

# **UCEM Code of Practice**

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Board of Examiners (taught provision)

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Board of Examiners Chapter**

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## 1. Introduction

This Code of Practice covers the scope and operation of Boards of Examiners. The Boards apply to modules/units and programmes leading to an award by the University College of Estate Management (UCEM). The Code of Practice covers programmes at all levels of study (currently from Levels 3 to 7).

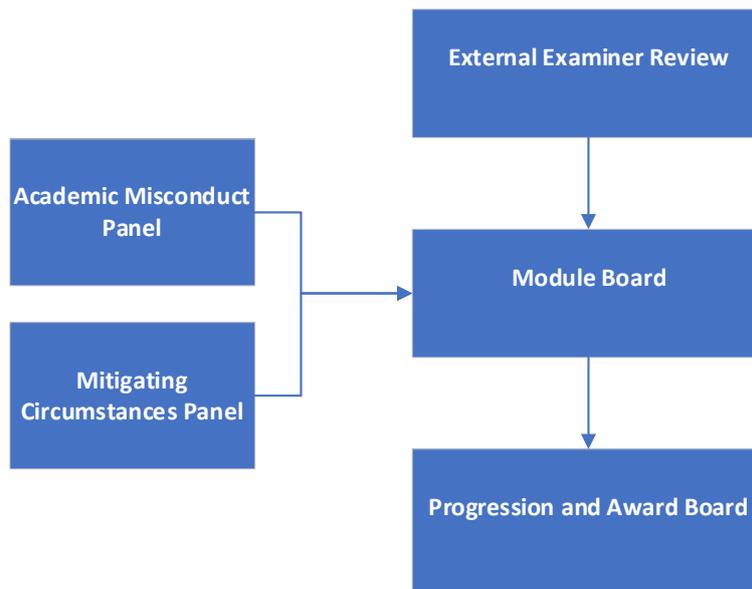
This Code should be read alongside the related [Code of Practice for External Examining \(opens new window\)](#) and the [UCEM Academic and Programme Regulations \(opens new window\)](#).

UCEM is responsible for the standards of its awards. Academic Board delegates relevant powers to make decisions on marks, progression and awards to the Boards of Examiners.

The purpose of this Code is to make clear UCEM's expectation for the conduct of Boards of Examiners considering external quality and compliance requirements, including defining the roles and responsibilities of staff involved.

## 2. Boards of Examiners

Overview of Process:



UCEM has two levels of Boards of Examiners, both of which have distinct responsibilities:

- Module/Unit Boards confirm and agree module/unit marks awarded for summative assessment tasks.
- Progression and Award Boards (Undergraduate, Postgraduate and Resubmission) verify progression through a programme to awards, and where applicable the classification of awards.

Under no circumstances may Module/Unit and Progression and Award Boards separately alter any decision made by the other. A Progression and Award Board, acting on information not available to Module/Unit Boards, may invite the Chair of a Module/Unit Board to consider whether the marks verified for a specified module/unit(s) were appropriate.

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## **2.1 Chairs of Boards of Examiners**

Academic Board will delegate to the Dean - School of Built Environment the responsibility for appointing Chairs of Module/Unit and Progression and Award Boards.

Each Chair must attend a briefing session provided by the Academic Quality Unit (AQU) before their first Board meeting. All Chairs must also attend annual briefing updates, provided by the AQU, to continue to be on the list of chairs. A list of trained senior academic Chairs should be maintained by the Academic Standards Manager.

Chairs are responsible for ensuring that the Board is conducted in accordance with this Code of Practice, the [UCEM Academic and Programme Regulations \(opens new window\)](#) and the [Code of Practice for External Examining \(opens new window\)](#), in accordance with the principles of rigour, fairness, transparency and consistency.

## **2.2 Secretaries of Boards of Examiners**

The Secretary will be appointed from the UCEM Academic Standards team. Secretaries should undertake a briefing session provided by the Academic Quality Unit prior to attending their first Board meeting. They must also attend annual training updates, provided by AQU, to continue in the role.

## **3. Mitigating Circumstances**

Mitigating circumstances must be considered in advance of the Module/Unit Board by the Mitigating Circumstances Panel, operating in accordance with the Mitigating Circumstances Procedure.

The Module/Unit Board will then consider each individual recommendation from the Mitigating Circumstances Panel. However, the Module/Unit Board will amend, or not enact, a recommendation in circumstances where it is deemed not to be in the student's interest academically. If the student is approaching award, the Progression and Award Board may make the final judgement in light of the student's overall profile.

Where mitigation is pending, the Module/Unit Board should note the module marks for the purposes of Chair's actions and record that the result is not yet available.

## **4. Module/Unit Boards**

### **4.1 Pre-Board activity**

Prior to the board taking place, External Examiners should be provided with the opportunity and time required to:

- Review assessments associated with modules/units being presented, along with access to the question papers.
- Review the second marking and moderation that has been undertaken with associated reports.
- Review the whole cohort results and statistical analysis of them.
- Meet with the academic team to provide opportunity to
  - discuss progress of the modules/units
  - discuss any individual cases as required
  - be advised of any changes that have been implemented since the last meeting.

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## **4.2 Membership**

A Module/Unit Board comprises of the following:

- The Chair
- The relevant External Examiner(s)
- The relevant Internal Examiners
- A Secretary
- The Disability and Wellbeing Advisor by invitation

A Module/Unit Board may be attended by one or more observers, for example a member of Academic Quality Unit.

A Module/Unit Board will be quorate only where at least 50% of the current voting members are present. Any decisions made by an inquorate board remain provisional until confirmed by a board which is quorate. Where no External Examiner is able to attend, the board may go ahead but the Director of Academic Quality and the Dean - School of Built Environment or Associate Dean - School of Built Environment must be informed and consulted prior to the decision and agree on the suitable arrangements for External Examiners to review and approve the relevant results.

Where an External Examiner is unable to attend, they must be provided with the opportunity to have both reviewed the relevant paperwork and to then provide relevant comments by another means (e.g. e-mail, telephone, video conferencing).

## **4.3 Agenda**

Boards must have a formal agenda, which should be circulated in advance and should cover the following:

- Confirmation of minutes of the previous meeting
- Report of Chair's action (if any)
- Declaration of conflicts of interest (including personal relationships with students, involvement in complaints or disciplinary investigations)
- Matters arising
- Receipt of all moderation reports
- Confirmation of the assessment components for the module/unit including weighting
- Receipt of the recommendations of the mitigating circumstances panel
- Report of unresolved academic misconduct matters
- Confirmation that consideration of students with disability and/or additional learning support needs have been considered
- Confirmation of the module/unit marks
- Feedback/general comments from the Internal Examiners
- Feedback from the External Examiner(s)
- Date of next meeting

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The following documentation will be available to the Module/Unit Board:

- [UCEM Academic and Programme Regulations \(opens new window\)](#) relevant to the Modules/Units under consideration
- Module/Unit Results by student
- Module/Unit Reports from the Module/Unit Leader\*,
- Report on the recognition of prior certified learning for individual students on the modules/units and programmes presented.
- Mitigating Circumstances Panel recommendations
- Matters arising from previous minutes
- Standard Deviation statistics relevant to the results for approval
- Copy of the Board of Examiners Denominators guidance document

\*It is an expectation that the Module/Unit Leader will be able to feedback about the delivery, the results and performance on the module/unit including feedback from students.

#### **4.4 Academic Misconduct**

The Module/Unit Board must be informed of any academic misconduct cases awaiting a decision. Where the Board is informed of a penalty imposed by the Academic Misconduct Panel the Board must apply that penalty to the module/unit in question and confirm the mark. Under no circumstances is a Module/Unit Board permitted to change the decision specified by the Academic Misconduct Panel. Where a case is ongoing the Module/Unit Board must defer decision for the student(s) in question.

#### **4.5 Confirmation of Marks**

Agreement of the marks awarded, and therefore resolution of any disagreement between examiners, should be achieved before the Module/Unit Board sits. All marks must have been moderated before the Module/Unit Board. Any marks bordering the pass threshold boundary should have been discussed and a determination made as to if the student's work warranted a pass grade prior to the Board. The Board should therefore be able to focus on confirming the marks awarded considering and confirming any recommendations of the Mitigating Circumstances Panel.

In confirming the marks awarded the Board's decision must be informed by the relevant module/unit results data. Boards must consider any anomalies which become apparent and take steps to address any unfairness, including additional moderation of marks where appropriate. Any additional moderation of marks must be agreed by the External Examiner.

The Module/Unit Board paperwork must be signed by the Chair of the Board and the External Examiner(s). Where a number of modules/units have been considered by Boards chaired by the same Chair and involving the same External Examiner(s) it is acceptable to sign a cover sheet applicable to all the modules/units considered, provided that Module/Unit Board paperwork is completed for each module/unit.

If an External Examiner is absent from the Board the Module/Unit Board paperwork will be sent to them for approval after the meeting.

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## **4.6 Recording of Outcomes**

### **4.6.1 Recording of Marks**

The marks confirmed by the Module/Unit Board must be recorded on SITS (UCEM's student record system) as the agreed mark. Agreed marks cannot be amended without the agreement of the Chair acting under Chair's action which must be reported to the next Module/Unit Board.

### **4.6.2 Resubmissions and Retakes**

The Module/Unit Board should agree and note the module resubmission or retake requirements for the students.' The Module/Unit Board receives all results inclusive of resubmissions and agrees unity marks. All decisions need to be in line with the [UCEM Academic and Programme Regulations \(opens new window\)](#).

### **4.6.3 Minutes**

The Chair is responsible for approving the minutes of the Module/Unit Board. Copies of the approved minutes and the signed Module/Unit Board paperwork should be kept and stored securely. See also section 7.

## **5. Progression and Awards Boards (Undergraduate, Postgraduate and Resubmission)**

### **5.1 Membership**

A Progression and Award Board comprises of the following:

- The Chair
- The relevant External Examiner(s)
- The relevant Programme Leader(s)
- A Secretary in attendance

Progression and Award Boards may be attended by a member of the Academic Quality Unit to observe the meeting.

A Progression and Award Board will be deemed quorate only where at least 50% of the current voting members are present. Where the External Examiner is unable to attend the board may proceed but the Director of Academic Quality and Dean - School of Built Environment or Associate Dean - School of Built Environment must be informed and consulted prior to the decision and agree on the suitable arrangements for External Examiners to review and approve the relevant awards.

Where an External Examiner is unable to attend, they must be provided with the opportunity to provide relevant comments by another means (e.g. e-mail, telephone, video conferencing).

### **5.2 Agenda**

Each Progression and Award Board must have a formal agenda, which should be circulated in advance and should cover the following:

- Confirmation of minutes of the previous meeting

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- Report of Chair's action (if any)
- Declaration of conflicts of interest (including personal relationships with students, involvement in complaints or disciplinary investigations)
- Matters arising (including consideration of candidates referred at the previous stage)
- Confirmation of the classification weighting for the programme (where applicable)
- Progression decisions through the programme
- Progression to the award (for candidates on the final stage of an award) and classification (where applicable)
- Confirmation of award for those wishing to exit the programme and who may be eligible for a lesser award
- Award of prizes
- Feedback/general comments from the programme leaders
- Feedback from the External Examiner(s)
- Date of next meeting.

The following documentation will be available to the Progression and Award Board:

- The [UCEM Academic and Programme Regulations \(opens new window\)](#) relevant to the Programme being considered
- Programme results by student
- Programme Leader's report\*
- A sample of student work
- Matters arising from previous minutes
- Details of prizes that the Board may approve
- The marks for all modules/units relevant to the programme being considered, and the credits for any modules/units where the student has Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)/ Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- The number of attempts a candidate has had on a module/unit
- The weighted average of any previous stage which is relevant to classification
- Mitigating Circumstances Panel recommendations for students coming up to final awards or who are at risk of having their studies terminated
- Modules on which students have received a disregard outcome
- The details of ongoing Academic Misconduct cases (where the Module/Unit Board has necessarily deferred decision on the module/unit in question).
- Copy of the Board of Examiners Denominators guidance document.

\*It is an expectation that the Programme Leader will be able to talk about the delivery, the results and performance on the programme including feedback from students.

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### **5.3 Student with Resubmissions or Retakes**

If the programme has resubmissions or retakes all considerations of students requiring resubmission or retake will have their considerations of progression and award deferred until after the Resubmission Progression and Award Board.

### **5.4 Responsibility of Progression and Award Board**

Progression and Award Boards (PAB's) are responsible for:

- Determining the progression of students through the programme, with attention paid to failure at a fourth attempt
- Determining the award for students completing or exiting programmes of study where they meet the requirements of the awards and, where applicable, determining the classification of the award
- Considering students who are eligible for academic compensation, in line with the [UCEM Academic and Programme Regulations \(opens new window\)](#).
- On reviewing a student profile, the PAB may, in very exceptional circumstances, excuse a failed Module/Unit Result (sometimes referred to as granting a condoned pass).
- Under no circumstances is a PAB permitted to change the actual marks achieved on a module/unit.

### **5.5 Progression**

#### **5.5.1 Progression General**

The Progression and Award Board will ensure that the progression outcomes for students are recorded to determine the individual student's next study pattern, whether in the coming semester or the subsequent semester.

#### **5.5.2 Failure and excused fails**

The decision whether to fail a student or allow, in exceptional circumstances, a fail to be excused (sometimes referred to as condonement), in line with the conditions specified in the UCEM regulations, is a matter of discretion for the Progression and Award Board. The Chair should confirm at the start of the meeting the factors and evidence which the Board will consider in exercising discretion. The Board must ensure that such discretion is exercised fairly and consistently between students, and that the factors considered in making the decision are recorded in the minutes of the Board.

### **5.6 Recording of Decisions**

#### **5.6.1 Student List**

The decisions of the Progression and Awards Board must be recorded on the Official Student List which constitutes the official record. The Student List, or group of lists considered at the same board, must be approved by the Chair of the Board and the External Examiner(s).

If an External Examiner is unable to attend the meeting in person, the Student List must be sent to the External Examiner for approval after the meeting.

The results confirmed by the Progression and Awards Board are recorded on the Student List and will be recorded in SITS.

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**5.6.2 Minutes**

It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Progression and Award Board to ensure that the meeting and decisions reached are formally recorded in the minutes.

The Chair is responsible for approving a copy of the minutes of the Progression and Award Board. See also section 7.

**5.7 Resubmission Progression and Award Boards**

Separate Undergraduate and Postgraduate Resubmission Progression and Award Boards will be held following the resit period. These Boards will operate to the same principles outlined in sections 5.1 to 5.6, with the exception that only one External Examiner is required to attend a Resubmission Progression and Award Board. External Examiner attendance for the Resubmission Progression and Award Boards will be organised on a rota basis, with a deputy identified who can stand in if required in the case of absence. An External Examiner should have been in post for at least one academic year before they attend a Resubmission Progression and Award Board.

**6. Communication of Results**

Results of the decisions of Module/Unit and Progression and Award Boards must be communicated securely to students by the relevant deadline.

All candidates reaching the end of a programme leading to an award will receive a Diploma Supplement (a formal document confirming studies completed).

**7. Module/Unit and Progression and Award Board Minutes**

The minutes of Module/Unit and Progression and Award Boards must be able to show that the Board acted fairly and impartially and in accordance with UCEM regulations and codes of practice.

It should be considered that under the UK Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), students may have a right under certain circumstances to see any minutes of discussions regarding them.

The minutes should record where relevant individual circumstances were raised at the Board and considered, and the outcome. This should include mention of performance affected by external events.

Reference must be made in the minutes to any guidance or regulations consulted or invoked.

The minutes must record the discussion and outcome for any borderline students.

The minutes must record the outcome of any vote during the meeting.

Where discussion of individual students is necessary the minutes must record the candidate number of the student, and the final decision reached.

The minutes must record the comments of the External Examiners and Programme/Module/Unit Leaders about the programme or the modules/Unit and the performance of the students.

The Module Board paperwork and Student Lists which are attached to the minutes must record a decision in respect of every student.

Minutes should never be verbatim or attribute comments to individual members of staff.

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## **7.1 Module/Unit Board Minutes**

Module/Unit Board minutes **must** include the following information:

- Title (e.g. Module Board for April Semester modules at stage 1 on the BSc)
- Date
- Those present
- Apologies received
- Any declaration of conflict of interest
- A report of any Chair's action since the previous meeting
- A summary of any issues with the Module/Unit that required consideration
- Confirmation that moderation has occurred
- A summary of any feedback provided by the Internal and External Examiners
- The attachment of the Module/Unit Board paperwork to verify the consideration of each student
- Date of next meeting.

## **7.2 Progression and Award Board Minutes**

Progression and Award Board minutes **must** include the following information:

- Title – e.g. Progression and Award Board for the UCEM MSc Programme
- Date
- Those present
- Apologies received
- Any declaration of conflict of interest
- A report of any Chair's action since the previous meeting
- A summary of each student case (factors/evidence considered, and decision reached) involving failure, condonation, borderlines cases
- A summary of any feedback provided by the Internal and External Examiners
- The attachment of the Student List to verify the consideration of each student
- Date of next meeting.

## **8. Associated documentation**

Board of Examiners Denominators guidance document.

Board of Examiners Terms of Reference:

- Progression and Award Board Terms of Reference
- Level 3 Progression and Award Board Terms of Reference
- Module Board Terms of Reference
- Unit Board Terms of Reference
- Scrutiny Board Terms of Reference