

ASSESSMENT BOARD POLICY

1. An Assessment Board shall be established for each programme of study (or cognate programmes of study as agreed with the Academic Registrar) leading to a University of Suffolk award (including award of credit). This policy should be read alongside the relevant assessment regulations for the programme of study.
2. Where the same programme of study is offered at more than one location (for example at the University of Suffolk and at a partner college, or at multiple partner colleges), normally a single Assessment Board will be established. The Quality Committee will determine which institution has responsibility for the establishment of an Assessment Board where there is multi-site delivery of the same programme.
3. All Assessment Boards shall be committees of the University of Suffolk Senate, and shall act under delegated authority of the Senate. At the start of each academic year each school, partner college and partner institution should submit membership details of their Assessment Boards to the Senate.
4. An Assessment Board has delegated powers to make final decisions about student progression and award in accordance with paragraph 3 above, with the exception of some cases where final recommendations of the Assessment Board may be submitted for ratification to an external body.
5. All proceedings of Assessment Boards, except their published outcomes, are confidential.
6. The relevant Dean of School (or equivalent in the partner colleges) will normally undertake the role of Chair of the Assessment Board. Where the relevant Dean is not available, another Dean will normally undertake the role of Chair. In exceptional circumstances, another senior member of the School who has been trained for the role may also act as Chair. Course Leaders will not be eligible to chair Assessment Boards for programmes for which they are a member of the course team. A full list of nominees for the role of Chair of the Assessment Board will be submitted to the Academic Registrar, normally at the start of each academic year.
7. Each Assessment Board shall be serviced by a Clerk who will be a representative of the Academic Registrar. The Clerk will be selected from an approved list of appropriately trained staff.

8. The function of an Assessment Board, its composition and quoracy are detailed in paragraphs 15 to 17. The Terms of Reference for Assessment Boards are detailed in Appendix 1.

9. A Pre-Board meeting must be held prior to the main Assessment Board. The purpose, composition and quoracy of the Pre-Board are detailed in paragraphs 11 to 13.

10. An individual shall not normally be in membership nor attend any meetings of the Pre-Board or Assessment Board for a course/programme of study which has been attended by a close friend or relative. Any member of academic staff who knows that this situation will apply to them should declare the fact **immediately** to his/her line manager and the Chair of the Assessment Board (if different).

Pre-Boards

11. The purpose of the Pre-Board is to:

- ensure that all recorded modules results have been confirmed as correct by the module leader;
- identify issues and/or trends within modules to be discussed at the Course Committee;
- review student module results and make recommendations to the assessment board for reassessment opportunities (where appropriate);
- review the student profile and make recommendations to the assessment board for progression or award;
- identify students whose profile requires further discussion at the assessment board;
- identify students to be noted at the assessment board in recognition of excellence or significant personal achievement.

12. The Pre-Board shall comprise:

- Chair – Head of Subject/Teaching and Learning Lead/Head of HE or equivalent
- Course Leader(s)
- Module Leaders
- Members of teaching staff responsible for setting and marking assessments to be considered at the Pre-Board
- Personal Tutors
- Course Administrator

In attendance:

- Clerk (who may also be the Course Administrator)

13. To be quorate, the Pre-Board must be attended by the Chair, the Course Leader, and the Module Leader for any modules being considered. Additionally, it is expected that all teaching staff responsible for setting and marking assessments for those modules will be in attendance. Exceptionally, in the unavoidable absence of a member of teaching staff, it is for the Chair to determine whether there is sufficient representation by other staff responsible for the marking of those assessments for the Board to proceed in their absence.

14. It is the responsibility of the relevant Chair to ensure that the business of the Pre-Board is conducted in a comprehensive and timely way, including ensuring: that all assessment component results are available for the Pre-Board; that evidence of moderation processes is available and complies with agreed policy; and that registers or evidence of student attendance are available. The Chair will also be responsible for ensuring that the recommendations of the Pre-Board are reported to the main Assessment Board. The main Assessment Board will either confirm the recommendations of the Pre-Board or will seek further clarification, at which point the main Board may confirm or amend the recommendation of the Pre-Board.

Assessment Boards

15. An Assessment Board shall carry out the following functions:

- Confirm and review the minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising.
- Consider and formally ratify the module results recommended by the Pre-Board.
- Determine the penalties for proven cases of academic misconduct, in accordance with the Academic Misconduct Policy.
- Consider the outcomes of the Academic Appeals Panel and determine the appropriate action (within the relevant assessment regulations).
- Consider and determine the assessment opportunities (within the relevant assessment regulations) for students granted deferrals by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel, setting clear dates by which assessment should occur.
- Consider and determine ways by which (within the relevant assessment regulations) students who fail to satisfy the assessment requirements can redeem their position, setting clear dates by which reassessment should occur and any conditions associated with the reassessment.
- Consider and determine whether students are eligible to progress from one stage of a programme to another.

- Consider and ratify the calculated classification of awards for those students completing their course/programme of study.
- Consider and determine (or make recommendations, where appropriate) exit awards for students who have withdrawn, or are being withdrawn, from their programme of study before completion.
- Consider and determine the arrangements for students due to return from a period of intercalation.
- Confirm a student's fitness to practise, where relevant, for those students completing an award leading to professional registration.
- Formally confirm Recognition of Prior Learning and Prior Experiential Learning (RPL).
- Consider and verify the achievement of any approved additional awards or activities (where applicable) for inclusion on the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR).
- Discuss any other issues referred to it by the Pre-Board.
- Review the assessment arrangements for the course/programme of study as a whole and make recommendations to the Course Committee and/or to the Senate.
- Ensure that the integrity of the academic standard is observed.
- Consider any other matters referred to it by Senate.

16. The Assessment Board shall comprise:

- Chair – Dean of School (or equivalent) or nominee from list of trained Chairs
- Head of Subject/Teaching and Learning Lead or equivalent (as Chair of the Pre-Board)
- Course Leader(s)
- Module Leaders
- Personal Tutors
- External Examiner(s) (required for progression and award Boards)
- Practice representatives for courses leading to registration and/or license to practise
- Course Administrator

In attendance:

- Clerk (a representative of the Academic Registrar)

17. To be quorate, the Chair, the Course Leader, and Chair of the Pre-Board must be present at the Assessment Board. It is also expected that all Module Leaders responsible for any modules to be considered by the Board will be in attendance. Exceptionally, in the unavoidable absence of

a Module Leader, it is for the Chair to determine whether robust arrangements can be put in place for the role to be fulfilled by someone else. The Personal Tutor of any students whose profile is being discussed at the Board should also be in attendance. The attendance of the External Examiner is covered under paragraph 41. If the Chair determines that the Board is inquorate, the meeting of the Board will be postponed and reconvened as soon as possible.

18. The role of specific members of the Assessment Board are set out in paragraphs 23 to 65.

Chair's Action and Extraordinary Boards

19. The Chair of the Board may reconvene the Board or a formally agreed sub-group thereof with delegated powers in order to determine the results of students who have been referred or who have not completed the assessment process. Members of the full Board should normally approve in advance whether a meeting of a sub-group is appropriate. The sub-group must, as a minimum, include the Chair of the Assessment Board, the Course Leader(s), the Chair of the relevant Pre-Board and a member of the course team plus the Clerk. It is also good practice to seek the views of the External Examiner(s), and essential in cases of academic misconduct, progression, academic appeal and final award. Meetings may be conducted virtually where necessary to facilitate timely decision-making, but adequate arrangements must be in place to ensure the security of student data. Decisions of the sub-group will be formally noted and reported to the next full meeting of the Board.

RPL Sub-Group

20. Academic assessment and approval of RPL applications may be conducted by a formally approved RPL sub-group of the relevant Assessment Board. The RPL sub-group has delegated authority to make decisions on RPL and to award the relevant credit, with the outcomes reported to the next full meeting of the Assessment Board for information. All documentation relating to RPL applications and decisions should be made available for subsequent external scrutiny.

21. The RPL sub-group should include, as a minimum, the Chair of the Assessment Board and the Course Leader(s) concerned (i.e. for each course for which there is an RPL application). A Clerk must be in attendance to coordinate the process and ensure that there is a formal record of the meeting. Meetings may be conducted virtually where necessary to facilitate timely decision-making, but adequate arrangements must be in place to ensure the security of student data. Prompt consideration of applications is particularly important for applicants wishing to seek exemption from a whole level of study as part of the admissions process.

Observation of Pre-Boards and Assessment Boards

22. As part of the University of Suffolk's quality audit processes, a representative sample of Pre-Boards and Assessment Boards will be observed to ensure compliance with the University's regulations, policies and procedures. A summary of the findings from the observations will be reported annually to Quality Committee and Senate.

ROLES OF ASSESSMENT BOARD PERSONNEL

ROLE OF CHAIR

23. To convene Assessment Board meetings and ensure that they are properly constituted and include the presence of the External Examiner(s) at progression and award Boards.

24. To emphasise to the membership the confidential nature of the Board's proceedings.

25. To establish a procedure within the Board meeting for dealing with results that ensures equality of treatment for students.

26. To ensure that the Board adheres to the assessment regulations for the course/programme in question.

27. To ensure that outcomes for previously referred/deferred students are formally reviewed.

28. To ensure that all outcomes of Assessment Board meetings are formally and accurately minuted and a copy lodged with Registry Services.

29. To identify and facilitate discussion of problematic cases or cases where there are special circumstances, ensuring that students are treated equitably.

30. To ensure that the cases of all referred/deferred/intercalating students are discussed and action initiated.

31. To invite comment from the External Examiner(s) present at the Assessment Board meeting or, exceptionally, where the External Examiner(s) is/are unavoidably absent, to convey the content of written comments to the Board.

32. To ensure that mechanisms for disclosure of results to students are clearly stated at the Assessment Board meeting.
33. To ensure that action required regarding referred/deferred students or those with special circumstances is clearly noted by the Board and that mechanisms for action and timescales are stipulated for cases of both referral and deferral.
34. To preside over reconvened Board meetings (or a formally agreed sub-group thereof with delegated powers) for the purpose of determining the results of students who have been referred or who have not completed the assessment process.
35. To authorise assessment decision and award notification letters to be sent to students.
36. To establish Assessment Board and Pre-Board membership, in liaison with the Deputy Academic Registrar (Registry Services) and Head of Course Administration.
37. To ensure that dates for Assessment Boards are set sufficiently far in advance of meetings; and that members are notified.
38. To ensure, with the Clerk, that decisions of Assessment Boards, especially for referred or deferred students, are conveyed accurately to the appropriate person in order that decision letters to students are generated.
39. To ensure, with the Clerk, that referred and deferred students are made aware of the exact requirements of the Assessment Board with regard to timescale and mechanisms for handing in work/re-sitting examinations for referred or deferred assessments.

ROLE OF COURSE LEADER

40. To ensure that External Examiners are aware of the dates of scheduled Assessment Board meetings.
41. Where it is known that an External Examiner will not be able to attend a progression or award Board, to seek the prior agreement of the Academic Registrar about whether the External Examiner may participate via tele/video-conferencing or by prior written comments or, where the participation of the External Examiner is not possible, whether an appropriate substitute may be appointed or whether the meeting may go ahead in their absence. Where final awards are under consideration, participation by External Examiners is a requirement.

42. To ensure that, where a member of the Assessment Board is unavoidably absent, the Course Leader is briefed to impart any relevant information that the absent Board member should have contributed.

43. To ensure that all necessary information concerning relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) and their regulations is available to the Assessment Board.

44. To ensure that, if an External Examiner is unavoidably unable to be present, his/her comments are made available for presentation to the Board.

45. In liaison with the Clerk, assemble a complete set of assessment sheets, containing **all** summative assessment (i.e. not just composite marks), indicating where marks have been subject to moderation.

46. To produce a written report for the Assessment Board in which they assure the Board that all assessment processes have been completed according to the University's policies and procedures, and that all work and documentation has been available for the External Examiner to review. The report should also note any issues that have affected the assessment processes.

47. To ensure that, where appropriate, evidence of assessment process is available to the Board.

ROLE OF PRE-BOARD CHAIR

48. To ensure that the recommendations of the Pre-Board for student results and progression are reported to the Assessment Board.

49. To ensure that any issues identified by the Pre-Board for further discussion are raised at the Assessment Board.

50. To ensure that any student achievement identified for recognition by the Pre-Board is reported to the Assessment Board.

ROLE OF MODULE LEADER

51. To ensure that component results are normally provided to administrative staff at least 72 hours prior to the meeting of the Pre-Board.

52. To confirm that component and module results recorded in the University's student record system are correct.

53. To ensure that internal and external moderation in accordance with the Assessment Moderation Policy has occurred, evidence of the assessment process (where necessary) has been obtained and appropriate consultation has taken place.

ROLE OF CLERK

54. To ensure that accommodation is booked and that dates for Board meetings are notified to the Academic Registrar's office, where a central calendar of Board meetings will be maintained.

55. To ensure as far as possible that Assessment Board meetings do not clash with other events which might require the presence of Assessment Board members.

56. To ensure that the agenda is made available to members of the Assessment Board in advance of the meeting.

57. To ensure that papers and the minutes of the previous meeting are made available to members of the Assessment Board at the meeting.

58. To ensure that the relevant assessment regulations are available at each Assessment Board meeting.

59. To ensure that evidence of student attendance is available at Pre-Board and at Assessment Board.

60. To monitor the adherence of the Board to relevant regulations, policies and procedures and to draw the attention of the Board and the Academic Registrar to any divergence from this.

61. To have available at Assessment Board meetings a copy of the most recent edition of the University's Academic Misconduct Policy.

62. To ensure that the proceedings of an Assessment Board are recorded accurately in the agreed format, particularly the assessment arrangements for students presenting extenuating circumstances/requesting intercalation and those who are referred/deferred.

63. To present a clear written report of the Assessment Board meeting in the agreed format.

64. To securely dispose of mark sheets after the Assessment Board meetings.

65. To ensure publication of results according to agreed procedures, including award notification letters and pass lists.

GLOSSARY OF ASSESSMENT BOARD TERMS

REFERRAL

A student is 'referred' when he/she has failed a component of assessment, either by submitting work of inadequate standard (exam or coursework) or by failing, for no good reason, to complete an assessment within a stated timescale. Referred students can redeem their position within a timescale and in accordance with arrangements stipulated by the Assessment Board.

DEFERRAL

An Assessment Board may 'defer' a decision on a student's performance if, for good reason, the student has failed to complete an assignment within the normal time schedule or attend a scheduled exam, normally as a result of an approved application for extenuating circumstances. The Assessment Board will need to define the timing and arrangements for any deferral. Exceptionally, an Assessment Board may elect to defer a decision either because members feel that advice has to be sought from a higher authority or because they feel that insufficient evidence has been presented for a fully informed decision to be made. The Assessment Board will stipulate a timescale for any mechanism by which deferred students can complete their assessments.

INTERCALATION

Intercalation is defined as an authorised break in studies during a course, but after the course has commenced. Intercalation applies to both full-time and part-time students. Granting intercalation status assumes that the student has been judged to have the potential to continue with their studies after a break, but does not guarantee that there is an automatic right to return or that the course will be available in its present form or at all on return. The maximum duration of intercalation is normally one academic year. Claims for intercalation will be considered by an Extenuating Circumstances Panel who will make recommendations to the Board.

EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

All work submitted by students for assessment shall be marked on its merits without consideration of any extenuating circumstances known to the marker. However, any notified extenuating circumstances (under the aegis of the Extenuating Circumstances Policy) will be taken into

account by the Assessment Board (on the recommendation of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel) when determining whether to set aside a mark and offer the student a further attempt without penalty.

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the overarching term used for the award of credit on the basis of demonstrated learning that has occurred at some time in the past either through attending formal courses (prior certificated learning) or through paid or unpaid work, self-directed learning or other life experiences (prior experiential learning). The theme common to both prior certificated learning and prior experiential learning is that learning, and not just the experience of the activities alone, is being recognised and awarded credit.

APPENDIX 1

COURSE ASSESSMENT BOARDS

Terms of Reference

- 1) Under delegated authority from the Senate, and with reference to the University of Suffolk Framework and Regulations for the relevant award, to consider and determine:
 - a) the performance of students in relation to marks for individual components of assessment and for modules overall
 - b) ways by which students who fail to satisfy the assessment requirements can redeem their position, setting clear dates by which reassessment should occur, and clarifying whether re-assessment is by re-submission of the component(s) or re-take of the module and any conditions associated with the reassessment
 - c) the recognition of prior learning (including certificated and experiential learning), in accordance with the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy
 - d) whether students are eligible to progress from one stage of a programme to another (including making decisions regarding termination of registration due to academic failure)
 - e) the achievement of employability skills and any other approved awards and/or activities for inclusion on the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)
 - f) where relevant, a student's fitness to practise
 - g) the conferment of final awards, including determination of the class or grade of award
 - h) the conferment of exit awards, including Aegrotat awards where eligible, for students who withdraw or are withdrawn before completion of their programme of study.
- 2) To consider the recommendations of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel in accordance with the Extenuating Circumstances Policy..
- 3) To determine penalties for academic misconduct in accordance with the Academic Misconduct policy.
- 4) To ensure that regulations relating to assessment are applied in a fair and consistent manner and that academic standards are maintained.

- 5) To review the assessment arrangements for the course/programme of study as a whole and make recommendations to the Course Committee and/or to the Senate.
- 6) To present to the Chair of the Senate a list of all final results on request.
- 7) Consider any other matters referred to it by the Senate.

Membership

Ex Officio

- Dean of School (or equivalent) or nominee from list of trained Chairs (Chair)
- Course/Programme Leader
- Chair of Pre-Board(s)
- Module Leaders
- Personal Tutors
- External Examiner(s) for progression and award Boards
- Practice representatives for course(s) leading to registration/license to practise
- Course Administrator

In attendance

- Clerk (a representative of the Academic Registrar)

Notes on membership

- 1) Observers may attend meetings of the Course Assessment Boards as part of the University's quality audit processes. Other observers may attend at the discretion and by invitation of the Chair.
- 2) Substitutions for members unable to attend a meeting must be agreed beforehand with the Chair.

Quorum

The following must be in attendance at the Assessment Board:

- Dean of School (or equivalent) or nominee from list previously agreed by the Academic Registrar
- Course Leader
- Chair of Pre-Board

- It is expected that all Module Leaders responsible for modules to be considered by the Board will be in attendance at the Board. Exceptionally, in the unavoidable absence of a Module Leader, it is for the Chair to determine whether robust arrangements can be put in place for the role to be fulfilled by someone else.
- It is expected that the Personal Tutor for any students whose profiles are being discussed by the Board will be in attendance at the Board. Exceptionally, in the unavoidable absence of a Personal Tutor, it is for the Chair to determine whether robust arrangements can be put in place for the role to be fulfilled by someone else.
- Where final awards are under consideration, participation by External Examiners is a requirement.

Frequency of meetings

Normally two meetings per academic year. Additional meetings may be held if required.

Reports to

- Senate
- School/Partner College Academic Committees (for purposes of emerging issues only, not consideration of minutes)

The terms of reference for Course Assessment Boards form part of the Assessment Board Policy and will be reviewed as part of the normal schedule of review for all University of Suffolk policies and procedures.