



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
NEW UNIVERSITY

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Boards of Examiners Procedure

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Purpose

- 1 Boards of Examiners (or 'Boards') enable degree-awarding bodies to make judgements and decisions on which the award of credit and qualifications is ultimately based.
- 2 The purpose of this procedure is to set out the University's requirements in respect of the following:
 - Membership of Boards, including internal assessors, external examiners and other staff. This will also include Pre-Boards.
 - Attendance of members at Board meetings, including regulations on quorum and how inquoracy will be managed.
 - Arrangements for, and limitations on, Chair's Actions taken outside a formal Board meeting.
 - The exercise of discretion by a Board.
- 3 The procedure should be read alongside the University's assessment regulations as relevant to the cohort(s) under consideration and specified in the programme specification. These regulations will specify the requirements for the award of credit, progression and award to be applied by the Board.
- 4 The procedure has been benchmarked against the QAA UK Quality Code Advice and Guidance Theme on Assessment (<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/the-quality-code/advice-and-guidance>) and OfS Condition of Registration B4: Assessment and Awards (<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/registration-with-the-ofs-a-guide/conditions-of-registration/>).

Applicability and Scope

- 5 The procedure applies to Boards of Examiners for all taught degree programmes awarded by the University.
- 6 This includes Boards for taught programmes delivered by one or more of the University's partners under a franchise arrangement, or where a programme is validated by the University to be delivered under a partnership arrangement.

Key Principles

- 7 **Anonymity:** All marks and decisions on learners' progression or awards must be considered on an anonymous basis, by student ID only.
- 8 **Confidentiality:** All decisions of a Board must remain confidential until the official date for the release of marks. Members of a Board must not speak to learners about their detailed performance, provide them with results prior to their release date, or disclose the nature of the Board's discussions outside the meeting.
- 9 **Collective decision-making:** Decisions are reached by a Board of Examiners on a collaborative basis and are not attributable to any single individual.

- 10 **Integrity and ethical conduct:** Members of the Boards of Examiners are expected to act with integrity and uphold the highest standards of ethical conduct. This includes being honest and impartial, avoiding any conflicts of interest, maintaining professionalism, and ensuring that their actions reflect the values and standards of the University.
- 11 **Commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion:** Boards of Examiners are committed to fostering an environment that upholds the principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). All members must ensure that decisions are made impartially, without discrimination or personal bias and address any potential barriers to equality and inclusion.

Membership

- 12 The School, with support from the Academic Registry, is responsible for establishing appropriately constituted Boards of Examiners which oversee the annual consideration and approval of end-of-year results contributing to all taught degree programmes.
- 13 The membership of the Boards of Examiners will consist of:
- Chair, normally the Head of School in which the programme(s) sit, or their designated representative from the School Leadership Team or School Professoriate
 - Academic staff within the School responsible for the programme(s) under consideration, i.e., the programme leader, or exceptionally, an appointed nominee
 - The External Examiner(s) appointed to oversee one or more of the programmes or individual modules under consideration
 - A Quality Representative (as a non-voting member), normally a senior member of the Academic Registry
 - A named Secretary (as a non-voting member), appointed from the Academic Registry
- 14 For Partnership programmes, the Academic Registry will ensure there is appropriate representation of academic colleagues from partner institutions involved with the programmes. In such instances, it is expected that the School's Link Tutor/Partnership Tutor or equivalent and Partner Programme Leads will be members of the Boards of Examiners.
- 15 For apprenticeship programmes, the Academic Registry will ensure there is appropriate representation from the Apprenticeship Hub involved with the apprenticeship programme. It is expected that the Apprenticeship Partnership Manager or their appointed nominee will be members of the Boards of Examiners.
- 16 The Boards of Examiners will be supported by Registry Officers and Administrators who will be responsible for the administrative arrangements for the effective operation of the Board. They will prepare the necessary documentation and ensure all post-board administrative actions are completed. Although Registry Officers will attend the Board meetings for the programmes they oversee, they are not considered members of the Boards of Examiners.

Quorum

- 17 No numerical quorum will be established for Boards of Examiners. It is expected that all appointed members of the Boards of Examiners will attend.
- 18 Quorum will not be established without the presence of the chair, or their nominated deputy, and the Quality Representative. In the case of Boards of Examiners held at Partner Institutions, quorum is additionally not established without the presence of a member of academic staff of the University.

Pre-Boards

- 19 Where possible, a Pre-Board will be scheduled within the School before each Board of Examiners meeting. The Pre-Board's purpose is to ensure the smooth running of the Boards by reviewing any missing marks, determining eligibility for reassessment and compensations, addressing complex reassessment decisions, and identifying any decisions that may need to be deferred.
- 20 Heads of School within which the portfolio sits will determine the membership of the Pre-Board. It is expected that the Pre-Boards will be chaired by a member of the Senior Leadership Team or School Professoriate.
- 21 Following the Pre-Board, a summary of provisional decisions should be submitted to the Academic Registry to enable updating of the Student Record System, profile recalculation and production of Board sheet(s) ready for confirmation by the Boards of Examiners.

Boards of Examiners

- 22 The role of the Boards of Examiners is to:
 - Consider student profiles and results individually by exception
 - Ensure that all appropriate University and professional/programme regulations are considered when making recommendations
 - Ensure consistency and fairness in applying University and specific professional/programme regulations to individual student results
 - Confirm recommendations for the conferment of approved awards to learners who have gained all required credits and fulfilled any specific requirements of the professional/course regulations
 - Make decisions on a student's eligibility for progression to the next stage, including recommendations for deferral, compensation, progression with outstanding credits and/or retrieval of failed modules or elements as approved by University and professional/programme regulations
 - Confirm satisfactory completion of modules ending part way through a stage
 - Confirm and apply appropriate actions according to regulations on Mitigating Circumstances and/or Academic Misconduct for cases referred to the Board through the relevant processes
 - Recommend an award or progression following successful retrieval of failure or completion of a deferred assessment

- Recommend an exit award
 - Refuse any of the above
 - Receive summary reports verbally from module External Examiners who are present and *in absentia* from those who have been unexpectedly unable to attend
- 23 Boards of Examiners are the only authorised body to confer compensation and sanctions, grant reassessment opportunities, approve progression to the next stage and recommend conferment of an academic award of the University.
- 24 Boards of Examiners will confirm the recommended results from the anonymised Board sheet(s) provided (via a Pre-Board where necessary), clearly indicating recommendations for individual learners where appropriate for:
- Awards of the University, including the classification where applicable
 - Progress between stages of the programme
 - Exit awards where appropriate
 - Reassessment and/or compensation in one or more modules on the programme
 - An offer for a repeat year in full or in part
 - Termination of the learner's studies
 - Withholding learner's results
- 25 Decisions of the Boards of Examiners will normally be taken by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, decisions will be determined by a simple majority vote, with only Board members eligible to vote. Attendees, including the Quality Representative and the Board Secretary, do not have voting rights. In the event of a tie, the chair will have the casting vote.

Reassessment Boards

- 26 Reassessment Boards are convened to determine progression and awards for learners who have undertaken reassessment or were deferred following Boards of Examiners decisions.
- 27 The Terms of Reference and Membership of Reassessment Boards are the same as the Boards of Examiners. However, it may be agreed in advance with the relevant External Examiner(s) whether they wish to attend or not.

Roles and Responsibilities

Chair of the Boards of Examiners

- 28 The Chair of the Board is a senior member of the School in which the programme or suite of programmes under consideration will sit. Best practice is for the Head of School to chair the Board, but this may be delegated to another member of the School Leadership Team or School Professoriate.
- 29 The Chair is responsible for ensuring that the business of the Board is conducted according to University and relevant professional/programme regulations.

- 30 If the Chair will not be available during the period following the Board, they will deputise a member of the School Senior Leadership Team or School Professoriate to authorise any post-Board amendments to decisions as permitted under Chair's Actions regulations.
- 31 The main responsibilities of the Chair of the Boards of Examiners are to:
- Convene the Board in liaison with the Secretary
 - Ensure members are properly introduced
 - Advise members on the remit and format of the Board, including the principles of anonymity, confidentiality, collective decision-making, integrity and ethical conduct and EDI.
 - Have an up-to-date understanding of the relevant University regulations and processes and ensure they are applied consistently
 - Confirm that the Board is quorate
 - Ensure that the Board is conducted at a pace that ensures all members have an opportunity to contribute to discussions
 - Ensure all agenda items are covered in a timely manner
 - Summarise any debate, ensuring that decisions are clear, in line with relevant University or programme regulations (or the basis on which an exception is permitted is clearly stated), and are properly recorded
 - Invite External Examiners present to make reports either after consideration of each programme/course or at the conclusion of business
 - Check and approve the Formal Record of the Board as an accurate reflection of proceedings
 - Agree Chair's Actions for decisions that could not be taken during the meeting, e.g., due to missing information

Programme Leader

- 32 Programme Leaders provide the academic leadership for specific programmes within a School, fostering a collective understanding across programme teams to ensure a high-quality experience and successful outcomes for learners. Programme Leaders have overall responsibility for ensuring that the marks required for the Board are presented to the administrative team with sufficient time for processing.
- 33 The main responsibilities of the Programme Leader are to:
- Attend all Boards for which they are a member or, exceptionally, appoint a suitable nominee
 - Ensure all module results have been confirmed and presented to the Board of Examiners
 - Advise Board members of any known irregularities surrounding the delivery and management of the programme(s) and assessment processes conducted throughout the year

- Ensure, in liaison with the Board Secretary, that External Examiners have been invited as required after considering the attendance pattern at all Boards
- Ensure, in liaison with the Board Secretary, that any External Examiner who was due to attend but has subsequently sent apologies completes and submits the short template report form for presentation to the Board
- Present the programme(s) profile of marks to the Board
- Ensure the programme team prepares suitable reassessment dates and submits them to the Board Secretary within three days of the Board meeting if this has not been provided already

External Examiner

- 34 The role of External Examiners is outlined in the *External Examining Policy*, which is provided to all External Examiners upon their initial appointment. External Examiners appointed to the programme(s) under consideration will be invited to attend the Boards of Examiners. At the start of the academic year, the School will have determined which External Examiner will be invited to specific Boards to ensure appropriate representation.
- 35 The External Examiner will:
- Provide general comments on the programme(s) under consideration and ensure that all recommendations comply with standard assessment regulations
 - Ensure that all decisions are consistent and that the University's policies and procedures are applied fairly, maintaining academic integrity, recognising good practice, and making recommendations for programme enhancements
 - Assure the appropriateness, level and fairness of the marking and moderation process
 - Comment on the quality and standards of the programme, the assessment regime and students' performance in relation to those standards
 - Provide feedback on any relevant input received from students where such meetings have formed part of the external examining duties
 - Submit the in-absentia report if unexpectedly unable to attend the Board meeting.
N.B: this does not replace the annual report

Quality Representative

- 36 The main responsibilities of the Quality Representative at the Board of Examiners are:
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of the relevant University regulations for taught degree programmes
 - Advise the Boards of Examiners on regulatory parameters as needed, ensuring a consistent approach to decision-making across Schools
 - Provide advice and guidance to the Boards of Examiners relating to regulatory matters
 - Ensure that a formal and detailed record of proceedings is kept and lodged within ten working days of the Board.

Board Secretary

- 37 The Board Secretary will normally be the Registry Officer responsible for the portfolio of programmes being considered and is responsible for preparing all the paperwork for the Board. The Board Secretary will make the appropriate arrangements with the School and External Examiner and ensure prompt notification of Board dates and times are circulated.
- 38 The Board Secretary will:
- Ensure timely communication of Board dates and times to relevant Board members and External Examiners through appropriate channels
 - Coordinate with academic staff to verify receipt of correct marks which will be populated into the Board sheets
 - Prepare Board sheets with anonymised data, presenting the marks by student ID and chunking outcomes for easier presentation during the Board
 - Inform the Boards of Examiners about relevant University and/or specific professional/programme regulations applicable to the programme(s) under consideration
 - Coordinate the attendance of Board members and obtain in absentia reports from External Examiners if required
 - Attend Pre-Boards as required by the School

Other Professional Service Employees

- 39 The Board Secretary will be supported by Registry Administrators who have responsibility for the portfolio of programmes being considered by the Board. Their role will be to provide general administrative support with pre- and post-Board activities.

Agenda and paperwork

- 40 All Boards of Examiners will operate to a standard agenda as set out below:
- Attendance and apologies
 - Chair's introduction including declaration of confidentiality and conflicts of interest
 - Report of chair's actions
 - Issues for note including any known issues of irregularity
 - Consideration of results including marks ratification, student progression and awards
 - External Examiner comments
 - Reassessment deadlines
 - Any other business
- 41 Boards of Examiners will receive the following information:
- Anonymised Board sheets showing the academic profiles for all learners under considerations
 - Identification of accepted exceptional circumstances claims for learners processed under the Mitigating Circumstances procedure
 - The agreed penalties for learners with proven academic misconduct as determined by the Academic Integrity Panel

- The relevant University and any applicable programme specific regulations (which can be downloaded from the University's Policies and Strategies webpage)
 - A report on Chair's Actions taken since the previous Board
- 42 Details of all processes and procedures, as well as all templates, can be found on the shared network drive at the following location: S:\Bucks\Results Board.

Conduct of meetings

Format of meetings

- 43 The Chair of the Boards of Examiners is responsible for ensuring that the meeting is properly conducted, and appropriate decisions are reached, in line with the University's regulations.
- 44 It is recommended that Boards of Examiners meetings are scheduled at least 10 months in advance and the dates are communicated to all internal and external members in a timely manner.
- 45 All Board meetings will be attended by a Quality Representative appointed from the senior team within Academic Registry, who will advise on regulatory procedures and produce the Formal Record of the Board.
- 46 The Board will be supported by members of Academic Registry staff who are responsible for the effective administration of the Boards and ensuring actions from the Board are undertaken.
- 47 Boards of Examiners will normally meet online but may convene in person on the University campus or other suitable venues, such as partner institutions, as required for the programme(s) under consideration. Pre-Board meetings may be held either online or in person.
- 48 Online meetings will be conducted on Microsoft Teams. Cameras should remain on throughout the meeting, except in cases of technological issues.
- 49 All virtual meetings must make every effort to ensure the security of learners' personal and sensitive information in line with GDPR requirements.
- 50 In the case of partnership programmes, it is expected that a representative from the partner institution will attend the Boards of Examiners meetings.
- 51 For apprenticeship programmes, it is expected that a member of the Apprenticeship Hub should attend the Boards of Examiners meetings.

Technological failures

- 52 In the event of technology failure during virtual Boards of Examiners meetings, every effort should be made to reconnect. If reconnection is not possible, the Chair may seek an alternative method or reschedule the meeting if sufficient decisions have not been reached.
- 53 When considering reconvening the Board, the Chair must ensure that the External Examiner has had the opportunity to express their views on the assessment process

and confirm that academic standards have been maintained. If the External Examiner has not had this opportunity or cannot attend a reconvened meeting, a written report may be requested instead.

Anonymity and confidentiality

- 54 All marks, progression decisions and awards considered by the Boards of Examiners must be considered anonymously. All Board sheets will be prepared with anonymised data, presenting the marks by student ID and chunking outcomes for easier presentation during the Board
- 55 All marks, progression decisions and awards must remain confidential and not discussed with learners before the official date for the release of results. The confidentiality of meetings should be stated at the start of each Board and recorded in the official Board record.
- 56 Due to their confidential nature, Boards of Examiners meetings held online must not be recorded. Care should be taken when using the chat function as comments remain online and cannot be deleted.

Conflicts of Interest

- 57 To avoid any suggestion of bias, any member of staff who is a member of a Board of Examiners (or who is involved in the assessment of a learner's work) and has a current or past relationship with a learner beyond the standard academic relationship, must declare a conflict of interest to their Head of School and/or the Chair of the Board of Examiners as early as possible.
- 58 The Head of School and/or the Chair of the Board should consider whether the nature of the relationship might be seen as compromising the ability of the member of staff objectively and impartially to evaluate the quality of the learner's work. They should then decide whether the member of staff should remain a member of the Board and/or continue to be involved in the assessment of the learner's work, or whether any special arrangements should be put in place.
- 59 A report on any declared conflicts of interest, along with special arrangements, will be made to the Board and noted in the official record. The record will also note where no conflicts of interest have been declared.

Confirmation of marks

- 60 Prior to each Board of Examiners, and under the procedures outlined in the University's *Assessment and Feedback* procedures, marks for assessed work will be entered into the University's Student Management System and confirmed with individual Module Leaders by correspondence.
- 61 A record should be made of any irregularities encountered through the assessment process, e.g. deferred marks, issues encountered during exams etc. These will be

reported to the Board at the start of the meeting or noted on Board sheet(s) against the relevant individual(s) as appropriate.

- 62 All marks are declared provisional until they have been endorsed by the External Examiner and Boards of Examiners.

Formal Record of the Boards of Examiners

- 63 All Boards of Examiners are required to keep a formal record of proceedings. This must record the decisions of the Board and summarise any factors taken into account when decisions were made.
- 64 Formal Records of the Boards of Examiners are confidential and must be kept securely and should be prepared within ten working days of the Board.
- 65 The Chair of the Boards of Examiners must approve the Formal Record as an accurate record of proceedings.
- 66 All Formal Records of Boards of Examiners should follow these general principles:
- Use IDs to refer to individual learners
 - Ensure discussions are not attributed to individual Board members to ensure anonymity
 - Note any factors taken into account when decisions are made, for example, allowing exceptional reassessment opportunities
 - Capture areas for consideration that may require further action

Chair's Actions

- 67 The Board grants authority to the Chair, or their nominated deputy, to approve amendments to Board decisions made after the conclusion of the Board. This authority is limited to changes necessitated by the disclosure of undisputed factors that were not reported to the Board but may have affected the decision.
- 68 This authority includes:
- Identification of an error or other procedural irregularity within the assessment process
 - Outcome of late decisions made on Mitigating Circumstances submissions or investigations into allegations of academic student misconduct
 - Updated information on placement hours and/or documentation
 - Completion of mandatory course specific requirements.
- 69 Approval of these Chairs' Actions must include a confirmation that the marks presented are correct. All decisions will be consistent with those made by the fully convened Board in similar situations for all other students in the cohort.
- 70 This process must not make decisions on groups of students where entire batches of marks were unavailable to the original Board or in cases where the decision involves academic judgement.

- 71 In these instances, the Chair is required to reconvene a Board representative of the original event. This Board must include, at a minimum, the Chair, or their nominated deputy, the Quality Representative and at least one Programme Leader from the area under consideration. In rare cases where it is considered that the External Examiner should be informed, it is acceptable that there is evidence presented to demonstrate that the External has been notified of the circumstances.
- 72 The Board Secretary, or their nominated representative, will enter details of Chairs' Actions onto a separate spreadsheet for each Board that has taken place. This will indicate the date of approval by the Chair, or their nominated deputy. It will also record the date that the decision was entered into the system. This spreadsheet will be filed on the shared drive and will form part of the official record of the Board.

Boards for Partner programmes

- 73 Where possible Boards for students of the University enrolled in partner institutions will be held at one of the University's UK campuses or held online via Microsoft Teams. Membership will be as described above and may include teaching staff from the institution where the programme is delivered in addition to University based academics.
- 74 Where Boards are to be held and serviced in institutions other than the University (whether in the UK or abroad), it is the responsibility of the School, with support from the Academic Registry to ensure that such Boards are serviced by appropriately qualified staff who have received training in the University's regulations and procedures.

Termination of registration

- 75 Boards of Examiners, acting under the delegated authority of Senate, have the power to terminate a learner's registration from the University on academic grounds.
- 76 Boards of Examiners shall withdraw a learner from the University if academic credit has not been achieved following all attempts of reassessment opportunity. Typically, this would occur over a period of two academic years. The Board has the authority to waive the time limit when there is satisfactory justification that additional time would be detrimental to the learner. When exercising such discretion, all contributing factors must be recorded in the formal record of the meeting.
- 77 The Boards of Examiners can use its discretion to withdraw on academic grounds when, according to their academic judgement, a learner has failed to engage with the programme or make satisfactory progress. The grounds for making the decision should be recorded in the formal record of the meeting. In such cases, the learner has the right to appeal the decision within ten working days of receiving the outcome of the Board through the *Academic Appeals* process.
- 78 When terminating a learner's registration, the Boards of Examiners shall recommend any exit award to which they are entitled.

- 79 Learners who have been terminated from registration are not eligible to rejoin their programme of study and cannot transfer to an alternative course within the University. Terminated learners who request to rejoin, or transfer must undergo the University's normal application process, but re-admission is not guaranteed. Any previous credit obtained while studying at the University will be considered through the *Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) Policy and Procedure* process.

Withholding Board Decisions

- 80 The University holds the right to withhold the publication of results following a recommendation from the Boards of Examiners. The decision to withhold results will be used in exceptional circumstances for learners who may be in breach of one or more of the University regulations.

Appendix: Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference

- 81 The Board of Examiners is the primary decision-making body for learners' eligibility for progression, award and classification decisions. Each Board will act under delegated authority from Senate, the University's senior academic body, which has overall responsibility for the approval of academic awards and qualifications and their regulations.
- 82 There will be a Board of Examiners for each programme, group of programmes, short courses, or collection of individual modules, the format of which will be based on organisational need. The precise remit of each Board will be determined by the School Leadership Team in liaison with the Academic Registry.
- 83 At a minimum, each Board of Examiners should meet at least once per academic year.
- 84 The Board of Examiners, acting under delegated authority of Senate, has the following responsibilities:
- To ensure that assessment, marking and moderation processes have been conducted in accordance with the University's regulations and processes and are appropriate, rigorous and fair
 - To ensure that learners are considered fairly and consistently in the application of the University's regulations and any programme specific regulations as appropriate
 - To receive confirmed marks for modules being considered by the Board and confirm the award of credit to learners as appropriate
 - To make decisions on learners' progression, awards (including exit awards), and the classifications of awards where appropriate
 - To agree actions in respect of academic failure, including decisions on compensation, reassessment, deferral, and/or the use of *aegrotat*

- To apply, where relevant, actions in respect of the decisions made elsewhere regarding academic misconduct penalties and/or accepted claims for exceptional circumstances
- To receive a brief verbal (or *in absentia*) report from each external examiner on the appropriateness of the assessment process and the extent to which the University's regulations and procedures have been consistently applied
- To highlight any issues for discussion at School or University level
- To consider any other matter referred to it by the Education Committee or Senate

Membership

85 Membership of a Board of Examiners will consist of the following:

- A Chair, normally the Head of School in which the programme(s) sit, or their designated representative from the School Leadership Team or School Professoriate
- Academic staff within the School responsible for the programme(s) under consideration, i.e., the programme leader or their equivalent, or exceptionally, an appointed nominee
- The external examiner(s) appointed to oversee one or more of the programmes or individual modules under consideration
- A Quality Representative (as a non-voting member), normally a senior member of the Academic Registry
- A named Secretary (as a non-voting member), appointed from the Academic Registry

86 For Partnership programmes, the Academic Registry will ensure there is appropriate representation of academic colleagues from partner institutions involved with the programmes. In such instances, it is expected that the School's Link Tutor and Partner Programme Leads will be members of the Boards of Examiners.

87 For apprenticeship programmes, the Academic Registry will ensure there is appropriate representation from the Apprenticeship Hub involved with the apprenticeship programme. It is expected that the Apprenticeship Partnership Manager or their appointed nominee will be members of the Boards of Examiners.

88 The Board Secretary will be responsible for scheduling meetings, liaising with other areas of the University as appropriate, preparing and distributing Board papers, and communicating with internal and external members of the Board.

Quorum

89 No numerical quorum will be established for Boards of Examiners. It is expected that all appointed members of the Boards of Examiners will attend.

90 Quorum will not be established without the presence of the chair, or their nominated deputy, and the Quality Representative. In the case of Boards of Examiners held at Partner Institutions, quorum is additionally not established without the presence of a member of academic staff of the University.

Appendix: Equality Impact Assessment

As a university, we are committed to enhancing equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). We have a legal (Equality Act 2010) and ethical obligation to ensure our policies, systems and processes are fair, inclusive and ensure every member of the BNU community can thrive.

Whilst we all have protected characteristics, we know there are certain characteristics and communities that are marginalised and underrepresented in Higher Education and the workplace. These are: different ethnicities (including Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showmen and Boaters, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers) Disabled individuals; neurodiverse individuals; pregnancy (including maternity and paternity impact); the LGBT+ community; carers; people of different faiths; people impacted by menopause and individuals from a range of backgrounds including: socio-economic disadvantage, homeless, alcohol and/or substance misuse, people experiencing domestic and/or sexual violence, ex-armed forces, looked after children and care leavers. We also know individuals have multiple intersectional experiences and different points in their lives and careers.

1. **With reference to the above characteristics, in what ways does this policy enhance equality and the access of opportunity at BNU?**

The Boards of Examiners Procedure document ensures there are clear guidelines that promote fairness, transparency, and inclusion. The document provides a clear and transparent framework ensuring that all learners are assessed through a consistent criterion. This helps prevent unconscious bias and discrimination against all individuals including those with protected characteristics.

2. **In what ways does the policy adversely impact individuals from marginalised and underrepresented communities?**

It is not envisaged that the Boards of Examiners Procedure would adversely impact individuals from marginalised and underrepresented groups. However, we are mindful that a rigid adherence to standardised procedures might overlook the unique needs of marginalised groups. Additionally, a uniform approach may fail to accommodate the diverse experiences and backgrounds of learners, potentially exacerbating existing inequalities. Nevertheless, the Boards of Examiners' function is to protect the integrity of University degree awards and must ensure they apply a fair and consistent approach in their decision-making. However, all learners have the right to appeal a decision of the Boards of Examiners through the Academic Appeals Process.

3. **How does this proposal work towards achieving the BNU Equality Objectives as outlined in the [Equality Strategy 2023-2028](#)? Please signpost objectives and actions in the BNU Equality Strategy.**

The Boards of Examiners Procedure supports BNU's Equality Objectives.

Priority one, Objective C: Boards of Examiners meetings will record any relevant issues and refer them to the appropriate School or Directorate to improve service planning, reporting and process.

Priority three, Objective E: all Boards of Examiners will be held online, and the Chair must ensure that all members of the Board have an opportunity to contribute.

Signed: *SWalton*

Name: Sandra Walton

Date: 01 August 2024



High Wycombe Campus
Queen Alexandra Road
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire
HP11 2JZ

Aylesbury Campus
59 Walton Street
Aylesbury
Buckinghamshire
HP21 7QG

Uxbridge Campus
106 Oxford Road
Uxbridge
Middlesex
UB8 1NA

BNU based at
Pinewood Studios

Pinewood Studios
Pinewood Road
Iver Heath
Buckinghamshire
SL0 0NH

Missenden Abbey
London Road
Great Missenden
Buckinghamshire
HP16 0BD

Telephone: 01494 522 141

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