

Higher Education Assessment Boards

(to be applied to Pearson accredited provision)

Assessment boards for higher education provision delivered via validation arrangements with the University of Northampton shall be constituted and administered in line with the university's assessment regulations.

Any other higher education provision delivered by the college shall be subject to the requirements laid out in this document.

Membership of the Higher Education Assessment Board

The membership shall be as follows

- Head of Higher Education (who will act as Chair)
- Director of Quality Improvement
- Course managers for any course under consideration
- Unit tutors for any units being considered
- External Examiners (not a requirement but must be offered the opportunity to attend)
- Higher Education Administrator (who shall act as officer to the Board)

A minimum of the Chair and 50% of the remaining membership shall be required to constitute a quorate meeting. If the meeting is not quorate, any decisions will be subject to ratification by a quorate membership.

Views and contributions from the membership may be submitted in writing for consideration by the Board if a member is unable to attend in person.

Chair's action may be taken on items that have been discussed and agreed in principle by the Board.

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for the Higher Education Assessment Board are

- To scrutinise and approve grades achieved by students in individual units
- To consider any mitigating circumstances for individual students
- To consider any cases of cheating or plagiarism
- To determine the requirement for any referred or deferred assessment including the removal of resit opportunities as a result of lack of engagement
- To confirm progression of students to the next stage of the programme
- To approve and confirm awards to be made
- To monitor academic standards.

Operational Procedures

Dates for Higher Education assessment boards will be agreed and published in September each year. This will include dates for any interim boards and a proposed resit board.

Requests for the consideration of mitigating circumstances must be made at least 10 working days in advance of the Board at which affected assessment items are to be considered.

External examiners will be notified of assessment board dates although they are not required to attend.

Before the Board

Grades will be collected and recorded within a standard template for presentation to the Board. The course manager will be responsible for this, in collaboration with the Higher Education Administrator.

Collated grade sheets will be checked by the course manager and the Higher Education administrator and signed off before presentation to the Board.

The Higher Education Administrator will be responsible for circulating the agenda and collating any additional information for consideration by the Board. This could include the outcomes from any extenuating circumstance or academic misconduct panels.

Timescales

Results grids must be prepared and completed at least 5 working days prior to a board of examiners convening. For example, the College considers it wholly unacceptable for exam board administrators to be preparing results grids for a board of examiners on the day a board is due to convene

Results grids prepared at least 5 working days before a scheduled board of examiners permits curriculum teams to convene a pre-board: teams should operate pre-boards as a process through which to 'iron out' any procedural errors, difficult cases, omissions or inconsistencies in the presentation of results grids before a formal board convenes

An exam board administrator, where practicable may request receipt of student results as early as 15 working days prior to a board of examiners convening

Where assessments are completed at the end of a first semester and a board of examiners is not scheduled to convene until the end of semester two in the same year, an exam board administrator may request student results 5 weeks into the second semester

At the Board

The Higher Education Assessment Board will adopt a standard agenda as follows

- Introductions and apologies for absence
- Declarations of conflicts of interest
- Confidentiality of proceedings
- Minutes of previous meeting and any matters arising
- Course leader's report including assessment related matters (including irregularities or misconduct)
- Consideration of unit grades
- External Examiner report or comments
- Recommendation for progression
- Recommendation for awards
- Confirmation of arrangements for refers, defers and resits
- Confirmation of decisions (signing grade sheets)
- Confirmation of arrangements to communicate results
- AOB/ Date of next meeting

All discussions and decisions made by the Higher Education Assessment Board must remain confidential to the Board.

The Higher Education Administrator will officiate the meeting and produce the minutes that will be approved by the Chair. Minutes will include reference to any factors taken into account when discretion was exercised or mitigating circumstances considered.

As part of its business the Board will scrutinise performance on each unit including details of average grade and range to identify any anomaly or other cause for concern.

Outcomes at a unit level will be confirmed as

Pass – confirms that the student has satisfied the assessment requirements for the unit at an acceptable level.

Refer – confirms that the student has not yet satisfied the assessment requirements for the unit but has an outstanding opportunity to complete assessment for one or more items.

Defer – confirms that the student has not yet satisfied the assessment requirements for the unit but has one or more items of assessment for which a claim of extenuating circumstances has been upheld.

Fail – confirms that the student has not satisfied the assessment requirements for the unit and is not eligible for a referral or deferral on any item.

Not attempted - confirms that the student has not submitted any item of assessment or has submitted nothing of substantial value for the unit and is thus not entitled to a referral opportunity.

Recommendations for award or progression will be confirmed as

Award (including grade where appropriate) – confirms that a student has met the requirements of the qualification and where appropriate, has achieved the criteria necessary for the award of a merit or distinction outcome.

Progress – confirms that the student has met the requirements for completion of the stage and may continue to the next stage.

Defer – confirms that the student has not yet met the requirements necessary for progression or award because of an upheld claim of extenuating circumstances and has a further opportunity to complete the required assessment.

Refer – confirms that the student has not yet met the requirements necessary for progression or award and has a further opportunity to complete referred assessments.

Repeat unit – confirms that the student may not continue with their qualification at that point, but may be permitted to repeat a unit to satisfy the requirements for progression or award.

Fail – confirms that the student may not continue with their qualification. This decision may apply where a student fails to meet the assessment requirements of one or more units within the qualification and therefore cannot meet the award or progression criteria.

Terminate - confirms that the student, following all opportunities for referral, deferral and repeat units, has not met the requirements for progression or award. Termination can also occur as a result of an academic misconduct outcome or a disciplinary process.

After the Board

Certificates will be requested through the Exams team in line with existing college processes. Students will be formally notified of their results via written communication from the college. This will be overseen by the Higher Education administrator in conjunction with the course manager and will include details of the academic appeal process.

Academic Appeals

If, following a decision made by the Higher Education Assessment Board, a student wishes to make an appeal on academic grounds, the college Academic Appeals process will apply.

Retention of Records

Assessment Board paperwork will be retained for five years and will be kept confidentially. Records will be destroyed by confidential shredding after five years.