

## **Higher Education Award Regulations: Part B**

**Section:** 7: Board of Examiners

**Version:** 2.5

**Academic Year:** 2023/24

## REVISION HISTORY

Ver	Date	Author	Description
1.0	January 2013	Peter Greenall	ASDC Consultation
2.0	December 2014	Scott Smith	Updated to reflect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No mid-year reassessment</li> <li>• The change in requirement for an independent Head of Curriculum Area to chair a Module Boards of Examiners</li> <li>• Various small typographical changes</li> </ul>
2.1	February 2015	Scott Smith	Updated to include an additional type of module board. Included for extraordinary circumstances surrounding reassessment. Clarity on the minutes taken to boards.
2.2	May 2016	Scott Smith	Removal of agenda and minutes templates. Addition of document requirements for meetings Clarification of minutes process
2.3	July 2016	Scott Smith	Amendment to titles and names
2.4	May 2018	Scott Smith	Amended to include additional guidance on the scaling of marks
2.4.1	October 2018	Naomi Owen	Update to reflect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reintroduction of mid-year reassessment</li> <li>• Removal of references to Salford University</li> </ul>
2.4.2	May 2021	Scott Smith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change of validating body name from BTEC to Pearson</li> <li>• Removal of reference to Liverpool John Moores as the partnership is to be dissolved from 2021/22</li> <li>• Clarification of MBoX purpose</li> <li>• Update of policy reference</li> </ul>
2.4.3	August 2021	Scott Smith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small typographical updates</li> </ul>
2.4.4	July 2022	Scott Smith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addition of Quoracy to clarify the membership of all boards.</li> <li>• Clarity on withdrawal following academic failure</li> </ul>

2.5	May 2023	Scott Smith	Annual update and inclusion of sections from Part A.
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## APPROVAL

Ver	Committee	Date Approved
1.0	HE Academic Board	January 2013
2.0	ASDC	December 2014
2.1	ASDC	February 2015
2.2	ASDC	May 2016
2.3	ASDC	July 2016
2.4	ASDC	May 2018
2.4.1	ASDC	November 2018
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2.4.4	ASDC	July 2022
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## **B7.1 INTRODUCTION**

This procedure specifies the function, membership and conduct of Boards of Examiners meetings convened for the purposes of award by Blackpool and The Fylde College, Lancaster University, Pearson and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).

This procedure includes guidance relating to:

- The role of Module and Programme Boards of Examiners.
- Membership of Module and Programme Boards of Examiners.
- Ratification of marks and decisions.
- Reassessment tracking and recording.

## **B7.2 MEMBERSHIP AND CONDUCT**

Blackpool and The Fylde College operates a two-tiered approach in relation to Board of Examiner meetings where each tier has a defined purpose. The first tier, the Module Board of Examiners, is responsible for the ratification of module marks and for the recommendation of reassessment decisions. The second tier, the Programme Board of Examiners is responsible for making decisions on progression and the award of qualifications as well as reassessment decisions.

Curriculum Areas oversee the operation of Boards of Examiners for modules and programmes of study in their areas. The standard membership for Module and Programme Boards of Examiners is defined within the relevant Terms of Reference.

Module and Programme Boards of Examiners are chaired by a Head of Curriculum or trained nominee who is independent to the oversight of the programmes under consideration and will be minuted by a trained representative from the Curriculum Area in which the programme(s) reside.

An independent member will attend all meetings to provide advice and guidance relating to the conduct of the Board and on matters relating to academic regulations.

All Boards of Examiners meetings should:

- Operate in an objective and consistent manner in reaching decisions.
- Ensure the information presented and considered is dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner.
- Ensure that all decisions are correctly recorded and duly communicated in a timely manner.

Boards of Examiners meetings are conducted utilising a standard agenda and supporting documentation.

Declarations of any conflict of interest should be minuted along with the action taken. The Chair may require the academic colleague to withdraw whilst a particular student or apprentice is presented, or the minutes may record “no action necessary”.

For both Module and Programme Boards of Examiners, the Board shall normally take all decisions. A Chair’s action may be used exceptionally and must adhere to the following guidelines:

- a) A Chair’s action should be mandated in advance by the full Board wherever possible.
- b) A Chair’s action must not be used as a way of circumventing the full Board.
- c) A Chair’s action should be supplemented by wider consultation with identified key members or all members of the Board.
- d) A Chair’s action should be reported to all members so that they know what action has been taken.
- e) The outcome of a Chair’s action must be appended to the record of the full Board meeting.

A record of all decisions, including the ratification of marks, taken by a Board or by a Chair’s action shall be signed or confirmed in writing by:

- a) the Chair of the Board
- b) the External Examiner for the programme (Programme Board of Examiners only)
- c) the Programme Leader or Curriculum Manager

Minutes should include a record of the decision made for every student along with any relevant additional information such as:

- Extent and outcomes of moderation
- Actions taken in response to Personal Mitigating Circumstances (PMC) /Interruption of Study (IoS) decisions.
- Details of students or apprentices who will undertake reassessment including identification of individual assessments and associated deadlines and arrangements.
- Implementation of penalties determined by an Academic Malpractice and Misconduct Panel
- Condonation/compensation of module results.
- Where appropriate discussions relating to the scaling of module results and any associated action taken

- Notes of the scope of any Chair's action agreed by the Board.

The minutes should be confirmed by the Chair of the Board and retained by the curriculum. Confirmed minutes must also be centrally archived.

In the case of student or apprentice withdrawal, Boards should consider all results of any assessments taken by them up to the point of the cancellation of their registration.

### **B7.3 CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Members of either a Module or Programme Board of Examiners meetings with an academic or personal interest must declare to the Chair their interest, such declarations must be recorded on the minutes of the meeting. Where appropriate, colleagues with interests will be asked to leave the meeting whilst the specific item is considered; the College's Data Protection policy should be observed where colleagues have access to assessment results and Board of Examiners minutes.

No student may be a member of a Board of Examiners. If, however, a person who is otherwise qualified to be an examiner for a course, such as an academic colleague or an approved External Examiner, is a student or apprentice because they are registered on another programme either within the College or in another institution of higher education, that shall not in itself disqualify that person from carrying out normal examining commitments unless there should be a conflict of interests. Where there is any unavoidable potential conflict of interests the procedures below must be followed.

1. Any examiner who is aware of any potential conflict of interest (for example being related to, or a close friend of, any student or apprentice registered on the programme for which that person is an examiner) must declare their interest as soon as the possibility arises and must not be the sole examiner for the student or apprentice concerned on any individual contributory module.
2. Any examiner who has a potential conflict of interests as described above, must inform the Chair(s) of the appropriate Board of Examiners and the connection must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting, and the person involved shall not take any part in any discussion covering the student(s) or apprentice(s) concerned; but may, at the discretion of the chairperson, be permitted to remain in attendance for the duration of the discussion.

## B7.4 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

### B7.4.1 MODULE BOARD OF EXAMINERS

Each module will be presented by the lead Module Tutor (or the Programme Leader if the lead Module Tutor is not in attendance at the meeting) using the College's Module Review proforma. The presentation should comprise of:

- An overview of the approach taken in moderation of module assessments and any issues arising from this process.
- Consideration of scaling where appropriate in accordance with the regulations of the awarding body.
- Identification of remedial work required for individual students or apprentices, including those requiring reassessment or deadline extensions in the case of approved Personal Mitigating Circumstances.

Quoracy is defined in the Module Board of Examiners terms of reference.

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#### B7.4.1.1 DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Module Board of Examiners meetings will have available to them:

- The Higher Education Award Regulations Part A.
- Terms of Reference.
- A customised agenda utilising the standard template clearly identifying the modules under consideration at the meeting.
- Details of approved or pending applications for Personal Mitigating Circumstances.
- Details of approved or pending applications for Interruption of Study.
- The Higher Education Award Regulations Part B7: Board of Examiners.
- Where appropriate, the awarding body regulations.
- EBS Module Matrix Reports – for each module being considered.
- Module Review – for each module being considered.

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#### B7.4.1.2 SCALING

This section does not apply to the award of Pearson and SQA programmes.

If, after application of all other methods of moderation set out in B6 Assessment and Feedback, the overall mean aggregation score for any module lies outside the range 13.5 to 17.0 the Board of Examiners must consider whether there is a case for the marks to be scaled. Scaling may be of the overall mark for the module or of any assessment therein. The method of scaling to be used should be discussed and should reflect both the nature of the assessment and the size of the cohort. Both the



reason for scaling and the method used must be justified within the minutes of the Board of Examiners. If scaling is discussed and not used, the reason for not scaling will be recorded in the minutes. In all cases both the original and the scaled marks will be permanently recorded.

### **Guidance for scaling of marks**

All assessments and marking schemes should be created with the aim of ensuring that the resulting grades/marks give a good indication of the ability and application of the students or apprentices. However, it is inevitable that on occasion this will not work as planned. Reasons may include a misprinted examination paper, the interruption of an examination or, in a science laboratory, an instrumental malfunction not obvious at the time of the experiment; or it may simply be that examiners agree, using their academic judgment and with the benefit of hindsight, that an assessment, or part of an assessment, proved to be significantly harder or easier than expected.

In such cases it is appropriate to consider whether the marks should be scaled. Although an unusual distribution of grades/marks is not of itself a sufficient reason for scaling to be applied, it may be an indication that something has gone wrong. For this reason, if, after application of all other methods of moderation, the overall mean aggregation score for any module lies outside the range 13.5-17.0 then examiners must consider whether there is a case for the marks to be scaled. Where the possibility of scaling is being discussed

Where scaling is applied for the same module for at least part of its assessment on more than one occasion, the assessment practices of the module must be reviewed as appropriate. Scaling may take any form as long as it preserves the ordering of students' or apprentices' marks, for example, if Student/Apprentice A has a higher unscaled mark than Student/Apprentice B, then Student/Apprentice A's scaled mark must not be lower than that of Student/Apprentice B. Two common examples of scaling methods are provided below.

- For work marked in letter grades, all grades may be raised or lowered by a constant amount.
- For work marked in percentages, every mark may be multiplied by a constant factor, or have a constant value added to or subtracted from it, or a combination of the two.

Where marks are being reduced, no passing grade may be turned into a fail, for example, where marks are in general being reduced by 10%, for a module or assessment, all unscaled marks between 40% and 49% become scaled marks of 40%, or no condonable mark is turned into an uncondonable mark.

## B7.4.2 PROGRAMME BOARD OF EXAMINERS

Each programme will be presented by the Programme Leader (or a Curriculum Leader or Curriculum Manager from the curriculum if the Programme Leader is not in attendance at the meeting). The presentation should comprise of:

- An overview of the approach taken in moderation of module assessments and any issues arising from the process.
- The details of any scaling actions considered or applied by a preceding Module Board of Examiners.
- The presentation of stage and or award for each student or apprentice. These should be read in the order presented within the report.
- Where remedial action is required, the Programme Leader should, inform the board of the relevant module and present the action agreed at the Module Board of Examiners

The Programme Board of Examiners should have available to them:

- Terms of Reference
- A customised agenda utilising the standard template, clearly identifying the programmes under consideration.
- Details of approved or pending applications for Personal Mitigating Circumstances.
- Details of approved or pending applications for Interruption of Study
- The Programme Assessment Matrix report.
- The minutes of preceding meetings of the Module Board of Examiners

Quoracy is defined in the Programme Board of Examiners terms of reference.

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### B7.4.2.1 DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Programme Board of Examiner meetings will have available to them:

- The Higher Education Award Regulations Part A.
- The Higher Education Award Regulations B7: Board of Examiners.
- Where appropriate the awarding body regulations.
- EBS Programme Matrix Reports – for each programme being considered.
- Minutes from the preceding Module Board of Examiners meetings

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### B7.4.2.2 BOARD OF EXAMINERS RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of Boards of Examiners are restricted to one of the following decisions per student:

<b>Pass Award</b>	<p>Successful completion of the whole of an award. The student or apprentice has completed a valid combination of modules, has acquired the required credits at every level and is entitled to the award.</p> <p>The award may be made with a summative classification or grade if appropriate.</p> <p>This description is to be used where the award made completes the student's or apprentice's studies, even where the award was not their original target award.</p>
<b>Pass Proceed</b>	<p>The student or apprentice has reached a point at which the validation document, or other regulations, requires a formal progression decision to be taken and the student or apprentice has met the criteria for progression, normally at the end of a stage.</p>
<b>Refer</b>	<p>The student or apprentice has failed to achieve the requirements to progress to the next level or to achieve the target award and has not exhausted the opportunities available to remedy the situation.</p> <p>In these cases, the board must state the nature of the shortfall(s) and the details of how these are to be remedied. Typically, this is likely to be by reassessment.</p>
<b>Continuing</b>	<p>The student or apprentice has not reached a point at which a formal progression decision is required. The student's or apprentice's results are being presented for approval before being entered on their record.</p>
<b>Fail Withdraw</b>	<p>The student or apprentice has failed the requirements of the award and is not permitted to continue the relevant programme.</p>
<b>Fail</b>	<p>The student or apprentice has reached the completion of their programme of study and has failed the requirements of the award.</p>
<b>Award Exit</b>	<p>The student or apprentice has failed the target award and is required to leave the programme but is to be granted a contained award to which they are entitled.</p>

<b>Chair's Action</b>	Some item of information required to make a recommendation is unavailable at the board but will be available very soon. The Board of Examiners asks the chair to enter a recommendation on its behalf as soon as sufficient information is available.
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## B7.5 CONFIDENTIALITY

Students and apprentices should be aware that all award and progression decisions are to be considered as provisional until ratified by a meeting of the Programme Board of Examiners and, for the award of a Lancaster University programme, considered as provisional until ratified by Senate at the University. To ensure adherence to the UK General Data Protection Regulations, programmes teams need to agree and implement a secure method of communication to students and apprentices, for example:

- Secure post (recorded delivery)
- Face to face
- Prior agreed telephone communication (confirm student identity with student number/address etc.)

It should be noted that only the Blackpool and The Fylde College's email system (to and from) can be used to communicate the outcomes of Programme or Module Board of Examiner meetings, external e-mail systems (Gmail etc.) are not a secure method of communication.

## B7.6 BOARD OF EXAMINERS MINUTES PROCESS

The management of Board of Examiners meeting minutes is a stage/level process; minutes will therefore not be taken to meetings in the subsequent year. The process comprises of three distinct parts: module, programme and reassessment meetings.

The process originates at Curriculum Area Module Board of Examiner meetings (usually two per year) the minutes of which are taken to any in-year subsequent curriculum area Programme Board of Examiners meetings.

All actions relating to Module Board of Examiners meetings should be closed in the relevant meeting minutes and should be up to date when the Programme Board of Examiners meeting is held. After the Programme Board of Examiners meeting, actions from the Module Board of Examiners should be carried forward to and closed in the Programme Board of Examiners minutes if required and an update to the Module Board of Examiners minutes should also be performed.

Where reassessment opportunities are provided at a Programme Board of Examiners the students or apprentices will be presented to the Curriculum Area

Reassessment Board of Examiners. The minutes of the Programme Board of Examiners meetings will be made available to the Reassessment Board, for information. These minutes will be confirmed to the Chair as having been checked for accuracy prior to the meeting. Matters arising of any minutes, due to the nature of the Board, will, usually, form the content of the agenda and as such will be dealt with during the presentation of results.

Any actions resulting from the business of the Reassessment Board of Examiners are required to be closed within the minutes of the meeting, actions will therefore not be carried forward to the next academic year.