

6K – Assessment Boards: Policy

1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 This policy for BU staff outlines the principles and standard practice that Bournemouth University (BU) applies to Assessment Boards. The policy outlines the importance of each type of Assessment Board and the sequencing requirements of these Boards to ensure robust and appropriate consideration of all student profiles.
- 1.2 Assessment Boards review student achievement and individual student results. They are authorised to assess students in accordance with the University's assessment regulations, and formally approved exceptional assessment regulations (where appropriate), and to confer awards of the University on behalf of Senate, where students have fulfilled the learning outcomes of an approved programme of study and achieved the standards required for an award.
- 1.3 Assessment Boards are responsible for ensuring that academic standards in relation to assessment, and assessment-related processes, are maintained, and that the marks received by students are an accurate reflection of their ability.

2. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 **Senate:** to approve any new policies or amendments to existing policies relating to Assessment Boards. Awards of taught degrees are conferred on behalf of Senate by Assessment Boards. The Vice-Chancellor confirms all taught awards made by Assessment Boards through signature on the award certificate on behalf of Senate.
- 2.2 **Assessment Boards:** Assessment Boards are sub-committees of Senate, and finalise decisions on student profiles, as delegated by Senate.
- 2.3 **Academic Standards and Education Committee:** to periodically review policies and procedure relating to Assessment Boards and to recommend changes to current policy to Senate. To maintain oversight of award profiles and the range of results being considered for progression and degree outcomes.
- 2.4 **Faculty Academic Standards and Education Committee:** to receive, discuss and take action (where necessary) any matters of concern raised by Assessment Boards
- 2.5 **Faculties/Partners:** to manage and operate Assessment Boards and implement their decisions consistently and in accordance with robust academic principles.
- 2.6 **BU staff and BU appointed external examiners:** to maintain responsibility for making decisions on student achievement which are fair, consistent and robust.

3. ACCESSING OTHER RELEVANT BU DOCUMENTS

3.1 All documents can be accessed [here](#)

To ensure consistency of practice and alignment with University regulations this Policy and Procedure document should be read in conjunction with:

- *3P - Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and UK Credit Transfer (UKCT): Policy and Procedure;*
- *3U - Interruption of Study: Procedure;*
- *6A - Standard Assessment Regulations¹:*
 - *6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Undergraduate Programmes*
 - *6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Postgraduate Taught Programmes*
 - *6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Foundation Degree Programmes*
 - *6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Higher National Programmes*
 - *6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma Programmes*
 - *6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Integrated Masters Programmes*
- *6C - Principles of Assessment Design: Policy;*
- *6D - Marking, Independent Marking and Moderation: Policy and Procedure;*
- *6E - Assessment Feedback and Return of Assessed Work: Policy and Procedure;*
- *6H - Academic Offences: Policy and Procedure for Taught Awards;*
- *6J - Exceptional Circumstances including extensions: Policy and Procedure;*
- *6L - Assessment Board Decision-Making, Including the Implementation of Assessment Regulations: Procedure;*
- *6M - Research Misconduct: Policy and Procedure;*
- *6N - External Examining: Policy and Procedure;*
- *9B - Quality Assurance and Enhancement Group (QAEG): Procedure;*
- *11A - Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure - Taught Awards.*

4. PRINCIPLES OF UNIT AND PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT BOARDS

- 4.1 Assessment Boards shall be appointed for every programme of study leading to an award of the University and, where appropriate, of other awarding bodies.
- 4.2 Assessment Boards are accountable to Senate, with a constitution, approved by or on behalf of Senate. The terms of reference for Unit and Programme Boards, including membership, are provided in appendix 1 and 2. Impartiality is a core principle of Assessment Boards and is embedded in the terms of reference of each Board.
- 4.3 Staff involved and participating in the Assessment Board process must ensure they have engaged with relevant training and development activities. Staff must declare any conflict of interest at the earliest opportunity to allow time to evaluate whether impartiality is at risk and whether any alternative arrangements need to be put in place.
- 4.4 Decisions made by Assessment Boards are collective and no member has overall veto on the final decision.
- 4.5 No other body, except Senate, has authority to recommend conferment of an award or to amend the decision of an approved and properly constituted Assessment Board acting within its terms of reference and in accordance with the regulations. An Assessment Board may however be required to review a decision or may have that decision annulled under the terms outlined in 5.5 below.

¹ For those programmes with approved amendments to the University's Standard Assessment Regulations, the amended regulations are outlined in the approved Programme Specification.

- 4.6 Matters discussed during an Assessment Board are confidential to that Board and should remain permanently confidential at all times.
- 4.7 External examiners have oversight of the marks and the marking process that contribute to a final award. External examiners may make recommendations to the Unit Board for the adjustment of marks awarded by internal assessors. Any matter of principle which is not resolved to the satisfaction of the external examiner by the Assessment Board, will be escalated to Senate.
- 4.8 External examiners are required to attend at least one Programme Board per academic year for the provision for which they are responsible.
- 4.9 All students have the right to appeal against the decision of a Programme Board. The permitted grounds for appeal and the required procedure are outlined in 11A – Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure – Taught Awards.

5. ASSESSMENT BOARDS ROLES AND DEFINITIONS

- 5.1 **Exceptional Circumstances Board:** determines whether the students' submitted application for circumstances is valid. If approved, the circumstances will be taken into account by the Programme Board. The Exceptional Circumstances Board is a sub-board of the Programme Board; it makes decisions on individual student circumstances that will inform the Programme Board's consideration of individual student outcomes
- 5.2 **Unit Board:** confirms accuracy of marks and that appropriate marking and moderation processes have been applied. Unit monitoring and data benchmarking must be fully considered at the Unit Board. The Unit Board may recommend a course of action to the Programme Board in cases where performance of a cohort has been affected by factors outside of students' control, and recommends appropriate methods of reassessment. The Unit Board may make adjustments to unit marks for whole cohorts where consideration of benchmarking data indicates this is warranted.
- 5.3 **Programme Board:** makes decisions on students' intermediate and final outcomes, progression, awards and reassessments. The Programme Board must determine whether a student has met the intended learning outcomes for the programme, and that they have satisfied any additional requirements as specified, including placements, requirements for professional recognition or accreditation, employment or practice. Decisions concerning the impact of individual student circumstances in the context of the overall student profile will be taken at this Board.

MANAGEMENT OF ASSESSMENT BOARDS

- 5.4 Assessment Board Chairs are normally senior academic staff, appointed from another department. In order to maintain the independence of the Assessment Board from the Exceptional Circumstances process, Faculties should ensure that the same individual is not Chair to both the Exceptional Circumstances Board and any related Assessment Board during the same period.
- 5.5 A formal record of the business and decisions of Assessment Boards must be maintained by the Secretary in the minutes. The minutes will be confidential, confirmed by the Chair following consultation with other Assessment Board members and will be made available to the next meeting of the Board. A copy of the Assessment Board report should be saved with the minutes to ensure a complete record is maintained.
- 5.6 It is the responsibility of the Programme Board to ensure publication of marks to students following ratification at the Programme Board.

- 5.7 There may be circumstances in which it is necessary to reconvene an Assessment Board, for example, in the case of it not being possible to reach a decision, a procedural error or in response to the outcome of an appeal.

General

6. REFERENCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

- 6.1 Training and guidance on all aspects of Assessment Boards is available each year. Please refer to procedural guidance and available workshops.
- 6.2 This policy has been reviewed in accordance with the University's [Equality Analysis Procedure](#).

7. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 [Terms of Reference for Unit Board](#)

Appendix 2 [Terms of Reference for Programme Board](#)