

ASSESSMENT BOARD POLICY

1. This policy sets out the arrangements for the operation of assessment boards at the University of Suffolk and its partner institutions, and covers Module Boards, Progression and Award Boards, Chair's Action and Extraordinary boards, and RPL sub-groups. The policy should be read alongside the relevant assessment regulations for the course.
2. Assessment boards shall be established for each course (or cognate group of courses, which may include all courses delivered by a school or partner institution) that leads to the award of credit.
3. All assessment boards shall be committees of the University of Suffolk Senate, and shall act under delegated authority of the Senate. At the start of each academic year each school, partner college and partner institution should submit membership details of their Progression and Award Boards to the Quality Committee for information.
4. A Progression and Award Board has delegated powers to make final decisions about student progression and award in accordance with paragraph 3 above, with the exception of some cases where final recommendations of the Progression and Award Board may be submitted for ratification to an external body.
5. All proceedings of assessment boards, except their published outcomes, are confidential.
6. Each assessment board shall be chaired by a senior member of staff who has been trained for the role. The relevant Dean of School (or equivalent in the partner colleges) will normally undertake the role of Chair of the Progression and Award Board. Where the relevant Dean is not available, the role may be undertaken by an Associate Dean from that school or another Dean. In exceptional circumstances, another senior member of the School who has been trained for the role may also act as Chair. Course Leaders will not be eligible to chair Progression and Award Boards for their own course. It is recognised that on occasion a Chair will have contributed to the teaching, assessment or support of students whose results are to be considered at a Progression and Award Board. Chairs should declare potential conflicts of interest and seek alternative Chairing arrangements where any conflict of interest may directly impact the consideration of students' eligibility for progression or award outcomes. Assessment boards held by partner institutions will be chaired by a senior member of University staff. A full list of nominees for the role of Chair of the Progression and Award Board will be submitted to the Academic Registrar, normally at the start of each academic year.

7. Each assessment board shall be serviced by a Clerk who will be a representative of the Academic Registrar. The Clerk will be selected from an approved list of appropriately trained staff.
8. An individual shall not normally be in membership nor attend any meetings of an assessment board for a course which has been attended by a close friend or relative. Any member of academic staff who knows that this situation will apply to them should declare the fact **immediately** to their line manager and the Chair of the Board (if different).
9. Module Boards should normally take place by correspondence, but may be held virtually by video-conferencing if required to ensure the accuracy of student outcomes.
10. Progression and Award Board and Pre-Board meetings may take place either in person or virtually by video-conferencing. Provided adequate arrangements are in place to allow all members to participate, hybrid meetings are also permitted.
11. The function of a Module Board, its membership and frequency are detailed in paragraphs 14 to 20.
12. The function of a Progression and Award Board, its composition and quoracy are detailed in paragraphs 26 to 28. The Terms of Reference for Progression and Award Boards are detailed in Appendix 1.
13. A Pre-Board meeting must be held prior to the Progression and Award Board. The purpose, composition and quoracy of the Pre-Board are detailed in paragraphs 22 to 25.

Module Boards

14. Module Boards take place at the end of each delivery block, including the final delivery block of the year, for all courses using block delivery, and at the end of each semester for all courses using semesterised delivery, with the Progression and Award Board taking place at the end of the academic year.
15. The purpose of the Module Board is to ratify the results of the first and/or second submissions for each component of summative assessment for a particular module. The Module Board will be held by correspondence within four working weeks of the end of each delivery block or semester and, where required, within four working weeks of the resubmission deadline.

16. For levels 3 to 6, all decisions regarding retakes will be made at the end of year Progression and Award Board to allow for consideration of the student's full academic profile and opportunities for condonement. For level 7, decisions regarding the offer of a third attempt or retake will be made at the Module Board.

17. The Module Board will consist of the Course Leader (as Chair), the Module Leader and the Academic Administrator.

18. The **Module Leader** will be responsible for ensuring that:

- all summative assessments have been marked and moderated in accordance with the Assessment Moderation Policy; and
- all results have been correctly entered to the student records system by the agreed date of the Module Board.

19. The **Course Leader**, as Chair, will be responsible for confirming:

- that all results have been checked and verified and are approved for ratification;
- the agreed resubmission deadline for all referrals and any deferral requests approved by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel;
- the date ratified results will be released to students (noting that the release date may be after the Progression and Award Board for the final block/semester to enable the decisions of the Progression and Award Board to be released at the same time).

20. Where the Course Leader also fulfils the role of the Module Leader, an alternative Senior representative from the School should assume the role of Chair as outlined above.

21. The **Academic Administrator** will act as the clerk to the Module Board and will be responsible for ensuring that the results ratified at the Module Board are released to students on the agreed date.

Pre-Boards

22. The purpose of the Pre-Board is to:

- ensure that all recorded modules results have been confirmed as correct by the module leader and ratified by the Module Board;
- identify issues and/or trends within modules to be discussed at the Course Committee;
- review student module results and make recommendations to the Progression and Award Board for condonement and retake opportunities (where appropriate);

- review the student profile and make recommendations to the Progression and Award Board for progression to the next level of study;
- review the profiles of apprentices and make recommendations to the Progression and Award Board for progression through Gateway;
- review the student profile and make recommendations to the Progression and Award Board for awards for students completing their course and any exit awards for students who have withdrawn, or are being withdrawn, from their course, including the titles of any awards in accordance with the Definitive Course Records (DCR);
- identify students whose profile requires further discussion at the Progression and Award Board;
- identify students to be noted at the Progression and Award Board in recognition of excellence or significant personal achievement.

23. The Pre-Board shall comprise:

- Chair – a senior academic member of the School/Head of HE or equivalent
- Course Leader(s)
- Module Leaders
- Members of teaching staff responsible for setting and marking assessments to be considered at the Pre-Board
- Personal Academic Coaches or equivalent
- Academic Administrator

In attendance:

- Clerk (who may also be the Academic Administrator)

24. To be quorate, the Pre-Board must be attended by the Chair, the Course Leader, and the Module Leader for any modules being considered. Additionally, it is expected that all teaching staff responsible for setting and marking assessments for those modules will be in attendance. The Personal Academic Coach or equivalent of any students whose profile is being discussed at the Pre-Board should also be in attendance. Exceptionally, in the unavoidable absence of a Personal Academic Coach or member of teaching staff, it is for the Chair to determine whether there is sufficient representation by other staff for the Pre-Board to proceed in their absence.

25. It is the responsibility of the relevant Chair to ensure that the business of the Pre-Board is conducted in a comprehensive and timely way, including ensuring: that all assessment component results are available for the Pre-Board; that evidence of moderation processes is available and

complies with agreed policy; and that registers or evidence of student attendance/engagement are available. The Chair will also be responsible for ensuring that the recommendations of the Pre-Board are reported to the Progression and Award Board. The Progression and Award Board will either confirm the recommendations of the Pre-Board or will seek further clarification, at which point the Progression and Award Board may confirm or amend the recommendation of the Pre-Board.

Progression and Award Boards

26. A Progression and Award Board shall carry out the following functions:

- Confirm and review the minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising.
- Formally acknowledge the module results ratified by the Module Board.
- Consider and determine the assessment opportunities (within the relevant assessment regulations) for students granted deferrals by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel, setting clear dates by which assessment should occur where these dates have not already been set by the Module Board, or agreeing arrangements for students to repeat the module(s) where appropriate.
- Consider and determine ways by which (within the relevant assessment regulations) students who fail to satisfy the assessment requirements can redeem their position, either by condonement (where permissible) or retake, setting clear dates by which retake should occur and any conditions associated with the retake.
- Consider and determine whether students are eligible to progress from one stage of a course to another.
- Consider and determine whether apprentices are eligible to progress through Gateway.
- Consider and ratify the calculated classification of awards for those students completing their course, including determining the correct award title in accordance with the definitive course records.
- Consider and determine (or recommend, where appropriate) exit awards for students who have withdrawn, or are being withdrawn, from their course before completion, including whether the exit award should be named or unnamed in accordance with the definitive course records.
- Consider and determine the arrangements for students due to return from a period of intercalation.

- Consider the outcomes of the Academic Misconduct Panel and determine the penalties for proven cases of academic misconduct, in accordance with the Academic Misconduct Policy.
- Consider the outcomes of the Academic Appeals Panel and determine the appropriate action (within the relevant assessment regulations).
- Confirm a student's fitness to practise, where relevant, for those students completing an award leading to professional registration.
- Formally acknowledge any Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning and Prior Experiential Learning (RPL) agreed by the RPL sub-group.
- Consider and verify the achievement of any approved additional awards or activities (where applicable) for inclusion on the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR).
- Discuss any other issues referred to it by the Pre-Board.
- Review the assessment arrangements for the course as a whole and make recommendations to the Course Committee and/or to the Senate.
- Ensure that the integrity of the academic standard is observed.
- Consider any other matters referred to it by Senate.

27. The Progression and Award Board shall comprise:

- Chair – Dean of School (or equivalent) or nominee from list of trained Chairs
- Chair(s) of the Pre-Board(s)
- Course Leader(s)
- External Examiner(s)
- Practice representatives for courses leading to registration and/or license to practise
- Academic Administrator

In attendance:

- Clerk (a representative of the Academic Registrar)

28. To be quorate, the Chair, the Course Leader(s), and Chair(s) of the Pre-Board must be present at the Progression and Award Board. Exceptionally, in the unavoidable absence of a Course Leader, it is for the Chair to determine whether robust arrangements can be put in place for the role to be fulfilled by someone else. If the Chair determines that the Board is inquorate, the meeting of the Board will be postponed and reconvened as soon as possible.

29. The External Examiner should be invited to attend all Progression and Award Boards with good notice and arrangements made such as to facilitate ease of attendance. Where an External Examiner is unable to attend, written comments submitted in advance of the meeting can be accepted in lieu of attendance at the meeting, as long as those comments provide adequate assurances to the Board, as outlined in the [External Examiners Policy](#).

30. The role of specific members of the Progression and Award Board are set out in paragraphs 37 to 80.

Chair's Action and Extraordinary Boards

31. The Chair of the Progression and Award Board may reconvene the Board or a formally agreed sub-group thereof as an Extraordinary Board with delegated powers in order to determine the outcomes/results of students who have not completed the assessment process at the time of the Progression and Award Board meeting. Members of the Progression and Award Board should normally approve in advance whether a meeting of a sub-group is appropriate. The sub-group must, as a minimum, include the Chair of the Progression and Award Board, the Course Leader(s), the Chair of the relevant Pre-Board and a member of the course team plus the Clerk. It is also good practice to seek the views of the External Examiner(s) in cases of academic misconduct, academic appeal, and progression and final award. Meetings may be conducted virtually/by correspondence where necessary to facilitate timely decision-making, but adequate arrangements must be in place to ensure the security of student data. Decisions of the sub-group will be formally noted and reported to the next full meeting of the Progression and Award Board.

32. An Extraordinary Board may also be convened when necessary during the academic year to consider the decisions of the Academic Misconduct Panel or Academic Appeals Panel. In such cases, the Extraordinary Board should include, as a minimum, the Chair of the Progression and Award Board, the Course Leader(s) and the Chair of the relevant Pre-Board plus the Clerk.

33. Exceptionally, the Progression and Award Board may agree that an outstanding outcome can be approved on Chair's Action. In such cases, this decision must be noted in the minutes and any outcomes approved on Chair's Action should be formally reported to the next meeting of the Progression and Award Board.

RPL Sub-Group

34. Academic assessment and approval of RPL applications may be conducted by a formally approved RPL sub-group of the relevant Progression and Award Board, in accordance with the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy. The RPL sub-group has delegated authority to make

decisions on RPL and to award the relevant credit, with the outcomes reported to the next full meeting of the Progression and Award Board for information. All documentation relating to RPL applications and decisions should be made available for subsequent external scrutiny.

35. The RPL sub-group should include, as a minimum, the Chair of the Progression and Award Board, a member of academic staff not previously involved in consideration of the RPL application and the Course Leader(s) concerned (i.e. for each course for which there is an RPL application). A Clerk must be in attendance to coordinate the process and ensure that there is a formal record of the meeting. Meetings may be conducted virtually or by correspondence where necessary to facilitate timely decision-making, but adequate arrangements must be in place to ensure the security of student data. Prompt consideration of applications is particularly important for applicants wishing to seek exemption from a whole level of study as part of the admissions process.

Observation of Pre-Boards and Progression and Award Boards

36. As part of the University of Suffolk's quality audit processes, a representative sample of Pre-Boards and Progression and Award Boards will be observed to ensure compliance with the University's regulations, policies and procedures. A summary of the findings from the observations will be reported annually to Quality Committee and Senate.

ROLES OF ASSESSMENT BOARD PERSONNEL

ROLE OF PROGRESSION AND AWARD BOARD CHAIR

37. To convene assessment board meetings and ensure that they are properly constituted, and include contributions from the External Examiner(s) at Progression and Award Boards.

38. To emphasise to the membership the confidential nature of the Board's proceedings.

39. To establish a procedure within the Board meeting for dealing with decisions that ensures equality of treatment for students.

40. To ensure that the Board adheres to the assessment regulations for the course in question.

41. To ensure that outcomes for previously referred/deferred students are formally reviewed.

42. To ensure that all outcomes of Progression and Award Board meetings are formally and accurately minuted and a copy lodged with Registry Services.

43. To identify and facilitate discussion of problematic cases or cases where there are special circumstances, ensuring that students are treated equitably.
44. To ensure that the cases of all referred/deferred/intercalating students are discussed and action initiated.
45. To invite comment from the External Examiner(s) present at the Progression and Award Board meeting or, where the External Examiner(s) is/are absent, to convey the content of written comments to the Board.
46. To ensure that mechanisms for disclosure of results/outcomes to students are clearly stated at the meeting.
47. To ensure that action required regarding referred/deferred students or those with special circumstances is clearly noted by the Board and that mechanisms for action and timescales are stipulated for cases of both referral and deferral.
48. To preside over reconvened Board meetings (or a formally agreed sub-group thereof with delegated powers) for the purpose of determining the results/outcomes of students who have not completed the assessment process.
49. To authorise assessment decision and award notification communications to be sent to students.
50. To establish Progression and Award Board and Pre-Board membership, in liaison with the Deputy Academic Registrar (Registry Services) and Academic Administration Manager.
51. To ensure that dates for assessment boards are set sufficiently far in advance of meetings; and that members are notified.
52. To ensure, with the Clerk, that decisions of Progression and Award Boards regarding issues such as withdrawals, outcomes of OSACC-related cases (for example appeals, academic misconduct, fitness to study/practise), modules to be repeated or retaken, and return from intercalation are conveyed accurately to the appropriate person in order that decision letters to students are generated.

53. To ensure, with the Clerk, that referred and deferred students are made aware of the exact requirements with regard to timescale and mechanisms for handing in work/re-sitting examinations for referred or deferred assessments.

ROLE OF PRE-BOARD CHAIR

54. To ensure that the recommendations of the Pre-Board for student awards and progression are reported to the Progression and Award Board.

55. To ensure that any issues identified by the Pre-Board for further discussion are raised at the Progression and Award Board.

56. To ensure that any student achievement identified for recognition by the Pre-Board is reported to the Progression and Award Board.

ROLE OF COURSE LEADER

57. To act as Chair of the Module Board, in accordance with paragraph 19.

58. Where the participation of the External Examiner is not possible at the Progression and Award Board, to seek the prior agreement of the Academic Registrar whether an appropriate substitute may be appointed or whether the meeting may go ahead in their absence. Where final awards are under consideration, participation by External Examiners is a requirement.

59. To ensure that, where a member of the assessment board is unavoidably absent, the Course Leader is briefed to impart any relevant information that the absent Board member should have contributed.

60. To ensure that all necessary information concerning relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) and their regulations is available to the assessment board.

61. To ensure that, if an External Examiner is unable to be present at the Progression and Award Board, their comments are made available for presentation to the Board.

62. In liaison with the Clerk, assemble a complete set of assessment sheets, containing **all** summative assessment (i.e. not just composite marks), indicating where marks have been subject to moderation.

63. To produce a written report for the Progression and Award Board in which they assure the Board that all assessment processes have been completed according to the University's policies and procedures, and that all work and documentation has been available for the External Examiner to review. The report should also note any issues that have affected the assessment processes.

64. To ensure that, where appropriate, evidence of assessment process is available to the Board.

ROLE OF MODULE LEADER

65. To ensure that component results are normally provided to the Academic Administrator at least 72 hours prior to the Module Board.

66. To confirm that component and module results recorded in the University's student record system are correct.

67. To ensure that moderation in accordance with the Assessment Moderation Policy has occurred, evidence of the assessment process (where necessary) has been obtained and appropriate consultation has taken place.

ROLE OF CLERK

68. To ensure that accommodation is booked and that dates for Progression and Award Board meetings are notified to the Academic Registrar's office, where a central calendar of Board meetings will be maintained.

69. To ensure as far as possible that assessment board meetings do not clash with other events which might require the presence of assessment board members.

70. To ensure that External Examiners are aware of the dates of scheduled Progression and Award Board meetings.

71. To ensure that the agenda is made available to members of the Progression and Award Board in advance of the meeting.

72. To ensure that papers and the minutes of the previous meeting are made available to members of the Progression and Award Board at the meeting.

73. To ensure that the relevant assessment regulations are available at each assessment board meeting.

74. To ensure that evidence of student attendance is available at Pre-Board and at the Progression and Award Board.

75. To monitor the adherence of the Board to relevant regulations, policies and procedures and to draw the attention of the Board and the Academic Registrar to any divergence from this.

76. To have available at assessment board meetings a copy of the most recent edition of the University's Academic Misconduct Policy.

77. To ensure that the proceedings of the Progression and Award Board are recorded accurately in the agreed format, particularly the assessment arrangements for students who are repeating or retaking modules, or returning from intercalation.

78. To present a clear written report of the Progression and Award Board meeting in the agreed format.

79. To securely dispose of/delete relevant documentation after the assessment board meetings.

80. To ensure publication of results according to agreed procedures, including submission of pass lists to the Graduation Office.

GLOSSARY OF ASSESSMENT BOARD TERMS AND ASSOCIATED ACADEMIC PROFILE CODES

REFERRAL

A student is 'referred' when they have failed a component of assessment, either by submitting work of inadequate standard (exam or coursework), recorded on the student's academic profile as RS, or by failing, for no good reason, to complete an assessment within a stated timescale, recorded as RN. Where permissible within the relevant assessment regulations, referred students can redeem their position within a timescale and in accordance with arrangements stipulated by the assessment board.

DEFERRAL

An assessment board may 'defer' a decision on a student's performance if, for good reason, the student has failed to complete an assignment within the normal time schedule or attend a scheduled exam, normally as a result of an approved application for extenuating circumstances (see below). This would be recorded on the student's academic profile as DM. The assessment board will need to define the timing and arrangements for the recovery of any deferrals. In exceptional authorised circumstances, an administrative deferral may be applied where there are unavoidable institutional reasons why the results for a particular module/component or cohort are delayed. This would be recorded on the impacted students' profiles as DA. The assessment board will stipulate a timescale for any mechanism by which these students can complete their assessments.

DELAYED DECISION

Where a component of assessment is under investigation for alleged academic misconduct in accordance with the Academic Misconduct Policy, this will be noted on the student's academic profile as DD.

EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

All work submitted by students for assessment shall be marked on its merits without consideration of any extenuating circumstances known to the marker. However, any approved extenuating circumstances (under the aegis of the Additional Time due to Extenuating Circumstances Policy) resulting in the granting of a deferral by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel will be taken into account by the assessment board when determining whether to offer the student a further submission attempt (this should be without penalty for any first submissions, and with the existing penalty for any resubmissions) or to repeat the module(s) in accordance with the relevant assessment regulations.

INTERCALATION

Intercalation is defined as an authorised break in studies during a course, but after the course has commenced, and for apprentices is also referred to as a 'break in learning' for Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) purposes. Intercalation applies to both full-time and part-time students. Granting intercalation status assumes that the student has been judged to have the potential to continue with their studies after a break, but does not guarantee that there is an automatic right to return or that the course will be available in its present form or at all on return. The maximum duration of intercalation is normally one academic year. Claims for intercalation will be considered in accordance with the Additional Time due to Extenuating Circumstances Policy.

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the overarching term used for the award of credit on the basis of demonstrated learning that has occurred at some time in the past either through attending formal courses (prior certificated learning) or through paid or unpaid work, self-directed learning or other life experiences (prior experiential learning). The theme common to both prior certificated learning and prior experiential learning is that learning, and not just the experience of the activities alone, is being recognised and awarded credit.

REPEAT

A student may be offered the opportunity to repeat a module if a deferral has been granted by the Extenuating Circumstances panel and the relevant assessment board believes that it is in the student's best interest to repeat the module with attendance, for example if they have not had adequate opportunity to engage fully with the learning activities associated with the module or where the student has been granted three consecutive deferrals for that module.

RETAKE

A student may be offered the opportunity to retake a module with attendance (where permissible under the relevant assessment regulations) if the module has been failed, subject to the student having demonstrated sufficient engagement with their studies.

APPENDIX 1

PROGRESSION AND AWARD BOARDS

Terms of Reference

- 1) Under delegated authority from the Senate, and with reference to the University of Suffolk Framework and Regulations for the relevant award, to consider and determine:
 - a) the performance of students in relation to marks for individual components of assessment and for modules overall
 - b) ways by which students who fail to satisfy the assessment requirements can redeem their position, setting clear dates by which reassessment should occur, and clarifying whether re-assessment is by resubmission of the component(s) or retake of the module and any conditions associated with the reassessment
 - c) the recognition of prior learning (including certificated and experiential learning), in accordance with the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy
 - d) whether students are eligible to progress from one stage of a course to another (including making decisions regarding termination of registration due to academic failure)
 - e) whether apprentices are eligible to progress through Gateway
 - f) the achievement of employability skills and any other approved awards and/or activities for inclusion on the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)
 - g) where relevant, a student's fitness to practise
 - h) the conferment of final awards, including determination of the class or grade and name of the award
 - i) the conferment of exit awards and Aegrotat awards, where eligible, for students who withdraw or are withdrawn before completion of their course, including whether the exit awards should be named or unnamed.
- 2) To consider the recommendations of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel in accordance with the Additional Time due to Extenuating Circumstances Policy.

- 3) To consider the recommendations of the Academic Appeals Panel in accordance with the Academic Appeals Procedure.
- 4) To consider the recommendations of the Academic Misconduct Panel and determine penalties for academic misconduct in accordance with the Academic Misconduct Policy.
- 5) To ensure that regulations relating to assessment are applied in a fair and consistent manner and that academic standards are maintained.
- 6) To review the assessment arrangements for the course as a whole and make recommendations to the Course Committee and/or to the Senate.
- 7) To present to the Chair of the Senate a list of all final results on request.
- 8) Consider any other matters referred to it by the Senate.

Membership

Ex Officio

- Dean of School (or equivalent) or nominee from list of trained Chairs (Chair)
- Course Leader
- Chair of Pre-Board(s)
- External Examiner(s) for progression and award Boards
- Practice representatives for course(s) leading to registration/license to practise
- Academic Administrator

In attendance

- Clerk (a representative of the Academic Registrar)

Notes on membership

- 1) Observers may attend meetings of the Progression and Award Boards as part of the University's quality audit processes. Other observers may attend at the discretion and by invitation of the Chair.
- 2) Substitutions for members unable to attend a meeting must be agreed beforehand with the Chair.

Quorum

The following must be in attendance at the Progression and Award Board:

- Dean of School (or equivalent) or nominee from list previously agreed by the Academic Registrar
- Course Leader
- Chair of Pre-Board
- Exceptionally, in the unavoidable absence of a Course Leader, it is for the Chair to determine whether robust arrangements can be put in place for the role to be fulfilled by someone else.
- Where final awards are under consideration, participation by External Examiners is a requirement.

Frequency of meetings

Normally up to three meetings per academic year. Additional meetings may be held if required, for example to meet the requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).

Reports to

- Senate
- School/Partner College Academic Committees/Partnership Management Groups (for purposes of emerging issues only, not consideration of minutes)

The terms of reference for Progression and Award Boards form part of the Assessment Board Policy and will be reviewed as part of the normal schedule of review for all University of Suffolk policies and procedures.

