

UNIVERSITY OF CUMBRIA ACADEMIC PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES

APPENDIX 3f

The Conduct and Operation of Assessment Boards

The Conduct and Operation of Assessment Boards

Note: Section F11 of the Academic Regulations sets out the roles, responsibilities and composition of Assessment Boards. This section sets out requirements for and guidance on the conduct and operation of Assessment Boards. The University reviews the procedures described periodically.

1. General requirements and guidance for the conduct and operation of all Boards

- 1.1 All Assessment Boards meet formally with a structured agenda. Minutes are produced to the approved format.
- 1.2 All appointed members are required to attend for the whole of the meeting. Quoracy is at the same level for all Academic Board Committees.
- 1.3 All business is strictly confidential and must not be disclosed or discussed with non-board members other than designated relevant University officers outside the meeting.
- 1.4 Should any member of the Board have a personal interest in or relationship with any student whose marks are being considered by the Board, they must give prior notice to the relevant SAAS Administrator to enable the withdrawal of appropriate documents from the papers of individuals concerned. Notification must also be made to the Boards and the internal (or external) examiner will withdraw from the Board at the time of consideration of such a student's position.
- 1.5 The Chairs of Assessment Boards are responsible for ensuring agendas are compiled, for physical and organisational arrangements, for ensuring internal and external examiners are notified and for the production of mark sheets, recommendation sheets and other papers for the meeting. At Module Assessment Boards, the Chair provides procedural and regulatory advice and a SAAS administrator is present to ensure an accurate record of the meeting is compiled. At University Assessment Boards a senior SAAS administrator will act as secretary to the Board so that the business of the Board is progressed in an appropriate and timely fashion, that procedural and regulatory advice is offered and to ensure that an accurate record of the meeting is compiled.
- 1.6 All marks for credit bearing modules will be expressed as percentages, unless validated on a pass/fail basis.
- 1.7 Academic standards matters at modular level should be discussed initially in the Module Assessment Board (MAB) and brought to the attention of the University Assessment Board (UAB) by the relevant Programme Leader. Programme level academic standards issues should be brought to the attention of the UAB by the relevant Programme Leader and then all issues, where appropriate, reported to the Director of Academic Quality and Development.
- 1.8 All Boards are expected to identify and report good practice so that assessment practice can be enhanced across the University.
- 1.9 Collaborative Programmes will be considered at the same Boards as other programmes in the subject area.
- 1.10 The academic judgement of an Assessment Board properly executed is not open to challenge through appeal.
- 1.11 Prior to the MAB, Subject External Examiners must have:
 - i. Completed the moderation of all modules for which they are appointed (Appendices 3b & 4a refer);

The Conduct & Operation of Assessment Boards

- ii. Confirmed that marking standards are accurate;
- iii. Liaised with the Programme Team representative (normally the Programme Leader) on recommendations for fails or special cases;
- iv. Communicated to the Programme Team representative comments they wish to draw to the attention of the Board.

2. Module Assessment Boards (MABs)

2.1 The general requirements for and guidance on the conduct and operation of all Boards applies (section 1 of these procedures) to MABs.

2.2 The MAB considers module performance.

2.3 It is a responsibility of the MAB to ensure that moderation has been carried out appropriately (ie according to the rubric within the moderation and marking section of the academic procedures Section 3b), particularly for modules delivered at a number of separate locations.

2.4 The membership of MABs is determined in section F11 of the Academic Regulations.

2.4.1 Subject External Examiners are required to attend at least one MAB during each academic year and, for most programmes this will be the MAB at the end of the academic cycle for most of the students [ie summer]. For some programmes, [eg Masters awards] it will be in autumn.

2.4.2 For programmes leading to a professional registration the Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body may require the attendance of the Subject External Examiner[s] at all MABs.

Note: With reference to 1.11, Programme Leaders must be clear about expectations of Subject External Examiners outwith their attendance at MABs, particularly in their responsibilities in signing appropriate papers to indicate confirmation of accuracy of marking standards [2.10 refers].

2.4.3 In exceptional cases where an External Examiner cannot attend a Module Assessment Board, the MAB Chair, or designate, must determine whether the Assessment Board may proceed, taking into consideration whether all work has been moderated in line with university requirements, and whether there is documentary evidence of the External Examiner's satisfaction with marking standards, assessment criteria and their application.

2.5 The agenda for MABs is as follows:

- i. introductions
- ii. apologies for absence
- iii. confirmation of quoracy
- iv. confidentiality status
- v. approval of minutes from the last meeting
- vi. matters arising and follow up of actions
- vii. declarations of interest
- viii. confirmation of satisfactory internal and external moderation processes
- ix. resit and deferred results
- x. resolution of initial assessment marks, module by module, with noting of any adverse conditions or extenuating circumstances relating to the teaching or assessment of the cohort

The Conduct & Operation of Assessment Boards

[For items (xi) to (xvii) discussion can occur as each module is reviewed by the Board]:

- xi. recommendations to UABs (fails, special cases)
- xii. review of cross-site parity with identification and consideration of any trends
- xiii. mean and standard deviation
- xiv. modules with a failure rate of 20% or more at first attempt (will be discussed at the MAB and Module Leaders may be requested to provide a module failure report following the MAB) (*)
- xv. confirmation of reassessment titles
- xvi. External Examiner comments/issues
- xvii. Independent Panel Member comments
- xviii. Specific issues to be taken forward to UAB
- xix. signing of the mark sheets
- xx. date of next meeting.

(*) these modules are also reported through Annual Monitoring

2.6 The relevant SAAS Administrator will ensure that computer-generated aggregated marks by module are provided to the Chair and Secretary of the Board together with the record sheets of special needs, extenuating circumstances (for information only) and malpractice cases at least three working days before the Board. The mark sheets will include:

- i. the weighting of each item of assessment within the module
- ii. for each student, the raw marks for each component of the total assessment and the total module mark (calculated in accordance with the validated weighting scheme)
- iii. the mean mark per cohort and the standard deviation demonstrating each of the component marks and how the overall mark has been arrived at
- iv. in the case of programmes containing a professional element, professional performance should be included
- v. for reassessments, both the initial and resit marks (both actual and capped marks).

2.7 The Chair and the Secretary of the Board are responsible for checking the paperwork before the Board and liaising with the relevant SAAS Administrator where necessary.

2.8 The MAB considers the results and confirms the mark for the student for each module according to the academic regulations section F11. The role of the Subject External Examiner in relation to the MAB is to ensure that, for assessments undertaken within a designated subject area, that

- i. assessment/moderation processes are consistent, fair and rigorous
- ii. standards are maintained at a level comparable with that of assessments undertaken on similar programmes elsewhere in the UK
- iii. there is parity and consistency in relation to the application of the Regulations to individual student cases

[Note: The role and responsibilities of External Examiners is further outlined in Appendix 4a].

2.9 The MAB, may, in the light of the moderation process and recommendations from the External Examiner (s) exercise its discretion in determining the marks to be awarded. The moderation process should apply to the cohort as a whole but there may be a need to review individual cases. Should there be any disagreement

between the internal marking and the External Examiner (s), the view of the MAB shall prevail.

- 2.10 All marks ending in 9 are allowed to stand. A statement should be included in the minutes to indicate that the External Examiner found marking standards to be accurate.
- 2.11 The External Examiner[s] must sign the appropriate papers to confirm agreement with the standard of marking and the marks awarded. Each member of the Board should sign an attendance list and recommendations and mark sheets must be signed by the chair of the MAB (until which time marks are provisional).
- 2.12 Minutes should cover each of the items providing succinct summaries of the discussion and any ensuing actions. The results lists should be embedded within the minutes. Minutes and the action agreed should be produced within two working days of the meeting.

3. University Assessment Boards (UABs)

- 3.1 The general requirements for and guidance on the conduct and operation of all Boards applies (section 1 of these procedures) to UABs.
- 3.2 The UAB considers the progress of students through awards and end of session results in relation to continuing students and award and classification results for completing students. Its decisions are made according to the Academic Regulations requirements for progression and award classification. (Sections G and H of the Academic Regulations).
- 3.3 An Award External Examiner is required to be in attendance at every UAB. [Academic Regulation J3].
- 3.4 The role of the Award External Examiners at UABs is to ensure that:
 - i. through the application of Regulations, standards are maintained at a level comparable with that achieved in similar awards elsewhere in the UK;
 - ii. the assessment processes are sound, fairly operated and in line with the institution's policies and regulations;
 - iii. the procedures are followed in a fair and proper manner with consistency in application of the Regulations and comparability of treatment for students in their interpretation, across the University.
- 3.5 The membership of UABs is determined in section F11 of the Academic Regulations.
- 3.6 The agenda for UABs is as follows:
 - i. introductions;
 - ii. apologies for absence;
 - iii. confidentiality status;
 - iv. confirmation of the Academic Assessment Regulations;
 - v. approval of the minutes of the last meeting;
 - vi. matters arising;
 - vii. declarations of interest;
 - viii. consideration of the students' profiles, student by student, distinguishing between continuing and finalist students, identifying, as appropriate, reassessment and award outcomes, including any requirements for assessment contracts (see Annex 1);

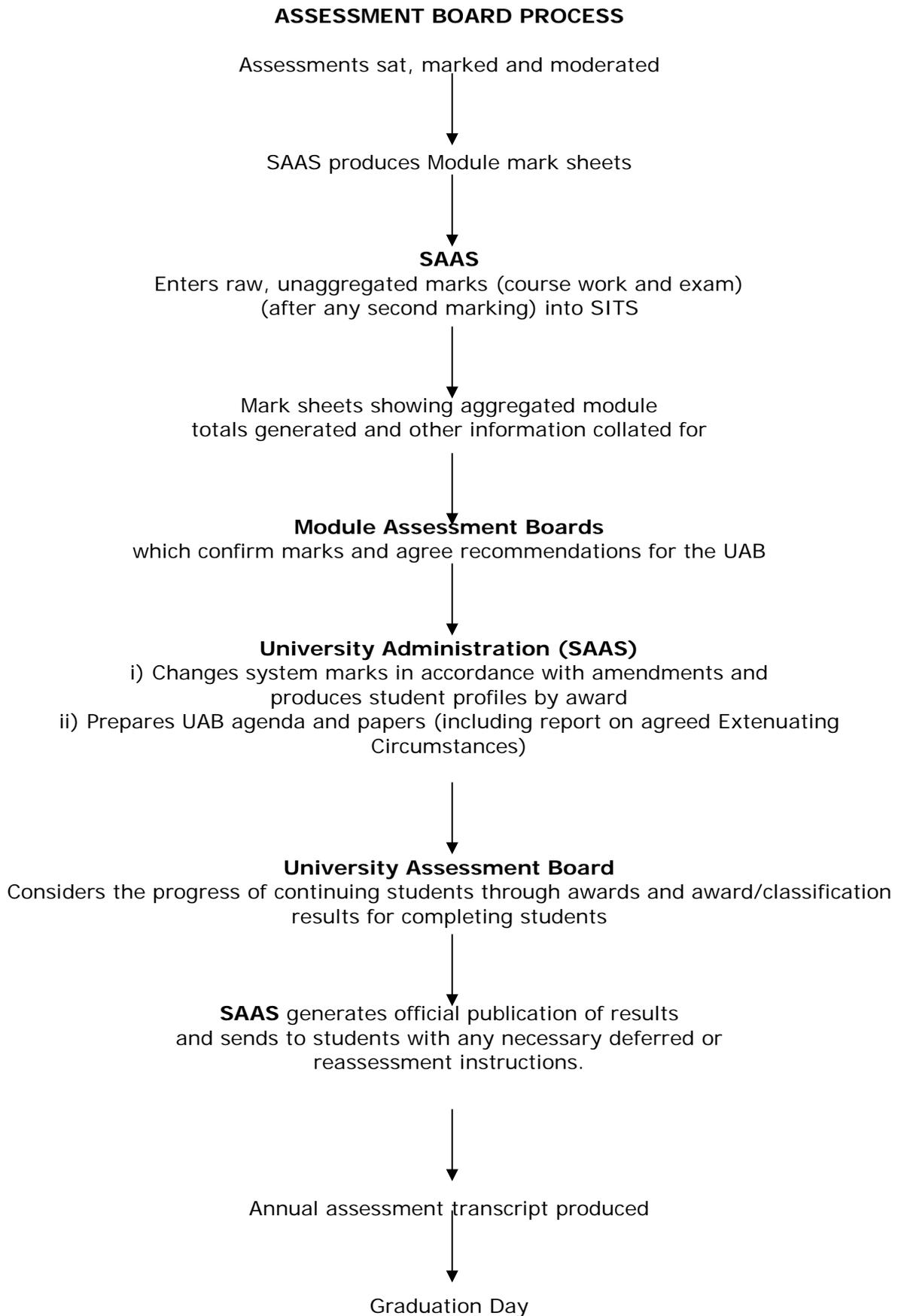
The Conduct & Operation of Assessment Boards

- ix. Award External Examiner's verbal comments/issues;
 - x. issues to be referred to the Director of Academic Quality and Development;
 - xi. date of next meeting.
- 3.7 UABs are convened and managed by the Dean for Student Experience, or the Director of Institute of Education, or an independent Head of Department¹. In some cases, it is appropriate to divide up the business into cognate groups of awards, each with its own agenda.
- It is a requirement that there is quoracy for each group and that the internal examiners are present for the whole of the business which relates to the courses/programmes for which they have responsibility. Award External Examiners must be present for the totality of the UAB business.
- 3.8 The Chair and the Award External Examiner should sign the agenda sheet considered at progression and/or award stage.
- 3.9 Minutes should cover each of the items providing succinct summaries of the discussion and any ensuing actions. The results lists should be appended/referred to rather than incorporate full results in the minutes. Minutes should be produced within four working days of the meeting. Following the meeting the University SAAS administrator generates official publication of results and sends to individual students' notification of these results together with any necessary deferred or reassessment instructions. Standard reassessment deadlines are provided on the University's Assessment Schedule which is available to all staff on the University's website and SAAS area of StaffHUB.

4. Review of the Procedures

The University reviews these procedures periodically.

¹ Module Assessment Boards are normally chaired by Principal Lecturer. In cases where a Head of Department is required to chair a Module Assessment Board (MAB), they may not chair the University Assessment Board that the MAB reports into.



ANNEX 1 (Appx 3f)

Guidance on the use of Assessment Contracts

1. Assessment Contracts should be completed in the following cases (Reg F8.3):
 - Students with more than 40 credits of assessed work to be recouped (first or second reassessment) (*)
 - All students on their second reassessment (including students readmitted on a part-time status to complete reassessment, without attendance)
 - Students who have had a confirmed case of malpractice that has resulted in reassessment

2. Responsibilities of the University Assessment Board:
 - To make decisions regarding the need for Assessment Contracts for students as set out in section 1 above.
 - To agree realistic timescales for reassessment taking account of any specific student needs.
 - To make the final decision on reassessment to allow the student to return to their course.

3. Responsibilities of the Programme Leader (or their designated member of Departmental academic staff with responsibility for ensuring Assessment Contracts are produced):
 - To engage in dialogue (can be through electronic means or telephone) with the student in preparing the Assessment Contract, taking account of deadlines set by the University Assessment Board. This should be completed within two weeks of the UAB.
 - To prepare the Assessment Contract and provide copies to the student and the relevant Programme Administration.

4. Responsibilities of the student:
 - Contact should be maintained with the Personal Tutor and the student should engage with other resources available to them, as outlined in the Assessment Contract (eg Academic Skills Service (Student & Staff Support Service (SASS), IT facilities.

 - To engage with SAAS relating to any documentary requests prior to return (eg DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) requirements and/or occupational health questionnaire, where relevant)).

(*) There will be no requirement for an Assessment Contract where 40 credits or below need to be recouped, although the Programme Leader may use one if this is expected to be helpful to the student.