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, MA/MSc by Research and PhD by Prior Publication 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.

1. College Boards of Examiners
2. College Board of Examiners’ Executive Committee
3. Sub-boards of examiners
4. Internal Examiners
5. External Examiners
6. Assessors and Assistant Examiners
7. Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Boards of Examiners
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BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

1. 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.
2. College Board of Examiners’ Executive Committee

(1) The Academic Board shall convene a College Board of Examiners’ Executive Committee to act on its behalf on matters outlined in paragraph (3) below.

(2) 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.

(3) 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 External 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;

(f) to review annually its own activity and institutional assessment processes more generally, having particular regard to comparability of standards and process across the College and any relevant partner institutions; 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.

(4) 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.

(5) 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.

3. Sub-boards of Examiners

(1) The College Board of Examiners’ Executive Committee shall convene Sub-boards of Examiners on an annual basis as required.

(2) 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 membership shall comprise the Chairs, or their representatives, of Sub-boards in subjects.
which make a significant contribution to the programmes in question. The Chair of this Sub-board shall be appointed by the College Board of Examiners’ Executive Committee.

(3) 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 Chairs of College Board on the appointment of External 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 External Examiners and to take appropriate action arising from such reports.

(4) 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 Section 11 (1) of these regulations);

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

(5) 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 External Examiner from the Sub-board. In addition to the responsibilities outlined in Section 3 (3) of these regulations, 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

4. Internal Examiners

(1) 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.

(2) Internal Examiners shall be appointed by the Chair of the relevant Sub-board of Examiners.

(3) 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 External Examiner(s).

5. External Examiners

(1) External Examiners shall be nominated by the Chair of the relevant Sub-board of Examiners and appointed by the Faculty Deans on behalf of the College Board of Examiners' Executive Committee. External 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.

(2) Further to the provisions of Section 5 (1), the following criteria shall apply when considering nominations for the appointment of External Examiners. All External Examiners must demonstrate appropriate evidence of:

(a) sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experiences within their discipline to command the respect of academic peers, and where appropriate, professional peers;
(b) familiarity with current standards and procedures of Higher Education in the UK, in particular agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards, and assurance and enhancement of provision;
(c) competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study or parts thereof;
(d) relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate;
(e) competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures;
(f) fluency in English, and where programmes are delivered and assessed in languages other than English, fluency in the relevant language(s);
(g) awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula;
(h) competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student experience;
(i) meeting applicable additional criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies;

The College Board of Examiners’ Executive Committee will consider and approve the appointment of any External Examiners who do not meet the criteria set out above.

(3) The External Examiner appointed by the College should not be:

(a) a member of a governing body or committee of the College (i.e. Council) or one of its collaborative partners, or a current member of staff of the College or one of its collaborative partners;

(b) any person currently or previously associated with the College as a student, member of staff, external validator unless a period of at least five years has elapsed since his/her association with the College ceased;

(c) any person who is connected either personally (i.e. a close relative), professionally or contractually with a student falling within the purview of a Sub-board of Examiners or with a member of staff involved in the programmes of study, in cases where a professional connection between an External Examiner from a College of the University of London and a student may occasionally arise from intercollegiate teaching, the External Examiner will inform the Chair of the Sub-board and the other External Examiner(s);

(d) any person required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study;

(e) any person who is or knows they will be in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study;

(f) any person significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff clearly involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme(s) or course units in question;

(g) a member of staff of an institution for which a member of staff of the College is appointed to act as an External Examiner for cognate programmes, unless the Chair of the College Board of Examiners’ Executive Committee is satisfied that such a situation is unavoidable;

(h) be a colleague from the home department and institution of the immediately preceding External Examiner;

(i) a member of the same department of the same institution as another External Examiner for the same programme.

(4) An External Examiner shall normally be appointed for a continuous period of up to four years, with an exceptional extension of one year to ensure continuity. Appointments are subject to annual review by the College Board of Examiners’ Executive Committee as are requests for extensions to such appointments. On completion of the period of appointment, an External Examiner may only be reappointed in exceptional circumstances and then only after a period of five years or more has elapsed since their last appointment. In order to allow sufficient time for the proper performance of his/her duties, an External Examiner shall normally hold no more than two External Examiner appointments for taught programmes/course units at any point in time.
Where a nominated External Examiner has no previous experience in such a role, the Department will, where possible, appoint a more experienced External as a mentor.

(5) The duties of External 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 for work that contributes to a named award;

(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.

Given the central role played by an External Examiner in confirming the standard of awards made by the College, the College Board of Examiner’s Executive Committee may take steps to terminate the contract of an External Examiner early for failure to fulfil the duties set out in (5)(a) above.

6. Assessors and Assistant Examiners

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

(2) 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.

(3) 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 Section 12 (2) of these regulations).

(4) 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.

7. Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Boards of Examiners

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

(2) Chairs of College Boards of Examiners shall be Faculty Deans or Associate Deans (Education).

(3) 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. In the case of collaborative provision the Chair may be an Associate Dean (Education) appointed by the College Board of Examiners’ Executive Committee.

(4) 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 External Examiner(s));

(b) to determine the distribution of work between examiners and assessors, including External 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 External Examiners receive an appropriate written response to any comments or recommendations contained in their annual reports within two months of receipt of their report.

8. Procedures following the appointment of examiners and assessors

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

(2) 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 case of an External Examiner, the appointment may be terminated from either side by giving three months written notice.

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(3) All examiners and assessors will be provided access to the College Regulations, the *Guidelines for Examiners and Assessors*, the College Student Handbook and other relevant information via the External Examiner Online Resource.

(4) External 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.

(5) External 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 External Examiners;

(c) the Departmental Student Handbook(s) or Programme Guide(s) and course specifications 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 External Examiners, the final report of the outgoing External Examiner.

MEETINGS OF BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

9. **Quorum for meetings**

(1) The quorum for any meeting of a Sub-board of Examiners shall be the Chair or Deputy Chair, one External 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 is present may only take place under exceptional circumstances.

(2) 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.

(3) The quorum for any meeting of the College Board of Examiners’ Executive Committee will be the Chair and at least three other members.
10. Conduct of meetings

(1) 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.

(2) 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 Section 6 (4) of these regulations;

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

(3) 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.

(4) 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.

(5) 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.

(6) 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 or a partner institution in the case of collaborative provision.

(7) 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. External 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.

(8) Decisions on final awards must be based only on the outcomes of course assessment which have been moderated and confirmed by an External Examiner in accordance with the provisions of Section 12 (5) of these regulations, otherwise the decision will be deemed provisional and subject to confirmation by the External Examiner(s) once confirmed marks become available.

(9) Decisions on course and programme outcomes made by College Boards of examiners are final unless a subsequent error in the recording of marks or incorrect application of relevant academic regulations is identified. In such circumstances the College reserves the right to make a revised determination of the course unit, final award and/or progression decisions.
11. Setting work

(1) 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 an External 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.

(2) 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.

(3) Sub-boards of Examiners shall determine who may be present at oral examinations and assessed presentations and performances in line with the Guidelines for Examiners and Assessors. Audio and video recordings of the examination may be made for the sole use of the examiners.

(4) 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.

(5) 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.

(6) 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 or in the case of collaborative provision copyright may rest with the partner institution as set out in the institutional contract.

(7) 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 or relevant partner institution in the case of collaborative provision, 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;
12. Marking work

(1) 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 form this requirement, of which students will be informed.

(2) 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 (2)(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 (2)c) above, except the second marker shall not have prior sight of the comments of the first marker.

(3) Any piece of work which contributes towards a candidate’s award classification shall normally be assessed using one of the methods outlined in Section 12 (2) (b-d) of these regulations, except in the case of in-course assessments the form or timing of which renders this impractical.

(4) Save in the case of formal oral examinations, presentations or performances, External Examiners will not normally mark work. In exceptional cases, however, an External 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.

(5) All final course outcomes shall be moderated by an External 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.

(6) In cases where the External Examiner fails to endorse final course outcomes or degree classifications, the matter will be referred to the College Board of Examiners’ Executive Committee.
13. Publication of results

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

(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.

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

(3) Save for the exclusions in Section 14 (2) of these regulations, 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.

14. Certification of results

(1) 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 have tuition or tuition-related debt to the College, the University of London or a partner institution in the case of collaborative provision.

(2) Certificates of award for degrees of the University of London awarded by the College will be issued by the University of London.

(3) Certificates of award for degrees, 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.