

## **ACADEMIC REGISTRAR'S DIVISION**

Instructions for Examiners | 2011-2012  
for Undergraduate and  
Taught Graduate Programmes



**Instructions for Examiners for Taught Programmes 2011-2012****INDEX**

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## 1. Assessment Principles

### 1.1 Statement of Assessment Principles

The School promotes a common philosophy about assessment, as far as this is possible given disciplinary diversity. The main points, as agreed by the Academic Board, are as follows:

- (a) The purpose of final assessment is to sample and gauge a number of student capabilities, especially subject knowledge, understanding of the main features of the disciplinary landscape, and critical analysis and synthesis.
- (b) “Key, transferable skills” (in QAA terminology) should be encouraged where appropriate through learning activity and coursework, but need not necessarily be tested through either formative or summative assessment.
- (c) It is important to avoid both over-complexity in designing assessment systems and assessment overload on students and staff.
- (d) It is also important to ensure the integrity of the assessment process by building in safeguards against cheating and other malpractice.

### 1.2 The main points of the rationale for the School’s current approach to assessment are:

- 1.2.1 Closed examinations make for fair and impartial assessment. In terms of taking the examinations, all students take them under the same conditions (except disabled students, where specific arrangements can apply). In terms of assessing them, blind double marking would be difficult to maintain if much greater use was made of more open assessment methods.
- 1.2.2 Closed examinations also reduce the dangers of plagiarism or other forms of cheating, especially at a time when improved access to electronic media and the internet has opened up increased possibilities in this regard – our impression is that, in the face of evidence of growth in student malpractice, other universities may be moving in the direction of increasing the diet of closed examinations.
- 1.2.3 The School’s student profile is such that many of its students have no prior experience of assessment by non-conventional methods.
- 1.2.4 The concentration of assessment of students in the Summer Term allows them to focus on learning in the Michaelmas and Lent Terms. It also gives teachers more freedom during these terms, without the complications that come from the rather different role of being an assessor.
- 1.2.5 Most courses build through an academic year. End of year assessment allows the students to develop interconnections and overlaps within a course, and it allows staff to assess whether or not they have done so.
- 1.2.6 It generates an incentive to acquire greater coverage of subject knowledge than is often the case with open essays on specified and limited topics.
- 1.2.7 Above all, it is an effective, economic and proven way of preserving the reputation and quality of degrees obtained at the School.
- 1.2.8 There is also an argument that closed methods serve to control the assessment load on the staff who mark the student work, at a time when they are confronted with many other competing pressures.
- 1.2.9 In the broadest terms, also, this whole issue raises some fundamental questions about the functions of higher education, both generally and as conceived by the School, for example in terms of whether it should be driven by student employability or the values of academic disciplinaryity.

## 2 Degree Programme Examination Boards

### 2.1 School Boards and Sub-Boards of Examiners

- 2.1.1 School Boards and Sub-Boards of Examiners have been established for all undergraduate and graduate programmes taught at the School.
- 2.1.2 For undergraduate programmes, it is the School Board of Examiners for BA/BSc degrees, supported by departmental Sub-Boards of Examiners. The Law Board of Examiners uniquely serves as both a Sub-board and School Board for candidates studying on LLB (and related) degrees.
- 2.1.3 For graduate programmes (Masters and Diplomas), it is the Graduate School Board of Examiners supported by programme-specific Sub-Boards of Examiners.

### 2.2 The Appointment of School Boards, Sub-Boards, Examiners, and Assessors

- 2.2.1 Attached as Annex A are the procedures for appointing the following:
- School Boards and Sub-Boards of Examiners;
  - Chairs of School Boards and Sub-Boards of Examiners;
  - Internal Examiners, including the use of Graduate Teaching Assistants and Guest Teachers as assessors/second internal makers.
- 2.2.2 Attached as Annex B are the procedures for appointing External Examiners.

### 2.3 Regulations and Classification Rules

The [School Calendar](#) and Regulations handbook details the regulations and classification rules for Undergraduate, Diploma and Masters programmes.

## 3 School Boards of Examiners

### 3.1 Duties and responsibilities of School Boards of Examiners

Each School Board of Examiners is responsible for:

- (a) ratifying, as appropriate, the results of all continuing candidates in accordance with the applicable progression rules;
- (b) scrutinising and confirming the final award classification of all candidates who have satisfied their programme requirements in accordance with the applicable award classification scheme;
- (c) determining the final award classification of any candidate(s) being recommended by a Sub-Board of Examiners for a higher class than the applicable award classification scheme would normally allow because of medical and/or extenuating circumstances. This should be carried out in a manner that ensures consistency and fairness across the School;
- (d) identifying and communicating general issues arising from the individual cases it considers.

### 3.2 Membership

- 3.2.1 The School Board of Examiners for BA/BSc degrees comprises an independent Chair and one representative (normally the Chair) from each Sub-Board of Examiners.
- 3.2.2 The Graduate School Board of Examiners comprises an independent Chair and ten members (normally Chairs of Sub-Boards of Examiners) with two representatives from each of the five academic constituency groups.

### 3.3 Meetings

- 3.3.1 For undergraduate programmes, the final meeting of the School Board of Examiners will take place by the second full week of July. There is also a 'business' meeting of this Board in November to discuss general procedural and/or policy issues.
- 3.3.2 For graduate and diploma programmes, the meeting of the Graduate School Board of Examiners will take place by the second full week of July to consider results for (9-

month) programmes where examinations (including the dissertation) are complete by the end of June. The Board will also meet as appropriate between late September and early November to consider results for all other (12-month) programmes. There is also a 'business' meeting of this Board in February to discuss general procedural and/or policy issues.

## 4 Sub-Boards of Examiners

### 4.1 Duties and responsibilities of Sub-Boards of Examiners

4.1.1 Each Sub-Board of Examiners is responsible for:

- (a) scrutinising the setting of questions in all elements of assessment, whether in coursework or at examination;
- (b) ratifying the marks of all candidates for courses at all levels within its remit;
- (c) considering progression to the next year of study for students following programmes of study within its remit;
- (d) classifying finalists who have satisfied the requirements of programmes within its remit;
- (e) recommending to the appropriate School Board of Examiners any candidate(s) who, because of documented medical and/or extenuating circumstances, should be given special consideration, including a higher class of award than the applicable award classification scheme would normally allow; or whether a student who has failed the degree or failed to progress should be granted an additional attempt at a failed paper or papers when his/her number of attempts allowed under the degree regulations have been exhausted.

4.1.2 Where a Sub-Board has no business relating to progression and/or classification, it is still required to hold a meeting to ratify the marks of all candidates taking courses within its remit.

4.1.3 For the avoidance of doubt, the business of the Sub-Board of Examiners must be conducted without reference to the names of candidates. Candidate numbers should be used in their place.

### 4.2 Membership

4.2.1 The following are to attend meetings of Sub-Boards of Examiners:

- (a) External Examiners as appointed to each Sub-Board;
- (b) At least one Internal Examiner (normally the Course Convenor) for each paper considered by the Sub-Board.

4.2.2 The following are **entitled** to attend meetings of Sub-Boards of Examiners:

- (a) associate examiners;
- (b) the Director and Academic Registrar (or their nominees);
- (c) designated administrative staff;
- (d) Graduate Teaching Assistants and Guest Teachers acting as second Internal Examiners/Assessors on the invitation of the Sub-Board (see [Annex A](#), section 3.3).

4.2.3 Any meeting of a Sub-Board of Examiners may proceed in the absence of any Examiner (internal or external) subject to the examiner having been able to carry out the functions set out for him/her in these *Instructions*.

### 4.3 Meetings

The Sub-Board will meet as necessary to fulfil its responsibilities as set out in 4.1, including:

4.3.1 a meeting(s) in the Lent Term to scrutinise all question papers (see section 9);

- 4.3.2 a final meeting to ratify marks for courses and to decide the overall results of individual candidates. This meeting must take place at least four full working days before the School Board of Examiners to which it reports:
- (i) By the end of the first week in July, for all undergraduate programmes and 9-month graduate programmes
  - (ii) By the end of the last week in October, for all 12-month graduate programmes.

## 5. Duties and responsibilities of the Chair of School Boards of Examiners

### 5.1 The Chairs of the School Boards of Examiners shall:

- (a) confirm that all decisions have been made in accordance with established School regulations and procedures, including those outlined in these *Instructions*;
- (b) confirm that there has been equitable treatment of all candidates across the Sub-Boards;
- (c) ensure that all exceptional cases are duly considered and processed, taking advice from Chairs of Sub-Boards and relevant External Examiners where appropriate;
- (d) provide ad hoc advice to Sub-Board Chairs, independently and/or on behalf of the School Board, as appropriate;
- (e) oversee the proceedings of School Board meetings, including any related email exchanges;
- (f) take Chair's action where appropriate and report such action to the next meeting of the School Board;
- (g) decide on the award of School and University (but not Department) prizes.

## 6. Duties and responsibilities of the Chair of Sub-Boards of Examiners

### 6.1 General

The Chair of each Sub-Board of Examiners shall:

- (a) ensure (in so far as is reasonably possible) that proper procedures are followed, as set out in these *Instructions*, in respect of all programmes and courses which fall under the remit of her/his Sub-Board;
- (b) ensure that the department produces and publishes assessment criteria in line with the School requirements;
- (c) be responsible, on behalf of the Sub-Board, for all communications with the relevant School Board, with other Sub-Boards and with the School Administration;
- (d) convene Sub-Board meetings as required (see 4.3) and oversee proceedings;
- (e) remind colleagues of the attendance requirements at Sub-Board meetings (as set out in 4.2) so as to ensure that there is a representative quorum at any meeting at which are confirmed<sup>1</sup>. For the avoidance of doubt, it is an expectation that, as detailed in 4.2.1(b), internal examiners shall attend each meeting of the Sub-Board unless unavoidably prevented from doing so.
- (f) ensure that a detailed and accurate record of each Sub-Board meeting is kept, including a note of any absences (see section 15);
- (g) take Chair's action where appropriate and report such action to the next meeting of the Sub-Board.

### 6.2 In respect of External Examiners:

The Chair of each Sub-Board of Examiners shall:

- a) nominate names of External Examiners for his/her Sub-Board for the approval of the Undergraduate or Graduate Studies Sub-Committee (as applicable);

<sup>1</sup> For guidance a quorum is normally considered to be half plus one of the voting membership of the Sub-Board, and should be maintained for the duration of the meeting.

- b) decide, as appropriate, the distribution of duties between External Examiners;
- c) ensure that External Examiners are properly inducted into their role and the courses and programme(s) to be examined (see [Annex B](#), 4.3).

### 6.3 In respect of examination papers

The Chair of each Sub-Board of Examiners shall:

- a) remind colleagues about the duties and responsibilities of examiners in setting examination papers, including the need to ensure that their contents are kept confidential;
- b) ensure that at least one Internal Examiner is present and immediately available in the School when each examination paper is being sat;
- c) execute other duties and responsibilities as outlined in section 9.

### 6.4 In respect of marking examination scripts

The Chair of each Sub-Board of Examiners shall:

- a) ensure that the Examiners mark the examination scripts and other elements of assessment for which the Sub-Board is responsible by the established deadlines (see section 12);
- b) make arrangements to receive and maintain in safe custody the official marksheets for each course, which must be signed by the responsible Examiners;
- c) ensure that any omissions or other queries are taken up with the Examiners;
- d) be jointly responsible with the first Examiner (normally the teacher responsible for the course) for the accuracy of final marks, including the correct calculation of all course component marks where applicable, prior to submission to Registry (see section 14).

### 6.5 In respect of determining results

The Chair of each Sub-Board of Examiners shall:

- a) assist the Sub-Board in preparing and processing any cases where an individual or group of candidates require special consideration for medical and/or extenuating circumstances;
- b) be fully responsible for the accuracy of final marks and recommendations by the Sub-Board as they appear on the consolidated markframe (which lists the profiles of results for all candidates on each programme) centrally generated for Sub-Board meetings;
- c) to arrange for consideration of appeals cases by the Sub-Board and to ensure the fair and timely processing of such cases.

### 6.6 In respect of liaising with the respective School Board

The Chair of each Sub-Board of Examiners shall:

- a) confirm the results of all continuing and finalist candidates following a programme of study which falls within the remit of the Sub-Board;
- b) raise any issues of concern arising from the proceedings of the Sub-Board;
- c) At undergraduate level, the Chair shall attend, or ensure representation at, the meeting of the School Board of Examiners for BA/BSc degrees in order to:
  - a. present any case where the Sub-Board has recommended to 'suspend' the normal application of the award classification or programme regulations for an individual or group of candidates<sup>2</sup>, and;
  - b. consider similar cases from other Sub-Boards.
- d) At graduate level, the Chair shall submit a written statement for each case where his/her Sub-Board has recommended to 'suspend' the normal application of the award classification or programme regulations for an individual or group of candidates<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> For the avoidance of doubt, this includes recommendations that individual students who have failed the degree or failed to progress should be granted an additional attempt at a failed paper or papers when his/her number of attempts allowed under the degree regulations have been exhausted.

## 7. Duties and responsibilities of the External Examiner

### 7.1. General

- 7.1.1. External Examiners shall be appointed as set out in the procedures and conditions, including support provisions, detailed in [Annex B](#). Please note the criteria for eligibility for appointment in section 1 of [Annex B](#).
- 7.1.2. External examiners have three primary duties:
- to help the School to assure and maintain academic standards in its programmes leading to an award;
  - to verify that academic standards are appropriate for the level of award to be granted;
  - to help the School to ensure that assessment processes are sound, fairly operated and in line with its policies and regulations.
- 7.1.3 External examiners shall take part in establishing the Sub-Board of Examiners assessment regime, according to School rules. S/he will endorse the marking schemes to be adopted.
- 7.1.4 External examiners shall not normally be involved in the design of programmes and/or their component elements.

### 7.2 In respect of examination papers

- 7.2.1 External examiners shall participate in and approve the setting of questions in examinations (see 9.3) and, as appropriate, other elements of assessed coursework.

### 7.3 In respect of marking examination scripts

- 7.3.1 External examiners must not act as second markers, but shall review a sample of examination scripts and/or assessed coursework (including essays/ reports/ dissertations) in accordance with agreed principles for sample selection. External examiners must see a sample of scripts and other assessed material from the top, the middle and the bottom of the range in order to have enough evidence to decide that internal marking is consistent and of an appropriate standard. They shall normally be sent examination scripts and other work that have been assessed internally as meriting a first / distinction or a failure.
- 7.3.2 External examiners shall have the authority to resolve significant differences of opinion between internal examiners about the marks to be awarded to individual or groups of candidates. They shall be provided with information on the method used by the internal examiners to reconcile divergent marks.
- 7.3.3 External examiners have the right to inspect any script or other assessed examination material. External examiners should make judgements on individuals separately from internal examiners. They have the authority:
- to obtain reasonable access to the assessed parts of any programme, including evidence about candidates' performances on placements;
  - to request additional marking of candidates' work;
  - to act as final moderators of assessed work with the power to adjust marks or decisions for individual or groups of candidates;
  - to give their view on decisions made by the Sub-Board on examination appeals. In all such cases, the Sub-Board Chair will consult with the external examiner over the Sub-Board's decision. Although the Sub-Board retains sovereignty in determining appeals outcomes, the Chair may wish to report back to the Sub-Board if the external examiner disagrees strongly with its proposed decision.
- 7.3.4 External examiners shall take part in oral and practical examinations where these are required.
- 7.3.5 Save where attendance at meetings is required, and provided that work is completed**

within the timeframes indicated by the School and in accordance with these instructions, it shall be for the External Examiner to determine how and when they carry out their duties

#### 7.4 In respect of determining results

- 7.4.1 External examiners are full and equal members of the Sub-Board of Examiners to which they are appointed and shall attend meetings at which significant decisions are to be taken, especially the final meeting at which candidates' results are confirmed. They shall be invited to:
- (a) express their view on specific events, a proposed course of action or individual cases being discussed, normally being the final contributor;
  - (b) have an equal vote on decisions taken.
- 7.4.2 The External examiners should sign the consolidated markframe (which records the final mark profiles for all candidates on each programme) to confirm, in so far as s/he can reasonably be expected to, that the standard of the examination was appropriate for the level of the course of study and that the examination was conducted in accordance with the relevant programme regulations. The External Examiner's signature does not rule out the reopening of any result through the proper appeals process.
- 7.4.3 If an External examiner is unwilling to endorse any result, that result will not be published until the matter is resolved. The matter will be referred to the Director who will seek to resolve the matter including the option of appointing further external examiners to provide a final result on behalf of the Sub-Board of Examiners.

#### 7.5 In respect providing a report

- 7.5.1 External examiners are required to provide a report to the Director of the School as soon as possible after the completion of the assessment of candidates in each year and no later than one month after the meeting of the Sub-Board of Examiners (see Annex B, section 5, for further details).

#### 7.6 Status of External Examiners

- 7.6.1 Appointment as External examiner does not confer upon the individual the status of employee of the School, and External examiners should not hold themselves out as such at any time.

### 8. Duties and responsibilities of the Internal Examiner

#### 8.1 General

All Internal Examiners shall:

- (a) assist the Chair of the Sub-Board in providing information for the External Examiner on course syllabus and content;
- (b) be aware of the School's policy on acceptable approaches to double 'blind' marking (see para 12.1) and classification schemes;
- (c) attend meetings of the Sub-Board or, if this is not possible, make suitable arrangements with the Chair.

#### 8.2 In respect of examination papers

All Internal Examiners shall:

- (d) execute all duties and responsibilities as outlined in section 9;
- (e) be present at all scheduled examination paper scrutiny meetings, unless specifically excused by the Chair;
- (f) be present and available immediately in the School at the time of the examination of papers for which they are responsible, in order to deal with any queries or difficulties that might arise during the examination (including evacuation – see Annex C). If in exceptional circumstances the Internal Examiner cannot be available in the School, s/he must make alternative arrangements in advance with Registry and the Chair of the Sub-Board.

### 8.3 In respect of marking examination scripts

Internal Examiners are required to:

- (g) mark the examination scripts and other forms of assessment according to the marking schemes of the School and by the deadlines set by the School and the Chair of the Sub-Board;
- (h) agree a mark with the other Internal Examiner(s) prior to sending scripts to the External Examiner. Where it is not possible to agree a final mark, the Internal Examiners must provide the External Examiner with the usual method used to reconcile divergent marks and as much information as possible to enable him/her to reach a decision;
- (i) the first examiner be jointly responsible with the Chair of the Sub-Board for the accuracy of final marks, including the correct addition of all course component marks where applicable. S/he shall complete and sign marksheets for each course and, in accordance with departmental arrangements, arrange for course marks to be submitted to Registry (see section 14).

8.4 Internal Examiners shall also undertake any other examination duties as requested by the Chair of the Sub-Board.

## 9. Preparation of examination papers

### 9.1 Format of papers

9.1.1 A template format for question papers will be sent electronically by Registry to Departmental Managers in the Lent Term. It is essential that this format is used for all papers. Question papers which are not submitted in this format will be returned to the department for amendment. All question papers should be in English except those for candidates taking foreign language examinations. All question papers should be prepared as camera-ready copy, word processed, and on plain A4.

9.1.2 All camera-ready copies should be fully headed to show:

- (a) the course code;
- (b) the full title of the paper, as shown in the Regulations;
- (c) the number of questions the candidate is required to answer;
- (d) the number of pages in the question paper (e.g. page 1 of 4);
- (e) any tables, materials or photographs to be provided for the candidate;
- (f) whether calculators or other materials (e.g. statutes, annotated text) are permitted;
- (g) the time allowed for the examination.

9.1.3 Where there are two (or more) versions of any question paper (e.g. one for candidates on the current syllabus, and one for candidates who are re-sitting a previous version) it is essential that the version of the paper is clearly indicated on the front sheet of both e.g. "AN666 2010/11 syllabus" and "AN666 for candidates re-sitting 2009/10 syllabus only" and also in the footer of each page.

9.1.4 Wherever an examination is coded differently for different cohorts of students, the question paper should state clearly both of the examination course codes.

9.1.5 All maps and drawings which are required for reproduction as part of examination papers must be sent to Registry in a form ready for reproduction without having to be re-drawn. Photographs that need to be reproduced by external printers should be sent with the paper.

9.1.6 If in any exceptional case Examiners want candidates to be provided with special tables and/or materials (e.g. graph paper), they must (i) make this explicitly clear upon submission of the camera-ready copies of the examination questions and (ii) clearly specify on the examination paper the necessary tables and/or materials (including, in the case of any books, the appropriate edition(s)).

## 9.2 Security of papers

- 9.2.1 All Examiners are required to preserve the confidentiality of each examination paper at all stages until it has been sat by all candidates. The contents must not be disclosed to any persons other than members of the Sub-Board of Examiners or officials of the School who are specially appointed to deal with examination papers.
- 9.2.2 Examiners must take all necessary measures to ensure the security of examination papers held on computer, for example by saving documents on a personal hard drive or other electronic memory device and by using password protection on all documents. Backups of all documents should also be kept and stored securely.
- 9.2.3 The exception to 9.2.1 is where the School has explicitly approved the disclosure to candidates of the topics to be covered in a specific paper(s) in advance of the examination. Application for approval to disclose examination questions should be made to the Undergraduate Studies or Graduate Studies Sub-Committees (as applicable) no later than 1 February. The application should state:
- (a) the particular paper at which this method will be employed;
  - (b) the place of that paper in the examination for the degree as a whole;
  - (c) whether this method is to be used initially for a trial period, the outcome of the use of this method and any special criteria that will apply to its assessment by virtue of the candidates having advance knowledge of the questions.

Where examination questions are disclosed to candidates in advance, arrangements must be in place to ensure that all candidates are able to receive the question paper at the same time.

## 9.3 Setting of papers

### General Principles

- 9.3.1 All reasonable steps should be taken when each examination paper is set to ensure that:
- a) questions in quantitative papers are solvable (or that there are academic reasons where they are not solvable);
  - b) questions are sufficiently distinct from any questions on examination papers, coursework or any other assessment (whether formative or summative) in the current and/or immediately preceding years that would materially help or be easily recognisable by candidates;
  - c) the form and content properly reflects the syllabus as published in the Course Guide section of the [School Calendar](#); and
  - d) the final version of the examination paper is accurate and presented in the format specified in 9.1. (NB: mistakes or misprints in examination papers may cause very serious difficulties for candidates.)
- 9.3.2 If there have been changes to the syllabus in the current academic year such that it would be difficult for re-sit or deferral candidates from a previous session(s) to answer all questions, separate question papers must be produced for re-sit candidates and for candidates sitting the current syllabus. There can, however, be overlap in one or more questions on both papers where this is appropriate and justified by overlap on the syllabi. For every course for which they are responsible, Academic Departments should ensure that, regardless of staff absence, planned or otherwise, they are able to produce question papers which are suitable for all remaining resit or deferred candidates. A sensible time to make contingency plans would be immediately after the meeting of the Sub-Board of Examiners in any given year, when the number of resit and deferral candidates is known. This should ensure sufficient time to make arrangements well in advance of the deadline for submission of examination papers for the next academic session.
- 9.3.3 Specimen examination papers (or appropriate examination-type questions) must also be produced for (i) any new course or (ii) an existing course where there have been

significant changes to the syllabus in the current academic year. (NB: such changes should also be announced at lectures, classes and in handouts.)

#### Internal Examiners

- 9.3.4 The first Examiner (normally the teacher responsible for the course) shall:
- (a) prepare two camera-ready copies of the final version(s) of each examination paper and an additional signed copy to certify that the paper (i) adheres to the general principles outlined in 9.3.1-9.3.3 and (ii) may be printed for candidates;
  - (b) inform the Chair of the Sub-Board of any requirements for source materials and/or calculators (see 9.4);
  - (c) liaise with the Chair of the Sub-Board on the despatch of question papers, scripts and other materials requested by the Chair.

#### External Examiner

- 9.3.5 The External Examiner shall have the opportunity (before, at and/or after the scrutiny meeting) to comment on draft examination papers for all relevant courses. If newly appointed, s/he will also be provided with copies of relevant examination papers for the past three years.

#### Sub-Board Chair

- 9.3.6 The Chair of the Sub-Board of Examiners shall:
- (a) arrange for the content of all draft examination papers within the Sub-Board's remit to be considered at a scrutiny meeting(s) in accordance with the general principles outlined in 9.3.1-9.3.3;
  - (b) sign one set of examination papers to signify that s/he is satisfied that the paper has been set in accordance with these *Instructions*;
  - (c) arrange for two camera-ready copies of each examination paper and one copy with the required signatures to be hand delivered, under confidential sealed cover addressed to Registry (Examinations), to the Student Services Centre by the specified deadline;
  - (d) notify Registry of precisely what source materials candidates shall be permitted to introduce or which shall be provided for candidates in the examination room, including electronic calculators (see 9.4).

### **9.4 Rules about the use of source materials and calculators**

- 9.4.1 Sub-Boards of Examiners are authorised to decide precisely what source materials candidates shall be permitted to bring into the examination or are provided with in the examination room. The Sub-Board Chair must include details of the examinations in which candidates may use their own calculators (if any). Permitted materials must not include the use of dictionaries for the specific purpose of enabling students to overcome any deficiency in their command of the English language.
- 9.4.2 A materials list, detailing all permitted source materials provided to or introduced by the candidates at the previous examination session, will be circulated to Academic Departments by Registry. This information should be updated by the Chair, and Registry notified, no later than the end of Lent Term. Registry shall ensure that full details of any permitted materials are made available to the candidates as soon as possible in the Summer Term.
- 9.4.3 Sub-Boards of Examiners shall not commit the School to any financial expenditure. Any proposal having financial implications must be submitted to Registry by the Chair of the Sub-Board no later than 1 February for consideration and before it is suggested to candidates that any particular materials may be provided.
- 9.4.4 Materials which candidates are expected to provide shall only be permitted if it can reasonably be expected that candidates will have or will be able to purchase such materials.
- 9.4.5 Where the use of calculators is permitted:

- (a) candidates will be required to state clearly on their scripts the name and type of electronic calculator used;
- (b) candidates will be limited to using calculators which are compact, hand-held, quiet in operation, and have their own power supply. Further guidance to candidates on this issue is the responsibility of Academic Departments;
- (c) candidates will be entirely responsible for ensuring that their calculators are in working order and for providing in advance for alternative means of calculating in the event of the calculator failing during the examination.

9.4.6 No material or equipment other than those specifically authorised may be introduced into an examination room.

## 9.5 Copyright of examination papers

9.5.1 It is a condition of the appointment of every Examiner that the School shall, without payment, be licensed to reproduce sufficient copies of examination papers (or material contained therein) prepared by the Examiner for the School, either alone or in collaboration with others, for the purpose of conducting the examination. The School shall also have the exclusive licence thereafter to publish the paper(s) as a whole provided that it shall not assign or transfer this exclusive licence in any way to any other person. Copyright is with the School.

## 10. Oral and practical examinations

- 10.1 Oral examinations shall be conducted by not fewer than two Examiners acting together. Where an oral examination is an examination element in its own right or makes a significant contribution to an element which forms part of the final assessment, one of these Examiners **must** be an External Examiner. If a selection of the candidates are to be given an oral examination an External Examiner should be present.
- 10.2 No one may attend an oral examination except the Examiners and the candidate, unless agreed as a reasonable adjustment by the Specific Examination Arrangements Panel.
- 10.3 The date, time and place for each oral and practical examination shall be determined by the Examiners and shall be notified to Registry by the Chair of the Sub-Board as early as possible and no later than four weeks before the date of the examination. Registry shall be responsible for notifying the candidates of all necessary arrangements.

## 11. Assessed coursework (essays, reports and dissertations)

- 11.1 All assessed coursework (essays, reports and dissertations) which counts towards a candidate's final classification should only be identifiable by the candidate's examination number so as to ensure, as far as is practicable, anonymity.
- 11.2 Where a course includes coursework as part of its assessment, all students must be given clear written instructions by the department on what is required, including the method of presentation and arrangements for the submission, and the deadline for its submission.
- 11.3 Assessed coursework must be submitted by the date specified in the relevant programme regulations. Subject to the provisions for extensions within the regulations, work not submitted by this date will be examined at the following year's examination and the non-submission counted as the first attempt.

Examination Sub-Board Chairs are asked to note that Departments are required to establish an earlier date for re-submission of a dissertation (or summer project) where this is the only element failed by a Masters student and s/he has not been awarded a degree. The earlier re-submission date should be at least three months after the student has been notified of the result of his/her initial submission, and no later than the end of the Lent Term (see [Annex E](#)).

- 11.4 No-one other than the Chair of the Sub-Board of Examiners has the authority to decide whether or not to accept assessed work that is submitted beyond the set, or extended, deadline. If late work is accepted, the Chair will apply a penalty as follows:
- Five marks out of 100 will be deducted for coursework submitted within 24 hours of the deadline and a further five marks will be deducted for each subsequent 24-hour period (working days only) until the coursework is submitted.
- 11.5 All students are required to add a declaration cover sheet to all work submitted as part of the formal assessment for their degree other than work produced under examination conditions. Without exception, the cover sheet, which shall be provided by the department, should carry the definition of plagiarism and make reference to the relevant School Regulations. It requires a student's signature that the work submitted is his/her own and complies with the requirements of the regulations. The regulations on assessment offences can be found in the [School Calendar](#) and Regulations handbook.
- 11.6 Where departments make use of electronic plagiarism detection software, e.g. Turnitin/iThenticate students should be informed of this before submitting their work. Students will be required to submit electronic copy, as well as hard copy, of their assessed work. Students must be given clear written instructions about how to submit the electronic version in a way that will avoid compromising their anonymity when their work is being marked.

## 12. Marking of examination scripts and assessed coursework

- 12.1 The School's view is that there are three acceptable approaches to marking which provide a highly rigorous assessment procedure: double-blind marking; sighted double marking; and moderated single marking, involving a second examiner. The default position is double-blind marking. Double blind marking is where the second internal examiner is unaware of how the first internal examiner has marked the script when carrying out his/her marking. However, it should be open to departments to opt-out of this approach for individual courses: for example, it is known that some of the School's more quantitative disciplines are of the view that double blind marking might not be necessary in certain circumstances. Departments which opt for sighted double marking or moderated single marking are required to register their reasons and details of their procedures with the appropriate central School body i.e. USSC/GSSC.
- 12.1
- 12.2 Classification schemes for undergraduate and graduate programmes are approved by the Undergraduate and Graduate Studies Sub-Committee as appropriate and published in the relevant section of the [School Calendar](#). All members of the Sub-Boards must ensure that they are aware of the relevant classification scheme before marking begins.
- 12.3 Registry shall distribute examination scripts to Examiners and Assessors in accordance with instructions from the Chairs of the Sub-Boards of Examiners and effective administrative processes.
- 12.4 In the event that an Examiner considers a candidate's examination script to be illegible, they should contact the Student Services Centre for guidance as soon as possible.
- 12.5 Scripts should not be sent to any Examiner at any time while s/he is outside the UK except by direct permission of the Head of the Student Services Centre. Such permission will normally be given only in cases where the marking of the examination in question could not otherwise be carried out.
- 12.6 Examiners should retain details of marks they have awarded to candidates on copies of the official marksheet for each course so as to limit damage in the event of scripts being lost between first and second markers and Chairs.
- 12.7 Every examination script shall be marked by at least two Internal Examiners or by one Internal Examiner and one Assessor (see [Annex A](#), section 3.3 for Assessor eligibility

criteria). The lead Examiner shall afterwards prepare an agreed list of marks. An External Examiner shall moderate the scripts (as in 7.3).

## 12.8 Adjustments for Groups of Students

12.8.1 Where examiners have found it both appropriate and necessary to adjust the results of an examination for a group of students due to extenuating circumstances (e.g. fire alarm, substantive errors in paper), the Chair of the relevant Sub-Board of Examiners should prepare a short statement which:

- (a) briefly outlines the circumstances and the adjustment made; and
- (b) provides clear guidance about the need (or not) to grant special consideration for affected candidates at the time of classification.

12.8.2 Such a statement will allow other Sub-Boards of Examiners to decide how to deal with affected candidates in light of action already taken, so as to prevent an occurrence of double compensation.

12.8.3 This statement should be sent to the Secretary of the relevant School Board of Examiners, as soon as possible after the decision to adjust the results has been confirmed and no later than 20 June or 15 September.

12.9 Assessed coursework which counts towards a candidate's final classification should normally be marked by two Internal Examiners.<sup>3</sup> If any differences of opinion emerge the External Examiner should be asked to moderate. Marks given for assessed coursework are not final until approved by the External Examiner.

12.10 Students are entitled to know any individual summative component grades, e.g. from assessed coursework and mid-term examinations, provisionally assigned during the session, but must be made aware that these are provisional until their overall course marks have been ratified by the final meeting of the respective School Board of Examiners. The School does not require examiners to provide feedback to students on their assessed coursework.

12.11 The School's current practice is to formally publish only the final overall marks for each course. As part of its standard marking procedures, however, examiners will normally record the following exam-related data about each candidate:

12.11.1 Marks - In addition to final overall marks for each course:

- a) the individual examiner sub-component marks for each component of assessment, e.g. question-by-question marks for exams<sup>4</sup>;
- b) the total mark by each individual examiner for each component of assessment within a course, e.g. essays, exams;
- c) an agreed final mark for each component of assessment.

12.11.2 Comments – e.g.:

- a) comments made by individual examiners during the marking process, including private notes to be referred to, as necessary, when agreeing a final mark with another examiner(s);
- b) in certain cases where internal examiners cannot agree a final mark, any additional comments provided to the external examiner about a script.

<sup>3</sup> "That where assessed coursework formed 25% or less of the overall assessment for a course, Departments should, if at all possible, operate a full system of double-marking, but, in the event that this was not possible, a second Internal Examiner should consider at least all Firsts, all Fails, all borderlines and a sample of work from each classification." [Minute 45(b), Academic Studies Committee, November 1997]

<sup>4</sup> It is understood that in some (but by no means all) departments, examiners agree sub-component marks for each component of assessment.

- 12.12** The School must retain copies of all assessed work (e.g. examination scripts, dissertations, essays, reports, and coursework) for one year. Members of a Sub-Board of Examiners shall have the right to see the assessed work of any candidate for the purpose of conducting the examination.
- 12.13** Assessing work in line with the Data Protection Act (DPA)
- 12.13.1 The School and all Examiners are required to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998, which establishes legal rights for individuals with regard to the processing of personal data, including examination marks and results. In order to ensure that these obligations are met, all examiners should be conversant with the School's general statement on [Data Protection](#).
- 12.13.2 Examination scripts (i.e. the physical object) are exempted from the DPA access rules. Current School policy prohibits students from accessing either their original exam scripts or copies.
- 12.13.3 Examiners' marks, and any comments on which they were based, are disclosable under the DPA, whether recorded on the script or held separately or made in an alternative form, e.g. in a coded table. This applies to all examiners, internal and external, and applies even to material marked 'blind', because codes must exist somewhere that allow the identity of the student to be determined.
- 12.13.4 Students do not have rights under the DPA to any explanation about how specific marks or comments were arrived at, as this does not constitute personal data. Thus the School does not have to explain how differences between examiners are resolved.
- 12.13.5 Examiners' marks and comments should, wherever possible/practicable, be made on a separate sheet rather than directly on examination scripts, i.e. when completing mark sheets or recording general evaluative comments ('good answer, but lacks depth'). This will enable DPA requests to be met simply by transcribing, or photocopying, where appropriate the relevant section of the examiners' sheets.
- 12.13.6 Where it is normal practice for marks to be made on the script this should continue. Similarly, it would not be practicable to record 'contextual' comments ('but...' or 'wrong way round'), symbols (!, X) or underlinings on a separate sheet.
- 12.13.7 As all contextual comments, symbols and underlining are disclosable under the DPA, they will need to be reproduced onto a separate form before they can be given to a student. In order to make such markings as intelligible as possible, the student will also be told which question, page, paragraph and sometimes line, any markings appear next to, although no part of the actual answer or essay is reproduced. As students will normally keep a copy of their assessed essays, they will be able to match comments/markings to the corresponding section of their work. While this is less helpful in respect of exam responses, the student does get the information to which they are entitled.
- 12.13.8 All written comments should be appropriate and relate to the examination script rather than the candidate. Where handwritten comments are illegible, they will need to be reproduced in a legible format, e.g. a typed format.
- 12.13.9 Examiners are required to keep all mark sheets, printed pages and emails containing candidate numbers alongside marks and/or comments (including any draft feedback to students in those departments which provide this), whether for exams or other assessed work, until a date specified by the Academic Registrar's Division (i.e. about one month after the release of official results).
- 12.13.10 Any general material about the marking process should also be kept in so far as to ensure that the overall marking process was sound.

### 13. Specific Examination Arrangements

- 13.1** School regulations allow for specific examination arrangements, (e.g. extra writing time, rest periods, the use of equipment) for candidates with documented evidence of an existing condition, i.e. physical, medical or psychological, and/or learning disability, e.g. dyslexia. Such specific arrangements can only be approved by the School's Specific Examination Arrangements Panel following a request by the student.
- 13.2** Examination scripts and assessed coursework of those candidates who are disabled by a condition, e.g. dyslexia or visual impairment, which is likely to affect presentation, spelling or grammatical errors (including style) will be officially flagged by the School for the attention of the examiners. Examiners will simultaneously be provided, by Academic Departments, with appropriate guidance for the marking of such scripts and coursework to ensure consistency and fairness in the treatment of disabled and/or dyslexic students.
- 13.3** Specific exam arrangements are distinct from mitigating circumstances. They are deemed to put a candidate who is disabled or who has a temporary condition (e.g. stress, sickness) on a level playing field. Sub-Boards of Examiners will not receive details of any specific arrangements made or the nature of the candidate's condition. No Sub-Board will be expected to give any special consideration to such candidates with specific arrangements, unless the candidate has submitted a separate statement of mitigating circumstances as described in 15.3.

### 14. Return of Marks by Course

- 14.1** After each examination, confirmed marks (i.e. where all phases of marking, including appropriate External Examiner involvement, has been completed) shall be submitted to Registry on a course by course basis using the electronic mark sheets distributed to Departmental Managers. The electronic mark sheets should be submitted as an e-mail attachment via the School's email network. **NB** provided this procedure is followed, the electronic mark sheets should not be password-protected. Hard copies of the mark sheets should also be completed, signed and retained within the department for quality assurance purposes.
- 14.2 Undergraduate degrees only:**
- 14.2.1 Confirmed marks for all undergraduate courses shall be returned to Registry, by or on behalf of the Chair of the Sub-Board, by a date in the ninth week of Summer Term, i.e. late June, as established by Registry.
- 14.2.2 For courses with more than one component, for example examination and essay, an additional spreadsheet indicating how the final mark is calculated from amongst the different components must also be submitted to Registry by the same date as specified for the return of confirmed marks.
- 14.3 Graduate degrees only:**
- 14.3.2 For **courses based on 9-month or 10-month programmes**, all confirmed marks shall be returned to Registry, by or on behalf of the Chair of the Sub-Board, by a date in the ninth or tenth week of Summer Term as notified by Registry.
- 14.3.3 The confirmed course mark in any **outside option taken by candidates following a 9-month or 10-month programme** shall also be forwarded by the Chair of the outside option Sub-Board to the Chair of the candidate's degree programme Sub-Board by an agreed deadline, and by no later than the tenth week of Summer Term. This is to ensure that the overall results for all candidates following 9-month programmes can be determined in time for the July ceremonies.
- 14.3.4 For **courses based on 12-month programmes**, all confirmed marks (except as stated in 14.3.3 or where work is submitted after 1 August – e.g. the dissertation) shall be returned to Registry, by or on behalf of the Chair of the Sub-Board, by a date in September as established by Registry.

**14.4 Zero (0) Marks**

There are important differences between the three types of zero (0) marks:

- a) 0 (Absent) i.e. where a candidate did not submit any of the required elements of assessment, e.g. s/he did not attend an exam when the course is assessed by 100% unseen exam.
- b) 0 (Fail) i.e. where a candidate submitted an element of assessment but it either warranted zero marks or constituted an assessment offence, e.g. plagiarism.
- c) 0 (Incomplete) i.e. where a candidate did not complete all required elements of assessment.

In the case of 0 (Fail), a candidate is considered as having taken but failed the course. In the case of 0 (Absent) or 0 (Incomplete), a candidate is considered as having not completed the course and therefore will not be eligible for the award of a degree.

**15. Determination of results (Progression and/or Classification)**

- 15.1** The final results of the examination shall be determined at a meeting of the Sub-Board at which internal examiners, as detailed in 4.2.1(b), and all external examiners are required to be present. However, the absence of any examiner(s) through illness or other unavoidable cause shall not invalidate the proceedings (see 4.2.3). If an examiner(s) cannot be present, s/he shall try to be available for consultation.

**Medical and Mitigating Circumstances**

- 15.2** Prior to the final Sub-Board meeting, each Chair shall receive all statements of medical and/or mitigating circumstances submitted by candidates for consideration at the final meeting. The Chair may also consult, if appropriate, the local Health Centre.
- 15.3** Candidates have been notified on various occasions that any statement of medical or mitigating circumstances must (a) clearly indicate the impact that such circumstances had on their performance in an exam / piece of assessed work and (b) be corroborated by documented evidence from an official source (e.g. doctor's note, death certificate). Unless both conditions (a) and (b) are met, Sub-Boards of Examiners should not normally take such circumstances into consideration.
- 15.4** As it is the student's responsibility to articulate in writing both the details and impact of her/his circumstances, oral statements from teachers/tutors on behalf of students/tutees should not normally be permitted at a Sub-Board meeting except where provided for by the Regulations<sup>5</sup>.
- 15.5** Individual mitigating circumstances should not lead to a change in a candidate's mark(s); i.e. all marks should be based solely on academic merit as agreed by the examiners. Rather, such circumstances should be taken into consideration when determining a candidate's overall award classification (see 15.9) or, exceptionally, in determining if a failed exam attempt should be discounted.

**Progression**

- 15.6** The regulations governing progression from one year to another and examination re-entry are set out in the [Regulations for First Degrees](#) (for Undergraduate Programmes) and the [relevant Programme Regulations \(for Postgraduate Programmes\)](#).
- 15.7** The regulations governing the treatment of candidates who miss an examination(s) due to illness are set out in the "Illness" section of the relevant regulations. See also [Annex D](#) for Special Exam Provision.

<sup>4</sup> e.g. paragraph 52 on "Special Provisions" in *Regulations for First Degrees*

**Award Classification**

- 15.8** The Sub-Board of Examiners shall not recommend for an award any candidate who has:
- 15.8.1 not completed to the satisfaction of the examiners the programme prescribed by the School for the qualification concerned, and
  - 15.8.2 not satisfied the examiners in all elements of assessment prescribed for the qualification concerned and has not shown a competent knowledge across the programme of study taken as a whole.
- 15.9** Overall results shall be determined in accordance with the relevant classification scheme. Where a vote is required, the Chair shall have a casting vote in addition to her/his own vote.
- 15.10 Recommendations to 'suspend' the classification scheme or programme regulations**
- 15.10.1 A Sub-Board should bring to the attention of the respective School Board those cases where it wishes to recommend that the overall result for an individual or group of candidates be altered because of medical or mitigating circumstances, or where it wishes to recommend that a student who has failed the degree or failed to progress should be granted an additional attempt at a failed paper or papers when his/her number of attempts allowed under the degree regulations have been exhausted (i.e. to 'suspend' the normal application of the classification or programme regulations).
  - 15.10.2 The Sub-Boards are also required to report to the School Board any unusual procedure that has been adopted or any special circumstances necessitating a departure from normal practice, even if not specifically mentioned in these *Instructions*.
- 15.11 Undergraduate degrees only**
- Any recommendation made by a Sub-Board to offer a condoned failure must be brought to the attention of the Secretary of the School Board of Examiners for BA/BSc degrees for (i) initial agreement by the School Board Chair/Vice-Chair and (ii) approval by the School Board.
- 15.12** For all programmes the Board/Sub-Board is required to indicate for candidates who fail whether, in the event of re-entry, they may be exempt from one or more parts of the examination in accordance with the relevant regulation. In the event of failure in the dissertation, the Chair of the Sub-Board shall be responsible for ensuring a candidate receives proper advice about re-submission, including information on his/her entitlement to supervision for this purpose.

**16. Record of Proceedings**

- 16.1** Completed consolidated markframes with details of final agreed course marks and award classifications for each candidate, signed by the Chair of the Sub-Board and all External Examiners who were present, shall be delivered by hand to Registry as soon as possible following the final Sub-Board meeting.
- 16.2** The Chair shall ensure that a detailed and accurate record of the proceedings of the final Sub-Board meeting is kept, including:
- (i) discussions where special consideration was given to individual candidates for any reason, in particular to those presenting medical or other relevant evidence, and the agreed outcome (whether or not these affected a change);
  - (ii) a general note of all medical or other relevant evidence submitted to the Sub-Board, even if not discussed in detail;
  - (iii) attendance of all individuals, including agreed apologies;
  - (iv) any discussions of general principles.
- 16.3** Chair-approved minutes should be sent to the Secretary of the respective School Board of Examiners by the first week of July (for programmes completed in June) or the first week of November (for programmes completed in September/October).

- 16.4 Extracts from Examination Sub-Board minutes that record discussion about a candidate, including in respect of mitigating circumstances, are disclosable under the DPA unless the data cannot be disclosed without also disclosing data about someone else.

## 17. Publication of results

- 17.1 The School has a policy of 'withholding results' for all **debtors**. Students with an outstanding debt to the School will not be able to access their results.
- 17.2 For Undergraduate programmes all results are confidential and students must not be told their examination marks for each paper, dissertation or overall classification until after the results have been confirmed and published by the School.
- 17.3 For all Taught Masters and Diploma programmes, overall course marks must not be released in any form until they have been through the full internal and external examiner marking process, unless approval for them to be so has been specifically granted by the GSBE. It should be noted, however, that these marks still remain **provisional** until officially ratified by the final meeting of the respective School Board of Examiners.
- 17.4 For 12-month Taught Masters, it is up to each Department to decide whether or not to release, in advance of the official results publication date in November, provisional overall course marks and/or grades for all courses that it offers. If they are released it is important that they are released to all candidates who took the course and that they are accompanied by a warning that they represent marks for individual units of assessment only, i.e. degree classification will be determined by a programme-level Sub-Board of Examiners in the Autumn and will be subject to ratification by the Graduate School Board of Examiners
- 17.5 Official results, including award classification and/or course marks, are only provided in the form of individual transcripts issued by Registry. In the event of any discrepancy between the results published and the official transcript, the official transcript will be the final and correct version.

## 18. Examination irregularities

- 18.1 Any case of alleged plagiarism arising from assessed work will be governed by the School's [Regulations on Assessment Offences: Plagiarism](#). Any case of alleged cheating, including conduct affecting the security of examinations, will be governed by the School's [Regulations on Assessment Offences: Offences other than Plagiarism](#). These regulations can also be found in the School Regulations handbook.

## 19. Representation and/or Appeal by candidates

- 19.1 Any representation which a candidate may make in connection with her/his examination must be referred to the Academic Registrar under the [Regulations for the Consideration of Appeals Against Decisions of Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses](#). Neither Chairs nor Examiners shall communicate with candidates on behalf of the Sub-Board about their performance in an examination(s) other than via agreed channels for providing feedback to students on their examination performance.
- 19.2 No decision of a properly constituted School Board of Examiners or Sub-Board of Examiners, acting in accordance with these and any other relevant Instructions for the conduct of examinations and the regulations for the particular examinations, may be modified, except in cases covered by the [Regulations for the Consideration of Appeals Against Decisions of Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses](#).

## Appointment of Examiners

### 1. Procedure for appointing School Boards and Sub-Boards of Examiners

- 1.1. The length of appointment of the School Board of Examiners and their Sub-Boards will continue until completion of the final meeting of the School Board or Sub-Board of Examiners for that session's cohort of students and any matters arising there from.
- 1.2. All full-time teachers (or those appointed on a fractional basis) on the degree programme will be examiners and will automatically be members of, and will be required to attend meetings of, the Sub-Board of Examiners. Members who for any reason are unable to attend the Sub-Board of Examiners should seek prior approval from the Chair.
- 1.3. In the Michaelmas Term each session Conveners and Directors of Institutes should ensure that an updated record is kept within their department or institute of the confirmed Internal Examiner members of the Sub-Board(s) of Examiners for programmes taught in their department or institute.

### 2. Procedure for appointing Chairs of School Boards or Sub-Boards of Examiners

- 2.1. The Chair and Deputy Chair of all School Board of Examiners are appointed by the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee (TLAC).
- 2.2. In the Michaelmas Term of each session, Conveners of each department will be asked to forward to Registry names of the proposed Chair(s) of any Sub-Board(s) of Examiners for the following session. To be eligible, the proposed Chair must have passed her/his departmental review and have had at least two years' experience of examining at the undergraduate or graduate level, as appropriate.
- 2.3. Details of nominations for Chairs of Sub-Boards of Examiners will be collated by Registry and sent to the Secretary of the Undergraduate Studies or Graduate Studies sub-committee as appropriate. The sub-committee secretary will ensure that all nominations conform to normal rules and practices and refer them to the sub-committee Chair for approval. All recommendations are then referred to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee for ratification.
- 2.4. There will be no restriction on the number of times a person may be re-appointed as Chair of a Sub-Board of Examiners.

### 3. Internal Examiners

#### 3.1. Procedure for appointing Internal Examiners

Nominations for Internal Examiners on degree and diploma programmes are handled by the Chairs of the Sub-Boards of Examiners concerned.

- 3.2. The first examiner (normally the teacher responsible for the course) must be a permanent member of academic staff, or someone else experienced in the examinable subject matter to the satisfaction of the Chair of the relevant Sub-Board of Examiners. For the avoidance of doubt, LSE Fellows may be appointed as examiners.

#### 3.3. Procedure for appointing Graduate Teaching Assistants and Guest Teachers as Assessors/Second Internal Examiners

##### 3.3.1. Undergraduate

Graduate Teaching Assistants and Guest Teachers may be appointed as assessors/second internal examiners by the Chair of the Sub-Board of Examiners to assist the Sub-Board in:

- the setting of papers,
- the marking of scripts/essays/reports/dissertations (including, as required, practical examinations).

Where Graduate Teaching Assistants and Guest Teachers are appointed as the second internal examiner, the first internal examiner must be a senior/experienced member of the department concerned.

##### 3.3.2. Graduate

Graduate Teaching Assistants and Guest Teachers may be appointed as assessors/second internal examiners by the Graduate Studies Sub-Committee on the advice of the Chair of the Sub-Board of

Examiners, to assist the Sub-Board in the setting of papers, the marking of scripts/essays/reports/dissertations, and to attend practical examinations.

It would be highly exceptional for Graduate Teaching Assistants and Guest Teachers who are also registered as PhD students to act as second Internal Examiners for graduate level examinations. In such cases, the PhD student concerned would normally need to be near completion and/or would have specialist expertise of direct relevance to the course concerned.

- 3.3.3. Graduate Teaching Assistants and Guest Teachers are entitled to attend meetings of the Sub-Board of Examiners by invitation only.
- 3.3.4. Graduate Teaching Assistants and Guest Teachers acting as assessors/second internal markers must be covered by a proper contract, paid for their work, and properly trained.

**Appointment of External Examiners****1. Principles**

- 1.1. The Academic Board has formally delegated responsibility for the appointment of external examiners to the School's degree programmes and courses and modern foreign language certificates to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee (TLAC). TLAC has in turn agreed that its sub-committees for Graduate Studies and Undergraduate Studies respectively will deal with all appointments and re-appointments of external examiners. The External Examiners for the International Programmes of the University of London are nominated by the External Programme Board, for approval by the University of London; and the external examiners for the Summer School by the Summer Schools Board. This document deals with arrangements for external examiners for all teaching activities leading to any certificate of attainment, whether that is a degree, diploma, certificate or other award. Therefore all such activities, including modern foreign language certificate courses and summer schools, are now included.
- 1.2. At least one external examiner must be appointed for every teaching programme or part of a programme (e.g. one or more courses) that leads to or contributes to an award of the School. The number of external examiners appointed should be as small as is consistent with the quantity of assessed material being examined and the diversity of the subjects in question. Undergraduate examiners are normally appointed to an individual or group of courses, whilst graduate examiners are normally appointed to a programme.
- 1.3. External examiners should be experienced teachers in the same discipline and at the same level being examined. Teachers with less than five years' university teaching experience should not normally be considered. This requirement should be included as a reminder on the acceptance form signed by each external examiner.
- 1.4. External examiners should not normally have had a close involvement with the School during the last five years, including acting as an examiner for that part of the External Programme for which the School carries academic responsibility. Specifically, a period of five years should normally elapse before a former member of staff or former student may be appointed.
- 1.5. Other than in exceptional circumstances specifically approved by the appointing body, there should be no reciprocal arrangement whereby a School department or subject group and a department or subject group at another university or higher education institution exchange staff as external examiners. This requirement should be included as a reminder on the acceptance form signed by each external examiner.
- 1.6. An external examiner should not be succeeded in the same discipline by another from the same institution without the appointing committee having considered a statement proposing an exception to normal practice. This requirement should be included as a reminder on the acceptance form signed by each external examiner.
- 1.7. External examiners should not normally be asked to act for more than one Sub-board or Sub-committee of Examiners of the School at any one time unless a specific paper is shared across more than one programme.
- 1.8. The normal maximum period of appointment is four consecutive years, or, in exceptional circumstances, such limited extension of this period as the appropriate committee shall decide. The appointment is subject to confirmation for each year of the period. Having performed the role in previous years of an appointment, there is no obligation on the School to offer it again, or on the External Examiner to accept further offers.
- 1.9. After serving a period of appointment, an external examiner shall not normally be eligible for reappointment in any part of the School (including for other undergraduate or graduate courses or programmes, or that part of the External Programme for which the School carries academic responsibility) until after a lapse of four further years.

**2. Procedures**

- 2.1. Registry requests nominations for appointment and reappointment, annually. Chairs of Sub-Boards of Examiners will be asked to complete a form by which they provide details of proposed external examiners for the following session.
- 2.2. When Registry has received a form it will be checked for departmental confirmation of the requirements in 1.2-1.9 above. Where all the requirements are satisfied the nomination will be made to the appropriate appointing body.
- 2.3. Where a nomination appears not to comply with the requirements and no statement of justification has been provided the nomination will be referred back to the Chair of the Sub-Board for clarification.

When clarification has been provided the nomination will be made to the appropriate appointing body with all supporting information.

## ANNEX B

- 2.4. There is no method of appointment other than that set out in these procedures.
- 2.5. The contractual appointment and reappointment of each external examiner will be made by the Academic Registrar by a formal letter of appointment setting out the terms and length of the appointment.
- 2.6. Registry will maintain an up to date register of appointed external examiners.

### 3. Reappointment and removal

- 3.1. Registry will, having consulted the Chair of the Sub-Board concerned, reconfirm the appointment of all external examiners on an annual basis up to the end of the period of appointment.
- 3.2. If an external examiner offers his/her resignation or is unable to continue with his/her appointment during the academic year due to personal or other circumstances the Chair of the Sub-Board should nominate and appoint a replacement external examiner as soon as possible. Should this not be possible/practical, then the responsibilities of the external examiner should be redistributed amongst other appropriately qualified/experienced external examiners associated with the overall programme of study.
- 3.3. Removal of an external examiner or a decision not to make a routine annual reappointment under 1.8 above is an exceptional procedure that can be effected only by the appointing body on the basis of arguments presented by the Convener of the Department or Director of the Institute concerned or on the basis of the examiner's failure to report.

### 4. Support of the external examiner

- 4.1. All external examiners will receive briefing material and an induction into their role immediately following their appointment, as well as a reasonable degree of support during their period of appointment.
- 4.2. Details on how to access briefing material will be sent to all external examiners at the time of appointment by the Academic Registrar.
- 4.3. External examiners will receive an induction from the Chair of the Sub-Board of Examiners. This should include:
  - (a) details about:
    - the syllabus of the programme and individual courses;
    - the methods of assessment used, with copies of examination papers from previous years;
    - the marking schemes, classification schemes and statements of assessment criteria;
  - (b) as much notice as possible about the dates and details of the Sub-Board meetings and other deadlines within the assessment cycle;
  - (c) the provision of any other material which may help the external examiner to discharge his/her duties.
- 4.4. Where practical and/or desirable, the Chair should arrange to meet with the external examiner. The Chair should discuss with the external examiner his/her responsibilities and other matters, particularly where the external examiner has little or no previous experience of external examining. This could include a visit to the School and the opportunity for the external examiner to meet other examiners in the department.

### 5. The report

- 5.1. External examiners are required to provide a report to the Director of the School in the format agreed by the School; in the case of a federal degree the report will be of a different form and will arrive through the University of London. The form should be completed as soon as possible after the completion of the assessment of students in each year and no later than one month after the meeting of the Sub-Board of Examiners.
- 5.2. At the end of an external examiner's term of appointment it would be open to him/her to add any comments arising from his/her accumulated experience in the shape of an overview report. External examiners may make such other comments to members of the School, including the Director, as they think fit, either openly or in confidence.
- 5.3. External examiner reports made by way of the report forms are not confidential to the examination board but will be circulated as appropriate throughout the School. They will also be made available outside the School when used in association with quality assessment or audit by recognised bodies or in the case of legal proceedings. In particular, and in line with the HEFCE Teaching Quality Information

dataset requirements, the School will publish summaries of external examiners' reports to an external readership.

## ANNEX B

- 5.4. If an external examiner does not comply with the required form and coverage of the report a further request will be made. An external examiner who does not complete a report will not normally be paid the fee otherwise due; and non-completion may be seen as an argument for not reconfirming the continued appointment or future reappointment of the external examiner.
- 5.5. All reports should be sent to Registry for logging and certification for payment. They will then be passed to the Teaching Quality Assurance and Review Office (TQARO).
- 5.6. TQARO will, where necessary after consultation with a Pro Director, send the report to the Chair of the appropriate Examination Sub-Board, copied to the Head of Department concerned, and suggest any matters to which it seems important for the School to respond. The covering note to the Chair of the Sub-Board will draw attention to the importance of the report. The Chair of the Sub-Board will be responsible for keeping the main examination board informed of the report and of any proposals arising from it. The chairs of the various boards are responsible for ensuring that external examiners receive timely responses to their comments and recommendations and for copying all such correspondence to TQARO where it will be retained.
- 5.7. TQARO will also prepare a report for a Summer Term meeting of TLAC. The purpose of the report is to identify generic issues. It will also serve to ensure that the system is working properly, and it would need, therefore, to cover such points as how many reports have been received and how many departments have responded to them.
- 5.8. TQARO will also be responsible for providing information about the reports as and when requested by the University of London.

## 6. Payment

- 6.1. External examiners will receive an annual fee for the work undertaken, following receipt of the completed report form by Registry.
- 6.2. External examiners are also able to claim reasonable travel and subsistence expenses on the submission of relevant receipts. This can include standard class travel, food and one night's accommodation expenses incurred whilst attending board meetings. School guidance on subsistence allowances can be found under 'Travel & Subsistence Allowance & Expenses' at <http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/financeDivision/accountsPayable.htm>
- 6.3. As is common in all universities, we expect our external examiners to use their home universities postal account for sending scripts and making other written communications with the Chair and other internal examiners, unless they happen not to be employed during their contract with us. It is not usual for the School to pay postal expenses.

## 7. Collaboration with other institutions

Those planning collaborative arrangements of any kind that involve the assessment of students must as far as possible comply with these procedures and provide a statement of justification to the Chair of TLAC where they propose not to do so in full.

**Evacuation During an Examination Session**

1. The School will make every reasonable effort to prevent false fire alarms or other serious disturbances taking place during the annual examination period. Students will be warned of the seriousness and consequences of deliberate misuse of fire alarm points.
2. If the fire alarm is sounded the building must be evacuated immediately. Students will be advised to evacuate immediately, leaving all their belongings behind, including examination answer books and notes.
3. The Registry Manager, or their nominated deputy, will immediately contact the Head of the Student Services Centre, Chair/Vice-Chair of the relevant Boards of Examiners or the Academic Registrar as appropriate.
4. At the evacuation point students will be monitored by invigilators and other staff to ensure, as far as is practical, they are not undertaking any activity which would undermine the integrity of the examination e.g. consulting notes, using mobile phones or discussing the examination with other people.
5. If it is a false alarm, the examinations will always re-start, subject to confirmation by Registry.
6. Registry will advise all rooms of the exact time the examination should re-start, the adjusted finish time and whether additional time has been agreed to account for the disruption. Before re-starting the examination students will be required to draw a line across their answer book at the point when the alarm sounded.
7. The first examiner for each examination affected will be given full details of the disturbance and action taken. All internal and external examiners will be asked to mark the scripts in the usual manner, but paying particular attention to any borderline candidates or any irregularities.
8. Mitigating circumstances will be noted on the record of all candidates affected by the disruption. The candidates will be informed that the Sub-Boards of Examiners will be notified of the disruption both at this stage and at final classification stage. Candidates will be advised that they do not need to do anything further, unless they wish to report mitigating circumstances over and above the alarm disruption.

ANNEX D

**Special exam provision in “very exceptional” circumstances**

**1. BA/BSc or Masters students:**

- 1.1 The Academic Board agreed on 13 June 2007 to re-establish a provision whereby a special exam paper can be set for a BA/BSc student or a taught Masters student who wishes to sit such an exam, having been unable to attempt or complete it due to “very exceptional” medical or other mitigating circumstances that arose up to three calendar days prior to or during the affected examination(s).
- 1.2 The definition of “very exceptional” is limited to the following criteria:
- **serious injuries incurred in an accident** – i.e. resulting in hospitalisation and rendering them physically unable and/or medically unfit to sit an exam(s).
  - **the sudden contraction (or complication) of a very severe or contagious disease, illness or condition** (e.g. chicken pox) – in the period immediately before an examination i.e. rendering them physically unable and/or medically unfit to sit an exam(s). In the case of a contagious illness, this rule refers to an illness which may pose a serious risk to the health of others, (i.e., not, for example, the common cold) meaning that it would not be advisable for the student to attend the School because of the risk of infecting others.
  - **the death of a close relative** – i.e. a member of the immediate family (parent, sibling, spouse, child) or, where there is clear evidence, someone else whose death would have a similarly devastating effect.
- 1.3 This provision will only apply to students who cannot otherwise graduate or progress because of the missing exam. A special exam will not be required for a student:
- (i) who is not due to graduate in the current session and who can continue to the next year of study carrying an absence in the affected paper(s) – e.g. a BA/BSc student who passes all other papers in the current year and can carry forward the affected paper; or a student registered part-time or on the first year of a two-year Masters degree;
  - (ii) who has received a bad fail in any exam or failed more than one exam that was not affected by the “very exceptional” medical or other mitigating circumstances.
- 1.4 The Special Exam provision will be put into operation along the following lines:
- a) Any student who thinks s/he meets the “very exceptional” criteria and who wishes to sit a special exam should normally contact his/her department or the Student Services Centre (i) prior to the affected examination(s) or, (ii) if that is not possible, within five working days after it / them.
  - b) In all cases, the student will need to make a request to sit a special exam in writing to the Student Services Centre. S/he will also be required to provide documented supporting evidence. In the case of accident or severe illness, the evidence will include a hospital report and/or medical letter from a local GP practice (the School may also seek guidance from the St Phillips medical centre, in order to judge whether a particular condition meets these criteria). In the case of death, there will need to be a copy of the death certificate and proof of the relationship of the deceased to the student.
  - c) A view on the merits of the application will be sought from the student’s home department and, if different, from the department(s) responsible for the affected exam(s). In respect of the former, this will normally be the Sub-Board Chair and/or Head of Department, in consultation with the student’s supervisor/tutor and/or Programme Director. In respect of the latter, this will normally be the Sub-Board Chair and/or Head of Department, in consultation with the lead examiner for the affected exam.
  - d) All decisions will be taken by the Undergraduate or Graduate School Board of Examiners (SBE/GSBE) or its Chair to ensure equity across the School and consistency between years. If the SBE/GSBE does not approve a student’s request, it will be open to her/him to appeal the decision. The appeal would need to be made in writing within five working days to the Academic Registrar on the grounds that (i) there is evidence which the SBE/GSBE has failed properly to consider or (ii) the SBE/GSBE has not followed correct procedure. If the Academic Registrar determines that proper grounds have been established, the case will be referred back to the SBE/GSBE for re-consideration. If the Academic Registrar finds that proper grounds have not been established, the student will be able to appeal (i.e. in respect of the validity of grounds) to a Pro-Director.
  - e) The examination will be scheduled to take place as soon as is practicable, and normally no later than the middle of November. The exam date will be negotiated between the SBE/GSBE Secretary (on behalf of the student) and the Department responsible for the course, subject to ratification by the SBE/GSBE Chair.
  - f) The paper will need to be marked and ratified in accordance with the procedures outlined in the School’s *Instructions for Examiners*, within a timescale to be agreed by the SBE/GSBE Chair, taking into account the need to have a confirmed mark before the start of the next academic session.



**Guidance on the early resubmission of dissertations for a small group of Masters students**

- 1 Examination Sub-Board Chairs are asked to note that following a recent decision by the Academic Board, Departments are required to establish an earlier date for re-submission of a dissertation (or Summer project) where this is the only element failed by a Masters student and s/he has not been awarded a degree. This provision applies only to those who submitted and failed their dissertation and, therefore, cannot be classified. Those who did not submit a dissertation in the most recent session do not qualify.
2. Details on how this new procedure should be put into operation appear below.
  - (i) There is a group of about 15 Masters students who, despite passing all of their other examinations, fail their dissertation and do not, therefore, meet the necessary conditions to be awarded a degree.
  - (ii) In the absence of an early re-submission date, these students face additional delays in progressing to the next stage of their career / further study. They may well experience some degree of inconvenience and/or financial burden as a result.
  - (iii) It has been agreed by the Academic Board that an earlier date for re-submission of a dissertation should be established where this is the only element failed by a Masters student.
  - (iv) *This provision* should be put into operation along the following lines:
    - a. Any student who is eligible to re-submit a dissertation will be offered the choice by her/his department of re-submitting either by an earlier specified date or (as at present) by the standard date specified in the programme regulations. The earlier re-submission date should be at least three months after the student has been notified of the result of her/his initial dissertation submission, and no later than the end of the Lent Term.
    - b. To enable students to make an informed decision, each department should establish and publish in its Handbook both: (i) the extent to which it will provide feedback about the initial (failed) submission; and (ii) the extent to which supervisory support will be available.
    - c. The opportunity to resubmit early is optional. A student can decide at any time not to submit and wait until the normal submission date.
    - d. Mitigation in respect of an early re-submission is inadmissible. Students should be advised to wait and submit at the normal time rather than re-submitting early a dissertation that has been affected by mitigating circumstance.
    - e. The dissertation will need to be re-marked and ratified in accordance with the procedures outlined in the School's *Instructions for Examiners*, within a timescale to be agreed by the GSBE Chair. The External Examiner under contract at the time should be involved. It is important that at least one of the two initial internal examiners is involved as well.
    - f. Sub-Board chairs should determine on behalf of the sub-board if the student has passed the degree or not. This will simply be a case of applying the rules, i.e. there should be no need for discretion. The GSBE chair will ratify all decisions.
    - g. If a student does submit early and the result is still a fail, then the overall result will be 'final fail'. The Sub-Board chair should only consider recommending that an exceptional third attempt be granted if the initial attempt was affected by mitigation or there is clear evidence that the student was not in a position to make an informed decision about re-submitting early.

**Key contacts**

Name	Position	Contact Details	Area(s) of Responsibility
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Larissa Leech	Registry Assistant	ext 7131 <a href="mailto:l.leech@lse.ac.uk">l.leech@lse.ac.uk</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submission of mitigating circumstances</li> </ul>
Gavin Eves	Student Advice & Reception Manager	ext 7139 <a href="mailto:g.eves@lse.ac.uk">g.eves@lse.ac.uk</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Progress Panel</li> <li>• Student Welfare Issues</li> </ul>
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Therese Holmqvist	Deputy Registry Manager	ext 7758 <a href="mailto:t.holmqvist@lse.ac.uk">t.holmqvist@lse.ac.uk</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation of examination papers</li> <li>• Specific Examination Arrangements</li> </ul>
Carl Hornsey	Assessment Regulations Manager	ext 6114 <a href="mailto:c.hornsey@lse.ac.uk">c.hornsey@lse.ac.uk</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representations from Candidates</li> <li>• Assessment Misconduct</li> <li>• Duties and responsibilities of the Board of Examiners</li> <li>• Examination irregularities</li> <li>• Marking and classification schemes</li> </ul>
Daniel Bennett	Data Protection Officer	ext 6481 <a href="mailto:d.bennett@lse.ac.uk">d.bennett@lse.ac.uk</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Protection and Freedom of Information requests</li> </ul>
Nicola Martin	Head of Disability and Well-Being Services	ext 6034 <a href="mailto:n.martin@lse.ac.uk">n.martin@lse.ac.uk</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific Examination Arrangements</li> </ul>
Damian Roberts	Registry Manager	ext 7148 <a href="mailto:d.p.roberts@lse.ac.uk">d.p.roberts@lse.ac.uk</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publication of results</li> </ul>
Michelle Ward	Deputy Front of House Services Manager	ext 6337 <a href="mailto:m.ward@lse.ac.uk">m.ward@lse.ac.uk</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Late Specific Examination Arrangements</li> </ul>
Simeon Underwood	Academic Registrar	ext 6858 <a href="mailto:s.underwood@lse.ac.uk">s.underwood@lse.ac.uk</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examination irregularities</li> <li>• External Examiners Reports</li> <li>• Representation from candidates</li> </ul>