

2020/21 – version 1.0

This Handbook provides guidance on the operation of Panels and Boards of Examiners and the Senate Regulations for the progression, award and classification of students on taught programmes of study. **Colleagues are asked to take note of the changes to Senate Regulation 5 and how they impact upon finalists for the first time in 2021, as well as the introduction of the 2021 Safeguards for both UG and PGT programmes. Advice is also included on the management of Panels and Boards in light of the circumstances of summer 2021.**

Any queries about the principles relating to the operation of Panels of Examiners and Boards of Examiners or the interpretation of Regulations should be referred to the relevant College Academic Advisor in the Quality Office, to the Academic Services Manager (Quality and Standards) or to the Head of Quality, Compliance and Student Records.

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Any queries relating to documentation, record keeping or processes for Boards should be referred to the Student Records team.

Record and Process Queries

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Regulations and Policy

Updates for 2020/21 academic year

Senate Regulation 5

Two versions of Senate Regulation 5 are in place for students in the 2020/21 academic year, the 2017/18 version (applying mostly to students completing four year programmes) and the 2018/19 version (applying to the majority of three year bachelors students).

In 2021 the first round of finalists on three year bachelors degrees will be considered under the revised degree classification algorithm in the 2018/19 regulations. The Undergraduate Safeguard introduced for 2021 also allows for the University to make temporary amendments to Senate Regulation 5 to operate the contextual measures set out in [Advice Note 19](#).

Students must be considered under the correct regulations for their cohort, as set out below:

Student Group	Applicable Regulations
Students commencing their studies in 2016/17 or earlier	2017/18 Regulations
Students commencing their studies in 2017/18 and successfully proceeding to year 2 in 2018/19 NB this will include students on four year programmes graduating in 2021	2017/18 Regulations
Direct entry students into year 2 in 2018/19	2017/18 Regulations
Direct entry students into year 2 in 2019/20 or later	2018/19 Regulations
Students commencing their studies in 2017/18 but who undertook a repeat year 1 in 2018/19	2018/19 Regulations
Students commencing their studies in 2018/19 (onwards) NB this will include students on three year programmes graduating in 2021	2018/19 Regulations
Students transferring into the first year of a new programme from 2018/19 onwards	2018/19 Regulations

The following sections of the handbook set out the regulations that are typically in place for each broad group of students in 2020/21. If colleagues have any queries about the regulations to be applied to individual students please contact your Academic Advisor in the Quality Office.

For students graduating in 2021 there have been a number of amendments to the regulations and policy which are set out under the [finalist section](#) of this handbook (below). As there will be graduates under both sets of regulations (Year 4 finalists on the 2017/18 regulations and year 3

finalists on the 2018/19 regulations) please read this section carefully and familiarise yourself with the application to different groups.

The progression regulations for year 1 and 2 students under the 2018/19 regulations are now well embedded. Please note that progression regulations for year 1 and 2 students will operate as standard in 2021 unless a dispensation has been granted due to the exceptional circumstances of this year. Where this may be required please contact the [Quality Office](#) urgently.

The new regulations regarding award (on three year programmes) and non-finalist third year progression come into force for the first time in 2021. The following elements of the regulations will apply to year 3 students for the first time in summer 2021:

1. Students are normally required to attempt all assessment components within a module (SR5.10). However, the relevant Panel of Examiners may determine that, exceptionally, credit can be given for a module where an assessment has not been submitted because all Intended Learning Outcomes have been achieved and the student has an overall pass for the module.
2. Where students have failed an assessment component but passed the module overall, students have the right to request to re-sit the failed component if it may improve their overall module mark (SR5.16).
3. The removal of Pass for Credit, and the introduction of a Compensated Fail category. Compensated Fail may be granted after one re-sit attempt for modules with a mark of between 35.00 and 39.99 subject to the achievement of an overall credit weighted average for the level of 40.00%. Compensated Fails count towards the total failed credit allowance for the degree. The total amount of failed credit (marks under 40) is set at 60 credits across the programme, with no more than 45 at levels 5 and 6 in total. Students who have accumulated more than 60 credits of marks below 40% (either fail or compensated fail) over the course of their degree, after exhausting all re-sit attempts, will not be able to achieve a bachelors award.
4. The criteria that can be considered when deciding whether to promote a student who has fallen into the borderline category was due to be restricted to mitigating circumstances only but in light of the circumstances of the current year this has been **expanded to include the criteria available under the previous regulations (see below)**.
5. New scheme of award and classification for three year graduates, detailed in the [finalist section](#).

The University has also approved an amendment to Senate Regulation 7 to ensure that all consideration of students at Boards of Examiners is undertaken anonymously. The Board reports have been revised to reflect this. Pre-board processing and checking does not have to be undertaken anonymously due to the nature of the task requiring the ability to identify students for checking, but the formal decision-making stages of the process must be conducted anonymously.

Extraordinary Policy and Regulatory arrangements for 2020/21

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, the University implemented Extraordinary Assessment Arrangements for the academic year 2020/21. These are set out in a series of [Advice Notes](#):

[Advice Note 17](#)

This Advice note set out the initial elements of the Safeguard for students on taught programmes which included the principles of accessible assessment, uncapped re-sits and deferral.

[Advice Note 18](#)

This Advice note set out the initial elements of the Safeguard for students on DL programmes, including uncapped re-sits, mitigating circumstances and the support for individual management of study and assessment.

[Advice Note 19](#)

This Advice note sets out the detail of the UG Education Safeguard, including the contextual measures which may be applied on the basis of a review of student outcomes in summer 2021.

[Advice Note 20](#)

This Advice note sets out the detail of the PGT Safeguard, and how this interacts with the Safety Net measures in place from 2020.

Operation of Examination windows and late penalties

All remote examinations should have a minimum assessment window for 24 hours, other than where there are clear PSRB or pedagogic reasons for a shorter window. Extra time is added for students who are eligible due to disability.

Assessment [Advice Note 04](#) (in 2019/20) set out the policy regarding late submission and penalties with regard to remote examinations. This element of the advice note remains in force.

- Where the piece of work is defined as coursework, late penalties should be applied in line with the scheme set out in Senate Regulation 7.
- Where the assessment is an exam there is no scheme of late penalties. As for campus based exams where a student fails to attend an exam, a student who does not submit a remote exam by the expiry of their deadline (and any grace period that may be allowed) this is considered non-submission. A mark of zero would be applied to the assessment in question and the student be granted another attempt (where eligible). Note, the majority of re-assessments in 2020/21 will be uncapped but there may be some instances (such as PSRB requirements) where this is not-possible.

Automatic Safeguard Measures

The following measures apply to all students on taught programmes undertaking teaching and assessment in the 2020/21 academic year, regarding of their mode or type of study.

a) Self-Certification of Mitigating Circumstances

The majority of mitigating circumstances claims can be accepted without the requirement for supporting evidence.

Further details are in Advice Note [17](#)

b) Uncapped re-assessment attempts

Where an assessment has been failed the re-assessment attempt will be uncapped, other than where there are specific reasons meaning that this is not possible (such as PSRB requirements or where an assessment cannot be repeated, for example where students on PGT programmes have exceeded their re-sit allowance).

Where an attempt is already a re-sit due to failure in a previous year, these will not be uncapped. Where failure of the original module is due to an academic integrity offence such as plagiarism the re-sit will not be uncapped.

Further details are in Advice Note [17](#) (for campus based programmes) and [Advice Note 18](#) (for distance learning programmes) and FAQs can be found [here](#).

c) Deferral of assessment (for campus based students only)

Students were able to defer their assessments from January and/or May to August 2021, if they wished. This option only applied to campus-based students. DL students can manage their studies and assessment loading via mitigating circumstances, uncapped re-sit attempts and, if necessary, suspension of studies.

Further details are in Advice Note [17](#) (for campus based programmes) and [Advice Note 18](#) (for distance learning programmes)

Contextual Safeguard Measures (UG)

The Safeguard also included two contextual measures which will not be applied automatically. Their application will be subject to a review of student outcomes to establish whether there is any evidence that overall outcomes have been negatively affected by the circumstances of this year. On the basis of this analysis the University may choose to apply one of the contextual measures set out below.

- a) Discounting up to 30 credits of modules studied and assessed in 2020/21 when calculating the Credit Weighted Average (CWA) for that level. To be eligible for this element of the Safeguard, students must **pass all modules** studied and assessed in 2020/21. This means **achieving a mark of 40% or higher and a compensated fail will**

not count as passed for this purpose. This would be applied at the point of award, which would be July for students who have successfully attempted and passed all modules in the level at the first attempt, or August for those students required to undertake re-assessment. The discount would apply to the 30 credits in a student's profile with the lowest mark on an individual basis. Only whole modules will be discounted. Whole modules will not be discounted on a cohort basis as this may impact unfairly on individual students. Where a final year project or dissertation module is mandatory this cannot be discounted from the CWA for the year but the next lowest 30 credits may be discounted where this would improve the overall CWA.

- b) Adjusting the degree classification boundaries on the preponderance scheme by a maximum of 1%. This would have the effect of moving the boundaries back to where they were in 2020. This would apply to the credit weighted average thresholds set out for award via the preponderance element of the scheme or to qualify for consideration as a borderline student. Students must **pass all modules** studied and assessed in 2020/21 to be eligible for this measure. This means achieving a mark of 40% or higher and a compensated fail will not count as passed for this purpose.

Note, measure b) would **only apply to students on the 2018/9 Senate Regulation 5**, not to students on the 2017/18 regulations where the boundaries of 47/57/67% are already in place.

The above options only apply to students graduating in 2021. Measure a) above may potentially be applied at a later date to the outcomes for students in year 2 or non-finalist year 3 students in 2021, in the event that there is evidence of lower outcomes. The University will review student outcomes from 2021 in due course to establish whether any measures may be necessary for non-finalists.

Implementation of the Contextual Measures for UG programmes at University level

The decision regarding whether to implement the contextual measures will be taken at University level, between Panels and Boards of Examiners. This decision will be taken with reference to criteria that have been agreed by the University Education Committee.

The Committee has considered historical data on good honours outcomes for the University over a four year period up to and including 2020. Using this information the Committee has determined a window of good honours outcomes that is representative of historic trends. Where the good honours rate for the University in 2021 falls below this window the contextual measures in the Safeguard are likely to be applied. Where the outcomes fall within the window application will be considered by the University Board of Examiners.

Where all marks are received before the moratorium the process for deciding to implement Safeguard measures will be:

1. In the first part of the moratorium Student Records will calculate projected degree classifications for finalists using three different algorithms:
Algorithm A: Standard Regulations under Senate Regulation 5 for the relevant cohorts. No Safeguard measures applied.
Algorithm B: Application of the first contextual measure in the Safeguard, namely the discounting of the lowest whole 30 credits of modules from the CWA for the level.
Algorithm C: Application of the second contextual measure in the Safeguard, namely the reduction of the thresholds for higher classifications.
2. A University Board of Examiners will meet immediately following this analysis and decide whether to apply contextual Safeguard measures.
3. Following this decision, schools will be provided with the revised Board reports with any agreed Safeguard measures automatically applied.
4. Schools will have a short window in which to review these outcomes. Where a school wishes to make a case for a dispensation from the University level decision there will be a mechanism to do so, noting that there will only be limited criteria under which such a dispensation may be considered. Further information on the process for this review of outcomes at school level will be provided separately.

Schools should note that all calculations of the application of the Safeguard measures will be undertaken centrally. Schools will not be required to calculate these locally. As in previous years there will be some scenarios, such as calculating where a student may be able to obtain a higher degree classification as a result of re-sitting, which will need to be undertaken at school level with support from the relevant Data Officer.

Alternative application of Safeguard measures

In the event that not all marks are available in a timeframe that allows for the above process the University may operate award, classification and Safeguard processes on a school by school basis if required. The Education Committee has approved the principles by which the Safeguard measures can be applied at School level if required.

A decision on whether to move to a school by school model will be undertaken by the University Board of Examiners on the basis of the information available at that time.

1. In advance of the board period a sub-group of the Committee will review the historical good honours outcomes for students on a school by school level over the past three years. Where appropriate this may be broken down within larger schools;
2. Using this data a window of good honours outcomes will be determined.

3. This information will be provided to schools and will form the basis of the criteria that the University Board of Examiners will use to determine whether there is evidence of a negative impact on student outcomes from the circumstances of 2020/21.
4. As above, following the meeting of all relevant Panels for the Board in question, the University Board of Examiners will consider data from Student Records which sets out the outcomes for the school in question under each of the three algorithms. Schools will have the opportunity to review their data and feed comments into this process. The University Board will decide, with reference to the statistical criteria set out above, whether to apply Safeguard measures to outcomes in the school.

Under this scenario the decision on whether to apply the contextual Safeguard Measures within an individual school would still be undertaken by a University Board of Examiners on a rolling basis.

Cohort specific regulations, policy and guidance

Information on the regulations and the impact of University policy that apply to each student group is set out in the section below.

Impact of Deferrals (general guidance)

Students on campus-based taught programmes had the opportunity to defer their assessments from the January and/or May assessment windows into the second assessment window in August 2021. Students were informed that by choosing to defer assessments this may have an impact upon the timing of their overall progression and award decision.

UG students:

Where a finalist has deferred any assessment to August they will not be considered for award and conferral in July 2021. This will be the case regardless of whether they have passed enough credits from non-deferred modules to be able to meet the threshold requirements for an award. Students are required under regulations to have attempted all assessments unless this is specifically waived by a Panel of Examiners. Note, students will not have access to the contextual measures set out in the Safeguard where they do not pass all of their modules for this academic year.

Where non-finalist students have deferred assessments they will not be able to receive a progression outcome for the level until the second assessment period has completed. Where students either fail or do not attempt deferred assessments in August and this results in the failure of the module overall then the modules in question would typically count as failed for the purposes of making progression decisions.

There will not typically be the opportunity for students to be re-assessed between the second assessment period and the commencement of the next academic year. Accordingly, if students do not meet the progression requirements by the end of the second assessment period they may not be able to progress. Schools should consult the progression criteria for the level of

study set out in Senate Regulation 5, noting that in the majority of instances students will only have had one valid assessment attempt at the deferred modules.

A standard regulatory outcome in these scenarios would be likely to be either without residence study (Y2 and Y3 students) or repeat year (Y1 students) however where, in light of current circumstances **a school wishes to discuss potential alternative approaches to managing progression please contact the Academic Registrar via qualoffice@le.ac.uk**

PGT Students

Senate Regulation 6 sets out criteria for progressing from the taught element of the programme to the project/dissertation phase, which require students to have passed a certain proportion of their taught credits at the first attempt. Where assessments have been deferred this should be considered as credit that has not yet been passed for the purposes of progression decisions. Further information is in the [PGT section](#) below.

Foundation Year students

Other than those automatic safeguard measures set out above there are no amendments to the progression criteria for Foundation programmes in 2020/21. These are as set out in the relevant programme specification for the programme in question and any local amendments should have been approved by the relevant College Dean of Education.

Year 1 Students

The standard progression rules for year 1 students set out in Senate Regulation 5 (2018/19) are in place for this cohort. No amendments to standard progression regulations have been put in place as a result of the Safeguard.

The standard rules for year 1 progression are set out in Senate Regulation 5, and are summarised below for reference. These apply **after the point of re-sit** when a student has had two valid attempts at their module assessments.

- a) Students who have failed **more than** 45 credits (mark below 35%), in the absence of mitigating circumstances, have their studies terminated;
- b) Students are permitted to Proceed and Carry up to 15 credits of failed modules (mark below 35%) from year 1. Under this regulation students may proceed into year 2 and are not required to re-sit the failed credit from year 1, but have the option to do so if they request it;
- c) Students may Proceed and Re-sit up to 30 credits of failed modules (mark below 35%), subject to specific requirements;

- d) Students failing up to 45 credits (mark below 35%) and who do not meet the criteria for progression will be granted a repeat year 1 in 2021/22 (including a fee waiver for that year);
- e) Re-sit without Residence is not available as standard as a progression outcome for Year 1 (Level 4) students. Where a student wishes to request a re-sit without residence instead of a repeat year, this will be require direct application to the Academic Registrar;

Note the section above for the impact of deferrals - where a student has not met the progression requirements but only had one attempt at an assessment due to deferral, they may not be able to proceed under standard regulations but have not exhausted all of their attempts. Outcome a) will only apply where the student has failed more than 45 credits after two attempts regardless of deferred assessment.

Boards of Examiners should review outcomes b) - e) on the basis of credits passed or failed following the attempts that have been taken. **Where this may result in a student being unable to progress due to the impact of deferred credit that has not yet been passed, please contact the Quality Office.**

Compensated Fail

Compensated Fail is not applied to a student's module mark until after their re-sit. Compensated Fail counts towards the total failed credit allowance for the degree (60 credits of marks below 40%). Up to 60 credits of compensated fail may be granted in year 1, but it should be noted that this will reduce the number of credits that can be failed in later years of the degree. As an example, if a student is carrying 45 credits of marks below 40% (from compensated fail and/or outright fail) from year 1 they can only accrue a further 15 credits of marks below 40% over the rest of their studies and still be eligible for an award. If a student carries 60 credits of fail (compensated or outright) from year 1 they cannot accrue any more later in their studies.

Where a student has a mark at compensated fail after one attempt but, due to deferral or mitigating circumstances has not been able to take a re-assessment this will present as a fail mark and may prevent progression. **Where this is the case please contact the Quality Office.**

Second Year Students

The progression rules for second year students in 2021 are set out in Senate Regulation 5 (2018/19). There have been no amendments to progression criteria for second year students as a result of the Safeguard or other pandemic mitigation measures.

The full progression regulations for second year students can be found in Senate Regulation 5 and are summarised here. These apply after the point of re-sit.

- a) Students who have failed **more than** 45 credits, in the absence of mitigating circumstances, have their studies terminated;
- b) Students may proceed and re-sit up to 30 credits, subject to specific requirements.
- c) Students who have proceeded into year 2 with re-assessments outstanding from year 1 can proceed into year 3 as long as they have no more than 15 credits of failed modules from year 1 outstanding (mark below 35%) at the end of year 2. They must have passed at least 105 credits in year 2 to be allowed to proceed under this rule
- d) Where stated in the programme specification, students may be allowed to proceed into the next year and substitute up to 30 credits of failed modules from year 2, subject to specific requirements
- e) Where a student has failed more than 30 credits but has not exceeded the threshold for termination of studies they may have a further attempt at their failed modules via re-sit without residence. This may also be applied where students have failed 30 or fewer credits but these are pre-requisite for year 3.
- f) A student may also be eligible for a repeat period of study

Note the section above for the impact of deferrals - where a student has not met the progression requirements but only had one attempt at an assessment due to deferral, the result may be they cannot proceed but have not exhausted all of their attempts. Outcome a) will only apply where the student has failed more than 45 credits after two valid attempts regardless of deferred assessment.

Boards of Examiners should apply outcomes b) - e) on the basis of credits passed or failed following the attempts that have been taken. **Where this may result in a student being unable to progress due to the impact of deferred credit that has not yet been passed, please contact the Quality Office.**

Year 2 Proceed and Resit Students, including Compensated Fail

Under Senate Regulation 5 students may proceed from year 1 to year 2 with the requirement to re-sit certain failed year 1 modules, up to a value of 30 credits, alongside their second year studies. Senate Regulations also state that a student may have a maximum of 15 credits with a fail mark (below 35%) from the first year of their programme in order to be eligible to graduate.

Students who achieved a Compensated Fail mark (35.00-39.99%) after re-sit in their first year in 2019/20 and were allowed to progress were not required to re-sit this in year 2, although the module would count towards the overall failed credit allowance for the degree.

Students who have proceeded into the second year in 2020/21 with 30 credits of failed year 1 modules (below 35.00%) and who then fail to achieve a mark above 35.00% in at least 15 of these credits at the final attempt will not have enough credits from the first year and therefore

not be eligible to graduate. Under Regulations, this would lead to course termination at the end of their second year. Note, a mark of between 35.00-39.99% would be assigned a Compensated Fail grade. Although this would potentially allow progression it would still count towards the total allowance of modules that a student may carry with a mark of below 40.00% and still be eligible for an award.

First year students who failed 30 credits or less in 2019/20 were given the choice of taking these re-sits in either August 2020 or carrying them through to the 2020/21 academic year and take them alongside their second year studies. Depending on scenarios there is the possibility that students may not have exhausted all attempts at their first year modules by June 2021. Where this is the case, please contact the Quality Office for advice.

Following reassessment at the end of the second year (all attempts exhausted):

- Students with 15 failed credits below 35.00% (a mark below the compensated fail threshold) from year 1 who have exhausted all re-sit attempts will be able to proceed into the final year carrying the failed credits in line with the scheme of progression in Senate Regulation 5.
- Students who have failed 30 credits of first year modules with a mark below 35.00% (a mark below the compensated fail threshold) and have exhausted all re-sit attempts will not be able to proceed into their final year and will have their studies terminated, other than in cases of accepted mitigating circumstances. Consideration should be given to an exit award where a student qualifies.
- Where students have 30 credits of failed modules (below 35.00%, a mark below the compensated fail threshold) after final re-assessment and there are accepted mitigating circumstances, consideration can be given to allowing students to proceed exceptionally into the final year and undertake further attempts, but it will not be possible for them to graduate until at least 15 of the outstanding credits from year 1 have been passed. This will be subject to further guidance at the time of the additional assessment boards.

At the end of year 2 students who, after all re-sit attempts, have accumulated a total of more than 60 credits with a mark below 40.00% across their studies (this could include fail or compensated fail modules from years 1 and 2) will not be able to proceed to year 3 as they will have exceeded the total failed credit allowance for the degree.

Board Secretaries will need to review the progression board reports in detail in advance of the board meeting. Where a Board report indicates 'Fail Decision Required' or 'Fail & Terminate' for a student at this stage Board Secretaries will need to check the student's profile to establish the basis for this recommendation, in order to confirm to the Board of Examiners where required. This will include confirming for each student:

- The number of credits at Fail (below 35.00%) from year 1, following all re-sit attempts – nb if this is more than 15 students are prevented from progressing
- The number of credits at Compensated Fail (35.00-39.99%) from year 1, following all re-sit attempts

- The number of credits at Fail (below 35.00%) from year 2, following all re-sit attempts
- The number of credits at Compensated Fail (35.00-39.99%) from year 2, following all re-sit attempts

Where the total from across the above categories exceeds 60 credits a student would have too many credits below 40.00% to be eligible for an award, and would therefore be recommended for termination and consideration for an interim award.

Safeguard Policy for second year students

As year 2 counts 33% towards a 3 year Bachelors award or 20% towards a four year integrated award, the University has confirmed that a review of second year outcomes will be undertaken following assessment. If there is evidence that student outcomes in year 2 appear to have been negatively affected as a result of the circumstances of 2020/21 consideration will be given to applying contextual measures from the Safeguard, at the point of award.

For the purposes of progression decisions in the summer of 2021 the credit weighted average from across all 120 credits studied in the year should be used for decisions regarding the award of compensated fail marks. There will be no discount of credits from the CWA for level 2 students in 2021.

Third Year non finalist students

2021 will be the first year in which the new progression requirements set out in Senate Regulation 5 (2018/19) will apply to non-finalist third year students. There have been no changes to these regulations as a result of the Safeguard. The progression requirements are summarised below but it should be noted that in the case of Integrated Masters programmes there are often additional requirements set out in the programme specification.

- a) Students who have failed **more than** 45 credits, in the absence of mitigating circumstances, have their studies terminated;
- b) Students may proceed and re-sit up to 30 credits, subject to specific requirements.
- c) Where stated in the programme specification, students may be allowed to proceed into the next year and substitute up to 30 credits of failed modules from year 2, subject to specific requirements
- d) Where a student has failed more than 30 credits but has not exceeded the threshold for termination of studies they may have a further attempt at their failed modules via re-sit without residence. This may also be applied where students have failed 30 or fewer credits but these are pre-requisite for year 3.
- e) A student may also be eligible for a repeat period of study

Safeguard Policy for Year 3 non-finalist Students

As year 3 counts towards a 4 year bachelors and integrated masters programmes the University has confirmed that a review of third year outcomes will be undertaken following assessment. If there is evidence that student outcomes in year 3 appear to have been negatively affected as a result of the circumstances of 2020/21 consideration will be given to applying contextual measures from the Safeguard, at the point of award.

For the purposes of progression decisions in the summer of 2021 the credit weighted average from across all 120 credits studied in the year should be used for decisions regarding the award of compensated fail marks. There will be no discount of credits from the CWA for level 3 non-finalist students in 2021.

Non-Progression and exit from Integrated Masters Programmes

There may be circumstances under which students on integrated masters programmes fail to meet the progression threshold to the final year, or wish to exit in 2021 with a bachelors award.

Where this is known in advance programme teams should work with their Data Officer to revise the records in SITS to allow a BSc award and classification to be generated on the board report. Such students would be eligible for the application of the Safeguard measures (see below) to their bachelors award and therefore Secretaries will need to work with their Data Officers to ensure that this is reflected.

Where this is only known too late for amendments to the board report, the Secretary and Exams Officer (or equivalent) will need to report this to the Board but note that the decision will be need to be taken by Chair's action. They will then need to work with their Data Officer to update the relevant records and apply the Safeguard (if appropriate) to generate the correct award and classification. This will then need to be approved via Chair's action and reported to the board.

If the BSc calculations result in the student falling into a borderline this decision should be referred to the whole board, rather than undertaken by Chair's action. This consideration can take place by correspondence.

Finalist Students in 2020/21

The University has put in place the Education Safeguard for Undergraduate Students to mitigate the risk of the pandemic affecting overall student outcomes. Details on the operation of the Safeguard can be found elsewhere within this handbook. The following section addresses the wider regulatory and policy issues for finalist students in 2021.

Safety Net Policy from 2019/20

Advice [Note 05](#) sets out the detail of the Safety Net Policy that applied to students in 2019/2020. This policy was applied to all students where the year in question would contribute to their degree classification (year 2 for a standard bachelors programme, and years 2, 3 and 4 of certain bachelors or integrated masters programmes).

The principle of the Safety Net applied at the level of the credit-weighted-average (CWA) for the year of study. A **Benchmark CWA** was calculated for all students based on marks achieved in the first semester of 2019/2020 wherever possible. The Benchmark CWA was the level below which a student's CWA for the year could not fall for the purposes of degree classification calculation. An **Initial CWA** was also calculated on the basis of all marks from that year.

- Where the **Initial CWA** was lower than the **Benchmark CWA** then the **Benchmark CWA** would be used in the degree classification calculation.
- Where the **Initial CWA** was higher than the **Benchmark CWA**, then the **Initial CWA** would be used in the degree classification calculation.

The majority of final year students in 2020/2021 will have a benchmark from 2019/2020 calculated for the level of study they were undertaking during 2019/2020 and where their initial CWA fell below this the benchmark CWA will be the mark that will be carried forward to degree classification in 2020/2021 for the relevant level.

The temporary amendments to the preponderance element of the scheme of assessment that were in place for 2019/2020 are not in place as standard for graduates in 2020/2021, but may apply in a small number of scenarios. These, and other implications of the Safety Net Policy from 2019/2020 are set out below.

Repeat Year students

Finalists in 2020/2021 who are repeating their final year from 2019/2020 will not carry any benchmark CWA through to 2020/2021. A repeat year represents a clean slate and all marks from the previous year are null and void. These students will be considered under the Safeguard Policy as though they were attempting their final year for the first time.

A very small number of students may be repeating only one semester of their final year in 2020/2021. In such cases the students will not be eligible to carry through a benchmark from the previous academic year on the basis that they have been granted a repeat period of study for the time affected.

Re-sit without Residence (RWR)

Finalist students who were awarded a re-sit without residence at the end of 2019/2020 will be due to complete and graduate in 2020/2021. The study that they undertook in 2019/2020 was disrupted as for other students in their cohort, and the policy principle is that they should be treated consistently with their cohort.

Students who are re-sitting without residence will be eligible for the Safety Net measures that were in place in 2019/2020, including the calculation of a benchmark should the students meet the requirements of the Safety Net Policy, including passing all of the relevant assessments.

Students who were sitting without residence in 2020/2021 would still fall under the Safety Net Policy as the learning was undertaken in the 2019/20 academic year, even though the first valid attempts at assessment may have been in 2020/21.

Integrated Masters exit awards

In the scenario that a student in the final year of an integrated masters programme in 2020/2021 fails to meet the requirements and has to exit with a bachelors award, this should be calculated on the basis of the Safety Net policy and scheme of assessment that was in place for 2019/2020 (where the level 3 study happened in that year). This includes the reduced preponderance requirements. This is to ensure parity of treatment with the cohort who undertook their final contributing year in 2019/20.

New Scheme of Classification

Students on three year bachelors programmes in 2020/21 will be the first cohort to graduate under the [new scheme of degree award and classification](#) for students commencing their studies in 2018/19 or later.

The key features of the new scheme are:

- a) The limit on Failed and Compensated Fail credits that can be accrued across the whole of a student's programme. Compensated Fail counts as failed credit for the purposes of award. The limit on credit with a mark below 40% is set at 60 credits (with a maximum of 45 from years 2 and 3), meaning that students must have passed at least 300 credits at 40.00% or higher to be considered for an award.
 - As an example if a student is carrying 30 credits of modules with marks of below 40.00% from their first year, this means that they may only accrue a maximum of 30 further credits below 40.00% (fail or compensated fail) from the remaining years of their degree.
 - Students may only carry a maximum of 15 failed credits with a mark of below 35.00% from their first year.
 - Students may only have a maximum of 45 credits with a mark of below 40.00% (fail or compensated fail) from years 2 or 3 of their degree.
 - Where a student has accumulated more than 60 credits of marks below 40.00% across their studies, they will not be eligible for a bachelors award.
- b) The CWA threshold for award of a higher classification via the preponderance element of the scheme of assessment increases from 47.00/57.00/67.00% to 48.00/58.00/68.00%.

- This also applies to the CWA element of the borderline scheme. Note, this may be subject to change where the University applies the contextual measures within the Safeguard.
- c) A requirement within the preponderance element of the scheme of assessment that at least 30 of the credits achieved in the higher band must be from level 6. For example, where a student has achieved a credit weighted average of 58.00% or higher and 120 credits from across years 2 and 3 at 60.00% or higher, they will only be automatically promoted to the higher classification if at least 30 credits of the modules at 2:1 level were achieved in their final year (level 6).
 - d) Where a student is eligible for consideration for first class honours (either on the basis of their CWA being above 70.00%) or through meeting the preponderance requirements, they may only have a maximum of 30 credits with a mark of below 40.00% (failed or compensated fail) from years 2 and 3.
 - e) The removal of the 'borderline to the borderline' rule that existed within the previous regulations. This had allowed students who fell just below the mathematically defined borderline to potentially be considered as a borderline for promotion on the basis of exceptional circumstances. This does not exist for students graduating under the 2018/19 version of Senate Regulation 5.

The full scheme(s) are set out in [Senate Regulation 5 \(2018/19\)](#)

Note, students on four year programmes which commenced in 2017/8 will still be considered under the version of [Senate Regulation 5](#) that was in place for that cohort.

Panels of Examiners and scrutiny of module outcomes

Advice on the role and operation of Panels of Examiners can be found in the sections below. As was the case following semester 1 assessments in 2020/21, schools should make reference to the guidance on the operation of Panels of Examiners issued by the Quality Office.

Schools should typically review outcomes at module level and identify where there may be any need for further analysis or potentially action.

Given the circumstances of 2021 there may be a delay in marks provision and it is therefore recognised that there may be some circumstances where it is not possible to operate normal school level processes for review of outcomes pre-panel. Schools are encouraged where possible to work with their Academic Advisor in the Quality Office where action on marks may be required.

Note, any proposals to take action on marks require the approval of the Academic Registrar, in consultation with the PVC-Education or the College Dean of Education as appropriate.

General Guidance for Borderline Candidates

As part of responding to the pandemic and its impact in 2019/20 and 2020/21 the University has taken action at the level of regulation and policy to protect student outcomes and attempt to ensure that students final results do not suffer as a result of current circumstances. These actions have been extensive and include:

- The Safety Net in 2019/2020 allowed students access to a benchmark grade that would be carried forward to their point of award.
- Students have had significantly expanded options for self-certification of mitigating circumstances.
- Students have been able to manage their assessment load through use of deferral.
- Students have been awarded uncapped re-assessment where possible for modules failed in 2020/21

Taken together the above represents a substantial package of mitigating measures for students due to graduate in the 2020/21 academic year.

Balanced against the need to support our students is an equal imperative for the University to protect the academic standards of its awards. This also supports our students by ensuring that the awards that they received are recognised as being equivalent to those of other graduates.

Senate Regulation 5 (2018/19) defines a mathematical borderline region for consideration for promotion to a higher classification. **Note, as set out above there is no longer a 'borderline to the borderline' region in this version of the regulations.**

The Safety Net, Safeguard and other measures are in direct response to the circumstances of the past two years and therefore when considering whether to promote students to a higher classification the impact of COVID-19 is, in itself, not grounds for automatic promotion of borderline candidates.

Boards should not automatically promote students who fall into the borderline category in 2020/2021 simply on the basis that this period coincided with the impact of COVID-19. Boards should review the criteria for promotion set out in Senate Regulation 5 to assess whether these apply to individual student profiles. These include mitigating circumstances, 'exit velocity' or exceptional performance in particular pieces of work such as the dissertation. Where there is evidence that a student has suffered particular personal mitigating circumstances arising from the pandemic, above and beyond those accounted for through the standard university measures, then Boards may also consider whether to promote on this basis.

Re-sit to improve

Under normal circumstances, where an undergraduate student failed modules in their final year and had not had an opportunity to re-sit before the point of the summer board of Examiners they would only be offered a resit opportunity if either

- a) The result of the re-sit could improve their degree classification
- b) The module was affected by mitigating circumstances

In 2021 the situation is more complex due to the introduction of the Safeguard measures. Where a student fails a module the re-sit is likely to be uncapped and allows access to the full mark range. Where a decision is taken to apply the contextual measures set out in the Safeguard, students will only be eligible to receive these if they have attempted and passed all of their assessments in 2020/21.

As a result students who have attempted and failed assessments may have accumulated sufficient credits to be eligible for an award in midsummer, but could potentially significantly increase their outcome or classification by taking re-assessment.

Board secretaries will need to work with their Data Officers to calculate whether students who have outstanding assessments could potentially improve their position by taking them. This will include considering the impact of any Safeguard measures that may be applied in the event the student were to attempt and pass all modules.

Additional technical guidance on undertaking calculations will be provided separately.

Postgraduate Taught Students

Students on PGT programmes in 2020/2021 may be at different stages in their studies, and Boards of Examiners in June/July 2021 will be considering progression and award decisions for students.

Progression

There have been no changes to the progression rules set out in Senate Regulation 6 for PGT programmes as a result of the Safeguard measures. However, some of the Safeguard and previous Safety Net measures do interact with the existing progression regulations and these are set out in the following sections.

Uncapped re-sits

As standard any re-sits that students are required to take following modules studied in 2020/21 will be uncapped other than where PSRB requirements apply. Senate Regulation 6 sets a limit on the number of credits that can be re-sat and the introduction of the Safeguard does not override the rules regarding maximum numbers of permitted re-sits. The impact of the Safeguard is that where a student is granted a re-sit this will be uncapped where possible.

Deferral

The progression rules within Senate Regulation 6 set out a requirement that a student should have passed a certain number of credits at the first attempt from the taught component to be allowed to progress to the project or dissertation. This rule is to ensure that students have

demonstrated sufficient mastery of the core material to move to the project and to reduce the risk for the student as if they are carrying high numbers of failed modules it increases the chance that they may not pass sufficient to achieve an award.

Where students have elected to defer their assessments and have not therefore achieved a pass mark in the module, they have not yet demonstrated mastery of the learning outcomes of the module in question. For this reason, modules which have not yet been passed due to deferral should be counted as failed with mitigation for the purpose of a progression decision.

The result of this is that where a student has accumulated too many modules that have either been failed at the first attempt, or have not been passed due to deferral, they may not be able to proceed until they have passed a threshold amount.

Safety Net (2019/2020) rules for progression

Under the Safety Net in 2019/2020 there was a relaxation of the progression rules for students who undertook taught modules in the period 16 May to 27 September 2020. Under this rule the maximum amount of credit that could be re-sat was increased to 75% of the taught modules on the programme (up to a limit of 90 credits) and where a student had failed between 60-90 credits they were allowed to re-sit this increased amount and, if successful, proceed to their dissertation/project. These rules remain in place for students who undertook taught modules in the period set out above and may be approaching a progression point in 2020/21. The rules regarding deferral of assessments in 2020/21 also interact with the Safety Net for these students.

Progression scenarios

The following table sets out the impact of deferral on PGT progression decisions. This uses a 120:60 credit split programme as an example. For guidance on other programme structures schools should contact the Quality Office.

Credits not yet passed*	Progression Rule	Notes
a) Up to 30 credits	Proceed and take outstanding assessments* alongside dissertation/project	
b) 31 – 45 credits	Proceed and take outstanding assessments* alongside dissertation/project If after re-assessment there are more than 30 credits failed (following two attempts), cease	

	work on project / dissertation and consider for interim award	
c) 46 – 60 credits	Pause work on dissertation until outstanding assessments* taken. If failed modules at that point are worth 30 credits or less, proceed to dissertation or project	Where, following re-assessment, students have a mixture of fails at the first and second attempt as a result of MCs or deferral, contact the Quality Office for advice
d) 61 or more credits (for students commencing in 20/21)	Cease work on the dissertation and attempt outstanding assessments. Outcome will depend on whether outstanding assessments are failed or deferred at the first attempt (see notes).	Where a student has more than 60 credits of modules that have been attempted but failed (at the first attempt) this prevents progression and, following available re-assessment, students should be considered for an interim award. Where a student has only deferred credit or a mixture of failed and deferred assessment at the first attempt, students would only be prevented permanently from proceeding to their dissertation where they have attempted and failed more than 60 credits at the first attempt within this
e) 61 - 90 credits (for students commencing before 2020/21 and covered by the Safety Net)	Pause work on dissertation until outstanding assessments* are taken. If failed modules at that point are worth 30 credits or less, proceed to dissertation or project	Where a student has more than 90 credits of modules that have been attempted but failed (at the first attempt) this prevents progression and, following available re-assessments, students should be considered for an interim award. Where a student has only deferred credit or a mixture of failed and deferred assessment at the first attempt, students would only be prevented permanently from proceeding to their dissertation where they have attempted and failed more than 90 credits at the first attempt within this

f) More than 90 credits ((for students commencing before 2020/21 and covered by the Safety Net)	Cease work on dissertation, undertake re-assessments Outcome will depend on whether outstanding assessments are failed or deferred at the first attempt (see notes).	It is unlikely that students in this scenario will have deferred sufficient credit to be significant in this decision, but where this may be the case please contact the Quality Office.
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* This includes credits which are deferred and are therefore not yet failed but not yet passed at the first attempt.

Safeguard Policy

The full detail of the Safeguard policy on the award and classification of PGT programmes in 2020/21, including those offered on campus or by distance learning is set out in Advice Note 20. The following section summarises the policy.

Application of the Safeguard

The PGT Safeguard for 2021 is complex due to the importance of ensuring equitable application across different student groups. This includes full-time and part-time, campus based and distance learning, and those students who already benefitted from the 2020 Safety Net. The Education Committee and Senate approved the following two principles to then be applied to different student scenarios as appropriate:

- A) *Students should benefit from additional measures that relate to their current stage in their studies.*
- B) *Students should only have any additional measures applied where they have not benefitted sufficiently from the existing measures in place for their cohort.*

Application of the Safeguard to different student groups on the basis of these principles is set out below.

Students commencing a full time programme in September 2020 (CB or DL)

- 1) The project mark required for the award of a merit or distinction classification will be reduced by 3% - to 57% for the award of a merit and 67% for the award of a distinction.
- 2) The credit weighted average threshold for award of a higher classification will be reduced by 1 %

These revised criteria are set out in [Senate Regulation 6 \(exceptional variation for 2021\)](#).

The reduced CWA requirements set out under 2 below will also apply for the calculation of interim/exit awards for students undertaking a 12 month (intended) programme commencing in September 2020.

Students commencing a full time programme in January 2021

The University will review the position in the summer of 2021 based on student module outcome data to establish whether to extend the application of the Safeguard measures to January 2021 starters. Only measures that reflect the impact upon 2020/21 would be considered, namely the reduction of the credit weighted average requirement.

Students on distance learning programmes during 2020/21

Students who were actively studying on distance learning programmes between March and September 2020 were covered by the implementation of the 2019/20 Safety Net.

The following broad scenarios will be applied to award decisions for DL students in 2020/2021. If schools are unsure which scenario may apply to particular students, please contact the DL Hub in the first instance.

Scenario	Measures applied:	Notes
Students who commenced a 12-month DL programme in 2020/21	Full additional Safeguard measures, as for 12-month CB students	
Students who commenced a standard 24-month DL programme in 2020/21	Reduced CWA requirement for overall award, but no reduction to project mark requirement	
Students who commenced their DL studies prior to 2020/21 but study their dissertation/project in 2020/21	No classification measures under the Safeguard, apply the Safety Net measures from 2019/20	Extend the reduction in the dissertation mark requirement for (as per original Safety Net) for this group
Students who commenced their DL studies prior to 2020/21 and study taught modules only in 2020/21	No classification measures under the Safeguard, apply the Safety Net measures	
Students resubmitting modules studied in 2019/20 in 2020/21	No classification measures under the Safeguard, apply the Safety Net measures	As a resubmission students benefit from the policies in place when they originally studied

** CWA reduction not applied. Project/dissertation mark reduction not applied under the Safeguard but may still be applied under the Safety Net (see above)*

Part-time Campus Based Programmes commencing before 2020/21

There are a relatively small number of students undertaking part-time campus based programmes.

Scenario	Measures applied:	Notes
Students who commenced CB PT programme in 2020/21	Review in July 2021 to potentially reduced CWA requirement for overall award, but no reduction to project mark requirement	Equivalent principle as for January starters
Students who commenced their PT CB studies prior to 2020/21 but study their dissertation/project in 2020/21	No classification measures under the Safeguard*, apply the Safety Net measures from 2019/20	Extend the reduction in the dissertation mark requirement for (as per original Safety Net) for this group
Students who commenced their PT CB studies prior to 2020/21 and study taught modules only in 2020/21	No classification measures under the Safeguard, apply the Safety Net measures	

** CWA reduction not applied. Project/dissertation mark reduction not applied under the Safeguard but may still be applied under the Safety Net (see above)*

Safety Net Policy from 2019/2020

The section above sets out where the Safety Net Policy from 2019/2020 will feature in award and classification decisions made in 2020/2021.

Note, students covered by the Safety Net policy will have a benchmark created on the basis of the marks from taught modules studied wholly outside of the **period 16 March to 27 September 2020**. The calculation of the Benchmark will be automated as part of the process of creating the Board report.

Benchmarks will continue to be calculated for students who studied taught modules in the above named period, and these will be denoted on Board reports.

Mitigating Circumstances

Role of Mitigating Circumstances in Board of Examiners' processes

As set out above, the Safeguard measures for 2020/2021 have introduced broad self-certification of mitigating circumstances for students, in the majority of MC categories.

Separate guidance has been published to schools for managing mitigating circumstances in relation to the decisions made at Boards of Examiners. This is available on the SAS Sharepoint [site](#).

Spent and Unspent Mitigation

Boards of Examiners should in particular note the role of Spent and Unspent Mitigation within these decisions.

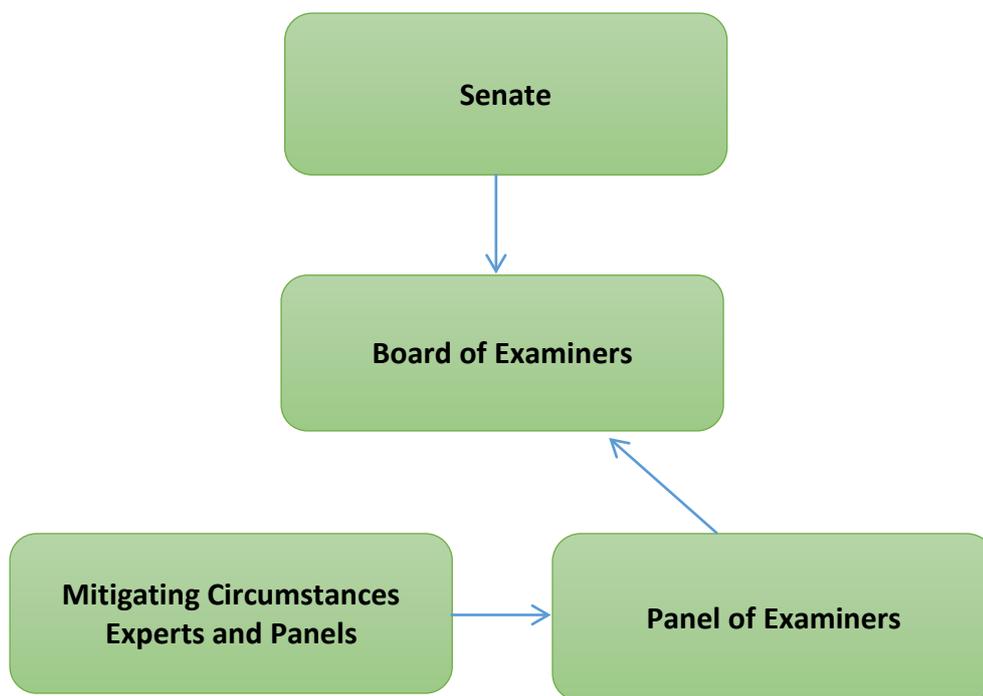
A Board needs to note whether allowance has already been made via the allocation of an approved outcome in line with the Mitigating Circumstances Policy. For example, where a student has submitted an accepted claim for mitigating circumstances which has resulted in the waiving of late penalties, that student has already received an allowance for their circumstances. On this basis, these mitigating circumstances are considered '**spent**'.

Where Mitigating Circumstances are spent, no further allowance should be made for these in the process of award and classification as this would have the effect of double counting the effect of the circumstances.

Where a student has accepted mitigation for which full allowance may not be able to have been taken prior to the Board, these circumstances can be considered '**unspent**'. As such circumstances have not yet been able to taken into account within the MC process, they can be considered as a basis to promote to a higher classification in line with the considerations set out in [general guidance for borderlines](#).

Note – under the 2018/19 regulations that will apply to the majority of three year bachelors graduates in 2021 there is no longer a 'borderline to the borderline' zone. If a student falls outside of the borderline category they are not eligible to be considered for promotion, even in the event of accepted mitigating circumstances.

University Framework for Panels and Boards of Examiners



Boards and Panels of Examiners are in place to evaluate and maintain academic standards, ensure adherence to the Senate Regulations, consider the interests of individual students and ensure fairness across a cohort.

Senate, as the University's academic authority has overriding responsibility for academic standards, including the award of degrees. The University operates a two- tier process of Panels and Boards of Examiners as standard but with the introduction of the Safeguard an additional University level process will be undertaken in 2021.

Boards of Examiners act under delegated authority from Senate which means that they are empowered to make awards on Senate's behalf. Once a Board of Examiners has made an award the student can be formally notified by Student Records. Awards are typically then conferred at the next degree congregation. Due to the cancellation of mass attendance graduation ceremonies in 2021 degrees will as standard be conferred by a meeting of Senate.

A Panel of Examiners is convened for clusters of cognate modules and reports to one or more Boards of Examiners. The University requires that each taught programme is considered at a Board of Examiners.

Mitigating Circumstances Experts and Panels make recommendations to Panels of Examiners for individual assessments in cases where mitigating circumstances are accepted or may recommend that the circumstances are taken into account at the point of award.

Roles and Responsibilities (of Staff involved in Panels and Boards of Examiners)

Chair of the Panel of Examiners

The Chair of a Panel of Examiners is appointed by the Head of School. The Chair is responsible for working with the Secretary to the Panel to ensure that all of the logistical arrangements for the Panel are in place ahead of the event.

Panels of Examiners should typically include a representative able to speak to each module and the distribution of performance both against previous years and in comparison with other modules. While this does not have to be the module convenor the Panel Chair should ensure that each module has sufficient representation.

Where it is not possible to secure input for each module in 2021, the Chair can confirm the outcomes for unrepresented modules on the basis of existing information regarding marking and moderation processes, and marks distribution. Please see the section on [guidance for summer 2021](#) (below).

The Chair should work with the Secretary to the Panel and relevant academic colleagues to review the overall standard of student performance and identify any areas where there appears to be evidence of a significant decrease or increase in student performance in comparison with previous years.

The Chair is responsible for working with module convenors to establish whether there is a case to take any action on marks at module level where this sits significantly outside historic or expected distributions for the module (see Principles on Conduct of Business, below and notes of Guidance for Panels of Examiners – June 2021).

The Chair should typically attend each Board of Examiners to which the Panel contributes marks and be able to inform the Board of any action the Panel has taken regarding student marks. Where this is not possible in 2021 please see **the section on [guidance for summer 2021](#)**.

The role of the Chair of the Panel at meetings is to:

- ensure that proceedings are properly conducted and managed in an efficient manner using the prescribed documentation and members are appropriately briefed;
- where large Panels will be taking place virtually, the Chair should ensure that they are familiar and confident with best practice for managing virtual meetings (see section below) and ensure that all those at the Panel meeting are aware of the principles for how the virtual Panel will operate;
- ensure that each module under the remit of the Panel is considered, in terms of the appropriateness of marking of moderation processes and that the overall mark profile achieved accurately reflects student performance;

- ensure that where a module profile may fall outside of historic or expected distributions this is specifically considered by the Panel and, in the event that action on marks may be necessary, work with the Secretary and the Quality Office to consider appropriate action;
- be responsible for taking any action on behalf of the Panel after the meeting;
- approve the minutes.

Chair of the Board of Examiners

The Chair of a Board of Examiners is a senior member of the academic staff of the school appointed by the Head of School.

The Chair with the Secretary and/or Examinations Officer should meet with the Academic Registrar's Representative (ARR) where one will be attendance, between the Panel and Board meetings to review all of the relevant arrangements for the Board and ensure that any complex cases are flagged to the ARR and discussed in advance of the meeting. It is strongly advised that the Chair attends this meeting in light of the exceptional circumstances of this period.

If there is a vote at a meeting, the Chair will only vote if there is a tie, in which case they will have the casting vote.

The role of the Chair at meetings of Boards of Examiners is to:

- ensure that proceedings are properly conducted and managed in an efficient manner using the prescribed documentation and members are appropriately briefed;
- Where large Boards will be taking place virtually, the Chair should ensure that they are familiar and confident with best practice for managing virtual meetings and ensure that all those at the Board meeting are aware of the principles for how the virtual board will operate;
- ensure familiarity with the Safety Net and Safeguard policies and their impact upon progression and award processes in 2021 as set out within the process, as well as any specific local requirements such as alternative benchmarks or PSRB requirements, and be able to summarise these in the Board meeting where required;
- ensure that students are treated equitably and in accordance with programme regulations and University regulations for progression and award, guiding the Board to clear recommendations and decisions
- ensure that where External Examiners are present, they are invited to comment on the proceedings and arrangements for the Board, assessment and marking practices and any other matters which they consider relevant

- be responsible for taking any action on behalf of the Board after the meeting
- ensure that External Examiners have the opportunity to contribute to the meeting, throughout the main business and also under the specific item for External Examiner reports
- sign the Board Report (electronically if required) as an accurate record of the meeting
- approve the minutes

Chair's Action

The Chair of a Panel or Board of Examiners may have delegated powers to act between meetings in relation to deferred decisions where the Panel or Board has agreed that the Chair should act on its behalf. Such cases may arise where a student's profile of marks is incomplete or further clarification is required before a decision can be reached.

Chair's action may only be taken on other occasions where there are urgent circumstances which mean that waiting for the next scheduled Panel or Board of Examiners would unnecessarily delay a student's normal progression or conferment of award. The decision on whether or not to take Chair's action rests with the Chair although advice may be sought from the Quality Office. Chair's action should be avoided where an issue is likely to be contentious.

Chair's action will normally fall into one of the following categories:

1. Administrative action, for example where it is necessary to correct an error and the resulting recalculation of marks
2. Delegated action, for example where the Board has given the Chair authority to act on its behalf following consideration of a case at its previous meeting
3. Academic action, for example, where it is necessary to make a decision which requires the exercise of academic judgement in order to allow a student to progress or be awarded in a timely fashion

A formal report on Chair's action should be made to Student Records on the appropriate form (see [appendices](#)). A report of actions taken should be made to the next scheduled meeting of the Board and recorded in its minutes.

For the midsummer 2021 assessment process, the deadline for receipt of Chair's action for processing is **9 July 2021**. **Where a school is concerned that the timescale for their board processes may not meet this deadline please contact the Quality Office urgently.**

Internal Examiners

Internal Examiners are members of the academic staff of the University. These are distinct from internal markers who may include associate tutors or postgraduate research students.

Senate Regulations state that all summative work that contributes towards the calculation of a student's degree classification must be subject to a system of moderation by an internal examiner, and the various marking practices are set out in SR7.10. Any first marking of any summative work, at any level of a programme, that is undertaken by an internal marker must also be subject to a system of moderation by an internal examiner.

Internal examiners are present at Boards of Examiners to ensure equality of decision making across students and the programme(s).

External Examiners

The role and responsibilities of External Examiners are articulated in Senate Regulations 7.37 - 7.48.

In 2020/21 a number of changes have been made to the process of assessment for students. The University has informed External Examiners of the high level policy and regulatory changes that have been put in place such as the movement to online assessment and the introduction of the Safety Net Policy.

One or more external examiner is typically required to be present at each Board of Examiners where awards are being made. **Please see the section on [guidance for summer 2021](#) for advice on where externals may not be able to attend or there are external examining vacancies.**

If an external examiner is unexpectedly unable to attend a Board of Examiners where their presence is required advice should be sought from the Head of Quality, Student Records and Compliance on the appropriate course of action.

External Examiners should, wherever possible, be provided with the opportunity to meet with students. Schools can make arrangements for External Examiners to meet students virtually where they and the External Examiners feel this is possible.

External Examiners are equal members of the Board and should participate in the transaction of its business.

External Examiners are not the final arbiter of marks or grades either within a module or for final award. They may not therefore seek or be invited to raise or lower marks for individual students or subsets of students. They may, however, request that marks be re-visited across a whole cohort if they consider there is evidence of under- or over-marking or they have concerns about its robustness. **Where concerns are raised by External Examiners in advance of a Board this should be raised to the Quality Office immediately.**

External Examiners should be requested to endorse, or not, the decisions of a Board of Examiners rather than decisions relating to individual students.

Where present External Examiners should sign the agreed final record of the Board's proceedings to confirm their satisfaction with the process of assessment and academic

standards. As set out above, where external examiners are not present please contact the Quality Office.

External Examiners are also required to approve interim awards (Cert HE, Dip HE or PGT interim awards) as these are still awards of the University. Where only interim awards are due to be made at an otherwise progression focussed board, this approval can be undertaken by correspondence without requiring external attendance. External Examiners are also required to approve, by correspondence, a change to an award previously agreed by a Board, and awarding of a student who was missing from a previous Board. Where there may be external examiner vacancies please contact the Quality Office for advice on sign off processes.

Further information on working with External Examiners ahead of virtual boards and the provision of sample assessment is provided under **Operational Guidance** below.

Secretary

The Secretary to Panels and Boards of Examiners is appointed by the Head of School. As indicated above the Secretary may be supported by other administrators but retains overall responsibility for ensuring key functions are performed. The Secretary to a Board of Examiners should be a member of the administrative staff of the relevant school(s) or Cluster with appropriate experience and an understanding of both the programme(s) and Senate Regulations.

The role of the Secretary is to:

- ensure that dates of meetings are agreed well in advance with the Chair and notified to members and Student Records, any subsequent changes are notified to members and Student Records at the earliest opportunity
- ensure that External Examiners have all the necessary information ahead of the Board and facilitate their virtual attendance at Boards
- ensure that the necessary administrative arrangements are made in advance of meetings
- draft agendas in consultation with the Chair and circulate them in advance of the meeting
- liaise with Student Records with respect to the production of documentation, and providing paperwork in a suitable electronic format ahead of the board meeting
- ensure that the Board is familiar with programme regulations and University regulations for progression and award, including the specific regulatory and policy amendments in place for 2021
- liaise where necessary with the Data Officer and the Academic Registrar's Representative in order to ensure that any complex cases are identified and discussed in

advance, and the processes for entering the data and releasing results to students are clear

- ensure that a formal record of attendance is maintained
- produce full and accurate minutes, including, in the case of Boards of Examiners, full details of individual student cases as this is essential should a student appeal or submit a complaint to the OIA. Minutes should be drafted **within one week of the meeting taking place**, and should be considered as part of the documentation for the following meeting of the Board
- ensure that the Panel and Board reports are annotated to reflect decisions taken at the meeting, clearly marking to either indicate that the decision is as recorded on the report and there is no change or there are changes. Guidance on annotating electronic Board reports virtually is available below;
- following the meeting ensure that decisions are updated on the relevant student record system, working with the designated Data Officer where appropriate
- ensure that the formal paperwork is signed by the Chair and External Examiner(s) (where present) and delivered to Student Records (note the ARR is not required to sign Board paperwork).
- ensure that a record of prizes is made and that these are forwarded to the Quality Office after the meeting
- ensure compliance with GDPR requirements relating to the remote access and storage of Panel and Board reports (see below)
- follow up any deferred decisions and work with the Chair to ensure that a formal report of Chair's action is made where appropriate.

Academic Registrar's Representative

An Academic Registrar's Representative is a member of the administrative staff of the University who attends each meeting of a Board of Examiners where awards are made to students. An Academic Registrar's Representative must be present at Boards of Examiners where awards are made.

They are responsible for:

- working with the Chair and the Secretary ahead of the meeting to identify complex cases for which additional information may be required to support the Board's consideration
- advising the Board on Senate Regulations and their interpretation, taking into account any variations approved for a particular programme, and any broader regulatory matters

- intervening in cases where an improper decision may be made or advising the Academic Registrar where a decision is taken against their advice
- taking notes of key decisions made in relation to individual students (the Academic Registrar's Representative is not responsible for keeping the formal record of the meeting or taking minutes)

For full details of the ARR role and particular issues for this academic year will be provided to ARRs separately. Any queries about the role of the ARR or the operation of a Board of Examiners should be referred to the Academic Services Manager (Quality and Standards).

Principles on the Conduct of Business

Panels of Examiners

Role of Panel of Examiners

Panels are concerned with a particular group of modules and provide the opportunity for the discussion of results at module level.

Panels will consider the performance of every student registered on specified modules regardless of their programme of study or the school in which they are registered.

Their role is to:

- consider the pattern of student achievement for individual modules
- ensure that marking and moderation processes are working effectively
- review marks across modules to identify any unexpected trends, for example significantly lower or higher marks profiles than anticipated, it may decide further investigation is required
- act on recommendations from Mitigating Circumstances Experts and Panels
- agree marks and module outcomes to report to Boards of Examiners
- approve the award of re-assessment opportunities for students
- agree the release of provisional module outcomes to students. Any results released to students following a Panel must be marked as provisional and subject to approval by the relevant Board of Examiners. Note: In the summer assessment period module outcomes will be released to students after Boards of Examiners, not after Panels.

Membership of Panel

The membership of a Panel of Examiners normally consists of:

1. A Chair appointed by the Head of School
2. Module convenors for all of the modules due to be considered by the Panel
3. A Secretary (a member of the school's administrative staff), appointed by the Head of School is in attendance

Where possible the minimum requirement for attendance at the Panel of Examiners shall be the Chair and the convenor, or exceptionally a named deputy, for each of the modules under consideration. The deputy should be a member of staff with some involvement with the module, such as the second marker or member of the module teaching team.

Where it is not possible to achieve representation of every module within the remit of the panel in the summer of 2021, please see the section on [guidance for summer 2021](#) below.

Where colleagues have any queries about the operation of Panels under these circumstances and where decisions can or cannot be made please contact the Quality Office via qualoff@le.ac.uk.

Principles on the Conduct of Business

- A Panel of Examiners should meet at the end of each block of teaching and assessment
- The timing of meetings will depend on the nature of the programme
- For campus-based programmes Panels will meet at the end of each semester
- For distance-learning programmes Panels will meet according to the pattern of teaching but should meet at least twice a year
- Panel meetings will follow a standard agenda
- The business of Panels is confidential
- Panels of Examiners will receive and act upon recommendations from Mitigating Circumstances Experts and Panels for individual students
- Panels use a standard data set from SITS to enable them to conduct their business, unless dispensation has been granted by the Learning and Teaching Committee

A separate meeting of the Panel of Examiners will not take place following the second assessment period unless, in the judgement of the Chair of the Board of Examiners, there are a significant number of re-assessment outcomes under consideration, for which a separate analysis of patterns of student achievement could usefully be undertaken. Where a Panel is not held, the consideration of marking and moderation practice will be undertaken by the Board of Examiners.

Action upon Marks

Panels of Examiners will play a critical role in reviewing patterns of student performance across modules and establishing whether there have been significant changes in the profile of marks compared to previous years which may require further action to be taken.

The assessment setting, marking and moderation process is subject to internal and external checks. As such the marks produced and considered by Panels of Examiners should be an accurate representation of student performance. Notwithstanding this general principle, Panels of Examiners may identify modules where the pattern of performance appears to be out of line with the wider cohort or historic trends.

[Additional guidance on the operation of Panels of Examiners](#) is provided by the Quality Office and sets out in detail the processes that should be followed for the initial review of student outcomes and how to determine whether any further action may be required.

Where a Panel of Examiners feels that the mark distribution on multiple modules is significantly out of line with previous or expected performance, this should be flagged to the Quality Office and the Dean of Education for the College urgently. Any potential requirement to scale or norm reference at module level will be considered on a case by case basis and will require the approval of the Academic Registrar in consultation with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education).

In such cases, any scaling undertaken by Panels will require ratification by the relevant Board of Examiners.

Boards of Examiners

A Board of Examiners is the body responsible for overseeing each student's academic performance on the relevant programmes and for making decisions on progression based on assessment results.

A Board ensures that students are treated consistently and fairly and that appropriate academic standards are maintained.

Heads of School are responsible for deciding how Boards of Examiners are organised for their school and for the programmes for which a Board is responsible. For example, Boards of Examiners may encompass more than one level of a programme or more than one programme. Alternatively, separate meetings may be held to consider award and progression decisions.

Role of Board of Examiners

The role of a Board of Examiners is to:

- confirm the module outcomes received from one or more Panels of Examiners and ratify any action which may have been taken on marks at a module level
- consider the academic performance of individual students
- agree awards and classifications, in accordance with Senate Regulations
- make award and classification decisions in line with the application of the revised policies and regulations in place for 2021
- consider borderline cases at undergraduate level (see p22 of this handbook for further guidance)
- agree progression decisions in accordance with Senate Regulations, including termination of studies on the grounds of academic failure
- ensure the appropriateness of marking practices for the modules across the programmes for which it has responsibility

- agree the award of school prizes, and make recommendations for the award of college or University prizes
- consider comments from External Examiners (where they are present)

Membership of the Board

The normal membership of a Board of Examiners is:

- The Chair, who shall be a senior member of the academic staff of the school, appointed by the Head of School
- Two members of each Panel of Examiners which contributes marks to the Board, one of whom is normally the Chair of the Panel. Where a Board receives a small number of module marks for a wide variety of Panels, the precise requirement for Panel representation should be discussed in advance with the Quality Office
- The Programme Leader or Chair of the Board of Studies or equivalent for each programme to be considered
- For Boards where awards are being made, External Examiners for each of the subjects or groups of subjects within the remit of the Board
- Such other members of the academic staff nomination by the Head of School, as are necessary to make informed progression and award decisions

The following are also be in attendance at Board of Examiners meetings:

- A Secretary (a member of the school's or school's administrative staff), appointed by the Head of School and other administrative staff as appropriate, who shall take notes which shall include an account of any discussion in relation to difficult cases and annotate the data set/Board reports;
- An Academic Registrar's Representative, where awards are being made.

Under standard regulations the minimum requirement for attendance at Board of Examiners is 75% of the members named under 1, 2, 3 and 4 above and must include the Chair. Where a board is meeting to consider progression only External Examiners described under 4 are excluded from this requirement.

In the summer of 2021 where it is not possible to achieve the full quoracy set out above the University has issued additional [Notes of Guidance on the Operation of Panels and Boards](#). Where required, a Board of Examiners can continue to operate and make decisions as long as the following minimum requirements are met:

- Chair
- At least one representative of a contributing Panel of Examiners

- Secretary
- ARR (For awarding Boards)

If a meeting of the Board does not meet this quoracy requirement, advice should be sought from the Quality Office.

Principles on the Conduct of Business

- Boards of Examiners must meet at the end of assessment and re-assessment cycles to ensure that award decisions are made at the appropriate time to allow students to graduate or to receive progression decisions.
- Board meetings will follow a standard agenda
- Boards will be provided with a standard data set from SITS by Student Records, unless a dispensation has been approved by the Education Committee
- Boards will confirm the module outcomes reported by one or more Panel of Examiners
- Boards will consider and confirm award decisions in line with the appropriate Senate Regulations, noting the policies and regulatory amendments in place for 2021;
- Boards will, where and if appropriate, consider students who fall into defined borderline categories for promotion to a higher classification
- Boards will consider and confirm progression decisions
- Boards should separate the consideration of award and progression decisions, so as to ensure that the business which requires the input of colleagues external to the school is normally considered early in the meeting
- Boards will receive and consider comments from External Examiners
- The Board of Examiners' Report is the primary record of the Board's decisions and authority and should be signed as an accurate record by the Chair, and by the external examiner when awards are being made, at the end of each meeting. Note: Please remember that Board paperwork must always be signed. A progression Board's paperwork must be signed by the Chair and if it is an awarding Board the paperwork should also be signed by the External Examiner/s (**note advice below**). Where a virtual/online Board is being held 'signing' can be done via email providing the email is sent from a verified email account i.e. a university's or organisation's email address. If the Board is making awards, an ARR should also have been allocated and will need to be included in any correspondence chain as well as any virtual/online meetings
- In cases where a decision is deferred the Board will require the Chair to take action on its behalf at a later date using the process detailed in the section on Chair's action below.

Guidance for Summer 2021

The University has issued notes of guidance for the operation of Panels and Boards in light of the circumstances of summer 2021. These are reproduced below.

Additional guidance may be provided by the University for the management of assessment, progression and award during this period. Where possible this guidance will be incorporated into subsequent versions of this handbook, but may be provided separately where appropriate.

The University is currently developing guidance for Boards where there are incomplete mark profiles and this will be published as soon as possible.

Notes of Guidance for the operation of Panels and Boards, May 2021 onwards

Purpose

This guidance applies to Panels and Boards of Examiners that are due to take place from May 2021 onwards. This guidance will be further developed over time with additional information on the operation of Panels and Boards in the main summer assessment round, in June and July.

Non-attendance at Panels and Boards of Examiners is within the scope of Action Short of a Strike (ASOS) being undertaken by members of the Universities and Colleges Union (UCU) which commenced on 4 May 2021.

This guidance is to support colleagues managing the assessment process during this period.

PART 1: PANELS OF EXAMINERS

Purpose and Role

Panels are concerned with a particular group of modules and provide the opportunity for the discussion of results at module level. Panels consider the performance of every student registered on specified modules regardless of their programme of study or the school in which they are registered.

Their role is to:

- consider the pattern of student achievement for individual modules
- ensure that marking and moderation processes have operated appropriately
- review marks across modules to identify any unexpected trends, for example significantly lower or higher marks profiles than anticipated, and decide whether further investigation is required
- act on recommendations from Mitigating Circumstances Experts and Panels
- agree marks and module outcomes to report to Boards of Examiners

- approve the award of re-assessment opportunities for students
- agree the release of provisional module outcomes to students (note, this does not occur in the midsummer assessment round).

Membership and Quoracy

ASOS may impact upon staff attendance at Panels of Examiners. While convenors or deputies would normally comment on individual modules as part of the Panel process, the ultimate purpose of a Panel is to confirm that the outcomes are an accurate and appropriate reflection of student performance. It is possible to provide this confirmation on the basis other sources of information (see below) and therefore Panels can proceed if every module is not represented by a convenor or deputy. Where ASOS means that not all modules are represented by the convenor or a named deputy the Panel can still go ahead as long as there are a Chair, and at least 2 other internal members of academic staff representing modules within the remit of the Panel. There must also be a Secretary.

The Chair of a Panel of Examiners is nominated by the Head of School. Heads should nominate an alternative Chair or deputy to be available in the event the named Chair is unable to perform the role due to ASOS.

Schools are encouraged to seek representation for as many of the modules as possible at the Panel meeting, but the above constitution is the minimum required to confirm outcomes.

Duration of meetings

Panel meetings will typically exceed 50 minutes if there are a substantial number of modules to consider. It is not uncommon for colleagues to be unable to attend for the whole meeting and where this is known in advance the meeting agenda can be arranged to facilitate early consideration of particular modules. Where it is not possible to conclude consideration of all modules within 50 minutes the Panel can continue beyond this point and still make valid decisions with regards to module outcomes as long as it continues to meet the above minimum quoracy requirements.

Operation of Panels

Where a Panel has a complete set of marks for all modules under consideration but not all modules are represented by staff attending the Panel (due to ASOS) the Panel should still take place to approve the module outcomes as presented. The Panel should confirm:

- a) That a full set of assessment marks has been received for the module allowing module marks to be derived;
- b) That evidence is available of appropriate marking and moderation processes having taken place for the assessments in question (see below). This should be confirmed in advance and the Secretary should be able to report to the Panel.
- c) That the outcomes are not substantially out of line with other modules considered by the panel or the broad historic pattern of achievement for the module in question.

Where the Panel is able to confirm a)-c) above, the Panel can proceed to approve the module outcomes in the event that the module convenor or deputy do not attend, subject to the reduced quoracy requirements set out above. Please see the following section for additional information on approaching criteria b).

As a general principle where a Panel meeting is taking place it should consider all modules within its remit for which a)-c) above apply. The Panel should not automatically be postponed to allow any outstanding information to be received. Where it appears that marks will not be available in time for the Panel please contact the Quality Office (qualoffice@le.ac.uk) to discuss the most appropriate course of action, including whether it should be postponed if marks are expected to be available at a later date but before the relevant Board of Examiners.

Where the Panel is not able to confirm a)-c) above for a module or modules(s) advice should be sought separately from the Quality Office.

Marking and Moderation

There may be circumstances where the University needs to operate alternative marking and moderation processes from May 2021. Any revised processes will continue to ensure that academic standards are maintained. Where schools are considering altering marking and moderation practices, they should raise this issue to the Quality Office ahead of, or if necessary, during the marking and moderation window, via qualoffice@le.ac.uk. This request should set out what alternative processes for marking and moderation that they wish to put in place for this period, and confirmation of how these will still ensure the maintenance of academic standards.

Requests for changes to standard school marking and moderation processes for individual or groups of modules require approval from the Academic Registrar, who will work with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) and the relevant College Deans of Education as required.

In the absence of the Academic Registrar the Acting Head of Quality and Student Records will co-ordinate consideration of requests for alterations to marking and moderation processes.

PART 2: BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

Purpose and Role

A Board of Examiners is the body responsible for overseeing each student's academic performance on the relevant programmes and for making decisions on progression, award and classification based on assessment results.

The role of a Board of Examiners is to:

- confirm the module outcomes received from one or more Panels of Examiners and ratify any action which may have been taken on marks at a module level
- consider the academic performance of individual students

- agree awards and classifications, in accordance with Senate Regulations
- consider borderline cases at undergraduate level
- agree progression decisions in accordance with Senate Regulations
- ensure the appropriateness of marking practices for the modules across the programmes for which it has responsibility
- agree the award of prizes
- consider comments from External Examiners (where they are present)

Membership and Quoracy

The standard quoracy for a Board of Examiners is set out in Senate Regulation 7 and schools should aim for this requirement to be met where possible. Where this is not possible the minimum requirement for quoracy of a Board of Examiners for the purposes of progression decisions is:

- Chair
- An academic representative from at least one contributing Panel of Examiners
- Secretary

The requirement for quoracy for a Board of Examiners where awards are due to be made is the above plus:

- An Academic Registrar's Representative (ARR)

The University maintains a register of trained Chairs of Boards of Examiners. Where schools wish to include additional Chairs please contact the Quality Office (qualoffice@le.ac.uk). Schools are advised to have more than one trained Board Chair as standard. Heads of School retain overall responsibility for the security of the assessment process and therefore may also act as Chairs of Boards of Examiners, with refresher training from the Quality Office where required.

Where a school may not be able to meet these quoracy requirements this should be raised urgently to the Quality Office. The Academic Registrar will be authorised to approve individual board arrangements as may be required.

External Examiners

There may be scenarios where one or more External Examiners are unable to attend the board meeting.

Where an external examiner has indicated in advance that they are not able to attend a board due to logistical difficulties (not as a result of resignation or boycott) they should be asked to provide written comments in advance to feed into the Board in order to confirm overall academic standards and their review of marking and moderation processes.

Where an external examiner raises any concerns about marks or overall standards in advance of the Board these should be highlighted urgently to the Quality Office.

Where there are instances of vacancies in external examiner coverage within a subject area the school should work with the Quality Office in the first instance to establish whether coverage can be achieved from among other appointed external examiners.

Where a subject area is not able to be adequately covered via the above arrangements, advice should be sought from the Quality Office. In general, the University will seek to proceed with boards wherever possible as long as

- a) there is a full set of marks that have been approved by the relevant Panel(s) of Examiners
- b) the relevant Panel(s) of Examiners has confirmed that quality assurance processes such as external sign off for assessment setting, internal marking and moderation have taken place to an appropriate standard (see section on marking and moderation above)
- c) the Board is quorate with respect to internal membership as set out above

In the unlikely event that an External Examiner attends a Board but refuses to approve awards for any reason, the Board should be temporarily suspended whilst the issue is raised with the Academic Registrar who will make a decision on how to proceed in consultation with the PVC (Education) and relevant Dean of Education.

Duration of meetings

Boards will typically exceed 50 minutes. It is not uncommon for colleagues to be unable to attend for the whole meeting and where this is known in advance the meeting agenda can be arranged to facilitate early consideration of particular items – for example joint degrees. Where it is not possible to conclude consideration of all business within 50 minutes the Board can continue beyond this point and still make valid progression, award and classification decisions as long as it continues to meet the above minimum quoracy requirements.

Operation of Boards

Where it is known in advance that marks for one or more modules will not be available for a Board of Examiners due to ASOS or industrial action this should be raised to the Quality Office in advance of the Board via qualoff@le.ac.uk

The potential absence of marks should not automatically cause a board to be postponed and schools are requested to consult urgently with the Quality Office to determine actions.

Further advice on reaching progression and award decisions in the event of missing marks will be issued in due course.

Operational Guidance for the Board Period

Documentation for the Board Period

The Board of Examiners process for the majority of taught programmes is supported by the data held in the University student records system (SITS). A small number of programmes with the approval of the Learning and Teaching Committee do not currently utilise this system, and in these cases assessment data is provided by the school in question.

Boards of Examiners will have the following documentation:

- A standard agenda (see [appendices](#))
- A standard dataset of student marks. For SITS supported programmes this dataset is provided from the student record system SITS via a Business Objects report at <http://crs.le.ac.uk> in the folder **Student Lifecycle > Students > Panel and Board**

The Secretary should liaise with their Data Officer with respect to the production of documentation, ensuring that Board reports are made available. Business Objects can be accessed remotely so the reports can be made available to Board members.

As set out above, where Safeguard measures have been applied these will appear automatically in the calculated outcomes for students. Schools will be informed separately which measures have been applied.

In addition, the Secretary should ensure that the following are available for consultation:

- Programme Specification(s) for all programmes under consideration by the Board
- Senate Regulations 5, 6, 7 and 11

Board reports

For 2020/21, there have been a number of enhancements to the redesigned Board of Examiners reports to reflect the policy and regulatory amendments set out elsewhere in this handbook, in addition to improvements to formatting and functionality. Further guidance on using the new Board reports can be found in the Appendices.

Safety Net

The board reports have been amended to reflect the student CWA if calculated under the 2019/20 Safety Net policy. The report will denote the type of CWA used for the purposes of progression/awarding:

^I = Initial CWA

^B = Benchmark CWA

For example (Level 2):

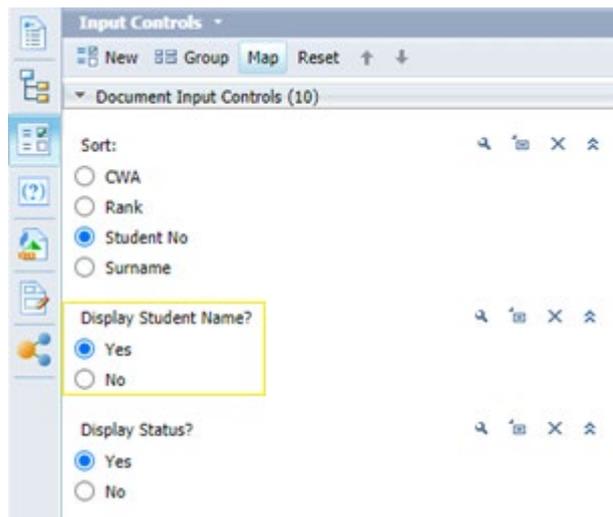
History and American Studies BA (Count: 8)

	Status	Final CWA	Calc Class	Award Rank	RREs	Prog. Code	Level 1 CWA	Level 2 CWA	Level 3 CWA
169014237	Current	53.11	2.2	5	N	S	65.23	72.75^B	43.44
179018268	Current	49.03	2.2	6	Y	S	58.38	65.86^I	40.74
189003085	Current	58.65	2.1B	3	N	S	63.69	70.13^I	53.00
189010130	Current	62.16	2.1	1	N	S	62.38	64.49^I	61.01
189010843	Current	53.88	2.2	4	N	S	60.74	63.23^I	49.28
189017541	Current	59.91	DipHE	8	Y		58.25	60.73^B	44.96
189021346	Current	62.22	DipHE	7	Y	MM	54.54	66.00^B	31.25
189021372	Current	61.11	2.1	2	Y	S	62.80	69.30^B	57.08
		57.51				Avg	60.75	66.56	47.60

Avg X0

Anonymised Board Reports

There are no longer static anonymised/non-anonymised versions of the Board reports. The input control “Display Student Name?” allows the user to anonymise the report by hiding the Surname and Forename columns.



Attempt Number

The Summary page shows the sum of module credits (where a Resit Recommendation has been generated) at each attempt number. The addition of attempt number makes it clear when further attempts beyond the normal first sit, and one resit, are to be awarded at the Board’s discretion.

The module mark scheme will determine if the reassessment attempt will be automatically uncapped, allowing access to the full marking scale for this second attempt.

Module Data

The Level tabs (UG only) show the sum of failed credits contributing to the final award where no further attempt is available, and the sum of failed Level 1 credits. For UG students under Senate Regulate 5 2018/9, Compensated Fails are included in the sum of failed credits.

Automatic pass modules are excluded from the CWA calculations to ensure CWA is based only on the partial credit achieved.

Modules that run in more than one term/semester will display as “Multi-Period” as opposed to one column for each period in the module results table.

Sort Orders

CWA has been updated to sort awarding students by Final CWA (irrespective of intended/interim award), and progressing students by the CWA for their current level.

Rank has been updated to rank awarding students by Award (intended awards being ranked higher than interim awards), Classification and Final CWA.

Additional Conditional Formatting

Conditional formatting of module results now includes modules that were failed with mitigating circumstances, where a first (uncapped) sit is available.

The student number column shows Repeat Year students - i.e. students who have the same Level, Route and Intended Award as a previous Board for which the outcome was “RY”.

NB: The addition/removal of a Year Abroad/in Industry will not display as a Repeat Year as the student has changed Route (e.g. Geography with a Year Abroad BSc → Geography BSc).

Key Page

Where previously the key was held in the report footer, which would not export to Excel, the new Board reports contain a single page that provides a key for: progression codes, attempt number, module result/CWA conditional formatting and student number conditional formatting. In addition, it also provides a summary of display/sort options selected by the user.

Working with External Examiners

External Examiners have received central University communications with details on the policy and regulatory amendments that the University has made in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Where a school has a vacancy in external examining for this round of boards please contact the Quality Office for advice.

As noted above, External Examiners should, wherever possible, be provided with the opportunity to meet with students virtually where the school and the External Examiners feel this is possible.

External Examiners should be given the opportunity to reflect on the year's assessment process and the standards achieved by students on the programme along with any other matters they consider relevant. There is an item on the standard agenda to facilitate this. The University recognises that for certain programmes External Examiners would normally expect to undertake an extended visit to the University and review samples of student assessment. As the majority of assessment in many subject areas has been undertaken online it should be possible for Externals to review this remotely but if there are any concerns please contact the Quality Office.

The University recognises that it will not be possible for a full sample of all assessments to be provided virtually/digitally (for example physical examinations stored on campus). Schools should agree an approach with their External Examiners so that the External Examiners receive a suitable sample in order to confirm academic standards. To support this schools should make provision where possible for External Examiners to have access to a sample of any electronic assessment for modules where this exists. Where there is no electronic assessment, Schools should work with their Externals to agree provision of a sample that provides coverage of marking, moderation and academic standards across the programme from what is available.

External Examiners are not the final arbiter of marks or grades either within a module or for final award. They may not therefore seek or be invited to raise or lower marks for individual students or subsets of students. They may, however, request that marks be re-visited across a whole cohort if they consider there is evidence of under- or over-marking or they have concerns about its robustness. **Where concerns are raised by External Examiners in advance of a Board this should be raised to the Quality Office immediately.**

Preparing for Online Board meetings

Platform

Following feedback from schools and the continuing impact of the pandemic, all Boards during the summer of 2021 will take place electronically and, Boards of Examiners' meetings will take place online via scheduled virtual meetings.

The University recommends online meetings are held using Microsoft Teams.

GDPR Compliance

When sharing data online, all staff should ensure that they are doing so securely and if emailing Board reports ahead of the meeting, please ensure that passwords are used to protect files.

In light of recent University regulation change, all Boards of Examiners consideration of students should now be conducted anonymously and the board report has been revised for this purpose.

Due to GDPR restrictions Board reports and other University documentation **should not be saved to personal devices or printed at home**. Files should ideally only be viewed on University devices only (or through Remote Desktop). No electronic versions should be saved onto anything other than University devices. This includes not saving data in personal cloud based

storage. Colleagues should have access to a secure shared drive or Microsoft Teams area within their school where reports can be saved but if not, this should be escalated to School managers. As noted above, given that External Examiners will not have UoL devices they should only be provided with anonymised versions of board reports, which should be deleted immediately after use.

The Secretary should ensure that confidential documents are permanently deleted or processed in line with GDPR and the University's retention schedule.

Working with Data Officers

The Secretary should liaise where necessary with the Data Officer in order to ensure that any complex cases are identified and discussed in advance. Meetings between Board Secretaries and Data Officers will be online at this time. It is important that Board Secretaries and Data Officers meet online so that changes to any progression information generated by SITS can be explained clearly and both parties know that the information being entered into SITS and sent to students is correct.

Following the Board meeting the Secretary ensures that decisions are updated on the relevant student record system, working with the designated Data Officer where appropriate, ensuring that all re-sit recommendations are amended via My Student Record (Re-assessment Recommendations screen) i.e. entering any dates that assessments are due or providing extra information for students on how to submit/resubmit. This should be done using My Student Record which can be accessed remotely. Colleagues should note that with resit recommendations, if a student has mitigating circumstances against one assessment element, SITS will apply mitigating circumstances to any other resits on the module and colleagues will need to manually amend these to "resit" or "resubmit" instead of "sit" or "submit", and then manually cap them.

Conducting a virtual Panel or Board meeting

Board Secretaries and Chairs may find it useful to consult the University guidelines for governance and management committees available here:

<https://www2.le.ac.uk/institution/covid19-meetings-guidance>. The section on pages 4-5 provides guidance for Chairs of meetings.

See above for more detailed guidance on the roles of key colleagues, such as the Board Chair in this exceptional period.

Documenting the Board Meeting

During online Boards it will be even more important than usual to keep clear and precise notes during the Board so that schools can explain why a decision was made in case of queries at a later date. Where possible schools may wish to draft in another staff member to assist with this and taking minutes.

Attendance

The Secretary should ensure that a formal record of attendance of the Online Board meeting is maintained.

Board Reports

The Secretary should ensure that the Board reports are annotated to reflect decisions taken at the meeting, clearly marking to either indicate that the decision is as recorded on the report and there is no change (e.g. by a tick at the end of the entry) or there are changes (e.g. by crossing out the original decision and adding/updating information). All notes should be clear with no room for misinterpretation. Ensure that for each student where a progression decision has changed from the one that was system generated, there is an explanation for this change e.g.:

- F to R “Board opted for resits over termination”
- F to T “Student failed AB1111 which cannot be retaken so they must be terminated”
- P to SL “Student now withdrawn. Lower award made”
- MM to CA “Missing marks to be entered via Chair’s Action by 01/01/01”

As well as annotating the Board report, ensure that a list is kept of any changes to SITS generated decisions and that this is shared with the Data Officer. This ensures that Data Officers can double check that within SITS they have made the rights changes to the right students.

Business Objects reports in PDF can be annotated either using software (such as Adobe available from the Software Centre) or can be opened using Excel and annotated within the workbook. If the Secretary is exporting Board reports into Excel, they should ensure that any changes made to data are annotated so that the data can also be changed in SITS. It is not possible to annotate the reports manually at this time as paper Board reports cannot be securely stored. A copy of the digitally annotated Board report will need to be submitted to the Data Officer. The Secretary should ensure that this is done before the annotated report is deleted.

The Secretary should follow up any deferred decisions and work with the Chair to ensure that a formal report of Chair’s action is made where appropriate.

Prizes

Where relevant the Secretary should ensure that a record of prizes is made and that these details are entered into the prize log following instructions from the Quality Office after the meeting. There may be some prizes where the criteria mean that it is not possible to award under current circumstances.

The deadline for return of prize information to the Quality Office is **9 July 2021**.

Signing the Paperwork

Please remember that Board paperwork must always be signed by the Chair. For awards this should also be signed by the External but please see above for advice on where an external may not be present. Where an online/virtual Board is being held ‘signing’ can be done via email

providing the email is sent from a verified email account i.e. a university's or organisation's email address. The email should confirm that the sender agrees with the outcomes of the Board.

Minutes

The Secretary should produce full and accurate minutes, including full details of individual student cases (but not personal details of mitigating circumstances) as this is essential should a student appeal or submit a complaint to the OIA. Minutes should be drafted **within one week of the meeting taking place**, and should be considered as part of the documentation for the following meeting of the Board.

Appendices

Any queries about the principles relating to the operation of Boards of Examiners or the interpretation of Regulations should be referred to qualoffice@le.ac.uk

Any queries relating to documentation, record keeping or processes for Boards should be referred to studentrecords@le.ac.uk

Useful sources are linked to below:

[Advice Note 4](#)

[Advice Note 5 \(UG Safety Net from 2020\) - for reference](#)

[Advice Note 8 \(PGT Safety Net from 2020\) - for reference](#)

[Advice Note 17](#)

[Advice Note 18](#)

[Advice Note 19](#)

[Advice Note 20](#)

[Advice Note 21](#)

[Senate Regulation 5 \(2018/19 version – for most year 3 graduates\)](#)

[Senate Regulation 5 \(2017/18 version – for year 4 graduates\)](#)

[Senate Regulation 6](#)

[Senate Regulation 7: Regulations governing the assessment of taught programmes](#)

[Senate Regulation 11: Regulations governing student discipline](#)

[Template Agenda Board of Examiners](#)

[Template Attendance List Board of Examiners](#)

[Template Minutes of Boards of Examiners](#)

[Template Chair's action form](#)

[Undergraduate grading structure - assessment marks](#)

[Postgraduate grading structure - assessment marks](#)

[Undergraduate grading structure - module marks](#)

[Postgraduate grading structure - module marks](#)[Guidance on using the new Board Report](#)