

# University Centre Colchester Regulations for Students on University of Essex Programmes

**2021/22**

## Academic Progress and Conferment of Awards

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## **1 Operation of Boards of Examiners Meetings**

- 1.1 Each academic year, there will be a meeting of the **Board of Examiners** for all Schools. Normally, this meeting will be convened following the examination period at the end of the academic year. However, a Board of Examiners may be convened at other times, where this is a requirement to meet. An additional Board of Examiners will be convened following the Autumn re-sit period, if students within the Schools have been involved in re-sit activity.
- 1.2 Prior to the meetings of the Boards of Examiners, an **Internal Board** for each School will be convened.

## **2 The Purpose of the Internal Board**

- 2.1 All schools are required to hold Internal Board meetings in advance of the Board of Examiners meeting. The Internal Board is responsible for considering the following:
- i. The accuracy and completeness of the marks and results shown on the Examination Board grids, ensuring itself that all the Internal Board checks have been completed;
  - ii. Extenuating circumstances claims and making recommendations to the Board of Examiners;
  - iii. Identification and investigation of modules where there has been a problem with the delivery or assessment requiring a possible scaling of marks;
  - iv. Preparing recommendations on reassessment in accordance with UCC's approved reassessment strategy;
  - v. Student performance on modules and courses, identifying any issues that require further consideration;
  - vi. Recommendations for the award of prizes.
- 2.2 The Internal Board is responsible for making recommendations to the Board of Examiners, to enable the Board to make effective decisions as efficiently as possible. It should be noted that recommendations from an Internal Board does not bind members of the Board of Examiners.
- 2.3 Examples of the type of recommendations that the Internal Board can make include, but not exclusive to, removing relevant capping of marks; resits/re-submissions to be uncapped; zero-weighting of modules; resit/resubmit particular elements of assessment; repeat year.

## **3 Membership of the Internal Board**

- 3.1 The Internal Board should comprise as a minimum at least three members of University Centre Colchester staff and be chaired by the Head of UCC Academic Services Manager or their nominee. This meeting is not normally attended by an External Examiner or by a representative of the University. The relevant Head of School, Programme Leader(s) and Module Tutors should attend.

## **4 Operation of the Internal Board**

- 4.1 University Centre Colchester holds separate Extenuating Circumstances Committee meetings to consider extenuating circumstances claims. At least one member of the Extenuating Circumstances Committee must also be a member of the Internal Board.

4.2 Ideally there should be two working days between the timing of the Internal Board and the Board of Examiners' meeting to allow for investigation and correction of any errors, or the scaling of marks.

4.3 Where errors on the grids are identified, the School concerned must investigate the matter and identify the correct mark or result.

## **5 Board of Examiners**

5.1 A Board of Examiners has the power to ratify module grades, condone, approve the progression of candidates to the next year of their scheme of study, and determine degree classifications.

5.2 Decisions made by the Board of Examiners regarding progression, condonement and awards will be in accordance with the Undergraduate Rules of Assessment and the Postgraduate Rules of Assessment of the University of Essex.

## **6 Timing, Composition and Attendance at Meetings of Boards of Examiners**

6.1 The quorum for a Board of Examiners is four members. External Examiners are included in the quorum in the case of undergraduate courses, but excluded in the case of taught postgraduate ones. The Chair is always included.

6.2 The Board of Examiners for each School will be chaired by the Deputy Dean of Partnerships at the University of Essex (or their nominee) and attended by the External Examiner, the Dean of Higher Education (or their nominee) and the relevant School Head(s) (or their nominee). Module Tutors do not attend this meeting. Other college staff may be present as deemed appropriate, including at least one senior member of staff from UCC Academic Services.

6.3 Taught Postgraduate Boards would normally include both the Head of School and the programme leaders.

6.4 A member of UCC Academic Services will act as Secretary to a Board of Examiners.

## **7 Role of External Examiners at Examination Boards**

7.1 External Examiners shall normally be present at any meeting of the Board of Examiners at which recommendations are made for the award of degrees, diplomas or certificates. When, for good reason, this is not possible the External Examiner's absence must be approved by the appropriate Executive Dean or their nominee.

7.2 External Examiners do not need to attend Reassessment Boards. However, practice may need to vary due to professional body requirements of the programmes concerned.

7.3 External Examiners need not be routinely engaged in level 4 work, and are not required to attend first year Boards of Examiners. Boards of Examiners have the power to confirm exit awards without an External Examiner being present.

7.4 If an External Examiner is unable to attend a required Board of Examiners a request for their absence should be made to the UCC Academic Services office, who would forward the information to the Chair. The following information should be contained in the request:

- i. The reasons for the request;
  - ii. Arrangements to ensure that the award External Examiner's views are available to the Board in advance of its meeting;
  - iii. Arrangements to resolve matters in which the views of the internal examiners on the Board differ from those of the External Examiner;
  - iv. The written agreement of the External Examiner concerned;
  - v. Where there is not sufficient time to make alternative arrangements for the Board of Examiners the Deputy Dean of Academic Partnerships or nominee may appoint a suitable substitute.
- 7.5 The award External Examiner is asked to comment on whether the Board of Examiners operates with fairness. They should be made aware of the outcome of any previous meeting to consider extenuating circumstances relating to the degree classifications of individual students, and they should be satisfied that decisions in this regard are appropriate and consistent.
- 7.6 The signature of an External Examiner must be appended to the marks grid annotated with the decisions of the Board of Examiners as evidence that they support the decisions of the Board.
- 7.7 Decisions as to the classification of a degree and the conferment of a Bachelor's degree shall normally require the consent of the appropriate award External Examiner. If the award External Examiner cannot consent, the decision requires the consent of a two-thirds majority of the Board of Examiners, including the Chair.
- 7.8 Where a Board of Examiners at which a particular External Examiner is not present proposes to make a decision which rejects the advice of the External Examiner, this should be communicated to the External Examiner and their consent contained in writing before a final decision is taken by the Board and communicated to students. In cases where the External Examiner does not agree to the Board's proposal and where the Board wishes its decision to stand, the Dean of Academic Partnerships should be informed. The Dean shall then chair a reconvened meeting of the Board at which the External Examiner shall be present.

## **8 Examination Board Grids**

- 8.1 Examination Board grids are required to be anonymised:
- i. Chairs of Boards of Examiners should normally not be given marks grids identifying candidates by name;
  - ii. Examination Board grids can identify where a penalty for an academic offence has been given;
  - iii. All errors must be disclosed to the Secretary and Chair of the Board of Examiners *in advance* of the main meeting.
- 8.2 The signature(s) of the External Examiner(s) present at a Board of Examiners meeting are required on an Examination Board coversheet alongside that of the Chair, to indicate that procedures have been correctly followed..

## **9 Aegrotat Degrees**

9.1 Aegrotat degrees are only available to undergraduate students. Below is a summary of University of Essex regulations relating to Aegrotat Degrees:

- i. Where illness or other sufficient cause affects an **undergraduate candidate** after the sixth week of the spring term and before the end of the final examination period (or the January exam period in the case of compulsory final year exams), the Board of Examiners may confer on them an aegrotat degree. Such a candidate may re-sit the examinations in the following year.
- ii. The Aegrotat regulation should be interpreted by Boards of Examiners in such a way that a candidate affected by extenuating circumstances over their entire period of study is not awarded an aegrotat, degree but considered for a classified degree.

9.2 Further details can be found at <http://www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/regulations/affairs.aspx>

## **10 Assessment Deferrals**

10.1 Where students have exceptional circumstances affecting examinations or other assessed work amounting to a significant percentage of a student's assessment, the School may make a case to the Deputy Dean of Partnerships (or their nominee) for the assessment to be deferred.

## **11 Voluntary Reassessment**

11.1 Students may not undertake voluntary reassessment to improve their marks.

11.2 The Board of Examiners may offer a voluntary reassessment in view of a candidate's extenuating circumstances, or where the Board decides it is necessary in order to permit a student to transfer course.

11.3 The Board will also offer one voluntary reassessment opportunity in failed credits to final stage students who have met the criteria to graduate with an honours degree but who have failed modules in the final stage.

## **12 Maximum Period for UG Students**

12.1 The maximum period within which students must complete their studies for foundation and honours degrees is normally the length of the original award plus two additional years.

## **13 Undergraduate students who fail their degrees**

13.1 The Undergraduate Rules of Assessment set out the criteria for the eligibility for an honours degree, and the range of reassessment opportunities which the Board can offer.

13.2 Criteria for Reassessment:

- i. Boards of Examiners will offer reassessment to final year students who have not met the minimum criteria for the award on which they are studying;
- ii. Boards of Examiners will also offer one further voluntary reassessment attempt to students who meet the criteria to graduate but who have failed credits in the final stage. The student must not already have exhausted their three attempts at the assessment for the module(s). The student will still be

permitted to attend Graduation. The attempt must be taken across the summer and cannot be delayed or retaken the following year;

- iii. Boards of Examiners will offer compulsory reassessment in a sufficient number of modules to that enabled a student to meet the minimum criteria for the award and a voluntary reassessment attempt at the remainder. For example, if a student has failed 60 credits worth of non-core modules in the final year they will be offered reassessment in 30 credits and voluntary reassessment in the other 30;
- iv. Where students must take reassessment in 30 out of 60 failed credits, the Board of Examiners should offer students the choice of module in which they are to be reassessed.
- v. Boards of Examiners will continue to check whether students have met the criteria for an exit award, and offer this as an alternative to reassessment;

### 13.3 The Method of Reassessment:

- i. The main Board of Examiners (at which the External Examiners are present) will decide on the form of reassessment based on what elements the student has failed, and the reassessment strategy for the modules concerned;
- ii. Students must confirm, by the published deadline, whether they are taking up the offer of reassessment and in which module(s);
- iii. Departments will not be required to set resit exam papers for final year modules at the time they set the main exam paper;
- iv. Where students are being asked to submit coursework, they should be set the work within two weeks of the results being published.

13.4 Details of the reassessment attempts for postgraduate taught programmes and the rules relating to the resubmission of dissertations can be found in the published Taught Masters' Rules of Assessment <http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ppg/pgt/assess-rules.aspx>

## 14 Procedure for handling errors after the Board of Examiners has met

14.1 If errors or cases of potential inconsistency are discovered after the Board of Examiners meeting, UCC Academic Services should be notified in the first instance. UCC Academic Services will investigate any claims received and liaise directly with the University of Essex Partnerships Office.

## 15. Appeals

15.1 Students wishing to appeal decisions taken by a Board of Examiners must do so in accordance with the relevant publicised appeals procedure within the time period specified. Students cannot appeal against academic judgement. Examinations will not be remarked, except in cases of procedural irregularities. If errors are discovered in the recording of marks, then the official records will be amended and the student issued with an amended statement of results/transcript.

15.2 Further details on how to appeal can be found in the Academic Appeals regulations for students on University of Essex programmes.