

ACADEMIC REGISTRAR'S DIVISION

Instructions for Examiners for Undergraduate
and Taught Graduate Programmes

2015-2016

Instructions for Examiners for Taught Programmes 2015-2016

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The School expects any collaborative arrangements that involve assessment of students to follow these procedures as closely as feasible, taking into account any partner institution's own regulations and procedures. Where it is not possible to comply fully, the department should provide a written statement of justification to the Chair of the ASC.

Please note that throughout this document, the term 'department' or 'academic department' also refers to institutes.

This document is owned and maintained by the Academic Registrar's Division. It sets out the processes which support the assessment related aspects of the School Regulations. Academic departments and other divisions are welcome to comment or to suggest improvements / adjustments to the processes or to the document. Please contact:

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1. Examination Boards

1.1. School boards and sub-boards of examiners

- 1.1.1. Undergraduate programmes, except for the LLB and related degrees, are the responsibility of departmental sub-boards of examiners which report to the School Board of Examiners (SBE).
- 1.1.2. Graduate programmes are the responsibility of programme-specific, departmental sub-boards which report to the Graduate School Board of Examiners (GSBE).
- 1.1.3. The Law Board of Examiners uniquely serves as both a sub-board and school board for students studying on LLB and related degrees.

1.2. Appointing school boards, sub-boards and examiners

- 1.2.1. Annex A sets out the procedures for appointing the following:
 - (a) Chairs of school boards and sub-boards of examiners;
 - (b) School boards and sub-boards of examiners;
 - (c) Internal examiners.
- 1.2.2. Annex B describes the procedures for appointing external examiners.

1.3. Regulations and classification rules

- 1.3.1. The [School Calendar](#) contains the regulations and classification schemes for each programme.

2. School Boards of Examiners (SBE and GSBE)

2.1. Duties and responsibilities

- 2.1.1. SBE and GSBE are responsible for:
 - (a) ratifying course marks and progression decisions for all continuing students in accordance with the applicable programme and progression rules;
 - (b) scrutinising and confirming award classifications for all finalists who have satisfied the requirements of their programmes;
 - (c) considering and deciding on the outcome of each sub-board request to suspend regulations. The school boards will ensure that suspensions of regulations are applied consistently and fairly across the School;
 - (d) recommending process or regulatory improvements identified as a result of carrying out duties (a)-(c);
 - (e) reviewing results and referring any issues relating to teaching and learning to the relevant committee as appropriate;
 - (f) approving new or amended regulations for degrees and classification schemes, including local rules for taught graduate programmes.
 - (g) ensuring that course marks, progression and classification are considered anonymously. Candidate numbers should be used in place of students' names and exceptional circumstances submissions should be suitably redacted if they are to be circulated to sub-board members. The Chair and the Secretary may use un-redacted documentation.

2.2. Membership and quoracy

- 2.2.1. The SBE comprises a chair and one representative, normally the chair, from each undergraduate sub-board.
- 2.2.2. The GSBE comprises a chair and ten members, normally chairs of graduate sub-boards, with two representatives from each of the five academic constituency groups.
- 2.2.3. The following are entitled to attend school board meetings but do not have voting rights:
 - (a) the Director and Academic Registrar or their nominees;
 - (b) administrative staff supporting the work of the sub-board such as the secretary.
- 2.2.4. Quoracy is usually defined as attendance by half plus one of the voting membership and should be maintained for the duration of the meeting.
- 2.2.5. Members must ensure they can attend all results and progression meetings. Where a member cannot attend they must normally arrange for a deputy to attend in their absence and should alert the relevant secretary to the change as soon as possible.

2.3. Meetings

- 2.3.1. The SBE meets at least twice each academic year:
 - (a) after the Summer Term to ratify final results and progression;
 - (b) during either the Michaelmas or the Lent Term to discuss general procedural, policy or regulatory issues.
- 2.3.2. The GSBE meets at least three times each academic year:
 - (a) once after the Summer Term and once during the Michaelmas Term to ratify final results and progression;
 - (b) during the Lent Term to discuss general procedural, policy or regulatory issues.

3. Duties and Responsibilities of the Chairs of School Boards of Examiners

- 3.1. The chairs of the school boards are responsible for:
 - (a) ensuring the school board fulfils its responsibilities, as set out in the [School Calendar](#) and these *Instructions*, including setting appropriate dates for meetings;
 - (b) ensuring members are appointed as required (see Annex A);
 - (c) ensuring all decisions are made in accordance with School regulations and procedures, including those outlined in these *Instructions*;
 - (d) ensuring that all requests from sub-boards to suspend regulations are carefully considered and processed, referring to precedent and taking advice from chairs of sub-boards and external examiners where appropriate;
 - (e) providing ad hoc procedural advice to sub-board chairs;
 - (f) considering academic appeals as referred by the Student Services Centre;
 - (g) taking chair's action where appropriate and reporting these decisions to the next meeting of the school board;
 - (h) deciding on the award of School, but not department, prizes.

4. Sub-Boards of Examiners

4.1. Duties and responsibilities

- 4.1.1. Each course and programme is within the remit of one sub-board. Each sub-board is responsible for:
- (a) ensuring that there is appropriate scrutiny in place for question-setting for all types of summative assessments. If requested, departments should be able to provide documentation that sets out their scrutiny procedure;
 - (b) ensuring that suitable examination papers are available for students who last attended teaching in at least the preceding three years for undergraduates or two years for taught graduates;
 - (c) ratifying the marks for all students on each of its courses. Final agreed marks should be returned in advance of Sub-Board meetings;
 - (d) recommending progression decisions for continuing students to the school board;
 - (e) classifying awards for finalists who have satisfied the requirements of their programme;
 - (f) recommending to the appropriate school board that regulations are suspended for any student(s) who, because of documented exceptional circumstances, should be given special consideration.
- 4.1.2. Sub-boards must ensure that course marks, progression and classification are considered anonymously. Candidate numbers should be used in place of students' names and exceptional circumstances submissions should be suitably redacted if they are to be circulated to sub-board members. The Chair and the Secretary may use un-redacted documentation.
- 4.1.3. Sub-boards are required to meet to ratify course marks, even when there is no business relating to progression or classification.

4.2. Membership and quoracy

- 4.2.1. The following are required to attend sub-boards and comprise the voting membership:
- (a) external examiners;
 - (b) at least one internal examiner, normally the course convenor or lead examiner, for each course within the remit of the sub-board.
- 4.2.2. The following are entitled to attend sub-board meetings but do not have voting rights:
- (a) the Director and Academic Registrar or their nominees;
 - (b) administrative staff supporting the work of the sub-board such as the secretary;
 - (c) Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) and guest teachers acting as markers on the invitation of the sub-board (see Annex A).
- 4.2.3. Any sub-board meeting may proceed in the absence of any examiner, internal or external, provided that:
- (a) the examiner has been able to fulfil his/her responsibilities as described in these *Instructions*;
 - (b) the sub-board is quorate.
- 4.2.4. Quoracy is usually defined as attendance by half plus one of the voting membership and should be maintained for the duration of the meeting.

4.3. Meetings

- 4.3.1. The sub-board will meet as necessary to fulfil its responsibilities (see section 3.1). Meetings which take place to ratify marks, determine progression or classify awards should be held no fewer than 4 working days before the relevant school board.

5. Duties and Responsibilities of the Chairs of Sub-Boards of Examiners

5.1. The chair of each sub-board is responsible for:

- (a) ensuring the sub-board fulfils its responsibilities, as set out in the [School Calendar](#) and these *Instructions*, including setting appropriate dates for meetings;
- (b) ensuring members are appointed as required (see Annex A);
- (c) ensuring all decisions are made in accordance with School regulations and procedures, including those outlined in these *Instructions*;
- (d) ensuring the department produces and publishes assessment criteria in line with School requirements;
- (e) ensuring the sub-board, where it has responsibility for graduate programmes, establishes 'local rules', to be ratified by the school board, for each programme within its remit;
- (f) nominating external examiners for approval by the Undergraduate (USSC) or Graduate Studies Sub-Committee (GSSC) and overseeing the distribution of duties between external examiners where more than one is appointed;
- (g) ensuring that external examiners are properly inducted into his/her role (see section 6 and Annex B) and that each external examiner fulfils the duties described in these *Instructions*;
- (h) responding to external examiner comments and reports in a timely manner, copying the Teaching Quality Assurance and Review Office (TQARO) into written correspondence, and keeping the sub-board informed of issues raised and responses provided (see Annex B);
- (i) ensuring that internal examiners fulfil their roles as set out in these Instructions, including approving arrangements for ensuring that examiners are available immediately within the School during each examination;
- (j) ensuring that final marks, progression decisions, award classification and suspension requests are accurate and clearly communicated to Registry prior to the relevant meeting of the school board;
- (k) ensuring that the sub-board keeps a detailed and accurate record of each meeting (see section 15);
- (l) ensuring that examination complaints from students are given careful consideration and consulting with the external examiner on any proposed course of action or outcome;
- (m) arranging for sub-boards to consider appeals cases when required and ensuring that cases are processed in a timely, fair and consistent manner;
- (n) raising any issues of concern to the sub-board with the appropriate school board;
- (o) acting as a voting member of the SBE where the sub-board has responsibility for undergraduate programmes;
- (p) taking chair's action where appropriate and reporting these decisions to the next meeting of the sub-board.

6. Duties and Responsibilities of External Examiners

6.1. General

6.1.1. Annex B sets out the procedures for appointing external examiners.

6.1.2. The School expects its external examiners to provide informed comment and recommendations upon whether or not:

- (a) the School is maintaining the threshold academic standards set for its awards in accordance with the frameworks for higher education qualifications and applicable Subject Benchmark Statements;

- (b) the assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the programme(s) and is conducted in line with the School's policies and regulations;
 - (c) the academic standards and the achievements of students are comparable with those in other UK degree-awarding bodies of which the external examiners have experience.
- 6.1.3. External examiners will usually be consulted by sub-boards when establishing local rules for graduate programmes and marking criteria for assessments.
- 6.1.4. External examiners will not normally be involved in designing programmes and/or their component elements.
- 6.1.5. External examiners may be consulted outside of the normal results processing periods on a case-by-case basis where:
- a candidate is suspected of or has been found to have committed plagiarism
 - an appeal case has been referred back to the Sub-Board
 - a candidate's special circumstances need to be considered (e.g. in relation to providing an assessment opportunity outside of the normal assessment periods).

6.2. Assessment setting

- 6.2.1. External examiners will participate in sub-boards' scrutiny of assessment setting and are required to sign off each examination paper for courses within their remit.

6.3. Marking

- 6.3.1. External examiners must not act as second markers. Their role is to ensure that marking is consistent and of an appropriate standard. External examiners should review a sample of examination scripts and/or other assessed work. It must include scripts and other assessed material from the top, the middle and the bottom of the range of internal marks awarded, including work that has been assessed a first / distinction or a failure. It should be proportionate to the size of the course and it does not need to include all fails, all borderline work or all first class / distinction work.
- 6.3.2. External examiners have the authority to resolve significant differences of opinion between internal examiners about the marks to be awarded to individual or groups of students. They must be provided with information on the usual method used by the internal examiners to reconcile divergent marks and each marker's reason for assigning the marks in question.
- 6.3.3. External examiners have the right to inspect any script or other assessed material. External examiners should make their judgements independently of internal examiners, unless fulfilling their role under section 6.3.2. They have the authority to:
- (a) obtain reasonable access to assessments from any part of a programme, including evidence about students' performance on projects or fieldwork;
 - (b) when consulted, give their view on decisions being made by the sub-board in relation to examination complaints or appeals. Although the sub-board retains sovereignty in determining examination complaints and appeals outcomes, the chair should report back to the sub-board if the external examiner disagrees strongly with its proposed decision.
- 6.3.4. External examiners do not have the authority to adjust marks. Where an external examiner has concerns about an individual mark, a group of marks or the internal marking process, this will be discussed with the internal markers in the first instance. If the internal markers agree that a mark should be reviewed, the work for all other relevant students, usually those with the same or similar marks, will be reviewed. If internal markers disagree with the external examiner, the chair of the sub-board will

be consulted and has the responsibility for making the final decision. The sub-board chair and the internal examiners will provide a full response to the external examiner.

- 6.3.5. External examiners shall take part in oral and practical examinations where these are required.

6.4. Determining results

- 6.4.1. External examiners are full, voting members of the sub-board to which they are appointed. They must attend meetings at which significant decisions are to be taken, especially meetings when final awards are being classified. They are entitled to comment on assessment and marking standards, exceptional circumstances submissions, proposed suspensions of the regulations, examination complaints and appeals if these are considered at a full sub-board meeting or if consulted by the sub-board chair.
- 6.4.2. External examiners are required to sign off the consolidated mark frame, which records the final mark profiles for all students on each programme, to confirm that the standard of the assessment was appropriate for the level of study and that assessments were conducted in accordance with the relevant programme regulations. The external examiner's signature does not rule out reconsideration of a progression decision or an award classification if a valid academic appeal is subsequently received.
- 6.4.3. If an external examiner is unwilling to endorse any result, that result will not be published until the matter is resolved. The matter will be referred to the Pro-Director for Teaching and Learning, or to his/her nominee, who will seek to resolve the matter including the option of appointing or consulting further external examiners to provide a final result on behalf of the sub-board.

6.5. Annual reporting

- 6.5.1. External examiners are required to submit a report to the Pro-Director for Teaching and Learning as soon as possible after the sub-board meeting at which the end of year / programme results, progression or classifications have been agreed (see Annex B).

6.6. Status

- 6.6.1. External examiners are not School employees and should not present themselves as such at any time.

7. Duties and Responsibilities of Internal Examiners

7.1. General

All internal examiners are responsible for:

- (a) assisting the chair of the sub-board with providing information for external examiner inductions and annual updates on course content, marking schemes and learning outcomes;
- (b) following the School's policy on acceptable approaches to marking (see section 12.1);
- (c) attending meetings of the sub-board;
- (d) undertaking any additional duties which the sub-board chair might reasonably assign.

7.2. Examination papers

Lead internal examiners are responsible for:

- (a) setting and managing examination papers (see section 8). This may include setting individual exam papers where Special Exam Provision is approved;
- (b) participating in assessment scrutiny as required by the sub-board chair and as appropriate to the type of assessment(s);
- (c) being present and available immediately in the School during each examination for which they are responsible, in order to deal with any queries or difficulties that might arise during the examination including evacuation (see Annex C). If, in exceptional circumstances s/he cannot be available in the School, s/he must make alternative arrangements in advance with Registry and with the sub-board chair's approval. Internal examiners should have a copy of the examination paper to hand at all times during the examination.

7.3. Marking

Internal examiners are responsible for:

- (a) marking assessments according to the marking criteria of the department and acceptable marking practices of the School (see Section 12.1). Marks must be submitted by the deadlines set by the School and the sub-board (see Section 12);
- (b) agreeing a mark with the other internal examiner(s) prior to sending scripts to the external examiner. Where it is not possible to agree a final mark, the internal examiners must provide the external examiner with the usual method used to reconcile divergent marks and a commentary on how and why they assigned each mark;
- (c) as lead examiner, ensuring that final marks submitted to Registry are accurate. This includes checking that component marks have been aggregated correctly to calculate the overall course mark (see section 13).

8. Examination Paper Preparation

8.1. Format of papers

- 8.1.1. Registry will send an electronic template for question papers and a form for additional accompanying information / documentation to Departmental Managers each academic year. It is essential that the standard format is used for all papers. Question papers should be in English except for foreign language examinations. All question papers should be prepared as camera-ready copy on plain A4.
- 8.1.2. All camera-ready copies should be fully headed to show:
 - (a) the course code, where one examination paper is used for more than one course, each course code must be listed;
 - (b) the full title of the paper, as shown in the [School Calendar](#);
 - (c) the academic year(s) of study to which the paper is relevant (e.g. 2015/16);
 - (d) the number of questions the student is required to answer;
 - (e) for each question, the number of marks available or the relative weighting;
 - (f) the number of pages in the question paper (e.g. page 1 of 4);
 - (g) any tables, materials or photographs to be provided for the student;
 - (h) whether calculators or other materials (e.g. statutes, annotated text, statistical tables etc.) are permitted;
 - (i) the time allowed for the examination and any additional reading time, if permitted.

8.2. Security of papers

- 8.2.1. All examiners are required to preserve the confidentiality of examination papers at all stages until the examination has taken place or, in the case of open/seen examinations, until the agreed release date to students. The contents must not be disclosed to anyone who is not directly involved with setting or delivering the examination.
- 8.2.2. Examiners must take all necessary measures to ensure the security of examination papers. Hard copies must be stored securely; if it is absolutely necessary to transport them, they must be transported securely. Electronic versions must be password protected and, where possible, encrypted. Departments should make arrangements to deliver camera-ready papers to Registry in person and not through the internal post.

8.3. Examination paper setting

- 8.3.1. Internal markers must take all reasonable steps to ensure that:
 - (a) questions in quantitative papers are solvable or that there are academic reasons where they are not solvable;
 - (b) questions are sufficiently distinct from any previous assessments, whether formative or summative, to ensure that no student(s) obtains an unfair advantage by having been assessed previously or having accessed prior/practice papers;
 - (c) the form and content properly reflect the syllabus as published in the Course Guide section of the [School Calendar](#);
 - (d) the final version of the examination paper is accurate and presented in the format specified by Registry each year.
- 8.3.2. Specimen examination papers, or appropriate examination-type practice questions, must be produced in sufficient time for students to practice for:
 - (a) any new course;
 - (b) an existing course where there have been significant changes to the syllabus in the current academic year;
 - (c) any course where there have been significant changes to the examination format or style of questions. Any changes to format need to have first been approved by the USSC/GSSC Chair. Guidance on this process can be found [online](#).

8.4. Supplementary materials and calculators

- 8.4.1. Departments / internal examiners decide what additional materials students may bring into an examination or which are provided by the School. The School does not permit dictionaries which enable students to overcome any deficiency in their English language skills.
- 8.4.2. Departments should discuss any proposed materials (e.g. updated book editions) which may have financial implications for the School with Registry by, and ideally well in advance of, the deadline for submitting camera-ready papers. Students must not be informed that such materials will be provided until the School and/or department have agreed to any required expenditure.
- 8.4.3. Academic departments should only ask students to provide their own materials where it is reasonable to expect that they will have or will be able to obtain such materials.
- 8.4.4. The School does not provide calculators. Registry provides more detail about the requirements relating calculators to departments (see section 8.1) and students are also given details each year via *Examination Procedures for Candidates*.
- 8.4.5. No materials or equipment other than those which have been specifically authorised are permitted in an examination room.

8.5. Copyright of examination papers

- 8.5.1. It is a condition of the appointment of every examiner that the School shall, without payment, be licensed to reproduce sufficient copies of examination papers, or material contained therein, prepared by the examiner for the School, either alone or in collaboration with others, for the purpose of conducting the examination. The School shall also have the exclusive licence thereafter to publish the paper(s) as a whole provided that it shall not assign or transfer this exclusive licence in any way to any other person. Copyright is with the School.

9. Oral and Practical Examinations

- 9.1. Oral examinations must be conducted by at least two internal examiners. If the department wishes to select a sample or sub-group from the students, an external examiner should be involved in the selection or in setting the marking scheme which will be used to identify the sample.
- 9.2. No one may attend an oral examination except the examiners and the student, unless agreed as a reasonable adjustment by the Individual Examination Adjustments Panel.
- 9.3. Departments should set the date, time and place for each oral and/or practical examination and notify Registry as early as possible, but by no later than four weeks before the date agreed. Registry will then be responsible for notifying the students of all necessary arrangements.
- 9.4. Departments must give all students clear written information about the assessment criteria and any other details of what is required.

10. Individual Examination Adjustments (IEAs)

- 10.1. School regulations allow for reasonable adjustments, e.g. extra writing time, rest periods, the use of equipment, permission to use notes etc. for students with documented evidence of an existing medical or mental health condition and/or a learning disability, e.g. dyslexia. Adjustments must be approved by the School's IEA Panel.
- 10.2. In very exceptional circumstances, the IEA Panel may determine that a student's condition(s) or circumstances are such that adjustments to a timed, invigilated examination would be insufficient to provide a fair assessment of his/her acquired knowledge, understanding or skills. In such rare circumstances, the IEA Panel will discuss options for alternative format assessment with the chair of the relevant sub-board(s) and the chair of the relevant school board.
- 10.3. If students have a disability which affects presentation, spelling or grammar (including style), this will be flagged by the School for the attention of the examiners. Students are provided with standard template notifications to attach to coursework submissions and Registry are responsible for attaching the notification to examination scripts. Examiners will be provided with appropriate guidance for marking such scripts and coursework to ensure consistency and fairness.
- 10.4. Other than as specified in section 11.3, sub-boards will not receive details of any individual adjustments made or the nature of a student's condition. No sub-board will be expected to give any special consideration to students with IEAs, unless the student has submitted a separate statement of exceptional circumstances as described in section 14.3. Individual Student Support Agreements should not be presented to boards of examiners unless submitted by a student in support of exceptional circumstances.

11. Assessed Coursework

11.1. Submission arrangements and late penalties

11.1.1. All summative work (essays, reports, dissertations etc.) which counts towards a student's final classification should be identified only by the student's candidate number to ensure, as far as possible, anonymity.

11.1.2. Where a course includes coursework, departments must give all students clear written instructions on what is required. These should include the method of presentation and the arrangements and deadline for submission.

11.1.3. Students must submit summative coursework by the date specified by the academic department unless they have been permitted an extension due to exceptional circumstances and/or on the basis of a disability. If a student fails to submit his/her assessment by the deadline, the non-submission will be counted as an attempt at assessment for the purpose of progression / resit decisions. The next point of assessment will be the equivalent submission date in the next academic year. There is no provision for early resubmission of summative assessment, other than for dissertations (see section 10.5).

11.2. Only sub-board chairs can decide whether or not to accept assessed work that is submitted beyond the set, or extended, deadline. If late work is accepted, the following penalty will apply:

- five marks will be deducted for work submitted within 24 hours of the deadline
- a further five marks will be deducted for each subsequent 24-hour period (working days only) until the work is submitted.

11.3. When submitting summative work, other than examinations, all students must confirm that the work submitted complies with the relevant assessment regulations. Departments must make suitable arrangements for students to make the declaration to this effect, regardless of whether submissions are hard copy or electronic.

11.4. Where departments make use of electronic plagiarism detection software, e.g. Turnitin/iThenticate, they should inform students of this before the submission deadline(s). They must make arrangements for students to submit electronic versions of assessments such that their anonymity is maintained.

11.5. Early re-submission of a dissertation

11.5.1. Departments are required to offer an early date for re-submission of a dissertation or summer project where this is the only element failed by a taught graduate and the student has not been awarded a degree. This is only applicable to students who failed or deferred the dissertation and not to those who chose not to submit at all.

11.5.2. The earlier re-submission date should be at least three months after the student receives the result of his/her initial submission and no later than the end of the following Lent Term.

11.5.3. Departments must publish the following information in the relevant handbook(s):

- (a) the type of feedback a student will receive on his/her failed submission and how they should access it;
- (b) what supervisory support is available during the resubmission period and how students should access it.

11.5.4. The department should agree a timescale for marking the work and returning the mark to Registry with the chair of the school board.

11.5.5. At least one of the two initial internal examiners should mark the resubmission and an external examiner should be involved in agreeing the final mark.

- 11.5.6. Sub-board chairs should take chair's action to determine whether the student has passed the dissertation on resubmission. This action will be reported to the school board chair who will also take chair's action to determine the final result.
- 11.5.7. Early resubmissions are subject to the same regulations and procedures regarding deferral, deadline extensions, exceptional circumstances, suspension of regulations and appeals as all other assessed work.

12. Marking

- 12.1. As determined by the Academic Board, the School's policy on acceptable approaches to marking is that double-blind marking is the default mode of summative marking, but that departments may also operate sighted double marking and moderated single marking which will involve a second examiner. Departments are required to register opt-outs from double-blind marking with the relevant [Sub-Committee Secretary](#), referring to guidance [online](#).
- 12.2. All departments and examiners are required to mark assessed work in line with the School's stated policy on acceptable marking methods and in accordance with the department's marking criteria.
- 12.3. Examiners should seek guidance from Registry if they find any examination script illegible.

12.4. Examination script security

- 12.4.1. Departments are responsible for ensuring that hard copies of any work submitted are stored securely and are only accessible to authorised staff.
- 12.4.2. Examination scripts should not be sent to any examiner at any time while s/he is outside the UK unless permitted by the Head of Student Services. Permission will normally be given only in cases where the examination could otherwise not be marked and when the department is able to retain copies of all scripts in question.
- 12.4.3. Where scripts are taken off LSE premises by examiners, electronic scans or copies of the scripts should be taken by the department, wherever feasible, before they are removed. Registry will issue clearly labelled envelopes with each batch of scripts given out for marking. If examiners take scripts off the premises, the scripts should be kept in the envelopes while being transported.
- 12.4.4. All examiners should retain details of marks they have awarded to students on copies of the official mark sheet. The mark sheet should be kept separate from the scripts so as to limit damage in the event of scripts being lost.
- 12.4.5. The School takes the potential loss of examination scripts very seriously. Any member of staff responsible for any loss may be subject to disciplinary procedures.

12.5. Adjustments for groups of students

- 12.5.1. In instances where a sub-board, or sub-board chair, decides that students have valid examination complaints, such as substantive errors in a paper or major disruption to the examination sitting, the chair should prepare a short statement which:
 - (a) briefly outlines the circumstances and the adjustment made; and
 - (b) provides clear guidance about whether or not it is necessary to grant special consideration for affected students at the time of classification.
- 12.5.2. This statement will allow other sub-boards to take the circumstances into account when considering progression or award classifications for students affected by the examination. The purpose of sharing the statement is to enable sub-boards to make fair decisions while avoiding double compensation.

- 12.5.3. The statement should be made available to Registry as soon as possible after the decision is agreed in order to circulate it quickly to other sub-boards. If a sub-board has already met, the sub-board chair will be consulted and the school board will determine the outcome for the students affected.

12.6. Recording marks

- 12.6.1. The School's current practice is to publish formally only the final overall marks for each course, rather than to publish each individual component. As part of standard marking procedures, however, examiners should record the following data about each student:
- (a) the internal examiner marks for each component of an examination, i.e. question-by-question marks;
 - (b) the internal examiner marks for each component of assessment within a course, e.g. essays, exams, projects etc;
 - (c) an agreed final mark for each component of assessment;
 - (d) a hard copy of the electronic mark sheet as returned to Registry (see section 13)
 - (e) comments made by individual examiners during the marking process, including notes to be referred to when agreeing a final mark with another examiner(s) or to aid feedback to the student;
 - (f) in certain cases where internal examiners cannot agree a final mark, any additional comments provided to a third internal examiner or the external examiner about a piece of work.
- 12.7. Copies of all assessed work (e.g. examination scripts, dissertations, essays, reports, and coursework) and the information listed in section 12.6.1 are retained for one year from the date of assessment / submission. Members of a sub-board have the right to see the assessed work of any student for the purpose of fulfilling its responsibilities (see section 3).
- 12.8. Examination scripts are exempt from the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and are therefore not released to students via requests under the DPA or the Freedom of Information Act. However, any comments, marks or annotations, symbolic or abbreviated, are disclosable. Examiners are therefore asked to make any substantive notes separately, rather than directly onto the script. This minimises the need to transcribe handwritten notes from the scripts after each request under the DPA.
- 12.9. All comments or notes relating to examinations or other assessed work must be appropriate and must relate to the assessment itself and not the anonymised student personally.

13. Return of Course Marks to Registry

- 13.1. Departments must generate electronic mark sheets for each course prior to the start of each examination period. Completed mark sheets should be returned to Registry via the School's email network.
- 13.2. Registry will notify departments of the deadline for receipt of each mark sheet. Exact timings will depend upon the course length and the examination or assessment period in question. Mark sheets will usually be required at least 5 working days prior to the first sub-board at which the results will be considered.
- 13.3. **Zero (0) Marks**
- 13.3.1. There are important differences between three types of zero (0) marks:
- (a) 0 (Absent) – a student did not submit any of the required elements of assessment;

- (b) 0 (Fail) – a student submitted the assessment but it either warranted zero marks or was reduced to zero following an academic misconduct investigation;
 - (c) 0 (Incomplete) – a student submitted an element of assessment but did not complete all required elements.
- 13.3.2. In the case of 0 (Fail), a student is considered as having taken but failed the course. In the case of 0 (Absent) or 0 (Incomplete), a student is considered as having not completed the course and therefore will not be eligible for the award of a degree. Such students will, however, be considered as having used an attempt at assessment.
- 13.3.3. If a student exhausts the maximum number of attempts at assessment by accumulating a sufficient number of 0 (Absent) or 0 (Incomplete) results, the sub-board will normally deem them to have failed the programme.

14. Determination of Results (Progression and/or Classification)

- 14.1.** Sub-boards are responsible for determining results, progression and final classifications (see section 3) in accordance with the School's regulations for degrees and classification schemes.
- 14.2.** Mark frames are a complete list, by student, of courses taken, results by course, aggregate marks and where possible calculated progression or award classification. Registry will provide each sub-board with mark frames for each student prior to each meeting. The mark frames will also indicate if and when a student submitted exceptional circumstances. Sub-Boards must check the recommended classifications and progression decisions and clearly note any changes to marks or classifications on a master copy of the mark frame.

14.3. Exceptional Circumstances

- 14.3.1. The Student Services Centre provides guidance to all students on how and when they should submit exceptional circumstances. Each submission must:
- (a) clearly indicate the impact that the circumstances had on their performance in specific examination(s) / assessment;
 - (b) be corroborated by documented evidence from an official source (e.g. doctor's note, death certificate etc.);
 - (c) relate to unforeseen circumstances immediately proximate to the affected assessment(s).
- 14.3.2. Registry will provide each sub-board with all exceptional circumstance forms and accompanying evidence for students on programmes within its remit.
- 14.3.3. Unless all three conditions listed above are met, sub-boards should not normally take such circumstances into consideration. Exceptional circumstances which relate only to negative impacts on learning and teaching, rather than assessment, cannot be addressed by sub-boards as exceptional circumstances. Sub-boards are not expected to estimate how a student's performance in assessment may have been affected by any impairment in their access to learning or teaching prior to assessment.
- 14.3.4. As it is the student's responsibility to articulate in writing both the details and impact of her/his circumstances, sub-boards should not normally consider oral statements from teachers/tutors on behalf of students/tutees except where provided for by the Regulations, such as paragraph 52 in [Regulations for First Degrees](#). Sub-Boards may, however, ask students to provide more details of their circumstances in advance of sub-board meetings.
- 14.3.5. Sub-boards are not authorised to adjust individual course marks, or component marks, on the basis of exceptional circumstances. All marks should be based solely on academic merit as agreed by the examiners. Sub-Boards should consider all

exceptional circumstances submissions but only need to make recommendations to suspend the regulations where they determine a student has satisfied the criteria set out in the 'General Proviso' of the relevant classification scheme.

14.4. Recommendations to suspend the classification scheme or programme regulations

- 14.4.1. A sub-board may recommend to the relevant school board that regulations relating to results, progression or awards be suspended in cases where exceptional circumstances apply. This may be in relation to an individual student or a group of students.
- 14.4.2. Registry will provide template request forms to sub-boards prior to their meetings.
- 14.4.3. Sub-boards are responsible for ensuring that all relevant documentation and an explanation of the reason for the request are provided to the school board.
- 14.4.4. Sub-boards are also required to report to the school board any unusual procedure that has been adopted or any special circumstances necessitating a departure from normal practice, even if not specifically mentioned in these *Instructions*.

15. Record of Proceedings

- 15.1. Sub-boards should return all annotated mark frames, signed by the sub-board chair and external examiners who were present, by hand to Registry as soon as possible following the sub-board meeting and no later than 4 working days before the relevant school board.
- 15.2. The sub-board chair and secretary are jointly responsible for ensuring that minutes of its meeting(s):
 - (a) record attendance and apologies;
 - (b) provide an accurate and factual account of discussions relating to exceptional circumstances or to any other discussions where special consideration was given to a student or group of students;
 - (c) record any discussions of general principles, feedback to external examiners or any other relevant business.
- 15.3. The sub-board chair should approve the minutes before they are returned to the Registry.
- 15.4. Minutes of sub-board meetings are frequently disclosed to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator following appropriate redaction. Extracts relating to individual students may be disclosed under the DPA unless the data cannot be disclosed without also disclosing data about another individual.

16. Publication of Results

- 16.1. The School does not release results or classifications to students who have an academic debt.
- 16.2. Overall course marks for undergraduates or graduate students on programmes that last less than 12 months must not be released until after the results have been confirmed and published by the School.
- 16.3. Students on 12 month Masters programmes and students who have taken summative January exams will have access to provisional course results. Provisional results should normally have been through the full internal marking process and reviewed by external examiners as appropriate to sampling requirements (see section 6.3.1).
- 16.4. Departments may give provisional marks for coursework components prior to sub-board meetings.

- 16.5. Provisional results remain provisional until they have been ratified by the appropriate school board and should therefore only be released via the official School portal. Students may not submit appeals and sub-boards may not determine progression, classification or resit requirements on the basis of provisional results.
- 16.6. Final ratified component marks may be issued by departments after overall course marks have been ratified by the relevant school board.
- 16.7. The School's only official confirmation of a student's results and/or award is the academic transcript and degree certificate issued by Registry following school board ratification.

17. Examination Irregularities

- 17.1. The School's [Regulations on Assessment Offences: Plagiarism](#) govern any case of alleged plagiarism arising from assessed work. The School's [Regulations on Assessment Offences: Offences other than Plagiarism](#) govern any case of alleged cheating, including conduct affecting the security of examinations, which does not relate to plagiarism.

18. Representation and/or Appeal by Students

- 18.1. Students are entitled to ask the School to reconsider a sub-board or school board decision under the [Appeals Regulations for Taught Students](#). Chairs of sub-boards or school boards should not discuss appeals directly with students in order to ensure impartiality. Students may obtain procedural advice from the Student Services Centre or case-specific advice from the Students' Union.
- 18.2. Decisions taken by a properly constituted sub-board or school board, acting in accordance with these and any other relevant instructions for the conduct of examinations and the regulations for the particular examinations, will not be modified, except in cases covered by the [Appeals Regulations for Taught Students](#).

Annex A: Appointment of Chairs of Boards and Internal Examiners

A.1. Procedure for appointing Chairs of School Boards

- A.1.1. The Academic Nominations Committee (ANC) is chaired by the Vice-Chair of Academic Board (VCAB) and is responsible for appointing the chairs of the school boards of examiners.
- A.1.2. The VCAB is responsible for approving the chairs' job descriptions.
- A.1.3. The terms and conditions of the chairs are agreed by the Office Holders Group (OHG).
- A.1.4. Chairs are appointed for three years with the possibility of a further term of office up to a maximum of 6 years. Any extension is subject to approval by the Pro-Director for Teaching and Learning, as the line-manager, and the ANC.

A.2. Procedure for appointing Chairs of Sub-Boards

- A.2.1. Heads of Department and Directors of Institutes are responsible for appointing chairs of sub-boards and for ensuring that Registry is given an update annually.
- A.2.2. A sub-board chair must have passed his/her departmental review and have had at least two years' experience of assessing / examining at either undergraduate or graduate level, as appropriate for the sub-board in question.
- A.2.3. The minimum term of appointment for a sub-board chair is one full academic year plus any additional time necessary to complete that year's business.

A.3. Procedure for appointing School Boards of Examiners

- A.3.1. Each chair of an undergraduate sub-board, excluding the Law Board of Examiners, is a member of the undergraduate School Board of Examiners (SBE). The minimum term of appointment for school board membership is one full academic year plus any additional time necessary to complete that year's business.
- A.3.2. The GSBE membership comprises ten representatives: two chairs of graduate sub-boards from each of the five academic constituency groups. Representatives are appointed by the ANC for three years with the possibility of a further term of three years.

A.4. Procedure for appointment Sub-Boards of Examiners

- A.4.1. All course teachers who are employees of the School are internal examiners and are entitled to membership of the sub-board relevant to the course(s)/programme(s) on which they teach.
- A.4.2. Heads of Department and Directors of Institutes are responsible for keeping an up-to-date record of the internal examiner members of the sub-board(s).

A.5. Procedure for appointing Internal Examiners

- A.5.1. The lead/first examiner, where a department uses double blind or double sighted marking, will normally be the course convenor and must be a permanent member of academic staff. Where departments operate moderated single marking involving a second examiner, the course convenor will normally act as the moderating examiner.
- A.5.2. Where the lead examiner is not the course convenor, they must have experience in the subject matter to the satisfaction of the sub-board chair and must be able to fulfil all duties set out in section 7 of the *Instructions*.

- A.5.3. LSE Fellows may be appointed as lead or moderating examiners.
- A.5.4. Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) and guest teachers may be appointed as second internal examiners, if double blind or double sighted marking is operated, or as first examiners where moderated single marking is operated, to assist with:
 - (a) setting examination papers;
 - (b) marking assessments of any type.
- A.5.5. Where a department appoints a GTA or guest teacher as an examiner, the other internal examiner must normally be a permanent member of academic staff with experience of examining at the School.
- A.5.6. At graduate level, the sub-board chair must approve any GTA or guest teacher appointment as an examiner.
- A.5.7. It would be highly exceptional for GTAs or guest teachers who are also registered as PhD students to act as examiners for graduate level assessments. In such cases, the chair of the GSSC must give his/her approval and the student concerned would normally need to be near completion and/or would have specialist expertise of direct relevance to the course concerned.
- A.5.8. GTAs and guest teachers acting as examiners are entitled to attend sub-board meetings by invitation only.
- A.5.9. GTAs and guest teachers acting as examiners must be covered by a contract of employment with the School, paid for their work, and properly trained.
- A.5.10. Any department wishing to operate summative marking arrangements that differ to the arrangements set out in section 12.1 in these *Instructions* and as above will require endorsement from the USSC/SBE or GSSC/GSBE as appropriate with final approval from the chair of the ASC.

Annex B: Appointment of External Examiners

B.1. Responsibilities and principles for appointments

- B.1.1. The Undergraduate (USSC) and Graduate Studies Sub-Committee (GSSC) hold delegated responsibility from the Academic and Student Affairs Committee (ASC) for appointing external examiners for taught programmes. .
- B.1.2. Every programme or part of a programme (e.g. a course) that leads to a School award must be under the remit of at least one external examiner. The number of external examiners appointed by a department will depend on the diversity of subjects and volume of assessment, but should be as small as possible without creating an unmanageable workload for the examiner(s).
- B.1.3. Undergraduate examiners are normally appointed to an individual or group of courses, whilst graduate examiners are normally appointed to a programme.

B.2. Pre-requisites for appointments

- B.2.1. External examiners should be experienced teachers in the same discipline and at the same level as the subject being assessed.
- B.2.2. External examiners should have good standing in the academic community.
- B.2.3. External examiners should have knowledge and understanding of current principles and practices in maintaining academic standards, quality assurance and enhancement, and methods of assessment.
- B.2.4. External examiners should usually have five or more years' experience of university teaching.
- B.2.5. External examiners should not normally have had a close involvement with the School during the five years preceding the planned date of appointment. This includes acting as an examiner for the LSE University of London International Programmes (ULIP) programmes, holding a contract of employment for them or acting as an external examiner for them. If an external examiner has previously taught or studied at the School, in addition to the requirement that five years has elapsed, all students must have completed the programme with which the examiner was involved.
- B.2.6. Other than in exceptional circumstances specifically approved by the ASC, there should be no reciprocal arrangement whereby a department or subject group and a department or subject group at another institution exchange staff as external examiners.
- B.2.7. No more than one external examiner should be concurrently appointed from the same department of the same institution.
- B.2.8. An external examiner should not be succeeded in the same discipline by another external examiner from the same institution, unless there are exceptional circumstances and the appointment is approved by the ASC.
- B.2.9. An external examiner should not normally be asked to act for more than one sub-board at any one time unless a specific paper is shared across more than one programme.
- B.2.10. An external examiner should not normally concurrently hold more than two external examiner appointments regardless of the institution.
- B.2.11. An external examiner should not normally have a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a student or any member of staff involved with the programme of study or course for which they would have responsibility. The ASC may permit such appointments in exceptional circumstances, e.g. where for disciplinary reasons the pool of eligible externals is small.

B.3. Terms of appointment

- B.3.1. The normal maximum period of appointment is four consecutive years.
- B.3.2. In exceptional circumstances, an appointment may be extended for one year with the approval of the USSC/GSSC.
- B.3.3. All appointments are subject to annual reconfirmation by both the School and the external examiner.

B.4. Procedures for appointment, reappointment and removal

- B.4.1. Registry will ask sub-board chairs for their nominations for appointments and confirmations of reappointments once each year.
- B.4.2. In putting an individual forward for appointment or reappointment, the chair is confirming that the external examiner meets, or continues to meet, the pre-requisites set out in section B2. Where the external examiner does not meet, or no longer meets, the pre-requisites, the chair should submit a statement to request an exception to the requirements for consideration by the USSC/GSSC.
- B.4.3. Once the appointing body has approved a nomination, the Registry will issue a formal letter of appointment. This will include the terms and length of appointment.
- B.4.4. The Registry will confirm reappointments with all external examiners on an annual basis.
- B.4.5. If an external examiner offers his/her resignation or is unable to continue with his/her appointment during the academic year, the sub-board chair should nominate and appoint a replacement external examiner as soon as possible. Should this not be possible / practical, then the responsibilities of the external examiner should be redistributed amongst other appropriately qualified / experienced external examiners associated with the overall programme of study.
- B.4.6. In exceptional circumstances, an external examiner may be removed or may not be reappointed. The ASC will only take this course of action on the basis of representations from the Head of Department or Director of an Institute or in the event that an examiner fails to report.
- B.4.7. Registry will maintain an up to date register of appointed external examiners.

B.5. Induction and support

- B.5.1. Registry provide all new external examiners with access to general briefing materials to assist their understanding of the School, its regulations and its programmes.
- B.5.2. Sub-board chairs are responsible for arranging inductions, which should include information about:
 - (a) the syllabus of the programme and individual courses;
 - (b) methods of assessment, assessment criteria as published for students and marking criteria, including examples of previous examination papers or other assessments;
 - (c) methods for examination and assessment setting scrutiny;
 - (d) marking and classification schemes;
 - (e) planned dates for sub-board meetings and other key dates / deadlines in the assessment cycle;
 - (f) names and contact details for key academic and administrative members of staff in the department;
 - (g) any other material which will assist the external examiner with his/her duties.

- B.5.3. Where practical and mutually agreed, sub-board chairs should meet new external examiners on or near the planned date of appointment. This is particularly useful if the examiner has little or no prior experience of external examining.

B.6. Reporting

- B.6.1. External examiners are required to provide a report to the Pro-Director for Teaching and Learning on an annual basis.
- B.6.2. The School will provide the external examiner with a template and required coverage for the report each year. Registry will inform examiners about how the reports should be submitted and to whom.
- B.6.3. The report should be submitted as soon as possible after completion of the annual assessment cycle and no later than one month after the final sub-board meeting of the academic year.
- B.6.4. Annual reports are not confidential to the sub-board. They may be circulated within the School or, where appropriate, made available externally for the purposes of quality assurance, audit, legal proceedings etc. The School will also publish summaries of the reports, in line with HEFCE Teaching Quality Information dataset requirements.
- B.6.5. All reports must conform to the School's template and requirements for coverage. If a report does not comply with the requirements or is not submitted at all, the School will withhold the annual fee and may consider not reappointing the examiner.
- B.6.6. The Teaching Quality Assurance and Review Office (TQARO) will scrutinise each report received. TQARO may ask sub-board chairs to respond to particular issues of note within the report.
- B.6.7. TQARO will prepare a summary report for the ASC each year. It will identify School-wide issues, act as a check that the system is working as envisaged and ensure that sub-boards, sub-board chairs and external examiners are fulfilling their duties.
- B.6.8. At the end of an external examiner's term of appointment it is open to him/her to add any comments arising from his/her accumulated experience in the shape of an overview report. External examiners may make such other comments to members of the School, including the Director, as they think fit, either openly or in confidence.

B.7. Payment and expenses

- B.7.1. Registry will make arrangements to pay each external examiner an annual fee once the completed report has been received.
- B.7.2. External examiners may claim reasonable travel and subsistence expenses provided receipts are provided. Reasonable expenses can include standard class travel, food, and one night's accommodation when attending board meetings.
- B.7.3. External examiners are expected to use their employing institution's address and postal service for sending/receiving scripts or other written materials. The School will not usually pay postal expenses.

Annex C: Evacuation During an Examination Session

- C.1.** The School will make every reasonable effort to prevent false fire alarms or other serious disturbances taking place during examination periods. Deliberate misuse of fire alarm points by staff or students may be considered a serious disciplinary offence.
- C.2.** If the fire alarm is sounded, all staff and students must leave the building immediately. Students will be instructed to leave all belongings and examination materials in the examination room and to remain silent unless they require help. Students may bring mobiles or other items that have been placed under their desks for the examination, but may not use them.
- C.3.** The Deputy Head of Student Services, or an appropriate delegate, will inform the Head of Student Services or the Academic Registrar as soon as possible.
- C.4.** Students will be monitored by invigilators and School staff to ensure, as far as is practical, that they are not engaging in any other activity which might undermine the examination. This includes, but is not limited to, using mobiles, consulting notes or discussing the examination. Any student who appears to be contravening instructions given by invigilators or staff may be deemed to be cheating.
- C.5.** If the alarm was false, the examination will be re-started by Registry as soon as possible. Registry will also confirm the time at which the examination will re-start, whether additional time has been agreed to compensate for the disruption and the revised finish time.
- C.6.** Students will be asked to draw a line across their answer booklets before re-starting their examination.
- C.7.** The lead/first examiner and the sub-board chair for each examination affected will be given full details of the disturbance, the action taken and any adjustments to timings. All internal and external examiners will mark the scripts as usual, but will pay particular attention to any borderline students or any irregularities.
- C.8.** Students will be informed that sub-boards of examiners have been notified of the disruption and will take this into account when making their decisions (see section 12.5).
- C.9.** Registry will record the disruption as exceptional circumstances to ensure that sub-boards take this into account at the final classification stage. Students do not need to submit individual exceptional circumstances unless they wish to report other issues related to or in addition to the disruption.

Annex D: Key contacts

Name	Position	Contact Details	Area(s) of Responsibility
Daniel Bennett	Data Protection Officer	ext 6481 d.bennett@lse.ac.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Protection and Freedom of Information requests
Cheryl Edwardes	Deputy Head of Student Services	ext 7149 c.a.edwardes@lse.ac.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversight of Registry processes relating to exams and results Individual Exam Arrangements Panel
Nicola Foster	Deputy Registry Manager	ext 6620 n.k.foster@lse.ac.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> G/SBE results meeting support Exceptional circumstances Publication of results External examiners
Casey Hawkins	Communications Manager, TQARO	ext 2602 c.hawkins@lse.ac.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GSSC support School Calendar
Farnaz Ayrom-Walsh	Deputy Registry Manager	ext 7913 f.ayrom-walsh@lse.ac.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examination papers Examination operations Individual Examination Adjustments
Martin Johnson	Assessment Regulations Manager	ext 7894 m.johnson@lse.ac.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment misconduct Examination irregularities Assessment regulations G/SBE business meeting support Academic appeals
Sarah Slater	Deputy Head of Student Wellbeing	ext 6034 s.slater1@lse.ac.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students with disabilities Individual Examination Adjustments
Tom Hewlett	Head of TQARO	ext 6387 t.w.hewlett@lse.ac.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASC support External examiner reports USSC support