

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN  
QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE  
**EXAMINERS' MEETINGS PROCEDURES**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER**

This paper provides an overview of the proposed amendments to the Examiners' Meetings procedures.

**2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED**

	<b>Board/Committee</b>	<b>Date</b>
Previously considered/approved by	Academic Policy and Regulations Group (For <b>approval</b> )	20 March 2025
Further consideration/ approval required by	Quality Assurance Committee (For <b>approval</b> )	16 April 2025
	Senate (For <b>information</b> )	7 May 2025

**3. RECOMMENDED ACTION**

The **Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)** are invited to **discuss and approve** the amendments to the Examiners' Meetings Procedures, as detailed in **Annex A**.

**4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The Examiners' Meetings procedures were last reviewed in 2017/18 and approved by the University Committee of Teaching and Learning (UCTL as was, now the University Education Committee (UEC)) in September 2017. The Examiners' Meetings procedures were originally published in three distinct documents: the job description for [Examinations Officers](#), guidance on the [Number, Composition and Purpose of Examiners' Meetings](#), and guidance on the [Conduct of Examiners' Meetings](#). These documents were intended to provide assistance for Schools and/or Disciplines in terms of what was required (as a minimum) to be detailed in an Examiners' Meeting, and to assure that assessment criteria had been applied consistently. The documents gave guidance to ensure that terms used within them were transparent, and that Examiners' Meetings were conducted in a largely standardised manner across the University
- 4.2 Further to the Education Policy and Regulations Update that the Education Committees received by circulation, a review of the Examiners' Meetings procedures has been undertaken to combine the three existing documents into one comprehensive document. Aspects of the existing procedures have been clarified (as summarised in Section 5), and extensive layout amendments have occurred to bring these procedures in line with other existing University documents.
- 4.3 In taking this forward, the Dean for Quality Assurance and Enhancement in conjunction with the Academic Services team developed a proposal document to be presented for consultation to maintain the rigour of quality assurance practices. This draft was presented to the Directors of Education and Examinations Officer(s) for each School,

and a number of comments were received. These have been noted, and the procedural document has been amended as a result.

- 4.4 In considering the review of the Examiners' Meetings procedures, sectoral research was carried out with a number of UK Universities, including other Ancient Scottish Universities. The sectoral research is appended as **Annex B**. The sectoral analysis highlights that the University's current Examiners' Meetings procedures appear to be in line with those of other Higher Education Institutions.

## **5. SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CHANGES**

- 5.1 The following summary details the key amendments and clarifications which are proposed to the procedures. The majority of the amendments were minor, and it should be noted that the content of the three documents remain largely preserved in the new single document. The full revised Examiners' Meetings procedures are provided in **Annex A**.

- The three documents that previously existed (as described in 4.1) have been combined into one document entitled *Examiners' Meetings Procedures*.
- A glossary has been added in Section 2 to clarify what is meant by the various terms referred to throughout the document. Additionally, in response to feedback, a sentence was added to highlight that membership and attendance at all Examiners' Meetings would be at the discretion of the Convenor of the Meeting.
- Distinction was made between undergraduate and postgraduate taught Examiners' Meetings, in terms of the times of year that they take place.
- Wording was changed in terms of "half-session" to "term", and "extenuating circumstances" to "mitigating circumstances".
- An optional template for the compilation of the minute for all Examiners' Meetings is included as Appendix A to the Annex.

## **6. ACTION REQUIRED**

- 6.1 The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) is invited to **discuss and approve** the combined document at the meeting on 16 April 2025.

## **7. NEXT STEPS**

- 7.1 The procedures will be noted at the University Education Committee (UEC) for information.

## **8. FURTHER INFORMATION**

Further information is available from Steve Tucker ([s.j.tucker@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:s.j.tucker@abdn.ac.uk)), Liam Dyker ([liam.dyker2@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:liam.dyker2@abdn.ac.uk)) or Morag MacRae ([morag.macrae@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:morag.macrae@abdn.ac.uk)).

26 March 2025

**Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status:** Open

ACADEMIC QUALITY HANDBOOK

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN  
EXAMINERS' MEETINGS PROCEDURES

1. PROCEDURES

- 1.1 These procedures set out the number, composition, conduct and responsibilities relating to Examiners' Meetings, and were approved by the Quality Assurance Committee on **XXX**.
- 1.2 These procedures are designed to be read in conjunction with the University's Codes of Practice on Assessment ([Undergraduate](#) and [Postgraduate Taught](#)) and [External Examining documentation](#). Further information on Assessment at the University is available in the [Academic Quality Handbook](#) (AQH).
- 1.3 The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) can be consulted (via [Academic Services](#)) should a School wish to discuss matters relating to Examiners' Meetings in more detail.

2. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- 2.1 A glossary of terms is provided as follows:
  - **Internal Examiners' Meeting:** A meeting of internal academic staff (the Professors, Readers, Senior Lecturers, Lecturers and Teaching Fellows within a specific programme or discipline) normally held following the end of an assessment diet.
  - **Examiners' Meeting:** A meeting of internal and external examiners normally held following the end of an assessment diet.
  - **Final Examiners' Meeting:** A meeting of internal and external examiners normally held following the end of an assessment diet to determine classifications and consider borderline cases. This is normally held at the end of the Term 2 assessment period for undergraduate programmes, and end of the Term 3 assessment period for postgraduate taught programmes.
  - **Examinations Officer:** The individual member(s) of academic staff within a school with oversight of the assessment procedures as detailed in section 6.

3. NUMBER, COMPOSITION AND PURPOSE OF MEETINGS

- 3.1 The outcomes of assessments are approved by Examiners' Meetings. It is the responsibility of Heads of School to decide how many Examiners' Meetings they need to convene each year and to ensure that External Examiners are informed of the dates well in advance. It is at the discretion of the respective Schools to determine whether the meetings will take place in person on campus, online, or in a hybrid manner.
- 3.2 Normally, Final Examiners' Meetings are held at the end of the Term 2 assessment diet for undergraduate programmes and at the end of the Term 3 assessment diet for postgraduate taught programmes. At least one External Examiner is required to attend these meetings. In addition, Schools should normally hold a meeting of internal examiners after the Term 2 or 3 assessment diet and immediately before a Final Examiners' Meeting, primarily to identify any potential borderline candidates. This would allow a candidate's scripts and in-course assignments to be collated and made available to the Final Examiners' Meeting, in order to ensure that sufficient time is allocated to candidates for whom the assessment outcome may be unclear.
- 3.3 In cases where a final Examiners' Meeting would be considering a very small number of candidates, it is acceptable for an External Examiner to request that they should be excused from attending the University provided they have been sent the following:

- advice regarding any mitigating circumstances that a student has submitted regarding their performance so that these can be taken into account by the External Examiner in approving overall course grades and programme awards;
- summative assessments for each individual candidate which have not been previously seen by the External Examiner.

The External Examiner must also agree to raise any issues with the Head of School by telephone or e-mail prior to confirming the marks and awards and in sufficient time for the School to meet the Senate-approved deadlines for the submission of results to the Student Records team, and to provide feedback to the Head of School in regard to the appropriateness of the assessment procedures and the standards attained by candidates, and the appropriateness of the curricula.

3.4 Schools may also elect to hold an internal Examiners' Meeting at the end of Term 1 or resit summer assessment diets, to agree the marks, scripts and other information to be made available to the External Examiners. There is no requirement for External Examiners to attend these meetings. Where an Examiners' Meeting is not held at the end of Term 1 or the resit diet, it shall be for the Head of School and Course Coordinator to approve the marks for an individual course, which should be submitted to the External Examiner for award of the final overall mark.

3.5 The primary purposes of Final Examiners' Meetings are: -

- to make recommendations in regard to programme awards (including decisions made regarding borderline candidates);
- to finalise the Term 1 grades for courses for Honours and postgraduate taught candidates;
- to finalise the grades to be awarded for all Term 2 courses and those Term 1 courses that are assessed at the end of Term 2 for Honours;
- to finalise the grades to be awarded for all Term 2 or 3 courses and those Term 1 courses that are assessed at the end of Term 2 or 3 for postgraduate taught;
- for borderline candidates only, to take into consideration any medical or other mitigating circumstances that had been submitted to the School within the required time limits (this is normally done via a separate School Mitigating Circumstances Committee);
- to assist Heads of School in identifying candidates for the award of any prizes that are the responsibility of a School;
- to receive oral comments from the External Examiner(s) in regard to (a) the appropriateness of the assessment procedures and the standards attained by candidates, (b) the appropriateness of the curricula, particularly in regard to any external reference points such as the national subject benchmark statement, where relevant, and (c) the structure and content of existing programmes of study, as part of a systematic reflection on the provision and appropriateness of these programmes.

#### **4. COMPOSITION OF EXAMINERS' MEETINGS**

4.1 For programmes delivered by one School, the Head of a School (or their nominated Deputy) should normally serve as Convenor of all Examiners' Meetings for that School. In addition, all Course Coordinators would be expected to attend where the results for their courses were being considered and/or where the results for their courses would contribute to a candidate's overall programme result. All other examiners are also eligible to attend internal Examiners' Meetings. Other markers may be permitted to be in attendance, but without power to vote. The membership of each Examiners' Meeting will be at the discretion of the Convenor. The quorum for a Final Examiners' Meeting

would be the Convenor, at least one External Examiner, and normally at least three other internal examiners.

- 4.2 For programmes delivered by more than one School, the final decision on the award should be taken by an Examiners' Meeting consisting of up to three examiners from each of the participating Schools, plus appropriate External Examiners where available. Where an External Examiner is not available, decisions will be subject to subsequent ratification by the relevant External Examiner(s). For multi-disciplinary programmes with a designated Honours Coordinator and separately identified External Examiners, the Examiners' Meeting must comprise at least the Honours Coordinator, the External Examiner(s), and at least one representative from each School which has contributed courses.
- 4.3 For joint and major/minor Honours degrees in which a candidate has studied two subjects, in practice one School will hold its Final Examiners' Meeting and decide candidates' marks to be awarded for the assessments for which it is responsible before the equivalent meeting for the second subject. Examiners representing the first School/subject will then take joint candidates' marks to the Final Examiners' Meeting for the second subject. The examiners for the two subjects will then jointly determine the overall programme award. This must be agreed in advance between the Examiners.

## **5. CONDUCT OF EXAMINERS' MEETINGS**

- 5.1 Examiners' Meetings shall be convened by the Head of the relevant School (or their nominated deputy) or Honours Coordinator where appropriate. The meetings should be scheduled to ensure that the School can submit results, approved by the External Examiner, by the Senate-approved deadlines.
- 5.2 Those attending Examiners' Meetings are obliged to declare any personal interest, involvement or relationship with a student being assessed, as defined in the [Personal Relationships Policy](#).
- 5.3 Only data, and any personal information, required for Examiners to reach an appropriate outcome should be shared for the meeting. Schools should determine an appropriate mechanism (e.g. a dedicated Teams site) for the distribution and management of this information. Examiners should be provided with instructions around restrictions on sharing and handling data, and instructions for deleting information following the conclusion of the meeting. Data should only be kept for the minimum period necessary to complete the task. Multiple copies of information must not be kept.
- 5.4 All summative assessments should be available for Examiners' Meetings, if requested, in regard to any student for whom an assessment outcome is being considered.
- 5.5 Where the Examiners have evidence (e.g. a candidate's past performance) to believe that a candidate's performance has been impaired for a prolonged period of time (e.g. long-term illness of a parent), the Examiners may take account of this in reviewing borderline cases to determine final degree classification or postgraduate taught award. Should mitigating circumstances already have been applied at course level, they should not be also applied at programme level. See also the relevant Code of Practice on Assessment.
- 5.6 The Code of Practice on Assessment indicates that, in regard to degree classification, where the Examiners use their discretion to depart from the class indicated by the Grade Point Average, such discretion can only be used in an **upward** direction. In all circumstances where discretion is applied, clear reasons must be identified for doing so and a record kept in the minutes of the Examiners' Meeting. It is the responsibility of the

Convenor to ensure that an appropriate record is kept of the procedures and decisions of each Examiners' Meeting. An optional template for School use for the minute of all internal and Final Examiners' Meetings is provided in Appendix A.

- 5.7 External Examiners, as full members of the relevant Examiners' Meeting, must normally be invited to attend all Examiners' Meetings at which significant decisions are to be taken in regard to the specialisms with which they have been concerned (including those for which they have approved question papers). At least one External Examiner must be present at all Final Examiners' Meetings.
- 5.8 In addition to noting the comments from External Examiners, minutes of Examiners' Meetings should include the following set of information as a minimum:
- Full title of Examiners' Meeting
  - Date and location of meeting
  - Those present followed by those who have submitted apologies
  - List of programmes and/or courses being examined
  - Explanation of calculations to be used in determining grades, including instances in which the Degree Classification Tool in the Students' Record System has not been used
  - Criteria used in consideration of borderline candidates
  - Candidates with special circumstances possibly affecting their performance
  - List of results, including details of any borderline decisions made and the rationale for them
- 5.9 Additionally, the following points should be taken into consideration when compiling minutes:
- The use of personal information should be avoided as much as possible
  - Students should be referred to by ID numbers
  - All decisions should be attributed to all Examiners

## **6. THE ROLE OF AN EXAMS OFFICER**

- 6.1 Each School must appoint an Examinations Officer, hereafter referred to as an Exams Officer, who will have oversight of the examinations process in that School. Schools can appoint an Exams Officer for undergraduate programmes and one for postgraduate taught programmes, if they wish, or a single Exams Officer can oversee both levels. If they wish, multi-discipline Schools can appoint an Exams Officer for each Discipline but in that case, it is expected that they would meet routinely throughout the year to agree on School policies and the timings and delegation of duties. In such instances, Schools should appoint a Senior Exams Officer to ensure consistency and compliance across the School and to provide a single point of contact for the School. The Exams Officer(s) must be an experienced academic member of staff who has an in-depth knowledge of the University's policies on Feedback and Assessment and the dates by which actions need to have been taken.
- 6.2 All Exams Officers are required to attend an annual training session prior to the final Examiners' Meetings of the academic year to apprise themselves of any changes to University policy. Support for Exams Officers is available throughout the year and in particular at the time of Examiners' Meetings from members of the Quality Assurance Committee and Academic Services staff.
- 6.3 The responsibilities of an Exams Officer are as follows:
- a) Being fully cognisant of, and keeping up to date with, all institutional policy and regulations in regard to assessment;
  - b) Attending annual Exams Officer training;

- c) Ensuring School/Discipline knowledge of, and compliance with, the University's current assessment policies and regulations, including internal moderation;
- d) Coordinating the preparation of examination papers for all courses assessed by written papers, including checking for accuracy and, where appropriate, ensuring they are in the requested format for special needs students;
- e) Ensuring that the School's External Examiner(s) are fully inducted (see [External Examining](#) for further detail) and have been familiarised with the University's policies and practices; ensuring that the External Examiner(s) have received accurate and timely information and documentation relating to the course/programme being examined; liaising with External Examiner(s) to obtain feedback on draft exam papers, and supplying them with course grade lists and samples of student coursework and exam scripts; providing additional information requested by the External Examiners, regarding assessments, programmes and courses, during their visit;
- f) Liaising with the University's Central Timetabling Team, Academic Services and the Quality Assurance Committee, as required, on academic matters relating to assessment;
- g) Ensuring staff are aware of, and comply with, all deadlines for the setting of assessments and the return of marks;
- h) Liaising with and supporting the work of non-academic staff concerning the School's assessment processes;
- i) Establishing and chairing a School/Discipline Mitigating Circumstances Committee, to ensure a consistent approach to, and consideration of, all students in the School/Discipline;
- j) Attending the School's/Discipline's Examiners' Meetings (potentially chairing such meetings if requested by the Head of School), ensuring they are held in accordance with University policy; arranging for the provision of materials for Examiners' Meetings within the School/Discipline, including any second marking/moderation issues and mitigating circumstances of particular students (anonymised); reviewing final degree examination results and, when necessary, bringing to the attention of External Examiners and Examiners' Meetings any borderline cases or others which require consideration; where appropriate, making statistical analysis of course grades available to internal and External Examiners;
- k) Ensuring production of records of the discussions and actions taken at Examiners' Meetings, including formal minutes in line with Academic Quality Handbook guidance; ensuring that such records are retained in an appropriate format in accordance with the University's retention policy;
- l) Agreeing an approach to and liaising with other Schools/Disciplines regarding results and decisions for students on joint degree programmes (NB: this should be agreed prior to the Examiners' Meeting);
- m) Supporting Administrative Staff to carry out a final check of course grades for accuracy prior to the School Office entering them into Student Records, and a further check after entering has been completed but before 'committing';
- n) Reporting and investigating, as appropriate, any instances of academic misconduct during examinations in accordance with the University's normal procedures.

All queries should be addressed to [academicservices@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:academicservices@abdn.ac.uk)

**Template for optional use by Schools to produce the  
Minute of all Examiners' Meetings  
(both Internal and Final)  
<FULL TITLE OF EXAMINERS' MEETING>**

Date and location of meeting

*(NB A note should be made as to whether the Examiners' Meeting was conducted remotely or in person, or in a hybrid manner)*

List of those present identifying the Convenor, the Internal Examiners, the Exams Officer(s), the External Examiner(s) and the meeting clerk. Where an examiner is not present at the meeting, the minute should acknowledge receipt of any written comments.

1. List of programmes and/or courses being examined
2. Explanation of calculations to be used in determining grades, including instances in which the Degree Classification Tool in the Students' Record System has not been used
3. Criteria used in consideration of borderline candidates
4. Candidates with special circumstances possibly affecting their performance (if appropriate)
5. List of results, including details of any borderline decisions made and the rationale for them
6. For any meeting which has an External Examiner in attendance, comments from External Examiners on the following:
  - the appropriateness of the assessment procedures and the standards attained by candidates
  - the appropriateness of the curricula, particularly in regard to any external reference points such as the national subject benchmark statement, where relevant
  - the structure and content of existing programmes of study,

Remember:

- The use of personal information should be avoided as much as possible
- Students should be referred to by ID numbers
- All decisions should be attributed to **all** Examiners



## Annex B – Summary of practices at other institutions

Institution	Key notes of practice	Link
University of Edinburgh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ﻯ Has a handbook for the Board of Examiners</li> <li>ﻯ Also a Regulations Expert for each board (or a number of Boards) – akin to our Exams Officers, or AST/Dean for QA</li> <li>ﻯ Gives a template for minutes of the BoE, and an annual calendar of timelines and processes associated with the BoE</li> <li>ﻯ Informal discussions take place before the BoE, as compared to internal examiners' meetings</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Uni of Edinburgh Board of Examiners Handbook</a>
University of Glasgow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ﻯ Does not seem to have one specific policy for standard Examiners' Meetings. Has template of minutes, exam board guidance for joint degrees</li> <li>ﻯ Has a YouTube video about taking exams at the UofG</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Template for Exam Board minutes</a>  <a href="#">Joint Degree Exam Boards</a>
University of Dundee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ﻯ Have pre-meetings instead of internal (vs external) meetings. Otherwise very similar to our processes</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Board of Examiners Conduct</a>
University of Strathclyde	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ﻯ No clear guidance on examiners' meetings conduct, frequency etc.</li> <li>ﻯ There is a "Procedure for returning marks and disseminating results" but it is relatively short and mostly concerns the release of marks to students on the UoS student portal</li> <li>ﻯ In the Assessment and Feedback Policy, it has a section on Programme Exam Boards which are responsible for: "making sure assessments across a programme are marked fairly; ensuring university and faculty regulations are adhered to; and responding to points made by External Examiners."</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Procedure for returning marks and disseminating results</a>
University of St Andrews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ﻯ They have a password protected document on "Assessment, marking and module boards" and one on</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Assessment policies and procedures</a>

	<p>“Assessments, policies and procedures: Guidance for staff” which is also password protected</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>﷥ They have Module Boards which are carried out at course level, and Degree Classification Boards which are only for graduating students. Uncertain what, if anything, comes between a Module Board and a Degree Classification Board. Seems burdensome for staff (academic and PS) to need to carry out boards for each individual course</li> <li>﷥ The “Assessment policies and procedures” has one section devoted to Module Boards.</li> </ul>	
University College London	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>﷥ <b>Board of Examiners</b> (annual meeting of the Board of Examiners with all members in attendance (subject to quoracy provisions), including the External Examiner(s)); <b>Preparatory Boards</b> (Preparatory Meetings will usually have a limited membership, and care must be taken to maintain candidate anonymity wherever possible); <b>Sub-Boards</b> (The Full Board may delegate authority to a smaller Sub Board of itself to make decisions on its behalf for out-of-cycle matters such as Late Summer Assessments. They may meet virtually, by correspondence or in person provided that all members of the Sub-Board (including the External Examiner(s), are copied in to the papers or discussion); and <b>Interim Boards</b> (Some Programmes hold ‘Interim Boards’ to discuss results received so far, often at the end of the taught modules on a Masters programme)</li> </ul>	<a href="#"><u>Boards of Examiners</u></a>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ﻯ Full Boards are also attended by a representative of the Faculty Board of Examiners to ensure all standard are adhered to</li> <li>ﻯ Conducted online unless there is an academic requirement for meeting face-to-face</li> <li>ﻯ Each Faculty will have its own BoE which must meet at least once a year, and reports to the UCL Quality and Standards Committee of Education Committee (akin to QAC). Seems an overly bureaucratic process as the FBoE just ratifies the decisions of the BoEs</li> </ul>	
University of Durham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ﻯ Can only locate the Theological Education Institution (TEI) policy, as compared to the institutional one.</li> <li>ﻯ From what is available, their processes are broadly similar to our own</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Exam Boards and External Examiners - Durham University</a>  <a href="#">Responsibilities of Durham (Overarching) Board of Examiners - Durham University</a>