



Access and HE Examination Board Guidance

Quality Assurance

Rationale for Examination Boards¹

It is a formal requirement that centres hold Examination Boards for all their level 4-6 programmes. In addition, the Examination Board reports and minutes provide valuable evidence for QAA's review processes. The main purpose of an Examination Board is to make recommendations on:

- **The grades achieved by students on the individual modules or units**
- **Extenuating circumstances**
- **Cases of cheating and plagiarism**
- **Progression of students onto the next stage of the programme**
- **The awards to be made to students**
- **Referrals and deferrals**
- **Examination Boards may also monitor academic standards.**

Examination Boards are held at the end of the academic year, normally in June, the College also completes Progress Examination Boards at the end of the first semester. The Examination Board has delegated certain responsibilities to Course Coordinators, such as the power to authorise resubmissions, please refer to your Award Organisation Higher Education Institution (HEI) Regulations to ensure decisions are made in line with their regulations. Your CAM can provide advice and guidance. If required, there may also be August Supplementary Examination Boards to deal with matters such as repeat units and mitigating/extenuating circumstances.

Preliminary Examination Board

It is important that each course schedules a Preliminary Examination Board to discuss results prior to the Examination Board and allow the Awarding Examination Board to run in an efficient manner. Include your Ulster University Faculty Partnership Manager (FPM) or Open University Quality and Partnerships Manager in discussions. FPMs should be part of the preliminary boards, OU do not require this, but the Senior Quality Partnership Manager can be consulted if necessary. No discussion of individual results or counselling of students should take place until after the results have been formally ratified and results lists have been published.

- **It is recommended that the Preliminary Examination Board is scheduled 5 working days before the Examination Board.**
- **All members of the Preliminary Examination Boards must be aware of the associated policies and procedures prior to attending, including:**
 - [The College's Standard Operating Procedure on Internal Verification](#)
 - [The College's Standard Operating Procedure on Academic Malpractice and Academic Offences](#)
 - [QAA UK Quality Code](#)
 - [QAA Code on Assessment](#)
 - [QAA Code on Academic Standards](#)

¹ Pearson HN refers to Assessment Boards
 Ulster University refer to Board of Examiners
 Open University refers to Examination Boards
 QUB Preliminary Boards refers to a Subject and Exam Boards

- **This generic guidance may be used to help establish processes for BMC Staff. All Awarding Organisation and Partner University Regulations must be adhered to:**
 - [OU Examination Board Guidance](#)
The college follow the OU published 'Guidance Notes for Partner Institutions on OU Examination Board Documentation' which can be found at <https://www5.open.ac.uk/validation-partnerships/sites/www.open.ac.uk.validation-partnerships/files/files/Guidance%20Notes%20for%20Partner%20Institutions%20on%20OU%20Examination%20Board%20Documentation%20.pdf>

The college follow the Board of Examiners guidance as outlined in Section F of the OU Handbook for Validated awards <https://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/siteFiles/resources/docs/public-documents/OU/ou-handbook-for-validated-awards.pdf>
 - [UU Assessment Board Guidance](#) and up to date AST codes [AST-Codes-Final.pdf](#)
 - [QUB regulations](#) are to be applied to Foundation degree students, registered for a programme of study with the college/ consortium of colleges. QUB organise, chair and minute all Examination Board meetings. BMC Quality assurance attend the Examination board. Please forward meeting invite to QA manager
 - Pearson Assessment Board Guidance- [BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment 2022-2023](#)
 - City & Guilds and AIQ please refer to programme specification on the Awarding Organisation website [City & Guilds](#) [Active IQ](#) & [OCN](#)
- **The grading templates to use:**
 - Pearson [2022-2023 HNC grading template](#) / [2022-23 HND grading template](#) with supporting [guidance](#)
 - EBS Markbook results sheet. City & Guilds, OCN and Active IQ course who are not using the Markbook use this [QA Exam Board Grading Template](#)
 - Open University - [Award Recommendation List.xlsx](#)
 - Ulster University – Course Results Sheets (CRS) are generated from UU academic office and will be sent to course teams. Please check for accuracy reporting anomalies to Collaborative Courses Unit. Ensure CRS' are sent to your FPMs too.

It is chaired by the CAM or Course Coordinator to discuss:

- That all information regarding students' achievement and assessment and IQA processes have been completed and verified. This documentation is to be retained and stored in course Programme Management Portfolio (PMP) detailed in Appendix 2.
- The grades achieved by students on the individual modules or units
- Extenuating circumstances, please follow college [EC1 guidance](#).
- Cases of cheating and plagiarism are recorded in line with college [Standard Operating Procedure on Academic Malpractice and Academic Offences](#) by emailing AcademicMalpractice@belfastmet.ac.uk or completing the Microsoft form [Academic Misconduct Tracker](#)
- Progression of students onto the next stage of the programme
- The awards to be made to students
- Referrals and deferrals

Decisions on the above are to be recorded on the grading template or EBS Mark book and submitted to Quality Assurance 2 days prior to the Awarding Examination Board. If further clarification or guidance is required on AO or HEI regulations, please contact your FPM² or AO to discuss prior to the scheduled Awarding Examination board.

² Pearson – Contact Lisa McArdle

Ulster University – Contact your Faculty Partnership Manager (FPM)

Open University – Contact your Senior Quality and Partnerships Manager (SQPM)

Examination Board

The Examination Board will be scheduled after the External Examiner (EE) visit and the course preliminary board has taken place.

Quality Assurance will arrange the chairing and minuting of Examination boards, it is advisable that the Chair and the Secretary of an Examination Board are, as far as possible, independent of the programme under consideration. For UU subject network groups, these are chaired outside Belfast Met and CAMs and Course Directors should advise QA of the dates and times of these as QA attend them too to ensure processes are followed. CAMs should attend these meetings, where this is not possible, please let QA know.

All members of an Examination Board must be aware of the associated policies and procedures prior to the meetings taking place. The Course Coordinator and the Curriculum Area Manager (CAM) must attend the Exam Board. Quality Assurance will issue the diary invite to all relevant staff with an agenda. It is important that staff confirm their attendance, to ensure the meetings are quorate. Links to your Awarding organisations approved agenda format can be at Appendix 1.

Quality Assurance will issue External Examiners with an invite to attend. External Examiners (EEs) have the right to attend Examination Boards, roles vary across Awarding Organisations. EEs must attend for awarding boards for HEIs (which are OU, UU QUB), Pearson EEs attend only in an advisory role.

The Examination Board will follow the set agenda and all actions and decisions will be recorded in the minutes and Grading Templates, ensuring that assessment decisions are recorded accurately, noting how the board will exercise discretion in a consistent manner, for example in relation to extenuating/mitigating circumstances (EC1) and borderline cases. Only an indication of which students have EC1's in place if they have been accepted or denied in accordance with the [EC1 policy](#) is required, students' personal details are not to be discussed as EC1 contents are confidential.

The Course Coordinator will present the grades for each student. If templates are not completed correctly or are not submitted in good time, the Chair has the right to reconvene at a later date.

Actions after the Examination Board

Completing the paperwork.

Please follow the instructions for your relevant Awarding Organisation.

Please follow the OU guidance [Guidance Notes for Partner Institutions on OU Examination Board Documentation .pdf \(open.ac.uk\)](#)

The draft minutes will be issued within 2 working days of the Examination Board to the members by Quality Assurance. If any anomalies are identified please notify Quality Assurance within 2 working days of the issue of the draft minutes. If no anomalies are identified within this timeframe, final minutes will be issued to the members. Any Chair decisions that require action must be completed within 2 working days.

The course coordinator or CAM must notify each student of their final grades, via a publication letter. Results should be sent as a PDF attachment to the students Belfast Met email account. Results information generated from the AO (if available) can be used to inform students of their grade. The notification of results communication must include information/refer the student to the relevant Appeals process. <https://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/about-us/corporate-information/public-documents/> and state clearly the timeframe in which the appeal must be submitted. Please liaise with your BSU who will supply you with a suitable template to issue results.

- **As certification has been released and the programme grades ratified by the Examination Board, ensure you follow your Awarding Organisation process i.e. Pearson is EOL by a minimum of two staff to ensure accuracy.**
- **Pearson Course Coordinator must email their External Examiner and CAM the final Exam Board minutes and Grading Template, these should be password protected.**

Confidentiality

Personal data being displayed at Examination Boards must be in line with College policies and all other relevant internal staff guidance on data sharing³. Examination Board decisions and documentation must be retained in line with Awarding Organisations and College Data Protection guidelines for three years.

³ <https://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/about-us/corporate-information/public-documents>

Appendix 1 – Examination Board Agenda

Examination Board

Agenda

1. **Attendance** Introductions and Apologies. Declaration of conflict of interest.
2. **Regulations** -To note the course regulations and confirmation of processes and administration. Registration, Internal verification, authenticity declaration, plagiarism and malpractice.
3. **Evidence of Extenuating Circumstances**
To receive evidence of extenuating circumstances submitted by or on behalf of examination.
4. **Receipt and consideration of Student results.** Presentation of results and sign off by Chair and EE where appropriate.
 - 4.1 To note any changes to overall module marks/ units following moderation.
 - 4.2 To confirm the results of candidates in examinations and coursework for which the Board is responsible.
 - 4.3 To determine the overall results and the academic progress of candidates.
 - 4.4 To forward to Senate recommendations for awards to candidates who have successfully completed their courses of study and who have satisfied the conditions specified in Ordinance XXIX (OU and UU requirement).
5. **Publication of Results** Process and confirmation of minutes. To note the arrangements for (a) publication of progress and award decisions and marks; (b) communication of decisions to unsuccessful candidates.
6. **Appeals (based on submission of new information)**
 - 6.1 To note the dates on which appeals shall be heard.
 - 6.2 To note the composition of the Appeals Panel.
7. **Agree arrangements for supplementary examination Boards**
8. **To make recommendation for prizes and awards** (If applicable in your school)
9. **Comments from Internal & External Examiners** (Chair comment on EE report)
10. **Any Other Business**

Appendix 2 - Programme Management Portfolio

Programme teams should have a Programme Management Portfolio (PMP), should be made accessible to all members the programme team and the documents may be required to be available for the Awarding Organisation or a student appeal.

<p>Section 1 The Course</p>	<p>a. Full title of programme b. Confirmation of approval letter/link from/to Awarding body (Contact QA team for approval letter) c. Programme and Specification Handbook – College template d. Copy of programme internet blurb/publicity</p>
<p>Section 2 Staffing</p>	<p>a. Staffing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course/unit/module Responsibilities (who teaches what units/course coordinator) • Job Title b. Updated staff CV including training records (last five years)</p>
<p>Section 3 Course set up</p>	<p>a. Course Timetable(s) b. Class Lists (as per EBS) c. Academic Year Calendar including work experience (if applicable)</p>
<p>Section 4 Induction</p>	<p>a. College Induction arrangements and materials, initial assessment etc</p>
<p>Section 5 Teaching and Learning</p>	<p>a. Schemes of Work for each module/unit – College template b. Assessment Schedule – Awarding body template c. Link to college Assessment Policy d. Copies of assignments including validations for all units/modules e. Copies of all Marking schedules –sample answers (if applicable) f. Sample of good practice for new staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A marked pass grade assessment with feedback • A marked merit grade assessment with feedback • A marked distinction grade assessment with feedback. • Examples of assessment methods used within School </p>
<p>Section 6 Staff Meetings</p>	<p>a. Team Meetings Schedule b. Agendas and minutes of all team meetings (College template) c. Action Plans</p>
<p>Section 7 Student Voice</p>	<p>a. Schedule for meetings with student representatives SSCC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda (College template) • Minutes (College template) • Action Plans b. Student Survey results per CAM/Programme level c. Unit /Module evaluations from unit questionnaires</p>
<p>Section 8 Assessment Boards</p>	<p>a. Records of (Examination) Board Meetings (3–5 years)</p>
<p>Section 9 Student Tracking</p>	<p>a. Assessment tracking records for all students - based on your awarding body retention schedule, e.g. Pearson BTEC FE and HE is 3 years from certification.</p>
<p>Section 10</p>	<p>a. Self-Evaluation Report (SER) – past 2 years</p>

SER	
Section 11 Internal Quality Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Internal Verification Plansb. Extenuating Circumstancesc. Assessment Appeals record
Section 13 External Quality Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. LIV/EE/SV/EQA, including reports, responses and Action Plansb. ETI/QAA, including reports, responses and Action Plans
Section 14 Awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Commendations/complaints if applicableb. Evidence of awards, prizes, competitions