All module external examiner reports must be submitted no later than 1 month after the last relevant Examining Board of the academic year. Failure to submit a report within this timescale is considered a breach of the contract of the module external examiner and may lead to a termination of the module external examiner's contract (see Section 7.14.7).

7.14.11 Procedures for Reporting Serious Concerns

- (1) A module external examiner has the authority to report directly to the Vice-Chancellor where there is concern about standards and performance, particularly if it is considered that assessments are being conducted in a way that jeopardises either the fair treatment of students or the standards of the awards.
- (2) Where a module external examiner has a serious concern relating to systemic failings with the academic standards of a programme or programmes and has exhausted all applicable internal procedures, including the submission of a confidential report to the Vice-Chancellor, she/he may invoke QAA's concerns scheme or inform the relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body.

7.14.12 Responding to Module External Examiner's Report

- (1) Each Module External Examiner's Report is considered in detail at different levels within the institution. Upon receipt of a report, copies are distributed to Heads of School, Programme Directors, Deans of Faculty and the Dean of Quality and Standards. Following consideration at School level, Heads of School and Programme Directors are required to ensure preparation of the School's response to any issues raised in consultation with the Programme Team (Appendix PV11c). The module external examiner should be provided with a copy of the response and informed of all actions to be taken in response to the recommendations that are made. The reports, together with the response are formally discussed during the Annual Review of each Programme of Study.
- (2) Deans or their nominees are responsible for scrutinising all module external examiner reports and for reporting any significant issues that require an urgent response to the Dean of Quality and Standards or nominee. A report is prepared centrally for the Academic Quality and Standards Committee summarising the findings of all the module external examiners' reports and identifying themes and issues that require an institutional response. The report, together

with the Academic Quality and Standards Committee's recommendations for actions at an institutional level in response to issues raised, is then presented to the Senate for approval of the recommendations.

- (3) Copies of the report and the recommendations for action are circulated to all module external examiners.

7.14.13 Information for students about external examiners

- (1) The names, positions and institutions of module external examiners will be made available to students, normally in the relevant Programme of Study Handbook.
- (2) Students have the right to view a Module External Examiner's Report in full, with the exception of any confidential reports made directly, and separately, to the Vice-Chancellor. Faculties/Schools are responsible for making module external examiner reports available to students on request.

7.14.14 The Module External Examiner's Involvement in Examining Boards

(1) Membership of Examining Boards

A module external examiner is expected to fully contribute to the appropriate Initial Examining Boards for the modules she/he has been appointed to scrutinise in person.

(2) Unfair Practice

A module external examiner who, either in the course of the marking period or subsequently, considers that a student has engaged in an unfair practice, shall immediately report the circumstances in writing to the Academic Office. Details of the procedure for dealing with cases of alleged unfair practice can be found in Section 13.8 of Chapter 13 of this handbook.

(3) Progression and Award Recommendation Form

A Progression and Award Recommendation Form (see paragraph 7.15.3 (8)) must be signed by all module external examiner(s) who contribute to an Initial Examining Board.

7.14.15 Validation and Review

- (1) A module external examiner plays a crucial role in maintaining standards and in providing information on outcomes for use when reviewing modules and programmes. However, this is a separate function from the process of validation and annual review and module external examiners should not be used as external advisers for validation. Details of the procedures for validation/review can be found in Chapter 4 of this handbook.
- (2) The contents of a Module External Examiner's Report may have implications for the way in which a programme is designed and delivered. It will be for the Faculty Board to determine what changes should be made as a result. Nevertheless, Module External Examiner's Reports will always be used in programme reviews.

7.14.16 The Process of External Examination for Taught Awards

(1) The Dean of Quality and Standards shall be responsible for:

- i) Ensuring that a formal response is provided to each Module External Examiner's Report.
- ii) Ensuring that feedback is provided to module external examiners in relation to issues raised in the Module External Examiner's Report.

- iii) Requesting that module external examiners undertake assessment of any module of a programme of study that, in the University's view, gives cause for concern.

(2) Deans of Faculty shall be responsible for ensuring that:

- i) The Faculty and its programme teams reflect on and respond appropriately to the feedback provided by module external examiners and their formal reports.
- ii) The Faculty Board receives, early in the academic year, a copy of each Module External Examiner Agreement (Appendix GA15) which has been drawn up by the relevant Head(s) of School/Programme Director(s) in consultation with the module external examiner about the external examination tasks to be undertaken in the forthcoming academic year, and either endorses the Agreement or requires amendments to it.
- iii) A copy of each Module External Examiner Agreement is presented to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee for approval at the second meeting of the academic year.

(3) Heads of School/Programme Directors shall be responsible for ensuring that:

- i) In the case of Honours degrees, modules accounting for a minimum of 120 credits of each programme of study will be identified for review by the relevant module external examiners in any given academic year, of which at least 60 credits shall be at Level 5 and at least 60 credits at Level 6. In the case of PGCE Primary / Secondary with QTS programmes, modules accounting for a minimum of 120 credits of each programme of study will be identified for review by the relevant module external examiners in any given academic year. For all other awards, at least half the credits that may contribute towards the award shall be identified for review in any given academic year. In some cases, modules that do not contribute to the award may also be identified for review.
- ii) All modules with a credit value of 40 or more must be reviewed by a module external examiner each academic year. All modules of a programme must be reviewed at least once by a module external examiner in the course of a 4 year period.
- iii) Agreement must be reached with each module external examiner about the marking process that shall be applied to any particular module, or component of a module. For further details see Section 7.6.
- iv) Agreement must be reached with each module external examiner about which of the modules he/she is responsible for will be reviewed in any given year, ensuring compliance with paragraphs 7.14.16 (3) i) and ii) and paragraph 7.14.16 (4) iv).
- v) A selection of assessment tasks in the modules identified for review in a given year will be considered by the module external examiner. A variety of different assessment tasks should be considered by a module external examiner in the course of a 4 year period.
- vi) A representative sample of first-sit work from the assessments tasks chosen for consideration by the module external examiner will be selected for moderation. The sample may overlap with the sample for internal moderation as defined in paragraph 7.6 (2) (iv).
- vii) Agreement on which modules will be reviewed, which assessment tasks will be considered and how the sample for moderation will be defined shall be recorded on the Module External Examiner Agreement (Appendix GA15).
- viii) The Module External Examiner Agreement will be passed to the Faculty Board for endorsement or amendment.
- ix) Following the Progression/Award Examining Board, or at the start of the subsequent academic session, liaising with staff from the Registry to transfer an appropriate sample to the assessment archive in accordance with Section 7.3.

(4) The Module External Examiner's Role in the Process of Assessment for Taught Modules (all Levels)

- i) A module external examiner shall be responsible for no more than 480 credits of modules across all levels (not including Level 7 dissertation/project modules) in a single appointment.
- ii) The module external examiner shall receive a copy of all assessment tasks and the associated assessment criteria at every level that may contribute towards an award (Level 3 for Foundation Certificate; Level 4 for HNC and CertHE; Level 5 for HND, DipHE and FD; Levels 5 and 6 for Honours Degrees, Levels 5, 6 and 7 for Integrated Master's Degrees, Level 7 for Master's Degrees) for approval before their distribution to students. In some cases, the module external examiner may be asked to consider assessment tasks in levels that do not contribute to an award.
- iii) The module external examiner must agree with the Programme Director the marking process that shall be applied to any particular module, or module component.
- iv) The module external examiner must liaise with the relevant Head(s) of School/Programme Director(s) to identify a minimum of half the modules for which he/she is responsible to be reviewed in any given academic year (minimum of 120 credits in total across all Levels). The actual credit rating of modules reviewed in any particular academic year may be greater than the minimum as the module external examiner is required to have reviewed every module for which he/she is responsible at least once during his/her period of appointment (assuming an appointment of 4 years).
- v) Where the module external examiner is responsible for modules with a total credit value of less than 120 credits per academic year, then the module external examiner must review all the modules she/he is responsible for. The module external examiner must agree with the Head(s) of School/Programme Director(s) which assessment tasks in the modules identified to be reviewed will be considered in a given year. Assessment tasks considered must account for a minimum weighting of 40% in the module. For modules worth 40 credits or more, the major component must always be considered.
- vi) The module external examiner must agree on the selection of a representative sample of first-sit work from the assessment tasks chosen for consideration for moderation, with the sample consisting of at least 6 students (the work of all students must be included in the sample where there are fewer than 6 students being assessed).
- vii) Where modules are delivered concurrently across multiple locations and where the same assessment tasks are used in each location, the sample must consist of at least 6 students in total and at least 2 students per location.
- viii) Where modules are delivered in multiple cohorts in a single location and where the same assessment tasks are used for each cohort, the sample must consist of at least 6 students in total with at least 3 students from each cohort.
- ix) Where modules are delivered in multiple cohorts across multiple locations and where the same assessment tasks are used for each cohort and in each location, the sample must consist of at least 6 students in total and at least 3 students from each cohort and at least 2 students per location.
- x) If for paragraphs 7.14.16 (4) vii), viii) or ix) above, the assessment task is different across locations or cohorts, then each location or cohort should be treated as an individual sample (with a minimum size of 6) and the module should be counted a separate module for determining credit rating of responsibility (see paragraph 7.14.16 (4) i) above).
- xi) Agreement on which modules will be reviewed, which assessment tasks will be considered and how the sample for moderation will be defined shall be recorded on the Module External Examiner Agreement (Appendix GA15).
- xii) If, in moderating an assessment, the module external examiner is unable to confirm that internal marking is of an appropriate standard or consistency for work in the sample, the module external examiner may request that all work be remarked.
- xiii) Where marks in the sample are considered to be consistently over or under-marked, remarking will take the form of a scaling up or down of marks across the cohort by a figure agreed between the internal examiners and the module external examiner.

- xiv) Where the internal examiners and module external examiner cannot reach agreement on the figure for scaling up or down of marks, the matter shall be reported to the Chair of the Progression/Award Examining Board who will act as arbiter. The Chair's decision shall be final.
- xv) Where there is no clear pattern in over or under-marking in the sample, remarking will take the form of a full re-mark of all work. A senior member of academic staff, who has not been involved in the internal marking of the work, shall be appointed as an additional marker. The mark of the additional marker shall be final.
- xvi) Where warranted, the module external examiner may request that assessment tasks not covered by the Module External Examiner Agreement, either in modules identified for review or modules not identified for review, be subject to moderation by the module external examiner.

(5) The Module External Examiner's Role in the Process of Assessment for Level 7 dissertation/project modules

- i) Any Level 7 module worth 60 credits or more is classified as a Level 7 dissertation/project module.
- ii) A module external examiner shall be responsible for no more than 30 dissertations/projects in a single appointment.
- iii) The relevant external examiner must see a sample of at least 6 dissertations/projects.
- iv) Where warranted, the module external examiner may request that projects/dissertations not initially included in the sample, be subject to moderation by the module external examiner.
- v) If, in moderating a dissertation/project, the module external examiner is unable to confirm that internal marking is of an appropriate standard or consistency for work in the sample, the module external examiner may request that all work be remarked.
- vi) Where marks in the sample are considered to be consistently over or under-marked, remarking will take the form of a scaling up or down of marks by a figure agreed between the internal examiners and the module external examiner.
- vii) Where the internal examiners and module external examiner cannot reach agreement on the figure for scaling up or down of marks, the matter shall be reported to the Chair of the Progression/Award Examining Board who will act as arbiter. The Chair's decision shall be final.
- viii) Where there is no clear pattern in over or under-marking in the sample, remarking will take the form of a full re-mark of all work. A senior member of academic staff, who has not been involved in the internal marking of the work, shall be appointed as an additional marker. The mark of the additional marker shall be final.

(6) The Module External Examiner's Role in the Process of Assessment for PGCE Primary/Secondary with QTS Programmes of Study

- i) The module external examiner shall receive a copy of all assessment tasks and the associated assessment criteria for approval before their distribution to students.
- ii) The module external examiner must agree with the Head of School/Programme Director the marking process that shall be applied to any particular module, or module component.
- iii) The module external examiner must liaise with the relevant Programme Director(s) to identify a minimum of 120 credits of modules for review in any given academic year.
- iv) Where the module external examiner is responsible for modules with a total credit value of less than 120 credits per academic year, then the module external examiner must review all the modules for which she/he is responsible.
- v) The relevant module external examiner must attend a number of placements each year as agreed in advance with the Head of School/Programme Director (normally three placements).
- vi) The module external examiner must agree with the Head(s) of School/Programme Director(s) which assessment tasks in the modules identified to be reviewed will be

considered in a given year. Assessment tasks considered must account for a minimum weighting of 40% in the module. For modules worth 40 credits or more, the major component must always be considered.

- vii) The module external examiner must agree on the selection of a representative sample of first-sit work from the assessment tasks chosen for consideration for moderation, with the sample consisting of at least 4 students (the work of all students must be included in the sample where there are fewer than 4 students being assessed).
- viii) Agreement on which modules will be reviewed, which assessment tasks will be considered and how the sample for moderation will be defined shall be recorded on the Module External Examiner Agreement (Appendix GA15).
- ix) If, in moderating an assessment, the module external examiner is unable to confirm that internal marking is of an appropriate standard or consistency for work in the sample, the module external examiner may request that all work be remarked.
- x) Where marks in the sample are considered to be consistently over or under-marked, remarking will take the form of a scaling up or down of marks across the cohort by a figure agreed between the internal examiners and the module external examiner.
- xi) Where the internal examiners and module external examiner cannot reach agreement on the figure for scaling up or down of marks, the matter shall be reported to the Chair of the Progression/Award Examining Board who will act as arbiter. The Chair's decision shall be final.
- xii) Where there is no clear pattern in over or under-marking in the sample, remarking will take the form of a full re-mark of all work. A senior member of academic staff, who has not been involved in the internal marking of the work, shall be appointed as an additional marker. The mark of the additional marker shall be final.
- xiii) Where warranted, the module external examiner may request that assessment tasks not covered by the Module External Examiner Agreement in modules identified for review be subject to moderation by the module external examiner.

7.14.17 Role of Procedural External Examiner

- (1) The University expects a procedural external examiner to:
 - (i) Be a member of, and attend, appropriate Progression/Award Examining Boards to ensure that the University's procedures are followed correctly and that the University's rules for progression are applied consistently.
 - (ii) Present a written report to the University that includes commentary and judgements on the conduct of the Progression/Award Examining Board.

7.14.18 Nomination, Selection and Appointment of Procedural External Examiners

- (1) Nominations of procedural external examiners are made using the Procedural External Examiner Nomination Form (Appendix GA2d). The External Examiner Nomination Panel is responsible for considering all nominations and making recommendations to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee in respect of the nomination of procedural external examiners and related issues. The Academic Quality and Standards Committee makes decisions on the appointment of procedural external examiners on behalf of the Senate.
- (2) The Terms of Reference and Membership of the External Examiner Nomination Panel are set out in Appendix GA20.

7.14.19 Person specification

- (1) Procedural external examiners must show appropriate evidence of the following:
 - (i) comprehensive knowledge and understanding of regulatory policies and practices across the UK Higher Education sector;

- (ii) experience of participating in Progression/Award Examining Boards (or equivalent) at more than one institution.

7.14.20 Conflicts of interest and impartiality

- (1) The circumstances which would prevent an individual from being appointed as a procedural external examiner are the same as those for a module external examiner as set out in paragraphs 7.14.5 (2) (i) to (xiii).

7.14.21 Duration of appointment

- (1) Procedural external examiners shall normally be appointed for a period of 4 years, with the possibility of extending the appointment for a further year where an exceptional case can be made that satisfies the Academic Quality and Standards Committee. No further extension is permitted.

7.14.22 Termination of Procedural External Examiner contract

- (1) Exceptionally a Chair of a Progression/Award Examining Board may consider the actions at a Progression/Award Examining Board or the reporting of a procedural external examiner to be unreasonable, unfair, or contrary to the regulations of the University. In such cases the matter shall be referred to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) who may make a recommendation to the Senate that the procedural external examiner's appointment should be terminated.
- (2) The University also reserves the right to terminate a procedural external examiner appointment at any time if a conflict of interest arises that cannot be satisfactorily resolved.

7.14.23 Annual briefing for Procedural External Examiners

- (1) All procedural external examiners shall receive a University briefing annually to update them on any modifications to the University's regulations and procedures and other relevant issues.

7.14.24 Procedural External Examiner's Report

- (1) The procedural external examiner is required to complete a report on the Procedural External Examiner's Report pro-forma (Appendix GA23) following each Progression/Award Examining Board and return it to the Academic Office electronically.

7.14.25 Content of the Procedural External Examiner's Report

- (1) The primary role of the Procedural External Examiner's Report is to provide independent assurance that the Progression/Award Examining Board was conducted properly and in accordance with established procedures.
- (2) Names of all students and staff must be omitted from reports, to maintain appropriate confidentiality.

7.14.26 Responding to Procedural External Examiner's Report

- (1) Should a procedural external examiner identify any issues of concern in the conduct of a Progression/Award Examining Board, a formal response will be prepared by the Dean of Quality and Standards. The contents of a Procedural External Examiner's Report may be included in the central report summarising the findings of all module external examiners' reports as described in paragraph 7.14.12 (2).

7.14.27 Procedures for Reporting Serious Concerns

- (1) A procedural external examiner has the authority to report directly to the Vice-Chancellor where there is concern that a Progression/Award Examining Board has been conducted in a way that jeopardises either the fair treatment of students or the standards of the awards.

7.15 Examining Boards

7.15.1 Taught Provision Examining Boards

- (1) This section defines the University's framework for examining boards for all the University's undergraduate and postgraduate taught degree provision. This framework is intended to facilitate appropriate:
 - discussion and provisional agreement of outcomes by the Programme Team, including consideration of the results for each module and the outcomes for each student;
 - engagement with the external examiner(s) which will include scrutiny of the assessment process, examination of the provisional outcomes, endorsement of the final outcomes and discussion on any changes to learning outcomes, assessment methodology and/or the assessment criteria that such scrutiny indicates to be necessary;
 - central oversight of assessment processes to secure compliance with regulations, institutional consistency and that the University discharges its responsibilities in relation to management of standards;
 - clearly defined processes for engaging with administrative staff within the Registry, the Faculty and Academic Office to assure data accuracy.
- (2) All assessment decisions are provisional until confirmed by the Progression/Award Examining Board.
- (3) The University operates a two-tier structure for formal Examining Boards:
 - Initial Examining Boards (IEB)
 - Progression/Award Examining Boards (PAEB)
- (4) All module external examiners are expected to fully contribute to the appropriate Initial Examining Board for all modules she/he has been appointed to scrutinise. This may take the form of:
 - written confirmation that:
 - an appropriate sample of assessed student work for moderation has been viewed;
 - internal marking is of an appropriate standard and consistency;
 - recommendations for retrieval, progression, and award have been endorsed.
 - attendance at the Initial Examining Board via video-link or audio link;
 - attendance at the Initial Examining Board in person.
- (5) At least one procedural external examiner must be appointed to attend each Progression/Award Examining Board in person. See Sections 7.14.17 to 7.14.27 for regulations on procedural external examiners.
- (6) Pre-Board meetings must be held in advance of each formal Examining Board.

7.15.2 Pre-Board meetings

- (1) Programme Teams are required to convene internal meetings in the absence of their module external examiner(s) as often as is considered necessary and in advance of the Initial Examining Boards in order to:

- a) assure the accuracy and completeness of the central assessment records;
 - b) ensure that any necessary investigative work has been thoroughly conducted;
 - c) ensure that module external examiners are provided with:
 - appropriate samples of assessed student work for External Examiner moderation;
 - information on any issues that require particular attention;
 - sufficient evidence in a timely manner to enable them to fulfil their role.
- (2) Faculties are required to convene internal meetings in the absence of the procedural external examiner(s) and in advance of the Progression/Award Examining Boards as often as is considered necessary in order to:
- a) confirm the accuracy and completeness of the central assessment records;
 - b) ensure institutional consistency in the interpretation of regulations across the Schools and Faculty.
- (3) Prior to the Progression/Award Examining Board, the Chair should liaise with staff from Academic Office and Registry to clarify any regulatory issues which may arise from the provisional outcomes for modules and students agreed by the Initial Examining Board.

7.15.3 Initial Examining Boards

- (1) Initial Examining Boards are organised at Faculty or School level.
- (2) Initial Examining Boards will meet prior to the Progression/Award Examining Board to consider and provisionally agree the outcomes for each module and for each student and to agree formal recommendations for the Progression/Award Examining Boards.
- (3) Initial Examining Boards consider the outcomes for each student in each module and the overall profile of the student and agree a formal recommendation on progression or award.
- (4) **Terms of Reference**
 - a) To consider the module profiles and provisionally agree the outcomes for each student in each module and, where appropriate, the provisional retrieval positions for students in individual modules.
 - b) To note and apply the decisions of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel in respect of student claims for consideration of extenuating circumstances.
 - c) To note and apply decisions relating to substantiated or accepted allegations of unfair practice.
 - d) To note and apply Fitness to Practice, Fitness to Study, or Disciplinary decisions.
 - e) To consider the student profiles and agree recommendations, in accordance with the University's rules for progression, for the relevant Progression/Award Examining Boards in relation to:
 - student progression and award;
 - Professional Body requirements, where appropriate;
 - the retrieval position for students who have failed to satisfy progression/award criteria;
 - students who should be given the opportunity to repeat modules or the level of study;
 - students who should be advised or required to withdraw.
 - f) To confirm formal module external examiner endorsement for all recommendations relating to the outcomes for each student in each module and of all recommendations relating to student progression and award.
 - g) To inform Registry of any changes to assessment outcomes.

- h) To identify any areas where module learning outcomes or assessment methodology require reviewing in terms of suitability for measuring the specified learning outcomes and/or module mark statistics.

(5) **Membership**

Chair:	A senior member of staff of the University with comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the University's academic regulations
External Examiner:	Module external examiners for all modules being considered and, where appropriate, Professional Body Representatives
Members:	Heads of School (or nominee) Staff responsible for teaching and/or assessing the provision under consideration
Secretary:	Registry appointment
In attendance:	Academic Office Collaborative Partnerships Office (for provision involving partner institutions)

(6) **Quoracy**

Actual membership for an Initial Examining Board in the form of a list of named individuals shall be determined and approved by the Chair prior to the meeting of the Board. Where a module external examiner is not attending the Board, written confirmation that he/she has contributed as defined in paragraph 7.15.1 (4) must be provided. The Head of School (or nominee) will ensure that there is at least one member of staff present as a representative of staff responsible for teaching and/or assessing the provision under consideration. The following quoracy will be adopted:

Chair

Module external examiners (where the module external examiner has agreed to attend in person)

Head(s) of School (or nominees)

At least one third of named other members.

Where a meeting is not quorate, no formal recommendations may be made.

- (7) Module external examiner input is not normally required for decisions that do not contribute to award classifications, for example, Level 4 of an Honours degree programme. However, in some cases the module external examiner may be asked to provide input for decisions that do not contribute to award classifications.
- (8) A Progression and Award Recommendation Form (Appendix GA26) must be completed after the Initial Examining Board and signed by the Chair and all module external examiners as evidence of the formal endorsement of all recommendations relating to the outcomes for each student in each module and to student progression and award by the module external examiners.

7.15.4 Progression/Award Examining Boards

- (1) Progression/Award Examining Boards are organised at University or Faculty level. In exceptional circumstances the Senate may act in the capacity of a Progression/Award Examining Board.
- (2) All Initial Examining Board progression and award outcomes remain provisional until they are confirmed by a Progression/Award Examining Board. Such Boards will normally meet at the end of each academic year and whenever necessary to determine progression and award outcomes. In addition to receiving formal external examiner endorsement of provisional assessment outcomes, Progression/Award Examining Boards serve as the

University's mechanism for securing institutional oversight of the assessment process and ensuring institutional consistency in the treatment of its students.

(3) **Terms of Reference**

- a) To approve and endorse the accuracy of the central record, including any amendments.
- b) To consider the recommendations of the relevant Initial Examining Board with regard to student progression and award as detailed by the Progression and Award Recommendation Form (Appendix GA26).
- c) To formally make final decisions, in accordance with the University's rules for progression, on Initial Examining Board recommendations, relating to:
 - student progression and award;
 - Professional Body requirements, where appropriate;
 - the retrieval position for students who have failed to satisfy progression/award criteria;
 - students who should be given the opportunity to repeat modules or the level of study;
 - students who should be advised or required to withdraw.
- d) To approve and endorse all student progression, award and exit award outcomes.
- e) On behalf of Senate, to approve and endorse the award of qualifications.
- f) To approve and endorse Professional Body awards, where appropriate.
- g) To secure formal procedural external examiner endorsement of all final decisions relating to student progression and award.
- h) To keep minutes of the decisions made by the Board, including relevant comments on the performance of students.

(4) **Membership**

Chair:	A senior member of staff of the University with comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the University's academic regulations
External Examiner:	At least one procedural external examiner
Members:	Chair(s) of relevant Initial Examining Board(s) (or nominee) Dean of Faculty (or nominee) Assistant Dean (Quality) (or nominee)
Secretary:	Central appointment
In attendance:	Registry Collaborative Partnerships Office (for provision involving partner institutions)

(5) **Quoracy**

Actual membership for a Progression/Award Examining Board in the form of a list of named individuals shall be determined and approved by the Chair prior to the meeting of the Board and the following quoracy adopted:

Chair
Procedural External Examiner
At least one further member.

Where a meeting is not quorate, the Progression/Award Examining Board must not proceed.

7.15.5 Mid-session, Re-assessment, and Unsatisfactory Progress Examining Boards

- (1) Mid-session, Re-assessment, and Unsatisfactory Progress Examining Boards are Progression/Award Examining Boards which meet at specific times in the academic year and have specific additional Terms of Reference. The membership of Mid-session and Re-

assessment Examining Boards is the same as for normal Progression/Award Examining Boards. Mid-session and Re-assessment Examining Boards will be preceded by Initial Examining Boards, although the Initial Examining Board and the Mid-session or Re-assessment Examining Board may be conflated if this is considered appropriate. Unsatisfactory Progress Examining Boards have separate Terms of Reference and Membership.

7.15.5.1 Mid-session Examining Boards

- (1) Mid-session Examining Boards meet midway through the academic year to identify any action that is required to enable timely student progression and completion of award.
- (2) **Additional Terms of Reference**
 - a) To ensure that the student is registered on appropriate and sufficient credits at the right level to enable him/her to complete their year of study, or in the case of final year students, to graduate as planned.
 - b) To identify any errors on the student profile, for example, modules on which he/she is registered but which he/she is not studying.
 - c) To identify students whose progress is a cause for concern and agree appropriate mitigation support strategies.
 - d) To ensure that a student has been or is being re-assessed in failed modules carried forward from the previous year of study.
 - e) To ensure that any credit transfer is accurately recorded, and, in the event that this is not the case, to identify cases where evidence needs to be collated to enable the credit to be added.
- (3) In cases where students have completed whole modules in the year of study prior to the Mid-session Examining Board, the Board may, following written endorsement from the appropriate module external examiners, make decisions on the retrieval position for students who have failed to satisfy progression/award criteria, including advising or requiring students to withdraw. It is not normally expected that module external examiners will attend the Initial Examining Board in person.

7.15.5.2 Re-assessment Examining Boards

- (1) Re-assessment Examining Boards take an overview of student progress at the end of each re-assessment period. These Boards normally consider students who required re-assessment and students who failed to complete their assessment during the academic year for medical or other acceptable reasons.
- (2) Following written endorsement from the appropriate module external examiners, Re-assessment Examining Boards may make decisions with regard to student progression and award. It is not normally expected that module external examiners will attend the Initial Examining Board in person.

7.15.5.3 Unsatisfactory Progress Examining Boards

- (1) Unsatisfactory Progress Examining Boards meet as required during the year to consider and confirm decisions to require students to withdraw due to continuing unsatisfactory progress (see Section 6.17.1).

(2) Terms of Reference

- a) To approve and endorse requests from Dean of Faculty (or nominee) that a student should be required to withdraw for continuing unsatisfactory progress.
- b) To determine the appropriate last date of attendance for each student required to withdraw for continuing unsatisfactory progress.
- c) On behalf of Senate, to approve and endorse the award of any exit qualifications.
- d) To secure formal procedural external examiner endorsement of all final decisions relating to student progression and award.
- e) To keep minutes of the decisions made by the Board, including relevant comments on the performance of students.

(3) Membership

Chair:	A senior member of staff of the University with comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the University's academic regulations
External Examiner:	At least one procedural external examiner
Members:	Dean of Faculty (or nominee) making request
Secretary:	Central appointment
In attendance:	Registry Academic Office Collaborative Partnerships Office (for provision involving partner institutions)

(4) Quoracy

Actual membership for an Unsatisfactory Progress Examining Board in the form of a list of named individuals shall be determined and approved by the Chair prior to the meeting of the Board and the following quoracy adopted:

Chair
Procedural External Examiner
Dean(s) of Faculty (or nominees).

Where a meeting is not quorate, the Unsatisfactory Progress Examining Board must not proceed.

7.15.6 Appeals against decisions of Examining Boards

- (1) A student who wishes to appeal against a decision of a Mid-session Examining Board, a Progression/Award Examining Board or a Re-assessment Examining Board shall be given an opportunity to appeal against the decision by presenting a case in accord with the Appeals Procedure. Full details of the Appeals Procedure can be found in Chapter 13.

7.16 Taught Master's Dissertations

7.16.1 Submission of Dissertations

- (1) Dissertations must be submitted in accordance with the University's requirements as set out in the Guide to Postgraduate Taught Dissertations (Appendix GA29).
- (2) A dissertation submitted for a Taught Master's degree shall normally be openly available and subject to no security or restriction of access. A student may request that a bar on photocopying and/or access to a dissertation may be put in place for a specified period of up to 5 years. Requests for a bar on access should normally be made in writing to the relevant

Head of School immediately after the approval of the dissertation proposal. The title and summary of the dissertation should remain freely available.

7.16.2 Supervision of Taught Master's Dissertations

- (1) All students will be assigned an appropriate dissertation supervisor and shall be supervised in accordance with the Supervision Policy for Taught Master's Students (Appendix GA30).