Annex J: Meetings of Boards of Examiners

1. Introduction

This section of the Code of Practice provides guidance to all examiners, and particularly those acting as the Chair or Secretary of a Board of Examiners, on the conduct of meetings of Boards of Examiners and draws together information with which Boards of Examiners need to be familiar. Reference should also be made to Annex K: External Examiners.

2. Duties of Boards of Examiners

Each School will have a Board or Boards of Examiners which will:

2.1 review the marking of and confirm the marks to be awarded for all modules for which the School holds responsibility;

2.2 make recommendations for the award of Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees to students who have successfully completed programmes of study for which the School holds responsibility;

2.3 make recommendations with regard to progression, referrals and termination of registration of students taking programmes of study for which the School holds responsibility.

3. Membership

3.1 Each Board of Examiners which considers work that contributes to the award of a certificate, diploma or degree shall include one or more External Examiners whose appointment has been approved by the Vice-Chancellor acting on behalf of Senate and Council.

3.2 Other members of the Board of Examiners shall be appointed by the appropriate Faculty Board on the recommendation of the School. These members shall include an internal marker for each module for which the Board of Examiners holds responsibility. One of these members shall be appointed by the Faculty Board as Chair of the Board of Examiners. Faculty Boards shall be authorised to appoint representative Boards of Examiners to consider referral results. These Boards may be smaller than the full Boards of Examiners and will hold delegated authority from the full Boards of Examiners. The membership of each representative Board may be decided at the meeting of the full Board of Examiners, when the scope of modules implicated in referral arrangements will be known, and must be approved by the Dean on behalf of the Faculty Board.

3.3 Faculty Boards may establish procedures to facilitate appropriate input from Schools or subject areas which are not represented on a Board of Examiners.

3.4 Decisions concerning students taking joint degrees or programmes of study which are delivered by more than one School should normally be made by the appropriate Board of Examiners within the School of which the student is a member. This Board of Examiners should liaise with other Schools as appropriate. However, Faculties may appoint special freestanding Boards of Examiners for joint degrees where they consider that there are special circumstances which make this appropriate.

3.5 All members of a Board of Examiners are required to attend meetings of the Board except that External Examiners are only required to attend meetings at which decisions are to be made about recommendations for awards. Where a Board of Examiners has been arranged, but the External Examiner then advises that he/she is no longer able to attend on that date, that absence may only be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.
Education, and only under exceptional circumstances. Where such absence is not approved, the Board of Examiners must be re-arranged for the earliest date possible. External Examiners should be invited, but are not required, to attend meetings of Boards of Examiners convened to consider referral results and deferral results. Boards of Examiners will have considered students’ cases following the initial assessment and will set out provisional decisions in each student’s case pending the results of the referrals and the deferrals. External Examiners should nevertheless be involved in consideration of all referral and deferral students and in decisions concerning awards. External Examiners should be invited, but are not required, to attend meetings which will only consider the work of Stage 2 degree students (unless Stage 2 constitutes the final stage of the programme, as would normally be the case for foundation degree students). External Examiners should nevertheless be involved in consideration of all students and in decisions concerning progression. Other members may only be absent for good reason and with the approval of the Dean of the Faculty.

3.6 All discussion at meetings of Boards of Examiners shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed to students except where such disclosure is authorised by the Academic Registrar.

4. **Concessionary Committee**

Before each meeting of a Board of Examiners, the Chair shall convene a meeting of a small number of internal members of the Board of Examiners (i.e. the Chair and normally no more than three members) to agree recommendations to be made to the Board regarding students about whom medical or other concessionary evidence has been received. The scale below provides a framework for assessing the impact of concessionary circumstances on a student's performance and should be used for the purpose of reporting this assessment and the resulting recommendations to the Board. It should be noted that, as per the requirements of the Credit Framework: Annex 9 (Concessions Applications), all such evidence submitted for consideration by students should document matters of illness or other misfortune such as to cause exceptional interference with academic performance over and above the normal difficulties experienced in life.

5. **Conventions for the Application of Concessionary Measures**

5.1 Where a concessionary committee determines that a student’s performance on a module or modules has been impaired by illness or other mitigating circumstances, it may recommend to the Board of Examiners that one or more of the measures set out in the table below should be adopted, within the limits prescribed and as appropriate to the circumstances and its assessment of the severity of the impact of the student's performance.

5.1.1 **Condonement**

Where the overall marks for a module or modules are condoned and are therefore excluded from the calculation of the classification of the award, Boards of Examiners must be satisfied that there is evidence to show that the student has achieved the programme learning outcomes.

5.1.2 **Adjusted Overall Marks for Modules**

Boards of Examiners should be satisfied that, where the overall marks on modules are adjusted by means of marks substitution or the disregarding of specific assessments, the adjusted overall mark(s) for the module(s) arrived at by these means properly represents the student's achievement in the module as a whole.
5.2 Condonement may only be applied to a maximum of 25% of the credit available for the stage.

5.3 In addition, the following measures may also be used:

5.3.1 For concessions assessed at Grade 1 or above, where the assessments to be disregarded contribute less than 20% to the overall mark for the module, Boards of Examiners may consider use of the measures of mark substitution and the disregarding of affected assessments without restriction.

**NB. Condonement would not normally be applied for a Grade 1 concession.**

5.3.2 For concessions assessed at Grade 2, where the assessment[s] to be disregarded contribute 20% or more to the overall mark for the module[s] in question, the cumulative application of the measures of mark substitution and the disregarding of affected assessments is limited to a maximum cumulative total of 25% of the credit available for any stage.

5.3.3 For concessions assessed at Grade 3, where a module or modules have been failed and where the assessment[s] to be disregarded contribute 20% or more to the overall mark for the module[s] in question, Boards of Examiners may consider use of the measures of mark substitution and the disregarding of affected assessments for up to a maximum cumulative total of 25% of the credit available for the stage.

5.3.4 For concessions assessed at Grade 3, where a module or modules have been passed and where the assessment[s] to be disregarded contribute 20% or more to the overall mark for the module[s] in question, Boards of Examiners may consider use of the measures of mark substitution and the disregarding of affected assessments without restriction.

5.4 Boards of Examiners may only defer a student with respect to modules that have been failed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Severity of Impact</th>
<th>Actions Might Include</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>The evidence submitted does not indicate that the concessionary circumstances had any adverse effect on the performance of the student in his/her assessment(s); OR the circumstances described have already been sufficiently mitigated through the granting of a concession; OR the alleged circumstances were experienced in a timeframe not relevant to the assessment(s) in question.</td>
<td>Discount concessionary submission. Note at the BoE, however, that it has been considered and discounted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The evidence submitted indicates that the concessionary circumstances are likely to have had <strong>limited adverse effect</strong> on the performance of the student in his/her assessment(s).</td>
<td>Override late submission penalties; grant time-limited extension; offer equivalent assessment, where appropriate (e.g. reschedule missed in-class test); <strong>AND/OR</strong> Disregard affected assessments or c/w requirement for the affected module or modules, where these <strong>contribute less than 20% of the mark</strong> for the module(s) in question. Such adjusted marks should properly represent the student’s achievement on the module as a whole.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2 The evidence submitted indicates that the concessionary circumstances are likely to have had a **significant adverse effect** on the performance of the student in his/her assessment(s).

Any actions available for a Grade 1 concession; and **Disregard** individual assessments for the affected module or modules, including where these **contribute 20% or more to the overall mark** for the module(s) in question provided that (i) the learning outcomes for the module(s) are achieved; and (ii) such adjusted marks properly represent the student’s achievement on the module(s) as a whole.

Nb.

(a) Where the modules in question have been **failed**, the disregard measure may only be used with respect to a maximum of 25% of the credit available for the stage;

(b) Where the modules in question have been **passed**, this measure may be used without restriction.

**Nb.** Where adjustments to module marks made via these means result in the award of credit for the module (i.e. the intervention turns an overall fail for the module into a pass for the module), they should be recorded by the Board of Examiners as resulting in the award of the full volume of credit available for the module in question (i.e. 15 or 30 credits; the credits recorded should **not** be fractions based on the contribution of individual assessments to the overall mark for the module). The limits set out at (a) above for use of such interventions must be observed.

**AND***/OR*

*Within limits, see 5.3.1 – 5.3.4 above.*

Where student has failed up to a maximum of 25% of the credit for the stage, consider condoning;

**OR**

Consider recommending deferral

3 The evidence submitted indicates that the concessionary circumstances are **serious** and are likely to have had a **very significant adverse effect** on the performance of the student in his/her assessment(s).

Any actions available for a Grade 1 concession; and **Disregard** individual assessments for the affected module or modules, including where these **contribute 20% or more to the overall mark** for the module(s) in question provided that (i) the learning outcomes for the module(s) are achieved; and (ii) such adjusted marks properly represent the student’s achievement on the module(s) as a whole.

Nb.

(a) Where the modules in question have been failed, the **disregard** and/or **substitute** measures may only be used cumulatively with respect to a maximum of 25% of the credit available for the stage;

(b) Where the modules in question have been passed, this measure may be used without restriction.
**UNIVERSITY OF KENT**  
**CODE OF PRACTICE FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE**

**Code of Practice for Quality Assurance for Taught Programmes: Annex J**  
Approved by LTB on 13 June 2001 and including all revisions up to October 2016

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**Nb.** Where adjustments to module marks made via these means result in the award of credit for the module (i.e. the intervention turns an overall fail for the module into a pass for the module), they should be recorded by the Board of Examiners as resulting in the award of the full volume of credit available for the module in question (i.e. 15 or 30 credits; the credits recorded should **not** be fractions based on the contribution of individual assessments to the overall mark for the module). The limits set out at (a) above for use of such interventions must be observed.

**AND/OR**

*Within limits, see 5.3.1 – 5.3.4 above.*

Where student has failed up to a maximum of 25% of the credit for the stage, consider condoning;

**OR**

Consider recommending deferral

**OR, where applicable:**

Re. the classification of UG students under the pre-2011-12 conventions and students on PGT programmes where they have the relevant borderline profile of marks, consider recommending use of the examiners' discretion for raising candidates under the 'Two More Marks' convention.

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| 4 | The evidence submitted indicates that the concessionary circumstances are **extreme** and are likely to have had a **severely adverse effect** on the performance of the student in his/her assessment(s), so as to prevent the achievement of the full volume of credit required for the award. Any actions available for concessions graded 1-2; **OR** Consider recommending deferral

**AND/OR, where applicable:**

Where a finalist has achieved seven-eighths of the credit required for the award (including credits awarded via condonement and/or compensation), consider use of the "notwithstanding" convention.

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5.5 A written record shall be kept of all decisions reached at the meeting of the Concessionary Committee, the rationales for the decisions, and of the concessionary evidence considered. Along with a graded assessment of the severity of the impact of concessionary circumstances, the Concessionary Committee should provide information to the Board of Examiners as to whether the recommendation is for a general concession, or if it might have application only to specific assignments or modules.

Where a student submits a concessionary case relating to a minor or short-term problem incurred during a specific module, which might include, for example, concessions submitted for in support of an extension to a coursework deadline, or to a failure to submit coursework by a deadline or a failure to attend classes, the concessionary case in question should be considered by the 'module-owning' school.

5.6 Where a student submits a concessionary case in support of a long-term problem with academic performance, which may have impacted on one or more modules, or where there has been a failure to attend an examination or the student has suffered an impaired exam performance due to concessionary factors, the concessionary case should be considered by the Concessionary Committee of the Board of Examiners for the programme in question. Concessionary cases of this nature submitted by students registered on joint honours programmes should be considered by the Concessionary Committee of the Board of Examiners of the lead School for the programme.
5.7 The Board of Examiners should normally follow the recommendations of its Concessionary Committee, which has assessed the concessionary evidence in advance on its behalf.

5.8 The recommendations of the Concessionary Committee as to the severity of impact of concessionary circumstances on a student’s performance may not be altered during the course of the meeting of the Board of Examiners.

5.9 **Definitions of Concessionary Measures:**

a) **Disregarding of assessments:** the exclusion of the piece or pieces of assessment affected by illness or other mitigating circumstances from the calculation of the final module mark;

b) **Mark substitution:** the substitution of a mark awarded for the piece or pieces of assessment affected by illness or other mitigating circumstances by the mark awarded for another piece of assessment taken as part of the same module;

c) **Condonement:** the award of credit for a failed module where student performance has been impacted by illness or other mitigating circumstances; where credit for a module is awarded by condonement, the mark awarded for that module should be excluded from the calculation of the classification of the award;

d) **Deferral:** the decision on concessionary grounds to allow a student to retake some or all of the assessment for a failed module or modules as if for the first time;

e) **The “Notwithstanding” convention:** recommendations by Boards of Examiners on the classification of awards made notwithstanding the conventions of the Credit Framework where a student who, despite suffering concessionary circumstances judged as extreme and as having a severely adverse effect on his/her performance, has nonetheless achieved at least seven-eighths of the credit normally required for the award in question.

5.10 **Consideration of Concessions Applications Regarding Non-attendance of Examination or Non-submission of Coursework**

5.10.1 Where a student’s concessionary submission indicates that s/he will be unable to attend an examination, the Concessionary Committee (or the Chair of the Concessionary Committee acting on its behalf) is authorised, as it sees appropriate, to grant permission in advance for the absence and report this to the meeting of the Board of Examiners.

5.10.2 Where a student’s concessionary submission indicates that s/he will be unable to submit an item or items of coursework by the published deadline, the Concessionary Committee (or the Chair of the Concessionary Committee acting on its behalf) is authorised, as it sees appropriate, to set a new deadline or deadlines for the submission of the coursework concerned. Where the item of coursework in question constitutes the final piece of coursework for the module, such matters should normally be considered prior to the published deadline for that item.

6. **Pre-meeting of the Board**

Before each meeting of a Board of Examiners, and separate to the Concessionary Committee meeting, the Chair may convene a pre-meeting to consider other matters as it deems appropriate. Such matters might include deciding, based on the profile of marks, which candidates should have a viva voce examination, which candidates should be drawn to the attention of the External Examiner, recommendations to be made regarding borderline candidates, reviewing the range of marks awarded for each module and identification of other issues requiring discussion by the Board of Examiners. The identities of candidates shall not be made known to examiners during the course of this meeting.
7. **Chairs of Boards of Examiners**

7.1 The Chair of the Board of Examiners shall be responsible for ensuring that the Board is arranged in good time for a date that allows the attendance of the External Examiner(s).

7.2 The Chair of the Board of Examiners shall be responsible for ensuring that a Secretary to the Board, who shall be someone other than him/herself, is appointed. The Secretary to the Board shall be responsible for recording the decisions made by the Board.

7.3 The Chair of the Board of Examiners shall be responsible for ensuring that proofs of examination question papers are checked for level, spread, accuracy, clarity and appropriateness, that where questions are divided into parts the marks allocated to each part are shown on the paper, and that all draft examination papers are sent to the appropriate External Examiner for comment and approval. He/she shall also ensure that the External Examiner receives the relevant module syllabus.

7.4 The Chair of the Board of Examiners shall be responsible for ensuring liaison with the External Examiner about all the arrangements relating to the examination and for coordinating arrangements for the examination with the Registry and all other staff concerned.

7.5 The Chair of the Board of Examiners shall be responsible for ensuring that all marking of examination scripts by Internal Examiners is satisfactorily carried out.

7.6 The Chair of the Board of Examiners shall be responsible for informing candidates selected for a viva voce examination of the time and place of the viva, and its purpose.

7.7 The Chair of the Board of Examiners shall be responsible for ensuring that where the Board of Examiners considers the work of students who have not, at that point, completed their programme of study, such examination scripts, extended essays and dissertations are deposited with the appropriate School Office for storing and for confirming the number of scripts, extended essays and dissertations so deposited for each module. Such examination scripts, extended essays and dissertations will be available if required for re-reading by the Examiners in the light of the final year performance of candidates.

7.8 The Chair of the Board of Examiners shall not permit any concessionary case to be reopened during Board proceedings.

7.9 The Chair of the Board of Examiners shall be responsible for ensuring that the identities of candidates shall not be made known to examiners at any Board during the proceedings for confirming marks and awarding credit, or when determining the progression or classification of candidates. Only when such proceedings have been completed in full may the identities of candidates be revealed to the examiners, if required (to facilitate, for example, the award of prizes). Decisions on candidates, however, may not be revisited after their identities have been made known to the Board.

7.10 The Chair of the Board of Examiners shall be responsible for ensuring that the reasons for awarding a student a higher class of degree than indicated by his/her marks should be recorded on or appended to the official record of decisions made by the Board of Examiners.

**Note:** The Chair of the Board of Examiners may nominate another member of the School, for example a School Examinations Officer, to undertake some of the above responsibilities on his/her behalf.
8. **Conduct of Meetings**

8.1 The Chair of the Board of Examiners is responsible for ensuring that all members of the Board are notified in good time of the time, date and location of the meeting (refer to 7.1 above).

8.2 All members of the Board should, either in advance or at the meeting, receive:
- An agenda for the meeting (an example of an appropriate agenda is attached)
- Conventions for the awards under consideration
- Appropriate assessment data

8.3 The Secretary to the Board is responsible for:
- advising the Board with regard to regulations and conventions and their interpretation;
- keeping a record of the decisions made by the Board and for ensuring that these decisions are acted upon;
- where the Board makes a decision other than that indicated by the conventions, recording the reasons for so doing on the official record of results;
- keeping a record of the consideration given to borderline cases and to concessions cases;
- confirming with the Chair the accuracy of the official record of the decisions of the Board;
- asking the External Examiner(s), where present, to sign the official record to endorse the decisions made by the Board.

9. Any member of a Board of Examiners who has a particular interest in a student or students to be considered by the Board must declare such interest at the start of the meeting or in advance to the Chair of the Board. The Chair of the Board shall decide whether it would be appropriate for such a member to withdraw for part or all of the meeting.

10. Individual members of academic staff should not take on a formal role of representing or advocating the interests of an individual student (see Annex G paragraph 2).