

**ACADEMIC AWARD REGULATIONS
The Assessment of Students**

Name of regulation :	The Assessment of Students
Purpose of regulation :	To outline the regulations of the assessment of students
Approval for this regulation given by :	Academic Board
Responsibility for its update :	Dean of Students and Academic Registrar
Regulation applies to :	To all students registered on Staffordshire University awards, Examiners and Staff of Staffordshire University.
Date of Approval :	29 June 2011
Proposed Date of Review :	May 2012

1. Principles Of Assessment

1.1 Fulfilment of programme's objectives

The purpose of assessment is to enable students to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the objectives of the programme of study and that they have achieved the standard required for the award(s) they seek. All programmes of study should be subject to regulations which relate to the assessment requirements of the programme to its objectives, and it is within those assessment regulations that the examiners make their judgements on the students' performance.

1.2 Confirmation of standard

Assessment should reflect the achievement of the individual student in fulfilling the award objectives. At the same time, assessment should relate that achievement to a consistent national standard of awards. It should, therefore, be carried out by competent and impartial examiners,

using methods which enable them to assess students fairly. To that end, external examiners should be involved in the assessments which may count towards a particular award; their particular role is to ensure that justice is done to the individual student and that the standard of the institution's awards is maintained.

1.3 Examiners' judgement

- a) Assessment is a matter of judgement, not simply of computation. Marks grades and percentages should not be treated as absolute values but a symbol to be used by examiners to communicate their judgement of different aspects of a student's work, in order to provide information on which the final decision on a student's fulfilment of award objectives may be based. In following good practice, it is particularly important for students to understand the nature of the examiners' discretion and judgement when details of individual marks are available to them.
- b) Within the constraints of the paragraph entitled, Fulfilment of programme's objectives, examiners should have wide discretion in reaching decisions on the awards to be made to individual candidates. They are responsible for interpreting the assessment regulations for the programme of study concerned if any difficulties arise, in the light of the University's requirements and good practice in higher education; and their academic judgements should not, in themselves, be questioned or overturned.

2. Assessment Regulations

NOTE: For the purposes of these regulations all references to Boards of Examiners can be interchanged with the words Assessment Boards or Award Boards unless specified to the contrary.

2.1 Assessment Regulations shall:-

- i) identify all the elements that shall be assessed including any assessed supervised work experience;
- ii) specify when and how each of these elements will be assessed by internal and external examiners;
- iii) specify which and how many elements must be passed to obtain an award and the weighting which each element carries;
- iv) identify those elements which will, in no circumstances, be subject to compensation for failure;

- v) state the criteria for the recommendation of each award to which the programme of study may lead;
 - vi) specify the provision by which students can make good an initial failure.
- 2.2** Each programme of study shall have a Board of Examiners, or an Award Board, the composition and terms of reference of which must conform to any directives of the Academic Board.
- 2.3** The Chair of each Board normally shall be the Faculty/School/School Dean to which the programme of study is assigned. The approval of the Academic Board must be sought well in advance for any other nomination for Chair.
- 2.4** The Dean of Students and Academic Registrar will be responsible for ensuring that detailed and accurate records of the Boards' proceedings are maintained and, in this regard, the Faculty/School/School Administrators and their staff are responsible to the Dean of Students and Academic Registrar. The Vice-Chancellor (or his/her nominee) and the Dean of Students and Academic Registrar reserve the right, on behalf of Academic Board, to attend any meetings of Boards of Examiners, Assessment and/or Award Boards of the University.
- 2.5** Boards of Examiners, Assessment Boards and Award Boards must include external examiners appointed by Academic Board in accordance with the regulations laid down by Academic Board.
- 2.6** No student of the University shall be a member of a Board of Examiners, Assessment and/or Award Boards or attend an examiners' meeting other than by invitation as a candidate for assessment. If, however, a person who is otherwise qualified to be an examiner for an award (for example, as a member of staff or as an appointed external examiner) is coincidentally registered as a student on another programme of study, that shall not in itself disqualify that person from carrying out normal examining commitments.
- 2.7** If a member of an external examiner's family is registered as a student on an award to which that external examiner is appointed, the external examiner concerned will not be allowed to continue in that role until the student concerned has completed his/her award.
- 2.8** Boards of Examiners, Assessment and Award Boards, and authorised subsidiary Examination Boards thereof, shall be accountable to the Academic Board for the fulfilment of their terms of reference.
- 2.9** Any subsidiary Examination Board appointed by a Board of Examiners shall include at least one external examiner, whose duties and rights shall be the same as those of the main Board itself.

2.10 A Board of Examiners or Award Board shall be responsible for all assessments that contribute to the granting of an academic award. No other body shall have the authority to recommend to the University the conferment of an award, nor to amend the decision of a properly constituted Board of Examiners acting within its terms of reference and in accordance with the regulations for the programme of study, except as provided for in these Regulations.

2.11 All discussions of a general nature or on individual students shall remain confidential to the Board of Examiners. Staff may face disciplinary action by the University if this confidentiality is breached.

3. Powers Of External Examiners

3.1 No recommendation by a Board of Examiners for the conferment of an award shall be made without the written consent of its approved external examiner(s). On any matter which the external examiner(s) has declared to be a matter of principle, the decision of the external examiner(s) either shall be accepted as final by the Board of Examiners or referred to the Academic Board as shall any unresolved disagreement between the external examiners.

4. Review Of A Decision Of A Board Of Examiners

4.1 The Academic Board, or other body authorised by it to act as a review group, may in the following circumstances require a Board of Examiners to reconsider its decision(s):

i) if a candidate requests such a reconsideration and establishes to the satisfaction of the Academic Board or review group that his or her performance in the assessment was adversely affected by illness or other factors which he or she was unable, or for valid reasons unwilling, to divulge before the Board of Examiners reached its decision. The candidate's request must be supported by medical certificates or other documentary evidence acceptable to the Academic Board;

ii) if the Academic Board or review group is satisfied on evidence produced by a candidate or any other person that there has been a material administrative error, or that the examinations were not conducted in accordance with the regulations for the award, or that some other material irregularity relevant to the assessments has occurred.

4.2 Disagreement with the academic judgement of a Board of Examiners in assessing the merits of an individual piece of work or in reaching any assessment decision based on the marks, grades and other information relating to a candidate's performance, shall not in itself constitute grounds for a request for reconsideration by a candidate.

- 4.3** If after reconsideration, in the circumstances detailed in sub-paragraph ii) above, the Board of Examiners does not modify its decision, the Academic Board shall be empowered to annul that decision if in its opinion due and proper account had not been taken of the relevant factors.
- 4.4** In cases of procedural or other irregularity, or where it is impossible to reconvene a Board of Examiners, the Academic Board shall have the power to annul a decision of the Board of Examiners without making a prior request for reconsideration. If an error or irregularity is found to have affected more than one candidate, the Academic Board may annul the whole assessment or any part of it.
- 4.5** When a decision has been annulled, it may be necessary to take action which, if necessary, would include the appointment of new external examiners.
- 4.6** The University's Procedures for Review of an Examination Board Decision are detailed separately.

5. Responsibilities Of Students

- 5.1** It is the responsibility of each student to ascertain when and where their assessments/examinations will take place, to attend assessments and/or examinations and to submit work for assessment as required and to provide the Board of Examiners in advance of their meeting with any relevant documentary evidence relating to personal circumstances which may have affected their performance and which they wish to be taken into account by the Board.
- 5.2** If a student fails to attend examinations or to submit work for assessment without good cause, the examiners shall have the authority to deem the student to have failed the assessments concerned.
- 5.3** If a student fails without good cause to provide the examiners in advance of their meeting with information about any personal circumstances that may have affected performance in assessments, any body authorised by the Academic Board to consider requests for the examiners' decision(s) to be reviewed shall be empowered to reject any such request on those grounds.
- 5.4** If a student is found to have cheated, plagiarised or attempted to gain an unfair advantage, the examiners shall have authority to deem the student to have failed part or all of the assessments and the authority to determine whether or not the student shall be permitted to be reassessed. The University Procedures for dealing with Breaches of Assessment (Academic Misconduct) are detailed separately

6. Boards Of Examiners

- 6.1** A recommendation for an award shall only be made by a Board of Examiners when it is satisfied that the candidate has fulfilled the objectives of the programme of study and achieved the required standard.
- 6.2** Subject to these Regulations and the applicable assessment regulations, Boards of Examiners shall have the discretion to reach such a decision in respect of a candidate's assessment(s) and award as they may deem appropriate having regard for the need to ensure that justice is done to individual students and that the standards of the University's awards are maintained.
- 6.3** Subject to the provisions of these Regulations, the reassessment of a student shall be at the discretion of the Board of Examiners. The Board of Examiners shall not unreasonably withhold permission for a student to be reassessed in accordance with course or award regulations.
- 6.4** Assessment regulations shall require that the reassessment of a candidate for an award shall normally take place within the maximum length of the student's period of registration for that award.
- 6.5** The Board of Examiners shall specify, in accordance with the award or course regulations, which elements of assessment must be retaken and identify the next available opportunity for the reassessment to take place. A student may be required to study certain components again before reassessment.
- 6.6** Except as exceptionally permitted under these Regulations, no reassessment shall be permitted for a student to improve upon a mark or grading above the pass level required for the award for which the student is a candidate.
- 6.7** A candidate for reassessment may not demand reassessment in elements which are no longer current. The Board of Examiners may, at its discretion, make such special arrangements as it deems appropriate in cases where it is not practicable for students to be reassessed in the same elements and by the same methods as at the first attempt.
- 6.8** Subject to the provisions of these Regulations, assessment regulations shall specify the requirements to be satisfied when a student is to be reassessed for an award. These will normally be the same as the requirements for assessment except that provision may be made for marks or grades for successfully completed assessments to be carried forward.

- 6.9** For the purpose of the Regulations shown above, the term “Board of Examiners” applies to all properly constituted Boards which are convened to consider students’ assessment and/or progress on their award.

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