

ORGANISATIONAL REGULATION O7: ASSESSMENT BOARDS

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REGULATION

1. AUTHORITY FOR REGULATION

This Regulation is made in pursuance of Article 17 of *The Robert Gordon University (Scotland) Order of Council 2019*.

2. REMIT

- 2.1 Assessment Boards are established under the authority of Academic Council, and are accountable to Academic Council.
- 2.2 In exercising the authority delegated by Academic Council an Assessment Board shall act in accordance with all the relevant University Regulations, and in accordance with any other general direction and guidance which has been issued on the authority of Academic Council.
- 2.3 Subject to the terms of [paragraph 2.6](#) below, Academic Council shall delegate authority to Assessment Boards for the following principal functions:
 - (i) to **confirm students' grades/marks** in assessments and re-assessments; grades/marks are not final until confirmed by the Assessment Board;
 - (ii) to take decisions on **awards**, as contained in *Regulation A1, Schedule 1.1*, including the level and/or classification of the award where applicable;

- (iii) to take decisions on the **progress** of students, including to decide whether the student shall be offered an opportunity for **re-assessment** and, where appropriate, to specify the terms of any re-assessment;
- (iv) to consider the **performance** of students in assessments and re-assessments, taking appropriate account of any **special factors** notified to the Board which are relevant to a consideration of the performance of individual students, and to defer, where appropriate, the recommendation of an award until the facts relating to particular circumstances have been established;
- (v) to **moderate the grades/marks** of a group of students or the entire class if the Board concludes that the general grades/marks standard has been too harsh or too lenient and that some moderation is necessary. The views of the external examiners on these matters shall carry particular weight;
- (viii) to **vary assessment procedures** where there is valid reason and in accordance with [Academic Regulation A4: Assessment and Recommendations of Assessment Boards](#);
- (vii) to determine whether a student be given the opportunity of a **viva voce examination** prior to a decision being recorded on the standard of his/her award;
- (vi) to determine whether **condonement** of failure be allowed in elements of the assessment in accordance with [Academic Regulation A4, paragraph 11](#);
- (ix) to appoint, at its discretion, a subsidiary **Assessment Committee** which shall make its recommendations to the Assessment Board; the Assessment Board shall remain responsible to Academic Council for all decisions relating to student assessment.

2.4 An Assessment Board which wishes to take a decision which is not in accordance with University Regulations and/or other general direction and guidance issued on the authority of Academic Council shall be required to obtain the permission of Academic Council for the appropriate provision(s) to be waived in the case concerned. No such waiver may be treated as a precedent. Fresh permission must be sought on any subsequent occasion¹.

2.5 A decision of an Assessment Board shall be valid only if it complies with the following conditions:

- (i) the decision falls within the limits of the delegated authority specified in [paragraph 2.3](#) above; and
- (ii) either (a) the decision is in accordance with University Regulations, and any other general direction and guidance which has been issued on the authority of Academic Council¹;

¹ For the purposes of Regulation O7, paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5, the Vice-Principal for Academic Development and Student Experience shall act with delegated authority on behalf of Academic Council.

- or (b) insofar as the decision is not in accordance with University Regulations, and/or other general direction and guidance issued on the authority of Academic Council, Academic Council has agreed that the relevant provision(s) may be waived².

- 2.6 Notwithstanding the delegation of authority specified in [paragraph 2.3](#) above, Academic Council shall retain the right to require an Assessment Board to reconsider the performance of an individual student or to reconsider any other matter relating to the performance of students. Exceptionally, Academic Council may annul a decision of an Assessment Board and substitute its own decision, save that any decision to deprive a recipient of a degree, diploma, or other academic distinction previously conferred by the University shall require confirmation by the Board of Governors².

3. COMPOSITION

- 3.1 The composition of an Assessment Board shall be:

Members

Dean of School (Convener) (or nominee)*
 Associate Deans of School as appropriate
 Course/Programme Leader
 Stage/Year Tutors
 One member of staff from another School not associated with the course
 External examiners appointed by Academic Council

- * The Dean of School shall always be a member of the Assessment Board and shall normally be Convener of the Assessment Board. Exceptionally, the Dean of School may nominate a senior member of staff as Convener.

In attendance

Academic Quality Officer
 Secretary of the Assessment Board

Academic Council shall delegate to the Dean of School (Convener) the authority to invite attendees to the Assessment Board as appropriate.

In addition

Only exceptionally will a nominee be permitted to attend an Assessment Board and only with the prior approval of the Convener of the Assessment Board.

2 For the purposes of Regulation O7, paragraphs 2.5 and 2.6, the Vice-Principal for Academic Development and Student Experience shall act with delegated authority on behalf of Academic Council.

- 3.2 It shall be the responsibility of the Dean of School to appoint a Convener for the Assessment Board in accordance with [paragraph 3.1](#) of this Regulation. The [School Academic Board](#) shall approve the other members of each Assessment Board in accordance with the composition of the Board as set out in [paragraph 3.1](#) of this Regulation. The appointments shall be made annually. All Assessment Boards shall also have a nominated Secretary.
- 3.3 All duly appointed external examiners shall attend meetings of the Assessment Board, either in person or by enabling technology. In the case of resit Assessment Boards:
- (i) the attendance of all external examiner(s) shall not be mandatory;
 - (ii) normally, at least one external examiner shall attend, and the details of the external examiner attending shall be agreed at the previous diet of Assessment Boards.
- 3.4 An external examiner appointed to undergraduate degrees will primarily be concerned with degree and honours degree stages, and his/her delegated authority will be sought at the commencement of his/her appointment to permit the University to undertake the assessment processes associated with the sub-degree exit awards. However, an external examiner may elect to be involved in all stages of a course should he/she so wish.
- 3.5 The quorum for a meeting of an Assessment Board shall be not less than half of its membership and must include at least one external examiner (with the exception of those Assessment Boards for which delegated authority has been granted (refer [paragraph 3.5](#)) and Assessment Boards convened to consider Academic Appeals (Award and Progression) (refer [Academic Regulation A3 – Section 1, paragraph 8.1](#)).

4. MEETINGS

- 4.1 Meetings of Assessment Boards shall be convened at times appropriate to the programme of assessment, and in accordance with any University timetable which may be prescribed. Except where there is no business for consideration, an Assessment Board shall normally meet at least twice in each academic session, to correspond with the requirement that the University shall normally offer two summative assessment opportunities, and normally not more than two, in respect of each assessment within each module in each academic session. Additional meetings shall be held where necessary either as a consequence of different patterns of assessment or because of urgent business.
- 4.2 The dates of meetings of Assessment Boards shall be determined as far as possible in advance following consultation between the Convener, the external examiner(s) and the Academic Quality Officer and shall be notified in writing to all members by the Secretary of the Board. Wherever possible, dates should be agreed at least three months in advance but, where urgent business so requires, the Convener in consultation with the external examiner(s) and the Academic Quality Officer may call a special meeting.
- 4.3 At meetings of Assessment Boards, formal voting shall not normally be used as a means of reaching decisions. Every effort shall be made to resolve disagreements, and to reach

unanimous conclusions. If, despite this effort, disagreement between internal members of the Board cannot be resolved, the view of the external examiner(s) shall prevail, unless either:

- (i) notwithstanding the view expressed by the external examiner(s), the majority of the Board members present remain unprepared to accept the view of the external examiner(s); or
- (ii) there is a disagreement among the external examiners which it has not been possible to resolve.

In the event of 4.3(i) or 4.3(ii) above, the Assessment Board is required to refer the matter to Academic Council for decision³.

- 4.4 Any person attending an Assessment Board shall be required, at the commencement of a meeting, to declare any personal interest, involvement or relationship with any of the students to be considered at that meeting. Provision for such declaration shall be a standard item on Assessment Board agendas and shall be minuted.

5. POWERS OF THE EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

- 5.1 The determination of awards shall be subject to the written consent of the attending external examiner(s) (refer also to [paragraph 3.5](#) of this Regulation).
- 5.2 Where an external examiner(s) identifies a particular concern as a matter of principle, the external examiner's decision either shall be accepted as final by the Assessment Board or, exceptionally, shall be referred to Academic Council; any unresolved disagreement between external examiners shall, similarly, be referred to Academic Council³.

6. STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

- 6.1 No student shall be a member of an Assessment Board or attend an examiners' meeting except as a candidate for assessment.
- 6.2 Coincidental registration as a student on another course, whether in the University or other institution, shall not disqualify a suitably qualified person from fulfilling the role of examiner.

7. RECORDS AND CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

- 7.1 The Convener shall ensure that a detailed and accurate minute of the proceedings of each Assessment Board is recorded. The minute shall be approved by the Convener normally within four weeks of the meeting. The Secretary of the Assessment Board shall notify Assessment

³ For the purposes of Regulation O7, paragraphs 4.3 and 5.2, the Vice-Principal for Academic Development and Student Experience shall act with delegated authority on behalf of Academic Council.

Board members, including external examiners, that the minute, as approved by the Convener, is available on request.

- 7.2 The minutes of an Assessment Board shall be considered for approval by the subsequent Assessment Board.
- 7.3 The Convener and Academic Quality Officer shall ensure that the procedures and requirements of this Regulation are followed. The conduct of all meetings of an Assessment Board shall be in accordance with the Standing Orders of Academic Council.

8. ASSESSMENT BOARDS - PROCEDURES

- 8.1 All stages of a course shall be considered by an Assessment Board.
- 8.2 The formal meeting of the Board may be preceded by a meeting of a subsidiary Assessment Committee (as specified in [paragraph 2.3\(ix\)](#)). The remit of such a Committee shall be to permit initial discussion of the pattern of results with the intention of allowing the formal Board to ratify straightforward recommendations and to concentrate on exceptional cases.
- 8.3 Records of student attendance shall be available to the Assessment Board.
- 8.4 Recommendations shall normally be presented to the Assessment Board on standard spreadsheet reports.
- 8.5 The Academic Quality Officer shall ensure that the University results listing is signed by both the Convener of the Assessment Board and by the attending external examiner(s).
- 8.6 Assessment Boards shall use the standard University agenda.