

# Regulations on the Conduct of Assessment

These regulations apply to the assessment of all awards made by the College, except that the examination of the thesis for the specialist doctorates and the assessment of the degrees of MPhil, PhD, and MA/MSc by Research are governed by the Research Degree Regulations. These regulations are to be read in conjunction with any special instructions or contractual arrangements for individual programmes.

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## Boards of Examiners

### College Boards of Examiners

1. The Academic Board shall convene a College Board of Examiners for each Faculty to act on its behalf in respect of all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes assessed wholly or partly within that Faculty.
2. The membership of each College Board of Examiners shall comprise a Chair and the Chair of each Sub-board of Examiners reporting to the Board, or his/her representative.
3. The terms of reference of the College Boards of Examiners will be:
  - (a) to act in accordance with the Regulations and Procedures of the College and to meet as necessary to fulfil this requirement;
  - (b) to consider recommendations from the Sub-boards of Examiners on final award classifications and student progress;
  - (c) to make recommendations to the Academic Board on regulations and procedures governing their business.
4. The Chair will have authority to act on behalf of the College Board of Examiners between meetings either individually, or in correspondence with other members. Any action taken in this way will be reported at the next meeting of the Board.

### College Board of Examiners' Executive Committee

5. The Academic Board shall convene a College Board of Examiners' Executive Committee to act on its behalf on matters outlined in paragraph 7.
6. The membership of the College Board of Examiners' Executive Committee shall comprise a Chair, the Chairs of the College Boards of Examiners and the Associate Deans (Education). The Academic Registrar acts an advisor to the Committee. The Committee

may also invite appropriately qualified professionals to meetings to act in an advisory capacity.

7. The terms of reference of the College Board of Examiners' Executive Committee will be:

(a) to act in accordance with the Regulations and Procedures of the College and to meet as necessary to fulfil this requirement;

(b) to convene Sub-boards of Examiners and to note annually the appointment of Visiting Examiners and to approve the appointment of Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Sub-boards of Examiners;

(c) to approve guidelines for standard requests from individual students with special circumstances for the provision of exam access arrangements and to approve any exceptional requests not covered by such guidelines;

(d) to consider recommendations for the suspension of regulations where these apply to assessment and student progress;

(e) to consider recommendations on the award of credit or exemptions for work undertaken outside the College;

(e) to review annually its own activity and institutional assessment processes more generally, having particular regard to comparability of standards and process across the College; to report to the Academic Board on the outcomes of the review as appropriate; and to review and issue guidance, including the *Guidelines for Examiners and Assessors*.

8. The Chair will have authority to act on behalf of the College Board of Examiners' Executive Committee between meetings either individually, or in correspondence with other members. Any action taken in this way will be reported at the next meeting of the Board.

9. The College Board of Examiners' Executive Committee may determine circumstances under which the Secretary may act on its behalf between meetings. Any action taken in this way will be reported at the next meeting of the Board.

### **Sub-boards of Examiners**

10. The College Board of Examiners' Executive Committee shall convene Sub-boards of Examiners on an annual basis as required.

11. The membership of each Sub-board of Examiners shall comprise a Chair, a Deputy Chair, Internal Examiners, at least one External Examiner and normally a member of the Academic Registry as an observer. Where a Sub-board is convened to consider candidates for joint honours programmes, the Internal Examiners shall be the Chairs, or their representatives, of Sub-boards in subjects which make a significant contribution to the programmes in question.

12. The terms of reference of the Sub-boards of Examiners will be:

(a) to act in accordance with the Regulations and Procedures of the College and to meet as necessary to fulfil this requirement;

(b) to make annual recommendations to the College Board of Examiners' Executive Committee on the appointment of Visiting Examiners;

(c) to be responsible for setting and marking all work necessary for assessment;

(d) to make recommendations to the College Boards of Examiners on final award classifications and student progress;

(e) to make recommendations to the College Board of Examiners' Executive Committee in respect of students with special circumstances for the provision of exam access arrangements and the suspension of regulations where these apply to assessment and student progress;

(f) to make recommendations to the College Boards of Examiners on regulations and procedures governing their business;

(g) to consider reports from Visiting Examiners and to take appropriate action arising from such reports.

13. Sub-boards of Examiners may convene sub-committees from their membership to undertake duties on their behalf, provided all decisions and actions taken by a sub-committee are reported at the next meeting of the Sub-board. Each Sub-board shall convene sub-committees for both:

(a) scrutiny of examination papers (see paragraph 47);

(b) consideration of extenuating circumstances, in which case the membership shall be the Chair of the Sub-board, at least one Visiting Examiner and the Head of Department or his/her representative, and normally a member of the Academic Registry as an observer.

14. The Chair will have authority to act on behalf of the Sub-board of Examiners in business which may arise between meetings, provided such action will be reported at the next meeting of the Sub-board. Final course outcomes and recommendations on award classifications will be agreed in writing between the Chair and at least one Visiting Examiner from the Sub-board. In addition to the responsibilities outlined in paragraph 12, the Chair may be required to liaise with the Chair of the Academic Board, the Academic Registrar and the Chairs of the College Boards of Examiners on representations and complaints from candidates.

## **Examiners and Assessors**

### **Internal Examiners**

15. Internal Examiners shall be members of the academic teaching staff of the College and other members of staff deemed appropriate by the College Board of Examiners' Executive Committee and shall serve as ex-officio members of the Sub-board(s) of Examiners to which they are appointed.

16. Internal Examiners shall be appointed by the Chair of the relevant Sub-board of Examiners.

17. The duties of Internal Examiners shall be determined by the Chair of the relevant Sub-board of Examiners, and will include:

- (a) to comply with the Regulations and Procedures of the College;
- (b) to attend meetings of the Sub-board of Examiners when asked to do so by the Chair;
- (c) to set and mark work for the purpose of assessing candidates;
- (d) to be available when required to discuss marking, moderation and course performance with the Chair and Visiting Examiner(s).

### **Visiting Examiners**

18. Visiting Examiners shall be members of the wider academic community who may be external or internal to the University of London, but not members of the College.

19. Visiting Examiners shall be nominated by the Chair of the relevant Sub-board of Examiners and appointed by the College Board of Examiners' Executive Committee.

20. Further to the provisions of paragraph 18, the following criteria shall apply when considering nominations for the appointment of Visiting Examiners:

- (a) all Visiting Examiners will be:
  - i. of sufficient authority in their discipline to command the respect of the wider academic community (e.g. will hold a senior academic position or will have substantial experience in the discipline);
  - ii. familiar with current standards and procedures of Higher Education in the UK;
- (b) in order to allow sufficient time for the proper performance of his/her duties, a Visiting Examiner shall not hold more than two visiting examinerships at undergraduate degree level;
- (c) any person currently or previously associated with the College as a student, member of staff, external validator or member of Council will not be appointed as a Visiting Examiner unless a period of at least five years has elapsed since his/her association with the College ceased;
- (d) any person who is connected either personally (i.e. a close relative) or professionally with a student falling within the purview of a Sub-board of Examiners shall not act as Visiting Examiner on that Sub-board, except a professional connection between an Intercollegiate Examiner and a student may occasionally arise from intercollegiate teaching, in which case the Intercollegiate Examiner will inform the Chair of the Sub-board and the other Visiting Examiner(s);
- (e) a Visiting Examiner shall not be a member of staff of an institution for which a member of staff of the College is appointed to act as a Visiting Examiner in the same discipline, unless the Chair of the College Board of Examiners' Executive Committee is satisfied that such a situation is unavoidable;

(f) where a programme has external accreditation from a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body, the programme specification may state additional criteria to be met in the appointment of a Visiting Examiner.

21. A Visiting Examiner shall be appointed for a continuous period of up to four years, subject to annual review by the College Board of Examiners' Executive Committee. On completion of the period of appointment, a Visiting Examiner shall not be eligible for re-appointment until a further two years have elapsed.

22. The duties of Visiting Examiners will be:

(a) to comply with the Regulations and Procedures of the College;

(b) to attend any meeting of a Sub-board of Examiners of which s/he is a member held to determine the outcomes of examinations, unless s/he has been granted dispensation to be absent on that occasion by the Faculty Dean;

(c) to assist in the maintenance of the standard of awards of the College and the University as appropriate, and to help ensure as far as is practicable that the process of assessing students is fair and operated equitably, by:

i. advising on whether marking schemes, award assessment schemes and programme content are consistent with national standards;

ii. advising on whether marking schemes and methods of assessment are appropriate to the discipline;

iii. approving draft examination papers;

iv. moderating the marking of Internal Examiners and adjudicating in exceptional cases of disagreement on marks;

v. advising Sub-boards of Examiners on decisions relating to awards;

vi. advising on proposals to introduce new courses, course amendments and programme amendments;

(d) to sign lists showing the final outcomes of course assessment and awards;

(e) to complete an annual report within three weeks following the main meeting of the Sub-board of Examiners, using a proforma issued by the Academic Registrar.

### **Assessors and Assistant Examiners**

23. Assessors shall be specialists with particular expertise or knowledge appointed to assist in setting and marking work and to attend examinations.

24. Assistant Examiners may be appointed to assist in marking and to attend practical examinations where large numbers of candidates are involved. Assistant Examiners shall not assist with setting work for assessment.

25. Assessors and Assistant Examiners shall be appointed by the Chair of the relevant Sub-board of Examiners, who will:

(a) assign them with duties, to include compliance with the Regulations and Procedures of the College;

(b) provide them with appropriate guidance on the assessment process, including the application of marking criteria;

(c) ensure that their marking is always confirmed by an Internal Examiner (see paragraph 55).

26. Assessors and Assistant Examiners shall not be members of Sub-boards of Examiners, but at the discretion of the Chair may attend meetings in a non-voting capacity to provide advice.

### **Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Boards of Examiners**

27. The Chair of the College Board of Examiners' Executive Committee shall be the Vice-Principal (Education).

28. Chairs of College Boards of Examiners shall be Faculty Deans or Associate Deans.

29. Chairs of Sub-boards of Examiners, and normally Deputy Chairs, shall be senior members of the academic teaching staff of the College, nominated by the Head of the academic department responsible for teaching the subject concerned and appointed by the College Board of Examiners' Executive Committee.

30. The duties of Chairs of Sub-boards of Examiners will include:

(a) to make all arrangements for meetings of the Sub-board, providing members with adequate notice of the meeting (normally at least six months in the case of meetings involving the Visiting Examiner(s));

(b) to determine the distribution of work between examiners and assessors, including Visiting Examiners;

(c) to ensure that examiners and assessors appointed to the Sub-board are provided with the information required to reach sound decisions, in accordance with the procedures described in the College Regulations and the *Guidelines for Examiners and Assessors*;

(d) in collaboration with the Head of the appropriate department, to assess the training needs of examiners and assessors appointed to the Sub-board and to ensure that adequate measures are taken to address any needs which may be identified;

(e) to retain responsibility for all decisions and action taken and not taken by the Sub-board in respect of the assessment for which it is responsible;

(f) to ensure that Visiting Examiners receive an appropriate written response to any comments or recommendations contained in their annual reports within two months of receipt of their report.

### **Procedures following the appointment of examiners and assessors**

31. The Academic Registrar shall maintain a record of the membership of all Boards of Examiners for awards conferred by the College.

32. The College Board of Examiners' Executive Committee may terminate the appointment of an examiner or assessor who no longer satisfies the criteria on which s/he was appointed, or who is unable to fulfil the duties for which s/he was appointed. In the Royal Holloway Regulations on the conduct of assessment 2014/15

case of a Visiting Examiner, the appointment may be terminated from either side by giving three months written notice.

33. All examiners and assessors will be provided access to the College Regulations, the *Guidelines for Examiners and Assessors*, and the College Student Handbook.

34. Visiting Examiners will be provided with the following additional items by the Academic Registrar:

- (a) an Annual Report Form;
- (b) a statement of impartiality;
- (c) an expenses claim form and schedule of reimbursable expenses.

35. Visiting Examiners will be provided with the following additional items by the Chair of the Sub-board of Examiners:

- (a) contact details;
- (b) a list giving the composition of the Sub-board, including a note of the subject areas covered by other Visiting Examiners;
- (c) the Departmental Student Handbook(s) or Programme Guide(s) covering programmes and courses under the Sub-board's purview;
- (d) a schedule for the assessment process, including the dates of meetings and any domestic arrangements;
- (e) minutes of the previous year's Sub-board meetings;
- (f) the Departmental Annual Review Report for the previous year;
- (g) for new Visiting Examiners, the final report of the outgoing Visiting Examiner.

## **Meetings of Boards of Examiners**

### **Quorum for meetings**

36. The quorum for any meeting of a Sub-board of Examiners shall be the Chair or Deputy Chair, one Visiting Examiner and at least two Internal Examiners. All meetings of the Sub-Board of Examiners should normally include all Internal examiners. A meeting at which just the quorum membership are present may only take place under exceptional circumstances.

37. The quorum for any meeting of a College Board of Examiners will be the Chair and at least three other members. The College Board shall not approve recommendations from Sub-boards of which there is not a representative present at the meeting, but may consider the Sub-Board's recommendations and determine conditions to be met before the recommendations can be approved by Chair's action.

38. The quorum for any meeting of the College Board of Examiners' Executive Committee will be the Chair and at least two other members.

### **Conduct of meetings**

39. Meetings of the College Boards of Examiners and the College Board of Examiners' Executive Committee, and meetings of Sub-boards of Examiners held to determine recommendations on the final outcomes of course assessment and award classification, will take place at times specified in a schedule circulated at the beginning of each academic year by the Academic Registrar.

40. Only the following may attend meetings of Boards of Examiners:

(a) appointed members of the Board;

(b) designated administrative staff, including departmental administrators and the Academic Registrar or his/her representative(s);

(c) the Principal of the College;

(d) Assessors or Assistant Examiners invited by the Chair of a Sub-board under the provisions of paragraph 26;

(e) inspectors appointed under Act of Parliament for examinations leading to a registrable qualification.

41. Members of Sub-boards of Examiners shall have the right to see any item of work submitted by a candidate for assessment by the Sub-board.

42. The Chair shall ensure that a formal and detailed record is kept of the proceedings and lodged with the Academic Registrar within ten working days.

43. For meetings of Boards of Examiners held to determine final recommendations on course assessment, award classifications and student progression, the identity of candidates shall be withheld from those present until all decisions have been finalised.

44. Decisions of Boards of Examiners will be based only on candidates' work or marks arising thereof and evidence of extenuating circumstances submitted by candidates or found as a result of any investigations into teaching provision or the assessment process conducted by the College.

45. Decisions of Boards of Examiners will be arrived at by consensus, or by a majority vote of those members present and eligible to vote (i.e. Visiting Examiners and Internal Examiners). Abstentions will count as votes against the motion. The Chair shall vote only where there is no majority among other members.

46. Decisions on final awards must be based only on the outcomes of course assessment which have been moderated and confirmed by a Visiting Examiner in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 58, otherwise the decision will be deemed provisional and subject to confirmation by the Visiting Examiner(s) once confirmed marks become available.

## Setting work and marking

### Setting work

47. Each Sub-board of Examiners shall convene a sub-committee to be responsible for:
- (a) ensuring that examination papers are set as and when required, and that they are both fair and appropriate to the learning outcomes of the course;
  - (b) ensuring that each examination paper and any associated marking schemes and sample answers are approved by a Visiting Examiner appointed to the Sub-board;
  - (c) reviewing the potential for overlap between coursework and examination papers likely to be sat by any candidate in the same session and across the period of study;
  - (d) obtaining copyright clearance as required for material reproduced in question papers;
  - (e) ensuring the final accuracy of each examination paper;
  - (f) lodging a copy of each examination paper with the Academic Registrar;
  - (g) where appropriate, approving topics for projects, dissertations and presentations, and programmes for recitals and performances.
48. Sub-boards of Examiners shall draw up marking schemes at levels appropriate to the courses and awards within their purview and make these available to candidates.
49. Sub-boards of Examiners shall determine who may be present at oral examinations and assessed presentations and performances. Audio and video recordings of the examination may be made for the sole use of the examiners.
50. All those involved in the assessment process shall be responsible for maintaining the secrecy of question papers and associated marking schemes until the papers have been worked by the candidates, and for maintaining the security of any work submitted by candidates for assessment.
51. Where candidates are to be given foresight of the format or content of assessment, including questions in an open-book examination, arrangements must be made to ensure that all candidates have an equal opportunity to access the material at the same time.
52. It is a condition of the appointment of examiners and assessors that copyright of question papers and any associated materials prepared in relation to the appointment shall rest with the College.
53. Sub-boards of Examiners shall determine precisely the source materials to be used by candidates during each examination, making clear to candidates whether they must provide the materials themselves or use materials provided by the College, subject to the following conditions:

(a) candidates will not normally be given use of dictionaries to overcome any deficiency in their command of the English language;

(b) Sub-boards shall not commit the College to any financial expenditure without the prior approval of the Academic Registrar;

(c) calculators, where used during formal written papers, must be a model approved by the relevant academic department;

(d) candidates should be asked to provide materials only where it is reasonable to expect that they would be able to purchase them.

## **Marking**

54. The identity of candidates will be withheld from those marking summatively-assessed work so far as is practicable until after the marking process is complete. The Faculty Dean may approve exemptions from this requirement, of which students will be informed.

55. Work submitted for assessment shall be marked using one of the following methods:

(a) single marking, where the work is marked by one Internal Examiner;

(b) single marking with sampling, where the work is marked in accordance with (a) above, except a second Internal Examiner also marks a sample of the work, which shall include all pieces of work which are given a mark of Fail by the first marker, in order to ensure consistency with the approved marking scheme;

(c) double marking, where the work is marked by two Internal Examiners, or by an Internal Examiner and an Assessor, who shall together agree a single mark for each piece of work;

(d) blind double marking, where the work is marked in accordance with (c) above, except the second marker shall not have prior sight of the comments of the first marker.

56. Any piece of work which contributes towards a candidate's award classification shall normally be assessed using one of the methods outlined in paragraph 55(b-d), except in the case of in-course assessments the form or timing of which renders this impractical.

57. Save in the case of formal oral examinations, presentations or performances, Visiting Examiners will not normally mark work. In exceptional cases, however, a Visiting Examiner will be asked to adjudicate where a first and second marker are unable to agree a single mark for a piece of work, even after reference to a third internal marker.

58. All final course outcomes shall be moderated by a Visiting Examiner, who shall have regard for matters such as the positioning of candidates at borderlines, the distribution of marks across the cohort and the award of Fail.

## **Publication of Results**

59. Assessment outcomes will be released to students only after they have been confirmed by the appropriate Board(s) of Examiners, as follows:

Royal Holloway Regulations on the conduct of assessment 2014/15

(a) each Sub-board of Examiners will publish anonymised lists showing course outcomes (e.g. Pass, Fail ), but not percentage results, after its final meeting at which these have been agreed;

(b) the Academic Registrar will publish anonymised award classification lists after the meeting of the College Board of Examiners at which these have been agreed.

60. Written confirmation of course outcomes, percentage results, award classifications and field of study may only be issued to candidates individually by the Academic Registrar.

61. Save for the exclusions in paragraph 62, provisional results may be released to third parties, such as funding bodies, employers and other education institutions, if the candidate's application to that party would be compromised by waiting until the results have been confirmed. In such cases, the third party will be apprised of the need to maintain confidentiality pending final ratification of the results.

62. Subject to the Data Protection Act, services such as the provision of transcripts, references and written notification of results will be withheld for candidates who are in debt to the College or the University of London.

63. Certificates of award for degrees of the University of London awarded by the College will be issued by the University of London.

64. Certificates of award for diplomas and certificates of the College will be issued by the Academic Registrar. The certificate shall state the name of the College, the title and date of the award, and where appropriate, the classification and field of study, and shall also carry the signature of the Principal.