

LTC16D101

Title: The operation of standard Undergraduate Module Boards in 2016/7
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Issue

Due to a variety of factors, particularly the shorter time period between the end of exams and Graduation and the limited scope of the Module Boards' remit, there will be some changes to the operation of Module Boards for UG/IM Boards from this year. Members and Secretaries of Exam Boards have been informed, as per the attached memo below.

Recommendation

There is no recommendation; this is for report only.

Resource Implications

The change to the operation of module boards is to ensure that the consideration of progression and awards can happen in a timely manner. It is anticipated that there is no significant resource implication with this change.

Risk Implications

None foreseen.

Equality and Diversity

This change is not expected to have a negative effect on the student experience for any individual or group of students.

Timing of decisions

N/A

Further Information

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Appendix:

Memo attached.

University of East Anglia
Learning and Teaching Service

To: Chairs of Undergraduate and Integrated Masters Exam Boards

Cc: Teaching Directors, Members of UG and IM Exam Boards, Secretaries to Exam Boards

Subject: The operation of standard Undergraduate Module Boards in 2016/7

From: Dr Andrea Blanchflower, Director of Student and Academic Services

Date: 3 March 2017

1. Introduction

Due to a variety of factors, particularly the shorter time period between the end of exams and Graduation and the limited scope of the Module Boards' remit, there will be some changes to the operation of Module Boards for UG/IM Boards from this year. As a reminder, the current Module Board regulations are set out below; these regulations are not changing, but there are a number of operational changes that members of the Exam Boards need to be aware of, as detailed below.

2. Bachelor and Integrated Masters regulations

9 MODULE ASSESSMENT BOARD

- 9.1 All marks are provisional until these have been confirmed by the Board of Examiners or appropriate sub-group at a Module Assessment Board.
- 9.2 The Board of Examiners or appropriate sub-group shall receive the marks presented for each module, and contributing components, which is being assessed and for which it is responsible.
- 9.3 It is the role of the Board of Examiners or appropriate sub-group to confirm that internal and external moderation has been completed and that the marking standards for the module are appropriate.

9.4 Adjustment of Marks

- 9.4.1 In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Examiners may determine that marks obtained in a component of the module should be amended by scaling. Scaling may only be undertaken with the approval of the Learning and Teaching Committee of Senate, which must be given for each assessment item for which the Board of Examiners believes that scaling is necessary. A recommendation that scaling should occur must be informed by factors other than the standard deviation and average marks for the module relative to other modules and should seek to address factors not previously addressed by internal and external moderation. Only upward scaling will be approved and the method for scaling shall be piecewise linear scaling. Any such adjustment must be made for all students who have taken the assessment in question.
- 9.4.2 In some circumstances it may be appropriate for the assessment item to be remarked.
- 9.4.3 Marks may not be adjusted for individual students. Special factors relating to an individual student's examination and coursework marks may only be taken into account at the relevant Stage or Final Assessment Board meeting.
- 9.4.4 Where a Student Progress Board acting as a Module Assessment Board has previously confirmed the marks of Autumn Semester Visiting or Exchange students, marks may not normally be subsequently amended. In the event that adjustments to module marks

would have resulted in a different outcome for the Autumn Semester Visiting or Exchange students concerned, the Board of Examiners must inform the student and the home institution.

- 9.5 After completing the above process, the Board shall confirm all marks.
- 9.6 Where modules are assessed without the award of a mark the Board of Examiners shall resolve whether the student has achieved a Pass or, where applicable for certain specified assessments, a Merit or Distinction.
- 9.7 Marks thus confirmed by the Board of Examiners shall not normally be subject to further amendment except in the following instances:
- (a) to correct an error in recording or transcription;
 - (b) following a decision to change a mark as a result of an Academic Appeal by a student. In such cases and after completion of the Academic Appeal process the final mark shall be determined by the Board of Examiners, if necessary at a later date
 - (c) as a result of the outcome of a disciplinary hearing

3. Timing of Module Boards

From this year Module Boards for Undergraduate/Integrated Masters Exam Boards will be amalgamated with the first Stage Board held in the School. The Module Boards' main purpose is the confirmation of marks, which, with the restrictions on scaling, has meant that the meeting has become less meaningful; a number of Exam Board members have commented on the 'waste of time' that separate Module Boards now represent, because scaling is only permitted in exceptional circumstances, normally to adjust for an unforeseen Exam-related event. In addition, Schools now hold an annual review of assessment, where there is the opportunity to review standards and achievements across modules and levels which may influence future assessment strategies, whereas previously this may have formed part of the Module Boards' business.

This amalgamation brings the practice into line with the PGT Boards and the UG Reassessment Boards, and frees up time in the very short period between marking/marks entry and the first Stage Boards (normally the Final Board). It will allow time for more data quality checks, including the complicated cases for non-standard study, such as breaks in period of study and repeat years, which sometimes require manual intervention in preparation for the final/stage board.

4. The role of External Examiners in confirmation of marks under the new arrangements

The role of the external examiner is to ensure that:

- internal marking is consistent, fairly applied and of an appropriate standard;
- assessment has enabled learning outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated;
- academic standards are appropriate for the level of the award and recommendations for awards and for classification of awards are consistent, fair, fairly applied and of an appropriate standard.

Externals do not normally attend Module Boards. The regulations (**7.3.4**) set out the procedure to be followed in the event that the external judges the marking standards to be unacceptable, both before and after the marks have been formally confirmed. For example, if the external's comments judging the standards to be unacceptable reach the Chair in time to take action before the Module/Stage Board, this can be accommodated through amendment of the marks of all the students who have taken the item in question (though

moderation). (If an individual mark appears to be inappropriate, the mark shall stand but it will be drawn to the attention of the Final Board). **[Regulation 7.3.4 (b)]**

However, if the external's comments are drawn to the attention of the Board after module marks are confirmed, the Board shall not amend confirmed marks, but shall take appropriate action to ensure that the classification of students is not compromised. This will normally involve considering the position of all borderline candidates who have taken the module or item in question and might also involve a review of further samples of work to ascertain an appropriate allowance to be made in consideration of such borderline students. **[Regulation 7.3.4 (c)]**

In practice this means that externals' comments need to be fed into the moderation process if they are to effect any amendment to the marks; if they are not considered until the Module/Stage Board, this will be too late to take action to amend marks, so the appropriate action would be to ensure that the classification of any student taking the module is not compromised.

5. The operation of the new arrangements

1. Marks must be submitted to the Hub by the deadline set by your LTS team, the final deadline (for the very last exams) being 20th June.
2. Any External Examiner comment should be taken account of during the moderation process; externals' comments cannot be used to change the marks at the Module/Stage Board meeting. (If they are not available until that meeting, regulation 7.3.4 (c) will be followed).
3. Exam Board members will have the opportunity to check marks directly on Tableau in advance of the Module/Stage Board. If there are any concerns about the marks, these should be raised with the Chair who will discuss the issue with the Secretary and take appropriate action.
4. Training on the use of Tableau will be available for Exam Board members; secretaries will be in touch about details when the dates are finalised.
5. The formal confirmation of marks will take place at the first Final/Stage Board held by the School owning the module as the first item on the agenda. The marks confirmation will be 'taken as read' as already generally happens with PGT and UG reassessment Boards.
6. If an error is identified, this will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, and the solution will depend on the status of the students' progression at the time of identification. This is not a change from current practice.