

Appendix A: Board of Examiners Policy

Board of Examiners Membership and Conduct Guidance

Introduction

1. This document provides detailed guidance for staff with regards to the membership requirements and conduct of Boards of Examiners. It will be updated periodically to reflect any changes to relevant academic regulations and policies.
2. Boards at the university are operated in two-tiers: **Pre-boards** (also referred to as sub-boards or internal boards), and **Examiners' Progression and Award Boards (EPABs)**. An EPAB may also include a specific meeting of the Board to consider students that have completed reassessment prior to consideration for award or progression (**Re-sit Board**). The role, membership and conduct will vary depending on the tier of the Board. Details are provided below.

Membership

3. The membership of the Boards shall consist of a [Chair](#), together with "College Examiners¹" and the External Examiners appointed to act for the relevant subjects.

Pre-Boards or Sub-Boards

4. Membership of these boards should include:
 - a. The EPAB Chair (or nominee),
 - b. The minimum of College Examiners to enable the consideration of the modules under review,
 - c. Key members of departmental administrative staff involved with assessment,
 - d. A member of the Department's Mitigating Circumstances Board (MCB).

For the 6-year MBBS programme², External Examiners should attend sub-board meetings.

Examiners' Progression and Award Boards (EPAB)

5. Membership of these boards must include:
 - a. The Board Chair,
 - b. College Examiners (unless granted dispensation by the current Head of Department),

¹ A College Examiner is a member of the Department that has responsibilities for teaching and learning, and assessment activities and maybe employed with the University on either the Academic or Learning and Teaching job families.

² This does not apply to the Graduate Entry MBBS programme (Pears Cumbria)

- c. key members of departmental administrative staff,
 - d. all External Examiners.
6. For the 6-year MBBS programme only, EPAB meetings take place in years four (BSc) and six (MBBS) and only consider the award of degrees to candidates. It is recognised that for undergraduate medicine a slightly different system operates whereby the sub-board meetings for each year of the programme are responsible for the detailed discussion of student progression, including consideration of borderline cases. For this reason, it is a requirement for all relevant External Examiners and College Examiners to attend the appropriate undergraduate medicine sub-board for which they are responsible. Only one External Examiner is required to attend each of the BSc and MBBS EPAB meetings. The Graduate-Entry MBBS programme has yearly EPAB meetings.

Joint Board of Examiner's Meetings

7. A Joint Board will normally be set up for candidates whose range of assessment has, in the opinion of the relevant Faculty Education Committee, been too wide for a single Board to deal with adequately. Any meeting of a Joint Board (and Sub-Board meetings where relevant) at which the classification of candidates is considered must be attended by (a) at least one External Examiner and (b) at least one College Examiner from each of the Boards concerned. It must, furthermore, normally be attended by at least one External Examiner in each of the principal fields of study concerned. The relevant Faculty Education Committee shall decide which fields of study and which Boards are concerned.

Board of Examiners' Meetings for Collaborative Programmes

8. Where programmes of study are run in collaboration with a partner institution there must be representation at the EPAB meetings (and sub-board meetings where relevant) by the partner(s) and the university. The composition of these Boards should be approved by the relevant Faculty Education Committee and detailed in the governing Memorandum of Agreement.

Programmes of Study with a "Management Year"

9. Management year results are considered by the Imperial Business School's EPAB rather than the students' home department. The management year results are passed to the students' home department prior to the departments' EPAB. A representative from the Imperial Business School should also attend the departmental EPAB to present the results. Decisions by the Imperial Business School EPAB for "with management years" are final and cannot be amended by the departmental EPAB. This is to ensure that the learning outcomes for the management year have been achieved and to ensure students with similar results for a module or for the whole management year are treated equitably across the university.

Consideration of all other modules taught externally to the student's home department

10. Where a module(s) is taught and assessed externally to the students' home department and are not covered by the paras above, such as I-Explore or other elective modules that are offered to broaden the curriculum, the department in which they are taught and assessed will complete the moderation and ratification of marks as part of their sub-board or pre-board processes.
11. These marks are final and any subsequent action within the EPAB in relation to scaling will not be permitted to applied to these modules. This is to ensure that the learning outcomes have been

achieved and to ensure students with similar results for a module are treated equitably across the university.

12. Where modules within a department are shared across programmes, for example Level 7 modules that may be taken by students on undergraduate or postgraduate taught programmes, the same considerations will apply with regards to moderation activities including scaling as for external taught modules to ensure parity of outcomes. The programme that 'owns' the module is responsible for considering and ratifying the marks.

Re-sit Boards:

13. The membership of resit boards must include: The EPAB Chair (or nominee) and the minimum of College Examiners to enable the consideration of modules under review as well as any other key members of departmental administrative staff. The Board decisions must be confirmed by at least one of the duly appointed External Examiners. This may be either through attendance at the Board (physically or virtually), or by correspondence post-Board.

Quoracy

14. Normally a minimum of 60 per cent of the membership of the Board of Examiners should be present for valid decisions to be taken (quoracy). This must include at least one External Examiner.
15. If no External Examiners can attend the EPAB meeting in any mode, the Academic Registrar (via quality@imperial.ac.uk) should be informed. The EPAB meeting cannot proceed without an External Examiner unless this is authorised by the Academic Registrar (or nominee). If authorised, the Board is required to follow up with the External Examiner(s) after the meeting to confirm the results of the students prior to final publication.

Roles and responsibilities of Board attendees

Chair

16. It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Board to ensure that the meeting is properly conducted and that appropriate decisions are reached, in line with the university Academic Regulations, policies and procedures.
17. Where it has been deemed necessary to vote on a matter, the Chair will have the deciding vote.
18. Full details of the role and responsibility of the Chair of the Board of Examiners can be found in the [Chair of the Board of Examiners Role](#)

Secretary to the Board

19. The Board meetings should be serviced by departmental administrative staff acting as secretary. They are responsible for:
 - a. advising on the procedures,
 - b. accurately recoding the proceedings of the meeting,
 - c. transmitting the decisions reached by the Board on behalf of the Chair.
20. They should also confirm the dates of the Board meetings, usually a year in advance, with all members including the External Examiner(s). The Assessment Records team (assessment.records@imperial.ac.uk) would also be advised when Board(s) is taking place.

21. The secretary is not a voting member of the Board.

College Examiners

22. College Examiners' responsibilities in the Board are to:

- a. ensure that relevant marks presented to the Board are correct and that they have completed their marking and moderation in line with university regulations and procedures.
- b. deliberate on decision-making regarding progression, reassessment and award in line with university regulations and procedures.
- c. contribute to discussions within the Board regarding the performance of students and of quality assurance and enhancement of the modules and programme(s) being considered.

23. The College Examiners are full voting members of the Board.

24. Full details can be found in the College Examiner's [role and responsibilities](#).

External Examiners

25. The role of the External Examiner at the Board is to:

- a. advise on the internal marking and moderation process with regards to fairness and consistency.
- b. advise on the relative standards of awards in comparison to the wider HE sector, and in accordance with national frameworks and the expectations of accrediting bodies as appropriate.
- c. to approve the agreed list of marks.
- d. comment of proposed changes to programmes of study.

26. External Examiners may also be requested to comment on decisions such as uplifts in classification, marking disputes, or consideration of fair application of mitigation however, it must be noted that they are not responsible for the final decision-making in such matters.

27. The External Examiners are not voting members of the Board.

28. Further details can be found in the External Examiners [role and responsibilities](#)

Additional attendees

29. A representative from Assessment Records in Registry will be invited to attend but is not required for the meeting to be quorate. Their role is to support the Board with the understanding of the university's academic regulations and procedures. Additional support in the interpretation of the regulations and academic policies can be sought from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team (quality@imperial.ac.uk).

30. The Chair may permit attendance at the Board by Assistant Examiners or other members of Faculty or Department staff at their discretion.

31. Any additional attendees are not voting members of the Board and are not included in quoracy.

Conduct of Boards

All Boards

32. Boards of Examiners may be held as in-person meetings on a university campus (or other venue as appropriate for the programme under consideration), virtually through a secure video conferencing platform, or in a hybrid model. Each department will confirm the expected mode of attendance for their Boards when setting the dates.
33. Where meetings are held virtually in part or in full, careful consideration should be given to ensure that the process remains compliant with the principles of data protection (GDPR). Support and guidance from ICT on secure remote working including distribution of files can be found at <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/ict/self-service/be-secure/> and further information on GDPR can be found on the university webpages at [Data protection guidance | Administration and support services | Imperial College London](#)
34. Clear provision must be made to enable potential conflicts of interest - such as personal interests or involvements with students - to be identified and addressed. See the [Personal Relationships Policy](#) for details of the university's definitions of potential conflicts due to close relationships. These should be reported to the Chair in advance of the meeting and noted. Where a member of staff has a conflict of interest, they should not be involved in any discussion or decision making related to that candidate.
35. Any Chair's Actions (see para 59 onwards) taken since the last meeting should be presented to the Board and recorded in the formal minutes of the meeting.
36. The university's Academic Regulations require Boards to be conducted with anonymity for all candidates and so their marks profile will be presented by either **candidate number or CID only**.
37. All Boards must ensure that any decisions they make are transparent and recorded accurately in the minutes of the meeting. There should be transparent processes for dealing with anomalies in marking and arrangements for fair and appropriate adjustments. EPAB minutes must be sent to the Registry's Assessment Records Team.

Voting protocols

38. During their discussion, the members of the Board may have differing views on how matters/decisions that are not specifically mandated by the Academic Regulations, policies, or procedures should be taken forward.
39. Where consensus cannot be reached, the Chair of the Board may agree to a vote of eligible members. Voting members may agree, disagree or abstain. A simple majority will be sufficient to agree a course of action, and members that abstain are not included in the vote count. Where the vote is tied, the Chair will have the deciding vote.
40. Examples of the decisions on which votes may be held include:
- a. Proposals for amendments or modifications to programmes in subsequent years based on the discussions held in the Board.
 - b. Moderation activities such as scaling.

- c. Proposals for action following the review in the Board of programme and module trend data, such as marks trend or differential outcomes.
 - d. Consideration of the application of mitigating circumstances, for example where there is disagreement of the best course of action. The Board may not alter the decision that mitigation was accepted/not accepted.
41. Boards of Examiners may not vote on decisions for which the Academic Regulations or policies and procedures have set clear outcomes or decisions that have been made under these policy's direct authority:
- a. Progression and award decisions.
 - b. Application of penalties under academic misconduct procedures.
 - c. Consideration of borderline candidates.
42. Where a vote has been held, the minutes of the meeting should record the motion that has been voted on, the outcome and, if relevant, any necessary follow up actions. This will be recorded as either:
- a. The majority vote was for the motion to be approved/not approved.
 - b. The vote was tied. The Chair cast their deciding vote for the motion to be approved/not approved.
43. In the rare event that the number of abstained votes means that the number that have cast a vote would be fewer than required for quoracy, this must be recorded in the minutes and will be considered a Chair's Action.

Examiners Progression and Award Board (EPAB)

44. The EPAB receives the final marks from the sub-board(s), including any recommendations regarding borderline cases or from the Mitigating Circumstances Board (MCB) made because of the consideration of mitigation, for ratification and confirm progression and award.
45. The Board will receive confirmation of the proven cases of Academic Misconduct through the summary (department level) or central process and the penalties that have been given and will make relevant decisions about the student(s) regarding progression and award.
46. Re-sit/re-take requirements must be agreed. These will be clearly recorded for each candidate with regards to session, and if they are capped or uncapped.
47. In considering final classifications, the Board will consider any borderline students in line with the Academic Regulations and the agreed criteria for uplifts in classification.
48. Potential changes to the examination arrangements and procedures, marking scheme and/or assessment formats for future cohorts should be discussed. A recommendation for any modifications should then be made to the appropriate committee.
49. The Board will confirm the outcome of relevant prizes and awards, including the Dean's list where relevant, which fall within their remit.

50. General preliminary comments made by the External Examiners on the outcome of assessments for the current academic session and their reflections on the assessment process and standards achieved should be recorded. This feedback is in addition to, and does not replace, the formal annual report that each External Examiner is asked to submit to the university.

Progression and Award Data – Discussion at Boards

51. During the Board meeting, members should consider management information set data for individual modules and for the awards overall. Boards should review and consider trends in the distribution of the award of honours, progression and failure rates. Boards may also wish to review year trends, including 3-year averages for the marks awarded on the different final year taught components of the degree programme and for examinations to ensure that parts of the programme are not consistently significantly different in marks awarded. This would exclude coursework only components such as projects, as these differ for explainable reasons.
52. This discussion is used to inform, and evidence, updates and changes to the programmes, for example minor and major modifications, and to support the annual monitoring process.

Limitations to the authority of the Board of Examiners

53. Whilst authority to consider student profiles is delegated to Boards from Senate, and they are granted powers to deviate from the university academic regulations under specific circumstances outlined in the *Mitigating Circumstances* or *Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures*, there are limitations in the actions that the Board may make.
54. Greater detail of the consideration of students with proven academic misconduct, an accepted mitigating circumstances claim, or during a period of industrial action is included in appendix c.
55. Boards of Examiners are advised that any decision that falls outside the limitations of the academic regulations, such as extending the maximum permitted registration of a student, or to change or amend the approved assessment regime must be considered and approved by the Academic Registrar (or nominee) before it can be taken forward.

Follow up action after the Board

56. After any Board, the minutes should be approved in a timely fashion. For an EPAB or Re-sit Board, the minutes must be forwarded to Assessment Records in Registry. The approved minutes are essential to ensure that actions following the Board, such as result production, can be completed or to explain the decision-making if challenged such as through an academic appeal.
57. The marks and decisions from EPAB reported to Registry must be on the agreed template. Marks will be reported to two decimal places.
58. Details of the progression coding for the results return can be found in the [Appendix D: Coding for Results Template](#).

Chair's Action

59. Chair's action should normally only be used if the next Board of Examiners is more than six weeks away³, to:

- a. approve an explicit and minuted Board decision, following completion of an action in respect of an individual student (e.g. outcome of an Academic Misconduct Panel)
- b. reflect a decision following the acceptance of a late mitigating circumstances claim or the resolution of an academic appeal or review.
- c. approve an exit award following the withdrawal the University during the academic year, where there are sufficient credits to make the award and any specific requirements for the programme have been met.
- d. correct an administrative error or delay.

60. A Chair's action may be planned or unplanned. A planned Chair's action is where the Board of Examiners is aware of a situation which means that they cannot make a final decision regarding a student(s), such as a missing mark, and agree a course of action depending on the outcome. For example, the Board of Examiners are made aware that there is a pending mark. They agree based on the marks profile of the student that if the mark is a fail, the student is offered a resit at the next opportunity, if the mark is a pass that the student progresses to the next year. An unplanned Chair's action is where the Board becomes aware of a change to a student(s) mark which is required to be ratified, for example, an error in reporting, proven academic misconduct, or that a student's outcome should be reconsidered following an upheld academic appeal or an accepted late claim for mitigation.

61. Of the above, an External Examiner's approval would usually only be required if circumstances have changed since the last Board the External Examiner attended. For example:

- a. A student is granted a final award of the University.
- b. The student's final award classification is increased or decreased.
- c. A student's award is rescinded.

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³ This timeframe may be shorted in limited circumstances, such as to meet the expectations of UKVI.