**Academic Regulations, Notes for Guidance and Procedures**

**2015-2016**

**All Brands & Group.ai**

**Academic Regulations**

**Summary of Major Changes for 2016-17***Exceptions to the regulations are set out in Programme Handbooks, where applicable.*

| **Regulation** | **2015-16 version (where applicable)** | **Changed for 2016-17** |
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| **UNDERGRADUATE REGULATIONS** | **2015-16 (where applicable)** | **Changed for 2016-17** |

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1. **POWERS**

The College has, inter alia, the following powers:

1. to approve and review under such conditions as the institution may from time to time determine, programmes of study pursued by candidates to qualify for the institution’s academic awards;
2. to grant Foundation Degrees to persons who have pursued programmes of study approved by the institution and who have passed such examinations or other assessments as from time to time be required by the College;
3. to accept in partial fulfilment of the study and assessment requirements for the awards of the institution such periods of learning and such assessments as may be recognised by the College and have been successfully completed and passed by students otherwise than on programmes of study approved under a) and b);
4. to determine the terms and conditions for the granting of such academic awards;
5. to grant any of its awards posthumously;
6. to rescind an award made by the College if the College considers there to be due cause;
7. to withdraw approval for a programme of studies or an award following appropriate consultation and notice.
8. **PORTFOLIO OF AWARDS**

The following awards are currently granted by the College:

Certificate of Higher Education (Level 4 exit award only)

Certificate of Higher Education with Distinction (Level 4 exit award only)

Aegrotat Certificate of Higher Education (Level 4 exit award only)

Foundation Degree (FdA, FdSc)

Foundation Degree with Distinction

Aegrotat Foundation Degree

**Higher National Certificate**

**Higher National Certificate with Distinction} Granted under licence from Pearson**

**Aegrotat Higher National Certificate**

**Higher National Diploma**

**Higher National Diploma with Distinction} Granted under licence from Pearson**

**Aegrotat Higher National Diploma**

**DEFINITIONS OF ELEMENTS AND COMPONENTS OF ASSESSMENT**

Each module is assessed by one or more **elements** of assessment. The formally approved Module Record defines the proportion of the module’s assessment derived from each element and this cannot be amended without following due process. Each element of assessment may contain more than one component of assessment, the results of which are aggregated together to produce a single percentage mark or pass/fail assessment. The components of assessment are subject to annual review by module and programme teams; the nature and proportion of marks they contribute must be defined in the Module Record before the module is offered for selection by students for study in the following academic Year.

**Element Definition**

**Code and Title**

**E1 Examination A task or set of tasks relating to a particular area of study.**

Written exams usually occur at the end of a period of learning and assess whether students have achieved the intended learning outcomes. They may be 'seen', where the student is aware in advance of the task(s) they are expected to complete, or 'unseen', where the tasks are only revealed 'on the day'. In an 'open-book' exam, a student is allowed to use a selection of reference materials during the assessment. The tasks set as part of a written exam may be essay, short answer, problem, multiple-choice or computer-based. Examinations take place under timed conditions.

Notes:

1. Most assessments under this category will be formal (normally end-of-year) examinations, arranged centrally by the College Examinations Office.

2. Examinations are always percentage marked.

**E2 Clinical Examination A clinical examination taken under timed conditions.**

A clinical examination can be either percentage marked or pass/fail. Examples include: OSCE – Observed Structured Clinical Examination, OSPA – Observed Simulated Practice Assessment, ISPE – Individual Structured Practical Examination, ISCE – Individual Structured Clinical Examination.

**T1 Test A task or set of tasks relating to a particular area of study taken in a similar way to a formal examination** (see E1 for definition), but normally held in a timetabled slot and room for the module. They may be 'seen', where the student is aware in advance of the task(s) they are expected to complete, or 'unseen', where the tasks are only revealed 'on the day'. In an 'open-book' test, a student is allowed to use a selection of reference materials during the assessment. The tasks set as part of a written test may be essay, short answer, problem, multiple-choice or computer-based.

Notes:

1. Most assessments in this category will be arranged through normal timetabling in the cluster and not by the College Examinations Office.

**C1 Coursework Assignments set during the module, to assess one or more of the learning outcomes. These are classified as:**

a. **Written assignment**, including essay.

b. **Report**. A description, summary or other account of an experience or activity.

c. **Dissertation**. An extended piece of written work, often the write-up of a final-year project.

d. **Portfolio**. A collection of work that relates to a given topic or theme, which has been produced over a period of time. Typically, a portfolio contains a number of pieces of work, usually connected by a topic or theme. Students are usually required to organise the collection of examples and the portfolio often includes some reflective accounts (diaries/logs). This does not include a portfolio which documents clinical competencies normally assessed through practice.

e. **Project output**. Output from project work, often of a practical nature, other than a dissertation or written report. Students are assessed on the output of a period of project work (other than in the form of a dissertation or written report). Examples are diverse and include the staging of a play or other performance, a piece of artwork, a new product or a poster.

f. **Set exercise**. Questions or tasks designed to assess the application of knowledge, analytical, problem-solving or evaluative skills. This includes tests (written or computer-based) of knowledge or interpretation that are not conducted under examination conditions.

**P1 Practical Assignments set during the module, to assess one or more of the learning outcomes by practical skills assessment, oral assessment or presentation.**

a. **Oral assessment and presentation.** Examples of oral assessments and presentations include conversations, discussions, debates, presentations and individual contributions to seminars or a viva voce exam.

b. **Practical skills assessment.** Practical skills assessment focuses on whether, and/or how well, a student performs a specific practical skill or technique (or competency). Examples include clinical skills, laboratory techniques, identification of or commentary on artwork, surveying skills, language translation or listening comprehension.

**A1 Assessment A generic element of assessment that enables a student to demonstrate some of the learning outcomes of a module** by, for example, satisfactory attendance at seminars, performances, laboratory or practical sessions or field courses, achievement of specified competencies or attitudes, behaviour and engagement in groupwork. This element of assessment is always assessed as pass/fail only. This element of assessment does not need to be included on every professionally accredited programme.

**REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS**

1. **INTRODUCTION**
   1. These regulations apply to the following Cornwall College Group awards:

Certificate of Higher Education CertHE

Foundation Degree in Arts FdA

Foundation Degree in Science FdSc

**Higher National Certificate HNC**

**Higher National Diploma HND**

* 1. Unless specific mention is made, these regulations make no distinction, for assessment purposes, between students on different modes of attendance.
  2. Variations from these regulations may be permitted but will be subject to specific approval under the College’s quality assurance processes. Students should refer to the appropriate student programme handbook for full details of the programme structure and assessment regulations.

1. **PROGRAMME STRUCTURE**
   1. Academic study will be organised into modules, specified in terms of credits. Module sizes may vary from 20 to 60 credits. Modules of 10 credits (normally delivered within one term/semester) must be justified within the approval documentation and discussed and agreed at the approval event.
   2. The standard study programme for an award consists of a number of Stages, each with is worth 120 credits. A Stage is equivalent to one year of study for a full time student. The College may offer programmes that do not fall into the ‘normal’ academic year. The nature of delivery will need to be considered in detail during the approval process and must take into account the financial implications for the College (e.g. funding) and the student (e.g. eligibility for Council Tax exemption) Students will normally be required to undertake the Level 4 - Personal and Employability Skills Development module. Work-based learning will be embedded within the programme and highlighted on individual Module Records.
   3. A student may not study more than 120 credits in any one session without the specific consent of his/her Course Co-ordinator. No student may study more than 140 credits in one session. A student studying more than 120 credits will be required to pay an additional tuition fee for the additional credits.
   4. The Level of a module is determined by the standard of work required to achieve the objectives of the module (see information on level descriptors). The Level of a module will normally be the same as the Stage of the study programme for the award in which the module is specified.

The credit weighting of undergraduate awards will be:

Certificate of Higher Education 120 credits at Level 4 or above

Foundation Degree 240 credits of which at least 120 are at Level 5

**Higher National Certificate 120 credits at Level 4**

**Higher National Diploma 240 credits of which at least 120 are at Level 5**

**A Higher National Certificate may only comprise a mixture of Level 4 and Level 5 credits if it is industry aligned and is not designed for progression to further study.**

* 1. The title(s) of the award(s) available within an undergraduate programme are specified in the appropriate programme definitive document.
  2. Students may exceptionally be permitted to vary their programme of study at any stage (or level) in up to 20 core or elective credits, subject to:
* Approval by the student’s Course Co-ordinator, who would be expected to confirm that in his/her academic judgement the student would, nevertheless, fulfil the programme learning outcomes;
* Approval by the relevant module leader who would be requested to confirm that in his/her academic judgement the student had sufficient subject pre-requisite knowledge to successfully complete the new module.

Any proposal would need to take into account timetabling and resource implications and would not normally be available to students on professional body accredited programmes. Any requests to vary the programme of study should be submitted, in writing, to the HE Assistant Registrar and agreed by the Director of Cluster.

1. **STUDENT REGISTRATION/WITHDRAWAL**

3.1 All students must register at the beginning of their programme of study and subsequently as required. The maximum period of registration for programmes of more than one year’s duration is three years longer than the planned duration of the programme with an absolute maximum of ten years. For programmes of one year’s duration, the maximum registration is three years for full-time students and five years for part-time students.

3.2 An application for extension to a student’s period of registration must be submitted in writing to the Director of Higher Education (or nominee), with an explanation of the reasons for the extension and a letter from the Course Co-ordinator confirming that the extension is supported and that the student is expected to complete within the extended period. The Director of Higher Education (or nominee) is authorised to approve or otherwise a request for extension.

3.3 Students are required to complete their module choices by the end of the second teaching week of the first term. **Changes in module choice must be notified to the relevant enrolment team by the deadlines identified on the ‘Module Transfer Form’.**

3.4 Students who wish to withdraw/suspend from a module must notify the enrolment team of their intention in writing by the end of the fourth week of the module teaching schedule for modules of one term’s duration, or by the end of the first term for year-long modules. A student who does not do so and subsequently does not complete the module will be deemed to have failed the module. Students who withdraw/suspend from a module at this stage will not be allowed to commence another module in the same term.

3.5 A student has the right to withdraw from a programme of study at any point during the academic year. Where a student does so s/he will be awarded credit for any modules successfully completed prior to the date of withdrawal, but will not be permitted to complete any module assessment after the date of withdrawal. A student who has withdrawn from a programme and subsequently wishes to re-join the programme will be required to re-apply. A student may agree that rather than withdraw they will suspend their registration for a period with the intention of resuming their studies. In this case the date for resumption must be agreed when the original suspension is agreed. A student who does not return or contact the College to extend the period of suspension by the agreed date will be deemed to have withdrawn.

1. **CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING**
   1. Detailed guidance regarding credit for prior learning is contained within the Regulations on Accreditation of Prior Learning.
   2. In all cases, the learning for which credit is awarded must constitute a coherent programme of study when considered with the College credits to be studied. Accreditation of prior learning is based on the concept of specific credit (that is that the learning outcomes of the prior learning are directly equivalent to those of the modules from which the student will be exempt as a result).
   3. Individual programmes will determine the nature of the processes adopted for accreditation of prior learning, with specific information available for each Cluster.
2. **ASSESSMENT**
   1. The purposes of assessment are:

* to objectively measure a student’s achievements against the learning outcomes of the module
* to assist student learning by providing appropriate feedback on performance
* to provide a reliable and consistent basis for the recommendation of an appropriate award
  1. The assessment for each module will be detailed in the Module Record. This will specify the elements contributing to summative assessment. Where assessment is by a combination of elements, the weightings of each element must be stated.
  2. Formal examinations, where part of a module assessment, will be scheduled after the end of the College’s standard teaching year. Other element assessments will be set during the module.
  3. Students will be assessed according to the assessment specified for each module on which they are registered, irrespective of their programme of study.

1. **SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF A MODULE**
   1. The pass mark for a module is 40% (39.50%). **Students on HNC/D programmes will, in addition, be awarded Pass, Merit or Distinction for all modules as follows:**

**PASS 40% (39.50%) to 54% (54.49%)**

**MERIT 55% (54.50%) to 69% (69.49%)**

**DISTINCTION 70% (69.50%) and above**

* 1. Where module assessment involves more than one element, a student is also required to achieve a minimum of 30% (29.5%) in each. An element is not necessarily one piece of work, but the weighted marks obtained for one type of assessment.
  2. A module may be validated with the requirement that a student achieve a mark of over 40% for each individual piece of assessment. This will need to be clearly stipulated on the Module Record and communicated to students when commencing the programme. Exceptions will be approved only where an accrediting professional body requires an alternative minimum achievement.
  3. A student who fails a module and is required to take a referral will normally be required to refer only the element(s) of the module which s/he failed. A student who fails and is required to repeat a module will normally be required to repeat all elements.
  4. Modules which have been successfully completed cannot be reassessed.

1. **SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF A LEVEL**
   1. An Award Assessment Board will normally meet at the end of the summer term and in September.
   2. A student must pass the requisite credits to complete the Level.
   3. A full-time student will normally be expected to complete a Level before being allowed to progress to the next Level (but see 10.2).
2. **AWARDS**

8.1 **Higher National Certificate**

**A Higher National Certificate may be awarded to:**

* **A student who is registered by the College with Pearson for the award of the HNC and has successfully completed a minimum of 120 credits at Level 4 or above, including all modules designated as essential for the award.**
* **A student who has successfully completed a minimum of 120 credits at Level 4 or above in an HND programme which s/he is not continuing, provided s/he has completed the modules which are designated as essential for the award of the HNC.**

**If the student’s aggregate mark across all modules is 70% (69.5%) or above, the HNC will be awarded with Distinction.**

8.2 **Higher National Diploma**

**A Higher National Diploma may be awarded to a student who is registered by the College with Pearson for the award of the HND and has successfully completed 240 credits, including at least 120 credits at Level 5.**

**If the student’s aggregate mark across all modules at Level 4 and 5 is 70% (69.5%) or above, the HND will be awarded with Distinction.**

8.3 Foundation Degree

A Foundation Degree will be awarded to a student who has successfully completed a minimum of 240 credits, including at least 120 credits at Level 5 or above. If the student’s aggregate mark across all modules is 70% (69.5%) or above, the Foundation Degree will be awarded with Distinction. ALL modules at Levels 4 and 5 count towards the award of a Distinction.

8.4 Certificate of Higher Education

A Certificate of Higher Education may be awarded to a student who has successfully completed 120 credits at Level 4 or above in a Foundation Degree on which s/he is not continuing provided the credits successfully completed fall within the programme specification for the award. If the aggregate of the student’s best 120 credits falling within the programme specification is 70% (69.5%) or above, the CertHE will be awarded with Distinction.

1. **PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF FAILURE**
   1. A student will be deemed to have completed the Level if they have failed in up to 20 credits with marks of 30% (29.5%) or more provided that the failed credits are not designated as non-compensatable and they have achieved an aggregate mark of at least 40% (39.5%) in the Level overall. In such cases a student will be awarded a compensated pass in the module(s). If the original mark was below 40% (39.5%), it will stand; if it was above 40% (39.5%), for example where failure is due to failing to meet minimum required standards in one element, the mark will be reduced to 40%.
   2. A part time student may be awarded a compensated pass only at the point when the student has attempted 120 credits of a Level.
   3. If a student fails up to and including 60 credits, s/he will be allowed to take appropriate referred assessment(s) as specified by the Award Assessment Board at the next available opportunity. The original rule for passing the module will apply for any student, unless the Award Assessment Board has specified a single module assessment in substitution for both elements, in which case a student must achieve 40% (39.5%) in that assessment. A student who fails to submit referred assessment or attend a refer examination/in-class test will be awarded a mark of 0% for that element.
   4. If a student fails more than 60 credits, the Award Assessment Board will:
2. require the student to repeat the failed modules with attendance; or

*This is likely to be the most common decision for students who have failed more than 60 credits at the first attempt. A student may elect to take an alternative module to one taken at the original attempt provided that s/he takes all required core/essential modules. It is within the discretion of the Award Assessment Board to agree, as a general guideline, that any student who had, because of the level of failure, taken a year twice with attendance, should not be permitted a third repeat year. However, since this is a matter for the discretion of the Board, it is important that the Board consider each individual case rather than apply its guidelines*

1. where there are valid extenuating circumstances, allow the student to take referrals in the appropriate assessments at the next available opportunity, based on a judgement of the student’s overall performance and potential; or
2. require the student to withdraw from the programme and award any intermediate qualification for which the student has achieved the credit requirements; or

*This ought to be an exceptional decision, only taken when it is clearly in the student’s best interests and usually the opportunity to repeat the failed modules has been applied.*

1. require a student whose extenuating circumstances will prevent the completion of the award during the normal period of registration, or have prevented her/him from making academic progress in the previous session, to interrupt studies or withdraw from the programme; or

*This regulation is subject to the fitness to study process being invoked.*

1. require a student who has developed a health or other problem which prevents her/him from meeting the learning outcomes of her/his programme to transfer to an alternative programme or withdraw from the programme and be granted the appropriate exit or aegrotat award.

*This regulation is subject to the fitness to study process being invoked.*

* 1. A student will normally be permitted a maximum of three attempts at a module. A failed module may therefore not normally be referred or repeated on more than two occasions. If a student chooses to study a different module instead of the failed module the number of attempts at the original module will count towards the maximum number of attempts at the new module.

9.6 Where a failed module is successfully passed after referral or repeat, any element retaken will be capped at 40%. In the case of repeated modules this would normally apply to all elements. If a student chooses to study a different module instead of the failed module, the capping at 40% will still apply. Marks will not be capped where the referral or repeat is as a first attempt.

1. **FAILURE AFTER REFERRAL**
   1. If a student has passed a minimum of 100 credits after having completed referrals s/he may be compensated for failure in up to 20 credits with marks of 30% (29.5%) or more, provided that the failed credits are not designated as non-compensatable and they have achieved an aggregate mark of at least 40% (39.5%) in the Level overall. In such cases a student will be awarded a compensated pass in the module(s). If the original mark was below 40% (39.5%), it will stand; if it was above 40% (39.5%), for example where failure is due to failing to meet minimum required standards in one element, the mark will be reduced to 40% (39.5%).
   2. If after referrals, and after consideration of compensation, a student has not achieved the requisite number of credits to complete the Level, the Award Assessment Board will:
2. exceptionally allow the student to progress and offer a further referral opportunity during the next session, based on a judgement of the student’s overall performance and potential. This decision may only be applied where the student has submitted valid extenuating circumstances for the first or referred attempts, or both, the student is commencing a placement or is required to repeat a field course, and will normally be applied in the case of failure in up to 20 credits (or one 30 credit module); or

*The Award Assessment Board may determine the form of reassessment. Where the referral work takes the form of coursework, the submission date should normally be set for end-November and, while marks are provisional, feedback should be given to students by the end of the autumn term (with academic staff consulting with External Examiners over any borderline marks). This would enable students who had failed at their final attempt to be advised of their options and, in particular, to have the option of withdrawing by the end of the first week of the following term and thereby avoiding liability for the full year’s fees. Referred examinations/fieldwork will normally be taken on the next occasion on which the examination/fieldwork is scheduled.*

1. require the student to repeat the failed modules with attendance; or
2. require the student to withdraw from the programme and award any intermediate qualification for which the student has achieved the credit requirements; or

*This ought to be an exceptional decision, only taken when it is clearly in the student’s best interests and usually the opportunity to repeat the failed modules has been applied.*

1. require a student whose extenuating circumstances will prevent the completion of the award during the normal period of registration, or have prevented her/him from making academic progress in the previous session, to interrupt studies or withdraw from the programme; or

*This regulation is subject to the fitness to study process being invoked.*

1. require a student who has developed a health or other problem which prevents her/him from meeting the learning outcomes of her/his programme to transfer to an alternative programme or withdraw from the programme and be granted the appropriate exit or aegrotat award.

*This regulation is subject to the fitness to study process being invoked.*

1. **EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES**
   1. If a student has failed to sit/submit all or part of an assessment due to valid extenuating circumstances, the student has a right to sit/submit the assessment as if for the first time in a form and by a date to be determined by the Board.

*If a student submits an extenuating circumstance based on a diagnosis of non-physical disability made in the second term but from which the evidence shows the student was also suffering in the first term, that extenuating circumstance should be taken into account also in relation to relevant first term assessments.*

*Where a student misses an assessment as a result of valid extenuating circumstances, it is possible that the student may be offered the opportunity of a ‘first submission’ prior to the Board. Alternatively the module leader may agree that where the assessment is made up of a number of components, and does not test learning outcomes which are not otherwise tested, it may be disregarded in calculating the element mark. These actions should be reported to the Award Assessment Board.*

*The use of the phrase ‘as if for the first time’ should be read as meaning that the student will be offered another attempt without penalty, hence if the assessment affected by the circumstances was a second/third attempt, the student will be offered a sit/submit as if for the second/third time.*

* 1. The circumstances may be such that the student is known to be unable to complete work which has been failed or which s/he has failed to sit/submit. If the Board is satisfied that the student would have qualified for an award had the circumstances not existed, the Board may make an Aegrotat award. It should be noted that Aegrotat awards are not permitted on some professional programmes and are not recognised for membership of many external professional institutions. Aegrotat awards are not granted with Commendation, Distinction or classification.

*Formally the student must confirm in writing his/her acceptance of the award but it is understood that there may be circumstances in which this is not possible (e.g. in the case of posthumous awards or those made to students whose medical circumstances make it impossible for them to give informed consent). In such cases the written authorisation of the Award Assessment Board Chair, confirming the circumstances in which the award is made, will be sufficient for the granting of the award.*

* 1. Valid extenuating circumstances enable the Board to exercise discretion in respect of many of the provisions of these Regulations.

**ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING**

**1 Definitions**

1.1 **Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL)***:* is the award of credit towards a Cornwall College award in respect of previous study at HE level which the student has passed. APCL may be awarded in respect of a completed programme of study or in respect of one or more modules or units of a programme.

1.2 **Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL):** is the award of credit towards a Cornwall College award in respect of knowledge and skills acquired through life, work experience, and/or study which are not formally attested through certification by a recognised professional or academic body. Experiential learning is formally reviewed to determine that the learning has in fact occurred and that it is still current in relation to the module(s) concerned, and its equivalence to College credit weightings and levels. It is the student’s learning, not his or her experience, which is being assessed. Applicants will be required to complete a form of assessment, governed by Cornwall College regulations, in order to demonstrate that they have satisfied the learning outcomes of the module(s) for which credit is claimed.

1.3 **Programme entry credit:** is an objective measure of the credit weighting and Level of previous learning and is normally considered as part of the admissions process, with reference to the programme specification. Prior certificated learning undertaken in the UK Higher Education system will normally have appropriate credit weightings and levels attributed to it. As such it will attract credit based on the academic value and level of the achievement: a student who has successfully completed a Certificate of Higher Education, for instance, will normally be entitled to claim 120 programme credits at Level 4. Programme Entry credit may be recorded on a transcript provided by another HE institution or confirmed by another institution.

1.4 **Module credit:** is credit awarded towards the attainment of specific module learning outcomes, working towards a Cornwall College award. Credit is against modules approved as part of a programme leading to a Cornwall College award. All the learning outcomes of a module have to be satisfied in order for credit to be granted. Claims for module credit may be part of the normal admission process or may occur at the beginning of a module. A student may not be awarded credit in respect of part of a module, except where a module incorporates both a theoretical and professional practice element, and those elements are separately assessed. In such cases a claim for credit may be agreed against one of the two elements.

1.5 Individual programmes may specify modules which must be taken and passed within the minimum credits to be taken at Cornwall College. These modules should be specified in the programme specification. For example, students will normally be expected to undertake a project/research based assessment.

**2 Maximum permitted credit for APCL/APEL**

* 1. The maximum amount of credit which a student may claim towards a Cornwall College award and the minimum credit which must be studied at the College in relation to specific awards is:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Programme** | **APCL/APEL** | **Credit to be studied at Cornwall College** |
| FdA / FdSc | 120 credits | 120 credits, including at least 60 at Level 5 |
| **HNC** | **60 credits** | **60 credits at Level 4** |
| **HND** | **120 credits** | **120 credits, including at least 60 at Level 5** |

***A student who is transferring into an HNC/D, or is ‘topping-up’ to an HND must satisfy the requirements of ALL modules in the programme for which s/he is to receive credit. Course co-ordinators must therefore award specific credit and grades for ALL such modules on admission. Any modules not covered by previous study must be completed and passed before an award may be made.***

2.2 Where a student claims APCL credit towards a programme in respect of credits which form part of another award which he or she has previously been awarded, the amount of APCL credit which can be awarded should be carefully considered by the programme team in the light of the student’s overall academic profile. Students with Cornwall College awards should not be treated any differently than students applying with awards from other HE institutions.

**3 Award of APCL/APEL**

3.1 All programmes are required to identify the procedure for making a claim which must be specified in the student programme handbook. Decisions on the award of credit are a matter of academic judgement and are therefore final.

3.2 Credit for prior certificated learning which occurred more than 8 years ago will not normally be accepted. Earlier deadlines may apply for particular subject areas. Where outdated certificated learning exists, but can be combined with more recent experiential learning, the certificated learning should be considered as part of an **APCL** claim.

3.3 Applications for programme credit (advanced point of entry) should normally be made as part of the admissions process prior to registration on a programme. Applications for module credit should normally be made prior to registration on a module, but may exceptionally be accepted within 2 weeks of the start of the module. Evidence to support a module credit claim must normally be submitted halfway through the module or within 30 days (whichever is the earlier).

3.4 APEL claims are subject to the normal academic regulations governing the marking and successful completion of a module. A student who has submitted an assessment for an APEL claim which has been deemed to have failed to satisfy the learning outcomes required would either be offered the opportunity to submit an appropriate piece of referred coursework for the module(s), or, exceptionally, the Award Assessment Board may require the student to repeat the module with attendance as a further attempt.

3.5 A claim for APCL programme credit will not normally be awarded with marks attached unless the College is familiar with the marking scheme and academic standards. The consequent effect on the calculation of final aggregate marks should be made clear in writing to students.

3.6 A claim for APCL module credit would not normally be approved with marks unless a student can demonstrate that the learning was directly applicable to the module against which the claim was being made and the College was familiar with the marking scheme and academic standard.

3.7 All APCL/APEL decisions must be recorded and clearly identified in all papers considered by Subject Assessment Panels and Award Assessment Boards and in the student transcript. Claims for APEL will be examined in line with the standard quality assurance procedures including external examining where appropriate.

3.8 The College reserves the right to reject an APCL/APEL claim based on academic judgement and the comparability of marking systems.

3.9 A student seeking specific credit through APCL or APEL will normally be required to pay a charge as specified on the College’s website.

**LATE COURSEWORK**

1. Coursework which is percentage marked and submitted after the deadline date and time will be capped at the minimum pass mark within the first 24 hours of the deadline and will be awarded a mark of zero if submitted more than 24 hours late. Coursework which is assessed on a pass/fail basis will be deemed to be a Fail if submitted at any time after the deadline date and time. In the case of deadlines on Friday or the last day of term, the 24 hours would apply to the next College working day, irrespective of programme term dates. Some programmes may be exempted from the ’24 hour’ rule due to accrediting/validating body requirements.
2. Extensions to deadlines for submission of coursework may not be granted by members of academic staff. A student who misses a deadline or believes that he or she will miss a deadline due to circumstances beyond her/his control should submit extenuating circumstances in accordance with these Regulations. The student will normally be permitted a maximum of 10 working days (excluding any holiday period) from the original deadline for the submission of the work. There may be instances where, because of the nature of the assessment task, a period of more or less than 10 days is permitted. Where this is the case, tutors should notify students and the HE Operations Office in advance. This additional period will not normally apply to the resit period for which an absolute deadline is already established, nor to any other deadline date for marks to be considered by Subject Assessment Panels/Award Assessment Boards. The final deadline for submission of the coursework will be confirmed in writing by the HE Assistant Registrar.
3. Coursework which is submitted after the deadline will be assessed but the results will not be published onto the official record until the extenuating circumstances have been considered. Informal feedback may be given on the quality of the work submitted. If the circumstances are deemed valid, the actual result achieved will be entered onto the record and submitted to the Subject Assessment Panel and Award Assessment Board.
4. If the circumstances are not considered valid**,** coursework which is percentage marked and submitted after the deadline date and time will be capped at the minimum pass mark within the first 24 hours of the deadline, or will be awarded a mark of zero if submitted more than 24 hours late. In the case of assessment operating on a pass/fail basis, a Fail will be recorded for coursework submitted at any time after the deadline date and time.

**EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

# Introduction

For the most part students will undertake modules and progress through their studies without any problems. Unfortunately there are times when a student will face difficulties that affect their academic progress. The difficulties experienced by students can be broadly categorised as follows:

* On-going disability supported by Disability Assist e.g. sight impairment, dyslexia, mental health problems
* Chronic Ill health e.g. Cystic Fibrosis, Bipolar Disorder
* Temporary acute conditions e.g. broken wrist
* Short term health or personal problems e.g. hospitalisation, bereavement causing significant impact

In many cases Student Services are able to provide specific teaching and learning support, details of which will be provided in a Teaching and Learning Support document which is passed to module leaders and also to examination scheduling (if additional time in formal examinations is required). For the most part extenuating circumstance provision should not be required for conditions supported by Disability Assist; however there may be occasions when issues arise and a student requires additional consideration. On these occasions the extenuating circumstance policy will apply.

Students who have a temporary or acute condition should refer to the procedure contained in “Students with disabilities or other temporary injuries and conditions” both in terms of providing additional support for study and to put in place an appropriate arrangement to address difficulties with assessment. Again, it is anticipated that the extenuating circumstance procedure will not be required unless other issues have arisen or the support in place did not sufficiently address the problem.

# Extenuating circumstances policy

If an examination or assessment has been affected by a serious matter, then a student can ask the College to take this into consideration. The aim of the policy is to ensure no student is disadvantaged by circumstances beyond their control whilst maintaining academic standards.

There is an expectation by the College that, whilst an assessment may be delayed because of extenuating circumstances, it should not be missed altogether. It is essential that an Award Assessment Board should have as complete a profile as possible so that a decision on progression or award can be made.

A claim for extenuating circumstances can be submitted to cover late submission of work, non- submission of work or non-attendance at a time specific assessment, e.g. examination, test or field-trip.

**Valid extenuating circumstances will not result in an adjustment to a mark. Improvement to marks can only be achieved by reassessment.** Details of how extenuating circumstances may be taken into account are given later in the policy.

# What is an extenuating circumstance?

Extenuating Circumstances are circumstances which:

* affect the student’s ability to attend or complete an assessment or a number of assessments
* are exceptional
* are outside the student’s control
* can be corroborated by independent evidence
* occurred during or shortly before the assessment in question

***Examples of circumstances which might be considered valid***

* Hospitalisation, including operations
* Health problems
* Personal or psychological problems for which the student is undergoing counselling or has been referred to a counsellor or other qualified practitioner
* Childbirth (including a partner in labour)
* Bereavement causing significant impact/effect
* Major accident or injury, acute ailments or conditions which coincide with an assessment deadline or an examination or test, or are sufficiently long-lasting to impact on a significant part of a term
* Clinical depression or other mental health problem
* Recent burglary/theft/serious car accident
* Jury service which cannot be deferred
* Representing the College at national level or his/her country at international level in a sporting event
* For part-time students in full-time employment, exceptional pressure of work or permanent change of employment circumstances
* Late diagnosis of, for example, dyslexia, resulting in no support or examination provision.
* Separation or divorce - student or parental (provided the facts and the effects are independently corroborated)
* Unavailability of the student portal prior to the deadline for an assignment or examination where it has been confirmed by the module leader that this would have had a material effect on the preparation for an assessment

# What is NOT an Extenuating Circumstance?

It is not possible to lay down hard and fast rules in every case. The key issue is whether the claim meets the criteria above. For instance, the College would not normally accept claims relating to travel delays which the student might be expected to have planned for, but if the delay were exceptional, a claim would be considered. Similarly, a cough, cold or throat infection during a term would not normally be a valid extenuating circumstance, since the student would be expected to plan their work taking into account the likelihood of minor disruptions.

Medical certification will not automatically be accepted in cases where it verifies a minor illness which within the regulations would not normally be deemed valid for, e.g. coursework submission, or simply reports a claim that the student felt unwell.

This means claims supported by medical notes will be deemed invalid if it is for a minor ailment as these would be considered not exceptional e.g. unspecified anxiety, mild depression or examination stress, cough, cold, upper respiratory tract Infection, sore throat, minor viral infection, unless the illness was at its peak at the time of an examination or in-class test and the corroborating evidence refers to the impact on the student’s performance.

***Examples of circumstances which would not normally be considered valid***

* Alarm clock did not go off
* Car broke down, train/bus delayed or cancelled, other public transport problems (unless the student can demonstrate that he or she had allowed adequate time to compensate for such problems as might reasonably have been anticipated)
* Child care problems which could have been anticipated
* Accidents or illness affecting relatives or friends (unless serious, or the student is a sole carer)
* Unspecified anxiety, mild depression or examination stress
* Cough, cold, upper respiratory tract Infection, sore throat, minor viral infection, unless the illness was at its peak at the time of an examination or in-class test and the corroborating evidence refers to the impact on the student’s performance
* Financial problems (other than cases of exceptional hardship)
* Holidays, house moves, family celebrations or other events where the student either has control over the date or may choose not to participate
* Computer problems, corrupt data, disk or printer failure or similar
* Problems with postal delivery of work (unless recorded delivery or registered mail)
* Time management problems (e.g. competing deadlines)
* Appointments (legal, medical, etc.) which could be rearranged
* **Reserve Forces** commitments or similar (unless unavoidable)
* Sporting or recreational commitments (unless the student is representing the College in national competition or representing his/her country in international competition)
* De-registration

Full-time students may not make an extenuating circumstances claim relating to pressures of work, since such students have by implication made a commitment to make available the time necessary for study. Part-time students in full-time employment, who wish to make claims based on exceptional pressures in their employment, must submit corroborating documentary evidence (e.g. a letter from their employer) which confirms the particular circumstances, explains why they are exceptional and outside the student’s control and formally supports the student’s claim. Where a student is self-employed, she or he must provide independent evidence to support the claim that the pressures are exceptional and outside the student’s control.

# Consideration of Extenuating Circumstance Claims

Each extenuating circumstance claim will be considered individually and all students will be treated fairly and equitably. The decision will take into consideration the nature, timing and severity of the problem and the impact it has had on assessment.

As stated previously, marks will not be amended as a result of a valid extenuating circumstance claim. Improvement to marks can only be achieved by re-assessment. To pass a module students are required to meet specific learning outcomes. The Award Assessment Board must be satisfied that these have been achieved prior to allowing a student to progress to the next stage or making an award.

As a result of valid extenuating circumstances the following action **may** be taken:

* waive a late submission penalty
* waive a zero mark for part of an assessment and re-calculate the module mark based on the completed assessments provided the missing assessment is worth 25% or less of the overall module mark and that the learning outcomes can be met from the remainder of the assessment
* agree an extension to the coursework submission deadline to a maximum period of 10 days – a longer period may be possible commensurate with the period of the extenuating circumstances.
* allow re-assessment of not achieved elements due to non-submission during the referral period (normally July – Sept) as a same attempt
* allow re-assessment of not achieved modules due to non-submission as a repeat of the whole module during the next academic year as a same attempt
* \*recommend a case conference be convened to consider support needs
* \*\*require a student to interrupt or withdraw from study

\*As a result of significant or repeated extenuating circumstances the Cluster may want to consider the student’s support needs or recommend that alternative forms of assessment are provided. This is normally considered in conjunction with Disability Assist Services and may involve a case conference meeting.

\*\*Where a student’s extenuating circumstances or health problems prevent them from making academic progress, the Award Assessment Board may require a student to interrupt or withdraw from the programme of study. This is subject to a case conference meeting having been held.

# Chronic ill health

Chronic ill health can be categorised as conditions which:

* are persistent, often lasting for more than three months, and often life-long
* cannot be solved in a short time, or which will recur regardless of action, or which need to be managed on a long-term basis
* are a long-term or permanent illness that often results in some type of disability and which may require you to seek help with various activities
* can be managed but can ‘flare-up’

Examples of conditions which fall into this category are: Cystic Fibrosis, Costochondritis, Fibromyalgia, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME), Psychosis, and Bipolar Disorder. Further advice may be obtained from the Student Services in the College.

Students who have a chronic health condition should discuss any support needs with Student Services before or soon after commencing their programme of study.

Whilst it is hoped that the condition can be managed and/or the student can be supported by Student Services, we recognise that there are times unexpected difficulties arise and a student may need to claim extenuating circumstances affecting specific assessments. Rather than requiring a student to evidence their condition with every extenuating circumstance claim, students who have a chronic condition may wish to complete a chronic ill health form. This form must be accompanied by a statement from your GP, hospital consultant or appropriate specialist responsible for their treatment which provides clear confirmation of the nature, severity, duration and effect on their studies of his/her condition.

Once a claim is authorised, the student will continue to be required to submit an extenuating circumstances claim for any missed assignment submission deadline, test, or examination or poor performance which is directly attributable to a flare-up of their chronic ill health condition, but they will not be required to resubmit evidence.

As a result of this process, it may be considered appropriate for a Case Conference to be convened to consider the student’s case in more detail.

The student must inform their Cluster of any change in their condition, whether improvement or deterioration, in order that the claim can be reassessed. The Cluster may require further evidence from time to time. The student will be contacted at the start of each academic year to review your case.

# Relationship to other policies

The College has a range of other policies and procedures which may be relevant in a specific situation. These include:

* Supporting students experiencing mental health difficulties
* Policy on supporting pregnant students and students with very young children
* Equality and Diversity Policy
* Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan
* Health and Safety Procedures
* Regulations on late coursework and extenuating circumstances
* Amended Policy – Penalty for late coursework
* Fitness to Practice procedures (where in place)
* Students with Disabilities or other Temporary Injuries and Conditions - Guidelines on Provisions for Assessment

# Sources of support and information

Within the College:

* HE Operations Office
* Senior Learning Advisors
* Course Co-ordinator
* Student Services

Out of hours, or in case of emergency:

* NHS Direct [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk) Tel 0845 4647
* Samaritans [www.samaritans.co.uk](http://www.samaritans.co.uk) Tel 08457 909090 (24hr helpline)
* Student’s GP practice

# Procedure (see flow chart and form)

Students who wish to claim extenuating circumstances should obtain a claim form from their Course Co-ordinator or the HE Operations Office. The form should be submitted to the HE Operations Office accompanied by independent corroborating evidence.

**It is essential that the details of dates and module codes are accurately completed on the claim form. Failure to do so may mean the circumstances are not fully taken into account. Circumstances are only valid for the period covered by the evidence.**

**Extenuating circumstances claims should be submitted as soon as feasible. In the case of assessed coursework/major project or equivalent, extenuating circumstances claims should be submitted as soon as possible,** and normally no later than ten working days after the deadline for the submission of the work. **Extenuating circumstances claims with respect to formal examinations should be submitted no later than the Monday after the end of the formal examination week.**

# Retrospective claims

The College regulations state that retrospective claims of extenuating circumstances will not normally be considered unless there were the most exceptional reasons for not doing so. This would normally only be because the student unable to disclose the circumstances in advance because a medical condition has only just been diagnosed. Appeals against Award Assessment Board decisions based on retrospective extenuating circumstances will normally be rejected unless they fall into this category.

**Circumstances can be submitted under confidential cover (by sealing in an envelope marked confidential and attaching to the form). Therefore the fact that a student did not wish to disclose personal information will not normally be considered as exceptional circumstances.**

**With this in mind, unless there are exceptional circumstances as detailed above, extenuating circumstance claims which are submitted retrospectively will be deemed to be invalid.**

# Corroborating evidence

Unless a Chronic Ill Health form has been validated, all claims must be accompanied by independent corroborating evidence.

The evidence must be specific about the nature, timing and severity of the problem and if possible provide an independent assessment of the effect the problem may have had on the student.

Evidence from family and/or friends will not be accepted. Self-certification for illness is not accepted

Corroborating evidence may include:

1. A medical note confirming a medical or psychological condition provided at the time when the student was suffering from that condition. (During term time the College would normally expect students to consult or provide evidence from a registered doctor local to their place of study.) Where alternative assessments are required, the College may require a more in depth (and perhaps independent) assessment of the student’s condition.
2. A letter from a counsellor (either a member of the College Counselling Service or a qualified counsellor working outside the College) confirming a personal, psychological or emotional problem for which the student has been receiving counselling. (NOTE: The College’s Counselling Service will only provide a letter of support if it has knowledge of the student‘s circumstances, and the student was a client of the Service during the relevant period. No student would be able to see a counsellor just in order to obtain an extenuating circumstances letter.)
3. An official document such as a police report including a police reference number, court summons or other legal document
4. A letter from a solicitor, social worker or other official agency
5. An insurance claim document supported by a letter from the insurance company.
6. Corroboration from support staff in e.g. Student Services with whom the student has previously been in contact about ongoing difficulties, or from an examination invigilator about illness during an examination
7. Academic staff who have been closely involved in the pastoral care of a student may submit written evidence which corroborates the student’s account, but in order to avoid allegations of unfair treatment and to ensure consistency of practice, such evidence must be countersigned by the member of staff designated as responsible for the co-ordination of pastoral care within the Cluster. It is the responsibility of the staff member concerned to obtain a valid countersignature. Staff who have signed a student’s Extenuating Circumstances Form should not normally participate in discussions of the claim during the Cluster screening procedures.

The student may be asked to provide additional evidence if the Cluster does not consider that it has sufficient corroborating evidence to come to a decision. Please note that this may not be possible if the student submits a claim for extenuating circumstances at the end of the academic year so it is important to submit claims in a timely fashion.

# Consideration of extenuating circumstances claims

Forms are considered as a matter of priority and the majority are considered soon after submission. However, occasionally some forms can take a little longer to assess. The student will be informed of the outcome by email (sent to the College email address). If the claim is deemed invalid the student will receive an explanation for this decision.

**Students should submit their work, as a final submission, within 10 days of the original deadline. They should not wait for a decision before submitting the work. If the student is not able to submit within this timeframe they should await instructions from the next Award Assessment Board which will make a decision on what action to take.**

# What happens when the student has a valid claim for…

## …late submission of work

Normally work submitted after the deadline will incur a late coursework penalty in accordance with the late coursework regulations; currently a mark cap at 40% for work submitted up to 24 hours beyond the deadline. Work submitted beyond 24 hours or those marked pass/fail only will be given a mark of zero or fail.

Provided the claim is deemed valid and the student meets the extended deadline, the late coursework penalty will be waived.

Students will normally be permitted a maximum extension of 10 working days (excluding any holiday period) from the original deadline for the submission of work. The extended submission deadline will be determined by the period the academic staff teaching on the module allow for return of work and/or feedback to students. Students will be advised of the extended deadline by email. Students can submit their coursework earlier than the date indicated by the extended submission deadline.

If the extended deadline goes into the examinations period, and the student chooses to submit during this period, they will not be able to claim extenuating circumstances for the impact of the revised assessment deadline in relation to their examinations.

An extension of 10 days may not be given where there is not sufficient time to mark work prior to a Subject Assessment Panel or Award Assessment Board

## …non-submission of work\*

If an extension is not possible or if work is not submitted, a zero mark will be included in the student profile and the extenuating circumstances will be forwarded to the Award Assessment Board which will make a decision on what action to take. Normally the Board will allow reassessment at the same attempt. This may be during the referred period or as a repeat of the whole module in the following academic year.

## …failure to attend examination(s), in class test(s), other timed assessments\*

A zero mark will be included in the student’s profile and the extenuating circumstances will be forwarded to the Award Assessment Board which will make a decision on what action to take. Normally the Board will allow reassessment as a same attempt. This may be during the referred period or as a repeat of the whole module in the following academic year.

\*Where the assessment is worth 25% or less of the module mark, the Module Leader may waive a zero mark for part of an assessment and re-calculate the module mark based on the completed assessments, provided that the learning outcomes are met. This decision is at the discretion of the Module Leader. Due to the nature of some programmes, particularly those that involve professional practice, this option is not allowed.

# What happens if …

**…the student feels their performance in coursework or other assessment will be affected by extenuating circumstances?**

If the student feels unwell or that their performance has been affected because of medical or personal difficulties they should not submit their work. Once the student has submitted their work it will be counted as an attempt. Extenuating circumstances can be claimed for late submission or non-submission provided that the duration and nature of the circumstances are adequate.

If the student is unable to submit work as a result of valid extenuating circumstances a zero mark will be included in their profile and the extenuating circumstances will be forwarded to the Award Assessment Board which will make a decision on what action to take. Normally the Board will allow reassessment at the same attempt. This may be during the referred period or, if the number of credits exceeds the referral limit, as a repeat of the whole module(s) in the following academic year.

## ...the student feels their performance in an exam will be affected by extenuating circumstances?

If the student feels unwell or that their performance has been affected because of medical or personal difficulties they should not sit an exam. If the student takes an exam knowing they are unwell, they will not be able to successfully claim extenuating circumstances.

If the student is unable to take an exam as a result of valid extenuating circumstances, a zero mark will be included in their profile and their extenuating circumstances will be forwarded to the Award Assessment Board which will make a decision on what action to take. Normally the Board will allow reassessment at the same attempt. This may be during the referred period or, if the number of credits exceeds the referral limit, as a repeat of the whole module(s) in the following academic year.

## … the student becomes unwell during an exam?

If the student is well and sits an exam but unexpectedly becomes ill during the exam and are unable to continue, they will be able to submit an extenuating circumstance claim for non-attendance as above.

## …extenuating circumstances affect the Referred period

If the student is required to undertake referred assessments during the summer period and are affected by extenuating circumstances during this time, they must submit a new claim form to cover this period.  They should be prepared for the Referred Award Assessment Board to decide that referred modules not achieved by the end of the academic year are to be retaken during the next academic year.  This may mean they do not progress to the next stage of their programme or graduate until the end of the next academic year.  Each case will be considered on an individual basis.

**EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES IN RELATION TO RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE AND MILITARY DUTIES**

**Religious Observance**

1. This guidance covers aspects of religious observance that occur at times known in advance. Unforeseeable events, such as the death of a close relative when there are specific forms of mourning are handled under the arrangements for considering extenuating circumstances.

2. Cornwall College staff endeavour to avoid timetabling assessments or other compulsory activities on major religious festivals but this is not always possible.

3. If a student has strict religious requirements that may affect their attendance at examinations they must notify the HE Assistant Registrar in writing within the first four weeks of the academic year. Examination periods are published in advance. (Please note that the major Christian festivals occur during vacations and examinations are scheduled to avoid these dates.)

4. If religious observance could affect the student’s attendance at teaching, learning and assessment activities during an academic year (in term time, Monday to Friday, usually between 9am – 6pm), it should be discussed with their Senior Learning Advisor, Course Co-ordinator or HE Assistant Registrar in the first four weeks of the academic year and/or the first week of each term. The Cluster will give the matter sympathetic consideration and try to make reasonable adjustments. The student should understand however that adjustment may not always be possible.

5. If religious observance affects the student’s attendance at a lecture, seminar or other class they can access the session resources on the module website and obtain any further notes from a student colleague. In addition if the student misses a session it is advised that they organise a peer to peer discussion on the subject.

6. If religious observance affects the student’s attendance at an assessment organised by your Cluster (e.g. presentations, in-class or practical tests) the Senior Learning Advisor, Course Co-ordinator or HE Assistant Registrar should be notified immediately in writing. The Cluster will try and make reasonable adjustments. The Cluster also needs to be notified immediately in writing of any conflicting dates when the assessment dates are published.

7. Deadlines for handing in coursework are published in advance and will not be extended to allow for religious observance. The student must manage their time and workload accordingly.

8. If no reasonable alternative can be found, the College reserves the right to hold examinations on any day and time during the examination period. If that means the student misses an examination, they will be required to take the examination when it is next held. This may involve an interruption of a programme or an extension to their period of study.

**Military Duties**

**1. UK students: Territorial Army, Royal Navy, Royal Marines or Air Force Reserves**

If a student is called up for full time Army, Navy, Royal Marines or Air Force military service they should immediately talk to their Senior Learning Advisor, Course Co-ordinator or HE Assistant Registrar. They can advise them on applying for an extension to course work, a delay or a suspension of studies.

Military training events must be organised around their timetable. Extensions are not available for training events.

**2. International students:**

If a student is called up for military service they should immediately talk to their Senior Learning Advisor, Course Co-ordinator or HE Assistant Registrar and the International Officer. Where appropriate the College can suspend their studies for a temporary period.

**POLICY ON SUPPORTING PREGNANT STUDENTS AND STUDENTS WITH VERY YOUNG CHILDREN**

# Introduction

This document provides students and staff who have a role in advising or supporting students with information about the College’s approach to supporting a student who is pregnant. It also provides some information relating to supporting students (whether female or male) who have recently become parents.

# The College’s commitment

The College believes that being pregnant or having a very young child should not, in itself, be a barrier to applying for, starting, succeeding in, or completing a programme of study. The College is committed to being as flexible as possible, providing academic standards are upheld. The special arrangements which can and should be made for students in these circumstances will vary from programme to programme. However, the general approach to be taken is consistent across the College – as is the legal framework in which the College operates.

This policy is based on a set of important guiding principles, namely:

* Avoiding less favourable treatment. The College and its staff will make sure they avoid treating the student (or applicant) less favourably than other students or applicants on the grounds that she is pregnant.
* Taking a flexible approach. As far as is possible, the College will take a flexible approach to supporting and facilitating the continued learning of – and maintaining a high-quality and safe student experience for - pregnant students and/or students who are the parents of a very young child. Students will be actively involved in drawing up a support plan.
* Demonstrating a non-judgmental and sensitive approach. When supporting and working with students on these matters, staff must take an open-minded and non-judgmental approach and must not attempt to influence a student’s decisions. Staff’s role is to provide context and advice to the student to enable them to make informed choices.

Information provided by the student should be treated sensitively and only passed onto others on a need-to-know basis (for example, in order to organise appropriate accommodations for the student relating to learning and teaching, assessment, placements, fees etc.).

# Rights and responsibilities

This section covers rights and responsibilities for students, staff and the College.

## 3.1 Confirming the Pregnancy

A student who suspects she is pregnant should see her GP to have the pregnancy confirmed as soon as she can.

## 3.2 Informing the College

Students are strongly encouraged to inform the College as soon as possible if they become pregnant or have a child whilst they are a student here. Whilst their Course Co-ordinator would normally be the first point of contact, students can choose to speak to another member of staff with whom they feel more comfortable. If requested, the student’s Cluster will identify a female member of staff to liaise with the student (students should note that their Course Co-ordinator will normally be kept informed of the student’s circumstances).

The College wishes to support students in their studies and ensure that any risks to mother and child are appropriately addressed, but can only do so if students disclose their circumstances. Accordingly, the College cannot accept responsibility for the consequences of non-disclosure if the student opts not to inform it.

In this respect, students should consider the following:

* There may be elements of a programme of study that could present a health and safety risk to a pregnant student and/or her child. A student’s Cluster will not be able to arrange appropriate risk assessments unless it is aware of her pregnancy.
* If a student’s pregnancy-related absence (for example, for antenatal appointments) impacts significantly on the student’s studies, the Cluster will only be able to take proper account of the reasons for absence if they are notified of these.
* In some cases, a student’s pregnancy-related absence from College might be something that needs to be discussed with other organisations.
* Sometimes, the absence of a student from College can adversely affect the work of other students s/he is working alongside (for example, on a group project), which might make it more important to notify the Cluster, so that plans can be made to deal with any such issues arising from the absence.

Ideally, students should inform the College of their pregnancy at least 15 weeks before the baby is due. The greatest risk to an unborn baby is during its first 13 weeks and so it is important that the student informs the College of her pregnancy as early as possible so that risks can be assessed and any necessary health and safety measures can be identified and put in place in a timely fashion. This time frame also allows sufficient time for the College to discuss and agree the student support plan (see below), make any necessary arrangements and ensure information is communicated as required.

When a student informs the College that she is pregnant, it is important that she receives consistent, objective and unbiased support and advice to enable her to make informed choices. Not all advice relating to pregnancy and maternity can be provided by the College.

**In certain subject areas, particularly those which involve a placement in a health or education setting, students may be required to inform the placement provider of their pregnancy. Students should check the programme handbook or contact the Cluster for further advice.**

## 3.3 Extenuating Circumstances

Whilst pregnancy itself is not considered to be an extenuating circumstance, there may be circumstances where pregnancy-related issues (e.g. medical conditions associated with the pregnancy) impact on a student’s studies/assessment. In these cases, the student must use the extenuating circumstances procedure to report them to the College (and provide appropriate supporting evidence, which can be submitted in confidence, if necessary).

## 3.4 Drawing up the Student Support in Pregnancy Plan

Once the student has disclosed her pregnancy, the Course Co-ordinator and HE Assistant Registrar will meet with the student to discuss how the pregnancy is likely to impact on her study.

A written Student Support in Pregnancy Plan should be drawn up by the Course Co-ordinator/HE Assistant Registrar and the student, detailing any special arrangements required during the student’s pregnancy and the agreed timescale for her return to study.

Occupational Health should be involved in the drawing up of the Plan if the student is experiencing, or develops, a pregnancy-related medical condition. It may also be necessary for Occupational Health to be consulted where the programme of study is in a professional discipline such as nursing as there may be specific regulations or procedures in place on these courses. Where necessary and with the student’s consent, Occupational Health may liaise with the student’s GP/midwife.

In order to inform the drawing up of the Plan, it is essential that a risk assessment is carried out as a matter of urgency.

Careful consideration must be given to the variety of ways in which the student can be enabled to continue her studies during her pregnancy or after the birth. For example, these might include:

* The date on which the student intends to start maternity-related absence
* The length of maternity-related absence that the student intends to take and the date on which she intends to return (N.B. in this case, and in that above, these dates may need to be revised as circumstances dictate).
* Advice on where the student can locate material issued/covered in lectures/seminars/tutorials missed for reasons related to the pregnancy e.g. medical appointments.
* Use of the extenuating circumstances procedure in cases where compliance with timescales/deadlines for assessments is affected by a pregnancy- related health condition or birth.
* Exploring the possibility of alternative means of assessment for the student (for example, a written assessment instead of a physical performance) if the pregnancy or birth prevents the normal methods of assessment.
* Any adjustments that may be required if the student will be sitting examinations (e.g. need for regular breaks.)
* The student interrupting her studies for a pre-determined amount of time.  This period of interruption may be extended if the time required to complete the programme of study will still fall within the maximum time limit allowed for the programme either by the College (and/or, where applicable, professional bodies).
* Consideration of a transfer to part-time study.

The Student Support in Pregnancy Plan should also:

* Accommodate the student’s antenatal care (e.g. medical appointments).
* Include a break from attending College of at least two weeks after giving birth for health and safety reasons.
* Include provision for re-integrating the student to the programme of study on return from any prolonged absence.

The student should receive a copy of the Plan, as should other appropriate member(s) of staff requiring this information including the student’s Senior Learning Advisor, the Course Co-ordinator and HE Assistant Registrar). The student must signify her agreement with the plan in writing. The student’s permission should be established before passing on information.

If the student continues to study during her pregnancy, she should meet regularly with her Course Co-ordinator (and with Occupational Health, if necessary) to review her Support Plan. Plans will need to be reviewed at key stages, such as when the student is 16 weeks pregnant, 24 weeks pregnant, and prior to her return to study, or at key points of the academic year, such as prior to examinations and field trips. Support plans will also need to be reviewed prior to the student’s return to study. Regular review is important as some decisions cannot be made at the start of a student’s pregnancy, for example the length of maternity-related absence that she will take.

## 3.5 Health and Safety

Pregnancy should not be equated with ill health. However, there are health and safety considerations that arise during pregnancy and breastfeeding, and the risks to which a students and her unborn child could be exposed need to be assessed.

The greatest risk to an unborn baby is during its first 13 weeks and so it is important that the student informs the College of her pregnancy as early as possible so that risks can be assessed and any necessary health and safety measures can identified and put in place in a timely fashion.

Close attention to health and safety measures will particularly be required in certain subject areas (e.g. where the student might be exposed to chemicals or radiation, or be expected to lift heavy objects or undertake other strenuous activity). Therefore, a Risk Assessment will be completed by the Course Co-ordinator and HE Assistant Registrar as part of the drawing up of the Student Support in Pregnancy Plan. If necessary, the College’s Health and Safety Manager should be involved. The Risk Assessment will identify any risks that may be present which could harm the student or her baby, and detail steps that need to be put in place to alleviate or minimise these risks. It should also detail any risks that may arise from any placement period or fieldwork due to be undertaken.

On occasion, it may not be practicable to alter the study conditions to alleviate or minimise the risk(s) connected with certain aspects of the course. Whilst the College will seek to identify alternative ways of allowing a student to meet the learning outcomes of her course in these circumstances, there may be occasions when this is not feasible. It may therefore be necessary for a student to temporarily suspend their studies or transfer to part-time mode to delay undertaking given modules where there are specific risks to her health and safety while she is pregnant.

## 3.6 Field work

Students will not be permitted to take part in field work after the 35th week of pregnancy. In certain areas, the time limit may be less than this, depending upon the nature of the activity being undertaken and this must be identified within the risk assessment.

## 3.7 Students on work placement

If the student becomes pregnant during a work placement, she must contact the College (via her Course Co-ordinator) to make appropriate plans to ensure that her health, and that of her child, is safeguarded and academic progress is properly managed. This is likely to require the College liaising with the placement provider. There may be circumstances where the College is limited in the support it can realistically offer to the student. Where this is judged to present a particular risk to the student or her unborn child, she may be strongly advised to take time out or transfer to a different programme of study.

## 3.8 Resuming studies

**The College requires students to take a break from attending the College of at least two weeks after the birth of their child, on health and safety grounds.**

An indication of the timescale for return to study will have been incorporated into the Student Support in Pregnancy Plan. Students should make contact with their Course Co-ordinator after the birth of the baby to confirm their return plans or, if a change of plan is necessary, to discuss this in more detail.

If there are concerns about a student’s health in relation to her proposed return date or her course requirements, Occupational Health must be consulted; it may be necessary for the student’s GP or health worker to confirm the student’s fitness to return to study.

## 3.9 Financial issues

Where students receive government funding support, they are strongly encouraged to contact Student Services to discuss the implications for their support. Generally, when students suspend their studies because of pregnancy Student Finance England can continue to award statutory support where the student requests it. Access to Learning fund payments can also be made during periods of suspension of study on the grounds of pregnancy.

## 3.10 International students

International students with financial sponsors must contact their sponsors and agree a plan of action (such as deferring study/ when to resume study etc.).

In addition to speaking to their Course Co-ordinator and HE Assistant Registrar regarding the Student Support in Pregnancy Plan), all international students must contact the International Student Advice Service (ISAS) to discuss the impact of their pregnancy on their visa arrangements. The College is required to report any Tier 4 student who suspends study to the UK Border Agency. Such students may be required to leave the UK during their Leave of Absence.

## 3.11 Babies / children on campus

Students must ensure they have suitable childcare arrangements in place at times when they are expected to be at College.

For health and safety reasons, as well as to avoid the disruption of classes or study, babies and children must not be brought into teaching, research or learning areas.

Students must not bring babies or children to College with the expectation that any staff member will take responsibility for caring for the child whilst the student is in classes.

Students may of course bring babies and children into public areas of the College, but the College cannot accept any liability for the child in these circumstances.

## 3.12 Breastfeeding

Students and staff are welcome to breastfeed their babies in public areas in the College including cafes. The College also acknowledges the need for breastfeeding mothers to have privacy and time to express milk.

## 3.13 Support for fathers and partners (including same-sex partners)

Any student who is to become a father, or any student who is a partner of a pregnant student (including same sex partners) who expects to be responsible for raising the child with the mother, will be entitled to request time out of study. This is likely to include time to attend medical appointments with their partner prior to, and after the birth, as well as a period of maternity support leave immediately following the birth. Flexibility will be shown where possible although this will necessarily be more limited in some programmes than others.

Whilst their Course Co-ordinator would normally be the first point of contact, students can choose to speak to another member of staff with whom they feel more comfortable. If requested, the student’s Cluster will identify a female member of staff to liaise with the student (students should note that their Course Co-ordinator will normally be kept informed of the student’s circumstances).

## 3.14 Adoption

As arrangements for the placing of children for adoption may take place within a very short timescale, it is important that students about to become parents through adoption should inform the College of their circumstances as soon as possible.

Whilst their Course Co-ordinator would normally be the first point of contact, students can choose to speak to another member of staff with whom they feel more comfortable (students should note that their Course Co-ordinator will normally be kept informed of the student’s circumstances).

A meeting with the student should then be arranged with the Course Co-ordinator and HE Assistant Registrar in which an Adoption Plan; this can be based on the “Support in Pregnancy Plan” where appropriate.

# Further Guidance for Clusters

It is not possible to provide a definitive list of special arrangements that might be considered reasonable in every possible situation because the decisions about which arrangements are appropriate in each particular case will vary according to a wide range of factors. These factors include the student’s individual circumstances, the time of year, the structure and content of the particular programme of study, restrictions imposed by professional bodies and any related health and safety matters.

Staff members are advised to take into account the following when considering what might be appropriate in a given case:

* A student’s own views on her options are very important and it is vital that staff consult her openly on the way forward, rather than seeking to implement a predetermined set of adjustments.
* At the same time, it is important to note that Clusters do not have to agree to any or all requests made by the student. There may be some situations in which it is impossible or unreasonable for a Cluster to agree to a particular request.
* To ensure best practice, and avoid any inadvertent discrimination, a Cluster should not normally decline a request from a pregnant student for particular special arrangements solely on grounds that they are too costly to implement (although this may be one factor taken into account when deciding on the overall reasonableness of meeting the request).
* If a Cluster decides to decline a flexibility request from a pregnant student, it is considered good practice for the Cluster to document its reasons for refusing the request and discuss with the student why this particular request is not considered “reasonable” in the particular circumstances.
* In cases where deferring her studies would lead to a student taking longer to complete a degree programme than would normally be permissible, the Cluster may decline a request for further time out from studies (in order to ensure that the information gained in previous parts of the programme remains current enough to count towards the qualification in question). However, in these circumstances the Cluster should still strive to demonstrate a flexible approach, where practicable, in relation to this deadline for programme completion, whilst ensuring that the student does not exceed the overall time limit allowed for her programme of study by the Cluster or a relevant professional body.

Occasionally, a situation may arise in which a Cluster is already making allowances for an individual student for reasons not related to pregnancy (for example, for reasons linked to disability). This does not mean that it is unreasonable for her to benefit from separate/additional flexibility relating to her pregnancy. It is important that, in these situations, the Cluster strives to separate out these different issues and clarify with the student what flexibility relates to which reasons. This approach will help Clusters to ensure that the flexibility remains in place only for as long as it is required and also that they are complying with all of the different pieces of anti-discrimination legislation.

**STUDENT FITNESS TO STUDY POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

**1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

1.1 The College is committed to supporting all students to fulfil their potential. Occasionally a student’s circumstances or health may impact upon their own, or others’, ability to fulfil that potential. This policy and the accompanying procedures are designed to outline the action that the College will take in such instances to ensure that issues can be dealt with in a clear, constructive and transparent fashion. Levels of risk will be assessed by the College on a case-by-case basis in conjunction with appropriate professionals.

1.2 This policy and the accompanying procedures are to be followed by Cornwall College staff where significant concerns have arisen as a result of a student’s extended absence, health condition or behaviours or attitudes that lead to an inability to progress in their programme, or that adversely affect others. The key purpose of this policy is to ensure that the best interests of the student are met and to provide appropriate guidance and support.

1.3 This policy runs parallel to other relevant policies for those programmes that are professionally accredited e.g. in health and education, where fitness to practice policies are in place. These processes are normally managed within the Cluster within which the programme is located; the outcome of these processes may also need to be reported centrally.

1.4 Students enrolled on professional or statutory regulated programmes with their own regulatory body (PSRB accredited) may require reporting of the outcomes of these processes to the relevant body as part of their mandate to protect the public and the profession; please see the specific programme handbook for details.

**2. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**

* 1. At all times Cornwall College aims to support individual students to engage with their studies. However, the College is responsible for the health, safety and wellbeing of **all** members of our community including students, staff and visitors.

2.2 The Director of Higher Education is responsible for the overall management and implementation of this policy and the accompanying procedures. The Director of Higher Education may delegate this responsibility as appropriate to the Head of Learner Journey or other senior staff.

2.3 Members of staff are responsible for acting within the framework of this policy and the accompanying procedures where a student’s health, behaviour or attitude gives them cause for significant concern, or where a student refers themselves to a member of staff.

2.4 Students are responsible for informing the College about their ability to study or otherwise. We recognise that there may be times when a student is unable to engage with this process. Inability or refusal to do so may result in a student’s study being interrupted until such time as the student is able or prepared to re-engage with the College.

2.5 The Fitness to Study procedures will not be invoked in an emergency situation where it is believed that a student’s behaviour presents an immediate risk to themselves or others. In this situation the appropriate Emergency Services should be contacted and the Head of Learner Journey should be notified as soon as possible.

**Policy**

**3. CORNWALL COLLEGE ETHOS AND SUPPORT**

3.1 The College is committed to an ethos of equality and inclusivity, and aims to facilitate and promote positive health and well-being through the recognition and understanding of all disabilities. The College encourages all students to contact the appropriate service at the **earliest** possible opportunity. The College sees this as part of if its wider agenda to empower and transform lives through education.

**4. DATA PROTECTION AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

4.1 The College is governed by the Data Protection Act 1998 and will treat all personal information (including sensitive personal information relating to students’ mental, physical health or personal circumstances) as confidential within the terms of the legislation.

4.2 Personal information about a student obtained under this policy and procedure will only be shared within the College amongst those members of staff who need to know that information in order to offer the student appropriate support, to enable the operation of this policy and procedure, or where it is required, with accrediting professional, regulatory or statutory bodies.

4.3 The College may ask a student for his or her agreement to share personal information obtained under this policy and procedure with relevant professionals outside of the College in order to offer the student appropriate support. The College will not normally share any personal information about a student without their agreement, but may do so in exceptional cases, where permitted by law.

4.4 International students should be aware that the College is required to report any interruptions to study or withdrawal to the UK Border Agency.

**Procedures**

5. Where a member of staff has cause for concern about a students’ health, wellbeing, attitudes and behaviour this should be reported to the relevant HE Assistant Registrar in the first instance. Where a student self-refers to a member of staff, or reports concerns about another student, the member of staff should refer this information to the HE Assistant Registrar. Depending on the circumstances the HE Assistant Registrar will identify and make contact with the appropriate person(s) or service(s) to establish the level of concern (low, medium or high risk) and appropriate actions in response.

5.1 **ASSESSMENT OF RISK: EMERGING CONCERNS**

Where a student’s health, behaviours or attitude first raise concern, staff should record details of any incident and immediately notify the relevant HE Assistant Registrar. It is the responsibility of the HE Assistant Registrar in conjunction with the Senior Learning Advisor from the student’s Cluster; Student Services or other appropriate staff, to assess levels of risk. Low risk situations are generally characterised as not a requiring any immediate additional professional interventions; medium risk situations may imply a need for appropriate interventions from one or more College or external support services; high risk situations may imply immediate or emergency interventions as appropriate to the situation.

5.2 Where possible, the student should be invited to meet with an appropriate member of staff within that student’s Cluster (e.g. Personal Learning Advisor/Senior Learning Advisor or module leader) to discuss any concerns identified. At that meeting it should be made clear to the student that it is their responsibility to inform the College of any issues related to their fitness to study. The explicit causes/instances for concern should be explained to the student, with clear examples provided.

**6. LOW RISK**

6.1 Levels of risk will be assessed by the College on a case by case basis in conjunction with appropriate professionals. Where the situation is judged to be a low risk (see 5.1 above), the student will be encouraged and given the opportunity to disclose any underlying physical or mental health conditions, or other circumstances and, if appropriate, the student will be provided with information about sources of support and advice available within the College.

**7. MEDIUM RISK**

7.1 Where the level of risk is judged to be medium (see 5.1 above), the student will be asked to agree an action plan. This may include:

a) Requiring the student to attend weekly appointments with a nominated member of staff for regular monitoring; and

b) Requiring the student to seek help from support services within the College or from external professionals, such as the student’s GP or other relevant medical services.

7.2 The HE Assistant Registrar will set a date for review of the student’s progress against any agreed action plan (normally 10 working days) and will inform the student that inability or refusal to meet the conditions agreed may result in a student’s study being interrupted until such time as the student is able or prepared to re-engage with the College.

**8. HIGH RISK**

8.1 If the risk assessment highlights a high level of risk (see 5.1 above), the HE Assistant Registrar will contact the Head of Learner Journey (or nominee) in order that an urgent case conference can be arranged. Attendees at the conference will include the Head of Learner Journey and other staff as necessary and appropriate to consider the case (e.g. the student’s Personal Learning Advisor, programme leader, appropriate healthcare professionals, or other staff). The student will normally be invited to attend the case conference and may be accompanied by a friend or representative (not acting in a legal capacity). Where appropriate, this will be an evidence-based process drawing upon expert professional judgement – for example a registered health practitioner, a social worker, law enforcement or rehabilitation professional.

8.2 The case conference may consider various options in relation to the student, including additional support strategies, a change in the mode of study, interruption from study or a recommendation to the Director of Higher Education that the student be withdrawn from the College.

8.3 The decision of the case conference will be communicated to the student in writing (normally within 10 working days of the conference by the HE Assistant Registrar or nominee).

8.4 If it is deemed appropriate that the student should be interrupted from studies then the student will also be informed in writing of the general procedure for return to study below and any arrangements specific to their case.

**9. IMPACT ON ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

9.1 In cases where an action plan has been agreed and implemented, failure to make academic progress, or to engage with the requirements of the programme of study, may result in the decision of the award assessment board to interrupt or withdraw the student from the programme.

**10. APPEAL**

10.1 Students have the right to appeal against any decision taken under these procedures. Appeals will only be accepted if there is evidence of procedural irregularity, bias or failure to reach a reasonable decision, or if the student submits further material circumstances which could not reasonably have been expected to have been submitted for consideration at the case conference.

10.2 Appeals against interruption

10.2.1 Appeals against interruption must be made in writing to the Complaints and Appeals Office within 10 working days of notification of the interruption clearly outlining the grounds for appeal. The Complaints and Appeals Office will prepare an appeal file for consideration by the Director of Higher Education (or nominee) and a representative from the Students’ Union.

10.2.2 Director of Higher Education or nominated representative will review the appeal and may overturn the decision to interrupt a student if they believe it appropriate. The decision of the Director of Higher Education (or nominee), and Students’ Union representative will be final.

10.2.3 Where a student’s appeal is rejected, a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued.

10.3 *Appeals against withdrawal*

10.3.1 Appeals against withdrawal must be made in writing to the Complaints and Appeals Office within 10 working days of notification of the withdrawal clearly outlining the grounds for request. The decision of the Director of Higher Education (or nominee), and Students’ Union representative will be final.

10.3.2 The Director of Higher Education or nominated representative will review the appeal and may overturn the decision to withdraw a student if they believe it appropriate. The Director of Higher Education’s decision will be final. The Student will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter at this stage.

**11. RETURN TO STUDY**

11.1 Following any period of interruption from the College under these procedures, it may be appropriate for the student to return to resume their studies.

11.2 Each student’s case depends on specific circumstances but in all cases, return to study will be conditional upon satisfactory evidence of fitness to study. Evidence should be from a registered health practitioner, a social worker, law enforcement or a rehabilitation professional who has enough knowledge of the student’s circumstances to be able to make an informed statement about the student’s fitness to study.

11.3 The decision to permit a student to return to study will be made by Head of Learner Journey and academic tutor from the student’s Cluster who may impose such conditions as they deem appropriate to the relevant case (such as a return to study plan or a requirement for the student to attend regular review meetings). The Head of Learner Journey will write to the Director of Cluster and HE Assistant Registrar or nominee.

11.4 In cases where a student has taken the decision independently to interrupt their studies the College reserves the right to utilise the return to study process to ensure that appropriate support is in place to facilitate success return to study.

**12. OIA**

If, after exhausting the Appeals process, the student remains dissatisfied with the College’s final decision they may submit a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education. Contact details for the Independent Adjudicator are:

Office of the Independent Adjudicator

3rd Floor

Kings Reach

38 – 50 Kings Road

Reading

RG1 3AA

Tel: 01189 599813

Email: enquiries@oiahe.org.uk

**13. Review of this policy**

This policy and procedures will be subject to an annual review meeting to be Chaired by the Director of Higher Education; and including the Head of Learner Journey; the Complaints and Appeals Manager; the HE Assistant Registrars.

**EXAMINATION AND ASSESSMENT OFFENCES**

**1 DEFINITIONS**

* 1. A breach of any part of College or Programme Regulations relating to assessment, or of the instructions issued in relation to an individual examination or piece of assessed work, will be considered an offence, irrespective of the intentions of the students concerned.
  2. For the purpose of this Regulation, ‘examination or piece of assessed work’ includes, *inter alia* written and oral examinations; tests; coursework essays and assignments; projects and dissertations; practical/laboratory work; group and other collaborative work; placements and field trips and reports thereon; designs, artefacts, computer programmes.
  3. References in this Regulation to ‘Cluster’ shall be construed as meaning the Cluster responsible for the examination or assessment in question. Where a student is registered on a module in another Cluster, the HE Assistant Registrar (or nominee) is responsible for ensuring that appropriate information is passed to their counterpart in that Cluster.

## EXAMPLES OF EXAMINATION AND ASSESSMENT OFFENCES

Note: these examples are not necessarily exhaustive

* 1. Obtaining or attempting to obtain access to an unseen examination or test paper prior to the start of the examination/test
  2. The introduction or use in an examination or test of any crib sheets, revision or other notes**,** books, notes, paper or devices of any kind other than those specifically permitted in the rubric of the paper. This would include, for example, the possession or use of a pre-programmable calculator/personal organiser where the paper permits use of an ordinary calculator; the possession of unauthorised notes (in whatever form). It could also include possession of a mobile phone or any other electronic device, where an invigilator had instructed that such articles were to be deposited in a specified place.
  3. Failing to comply with the instructions of an invigilator or examiner, or with the printed instructions for candidates.
  4. Removing from an examination or test any script, paper, or other official stationery (whether or not completed) unless specifically authorised by an invigilator or examiner.
  5. Being party to any arrangement whereby a person other than the candidate fraudulently represents, or intends to represent, the candidate in an examination or test (personation).
  6. Communicating, or attempting to communicate with another student or with any third party other than the invigilator/examiner during an examination or test.
  7. Copying or attempting to copy the work of another student, whether by overlooking his/her work, asking him/her for information, or by any other means, or knowingly allowing work to be copied.
  8. The submission for assessment of material (written, computer-generated, visual or oral) or ideas originally produced by another person or persons, without clearly indicating that the material is not original, such that the work could be assumed to be the student’s own. The use of direct quotations or lightly paraphrased text without citing the source would be deemed to be an assessment offence. Where work was similarly presented, without quotation marks, but with a clear indication of the source this would be identified as bad practice and marked accordingly. (In the latter case, overly-derivative work showing little intellectual input from the student would be likely to be given a low mark, and if extensive the work would be almost certain to fail). Offences can also include the use of intellectual data or ideas without acknowledgement; copying, summarising or paraphrasing the work of another student or graduate; commissioning another person to complete work which is then submitted as a student’s own work; the use of professional essay writing services or work drawn down from the Internet.
  9. The unauthorised use of the work of another student (whether by taking a hard copy without permission or through access to a hard disk or floppy disk)
  10. The representation of work produced in collaboration with another person or persons as the work of a single candidate
  11. The inclusion in a piece of assessed work (other than an examination or test) of material which is identical or substantially similar to material which has already been submitted for any other assessment within the College.
  12. Making false declarations in an attempt to obtain modified assessment provisions or special consideration (e.g. of extenuating circumstances).
  13. The presentation of data in laboratory work, projects, etc. based on work purporting to have been carried out by the student but which has been invented, copied, altered or otherwise falsified.
  14. Attempting to persuade another member of the College (student, staff, or invigilator) to participate in any way in actions which would be in breach of this Regulation
  15. Being party to any arrangement which would constitute a breach of this Regulation.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

* 1. All students must ensure that they are aware of, and comply with, College and programme requirements and that they are not party to any behaviour which could be construed as an examination or assessment offence.
  2. Students authorised to work in pairs and/or groups will normally be required to complete a cover sheet declaring whether the work was undertaken alone or as part of a team. Students may be required to name other students with whom they worked and/or identify individual responsibility for component parts.
  3. Students submitting an individual assignment must confirm that the work is entirely their own and has been completed in accordance with College and Programme Regulations.
  4. Clusters must ensure that students are directed towards written guidelines clearly identifying the parameters of acceptable practice for the modules for which they are responsible. Where students are authorised/required to work collaboratively, the module leader must specify the boundaries of collaboration at the outset. Information on the presentation of written assignments in order to avoid allegations of an assessment offence (e.g. information on acceptable referencing etc.) should be reinforced in lectures, seminars and tutorials as appropriate.
  5. The Director of Cluster must establish a pool of a dozen or so individuals who could be called upon to join any Panel or Committee of Investigation (see below)

## ALLEGED EXAMINATION OFFENCE (FORMAL WRITTEN EXAMINATION)

**4.1 College Committee of Investigation**

4.1.1 A College Committee of Investigation will comprise three members drawn from the Cluster pools, none of whom have taught the student(s) in question, **one of whom will Chair the Committee,** and the College Complaints and Appeals Manager , who will act as secretary to the Committee. The Secretary to the Committee will ensure, as far as is possible, a gender/ethnic representation in determining membership.

4.1.2 Two meetings of the College Committee of Investigation for examination offences will be fixed no later than five working days and ten working days respectively following the date of the last formal examination. Dates will be fixed in advance and publicised on the Examination Timetable. Additional meetings of the Committee will be organised subsequently if required (e.g. for non-standard examination dates or resit examinations).

**4.2 Procedure to be followed when the suspected offence is identified**

4.2.1 Where an invigilator or examiner suspects that a student may have committed (or be attempting to commit) an offence during an examination, s/he should

1. where possible call another invigilator/staff member to act as a witness
2. confiscate any unauthorised material/device in the possession of the candidate
3. endorse the candidate’s script/paper on the front cover with a note of the time the alleged offence was discovered
4. note on the script/paper the point the candidate had reached when the alleged offence was discovered
5. allow the candidate to continue with the examination but at the end of the examination provide him/her with a copy of this Regulation together with a standard letter (Invigilators will be provided with standard pro forma letters by the College Examinations Office) outlining the allegation, explaining the part of the regulation it is alleged the student has breached and requesting her/him to confirm in writing on a standard pro-forma to the College Examinations Officer, within 5 working days, whether

* s/he accepts the charge to be laid against her/him and understands that the case will be considered by a Panel (see paragraph 4.3.1 below). The candidate may submit evidence in mitigation, in the form of a written statement, for consideration by the Panel if s/he so wishes. Should correspondence not be received from the candidate by the deadline for a response, it will be assumed that s/he has accepted the allegation made and the case will be forwarded to the Panel.
* s/he wishes to contest the allegation and appear before the College Committee of Investigation (see paragraph 4.3.2 below). The dates of the meeting of the Committee will be confirmed in the letter. The student will be required to indicate which meeting s/he wishes to attend, or whether s/he wishes the case to be heard in absentia and if so whether s/he wishes to submit a written statement. A student will not have the right to demand a revised date for the Committee to meet. The student will be required to indicate whether s/he wishes to bring a friend (who may be a fellow student, staff member, SU officer or other party) and the identity of any such individual. S/he will also be required to indicate whether s/he will be calling any witnesses and if so the identity of those individuals. It is the student’s responsibility to arrange for the attendance of her/his own witnesses.

1. make a full written report to the College Examinations Officer enclosing any confiscated device/materials.

4.2.2 The College Examinations Officer will, within 24 hours, forward a copy of the written report and any confiscated device/materials to the Director of Cluster or nominee for comment by the module leader and Curriculum Leads. The module leader will be requested to comment on the relevance to the examination/student performance of any confiscated material.

4.2.3 Should an allegation of an examination offence come to light after the examination has been held, e.g. during the marking process, the person who has identified the alleged offence should consult the module leader who will then notify the College Examinations Office of the nature of the allegation. The College Examinations Office will then send a standard letter (see 4.2.1 v) above) by recorded delivery to the student’s home and local addresses, and email a copy to the student’s College address. Should there be no reply it will be assumed that the student does not wish to contest the allegation and the case will proceed to a College Panel (see 4.3.1 below). If the student wishes to contest the allegation it may be necessary to convene a special meeting of the College Committee of Investigation.

**4.3 Consideration of Allegation of Examination Offences**

Where more than one student is involved in an alleged offence, the cases will be referred to a Panel only if ALL students accept the allegation. If one or more students contest the allegation ALL cases will be referred to the Committee of Investigation.

**4.3.1 Consideration by College Panel**

4.3.1.1 Where a student has agreed to accept the charge laid against her/him the case will be considered by correspondence and the written report of the invigilator and any other relevant documentation (including information about any previous proven offences) will be circulated by the College Examinations Officer, with an appropriate recommendation, to a College Panel comprising three members drawn from the Cluster pools (other than the student's Cluster). The College Examinations Officer will ensure, as far as is possible, agender/ethnic representation in determining membership.

4.3.1.2 Members will signify their agreement or disagreement with the recommendation by email within five working days of receipt. If there is disagreement amongst the Panel members consulted as to the penalty to be applied, the majority view will prevail as long as that is the view most favourable to the student. If that is not the case, the penalty will be referred to the College Committee of Investigation.

* + - 1. Students will be informed of the decision of the Panel by the College Examinations Officer, in writing, within 5 days of the Panel’s decision. Should the case need to be referred to the Committee of Investigation the student will be notified of the date of the meeting and the date by which a decision will be reached.
    1. **Consideration by a College Committee of Investigation**

4.3.2.1 Where a student wishes to contest the allegation, the College Examinations Officer, will on receipt of the written confirmation by the student

i) acknowledge the letter from the student, confirming that her/his case will be referred to the Committee and the timing of the hearing

ii) confirm the membership of the Committee of Investigation, being three members drawn from the Cluster pools (The College Examinations Officer will, as far as is possible, ensure a gender/ethnic representation in determining membership). Students should be notified that they may lodge an objection to the membership of the Committee on the basis of previous contact with a member of staff. A student would be required to provide a rationale for the objection and, if deemed to be reasonable, an alternative member may be sought.

iii) confirm the identity of any witnesses called by the College

1. ensure that all relevant evidence is collected and made available to the Committee
2. call any relevant witnesses on behalf of the College
3. obtain information about any previous proven examination or assessment offences. This information will not be disclosed to the Committee unless and until it has completed its consideration of the case and found the student to have committed an offence. It would then be disclosed as a factor in considering an appropriate penalty.

4.3.2.2 The Committee is required to examine all the evidence relevant to the circumstances of the alleged offence and to interview the student and any witnesses in order to establish the facts of the case. The student will also have the right to question witnesses. Should the student be unable to attend s/he has the right for her/his case to be heard in absentia and to submit a written statement but will not have the right to demand a revised date for the Committee to meet.

4.3.2.3 The Committee may decide that the student be subject to a viva voce examination as a means of determining whether an offence has occurred. The viva voce examination will be conducted by the Director of Cluster or nominee together with one member of the Committee who will be considering the case.

4.3.2.4 If the Committee decides that there is no case to answer, the HE Assistant Registrar (or nominee) will be required to ensure that all records relating to the allegation are removed from the student files.

4.3.2.5 The outcome of the Committee hearing will be reported to the student and the relevant Director of Cluster and HE Assistant Registrar (or nominee) in writing within five working days of the meeting.

## ALLEGED COURSEWORK OFFENCES (INCLUDING TESTS)

* 1. **Dates of Cluster Committees**

Clusters shall convene formal meetings of Committees of Investigation for coursework offences (including tests) as and when required. Membership will be drawn from the cluster pool (see 3.5). The HE Assistant Registrar or nominee will attend and will act as secretary to the Committee and will ensure as far as is possible a gender/ethnic representation in determining membership.

* 1. **Initial action by internal or external marker**
     1. Where an internal or external marker suspects that a candidate has breached the Regulations in respect of assessed work other than a formal examination, s/he should advise the module leader for the work in question. The module leader, in consultation with the HE Assistant Registrar (or nominee), must advise the student in writing(recorded delivery letter to local and home addresses, with copy to the student’s College e-mail address) of the allegation and the date of the Cluster Committee of Investigation***,*** enclosing a copy of these Regulations, and ask the student to confirm in writing, through a standard pro-forma, within 5 working days, whether
* s/he wishes to accept the charge to be laid against her/him and understands that the case will be considered by a Panel (see 5.3.1 below). The candidate may submit evidence in mitigation, in the form of a written statement, for consideration by the Panel if s/he so wishes. Should a response not be received from the student by the deadline, it will be assumed that s/he has accepted the allegation made and the case will be forwarded to the Panel.
* s/he wishes to contest the allegation and appear before a formal hearing of a Committee of Investigation (see paragraph 5.3.2 below). The date of the meeting of the Committee will be confirmed in the letter. The student has the right for her/his case to be heard in absentia if s/he is unable to attend but nonetheless wishes to submit a written statement, but will not have the right to demand a revised date for the Committee to meet. The student will be required to indicate whether s/he wishes to bring a friend (who may be a fellow student, staff member, SU officer or other party) and the identity of any such individual. S/he will also be required to indicate whether s/he will be calling any witnesses and if so the identity of those individuals. It is the student’s responsibility to arrange for the attendance of her/his own witnesses.

Letters to students must enclose an annotated copy of the work clearly indicating the extent and nature of the allegation. The name of any other student should be anonymised.

* + 1. The module leader must refer the matter to the HE Assistant Registrar or nominee. The HE Assistant Registrar (or nominee) must be provided with a copy of the letter to the student, a written statement of the grounds for the allegation, the student’s work, and any other evidence in support of the allegation.
  1. **Consideration of Alleged Coursework Offences (including tests)**

**5.3.1 Consideration by Cluster Panel**

5.3.1.1 Should a student not wish to contest the allegation made, the case may be considered by correspondence by a Cluster Panel of three members, drawn from the Cluster pool (who have not taught the student). The HE Assistant Registrar (or nominee) will ensure as far as is possible a gender/ethnic representation in determining membership.

5.3.1.2 The HE Assistant Registrar or nominee must consult with the Chair of the Subject Assessment Panel, (where the module leader pursuing an allegation is also the Chair of the Subject Assessment Panel, the HE Assistant Registrar should consult with the Chair of an alternative Subject Panel) and, within ten working days of receipt of all the documentation, circulate details of the case (including information about any previous proven offences) and a recommended penalty to the Cluster Panel.

5.3.1.3 Panel members will signify their agreement or disagreement with the recommendation in writing within five working days of receiving it. If there is disagreement amongst the Cluster Panel members consulted as to the penalty to be applied, the majority view will prevail as long as that is the view most favourable to the student. If that is not the case, the penalty will be referred to the Cluster Committee of Investigation.

5.3.1.4 Students will be informed of the decision of the Cluster Panel in writing by the HE Assistant Registrar or nominee. Should the case need to be referred to the Cluster Committee of Investigation the student will be notified of the date of the meeting and the date by which a decision will be reached.

**5.3.2 Consideration by Cluster Committee of Investigation**

5.3.2.1 The HE Assistant Registrar or nominee must, within ten working days of receipt of the written confirmation by the student that s/he wishes to contest the allegation:

1. acknowledge the letter from the student, confirming that her/his case will be referred to the Committee and that the timing of the hearing will be confirmed in writing approximately ten working days before the date of the meeting
2. confirm the membership of the Committee of Investigation, being three members drawn from the Cluster pool, who have not taught the student (ensuring there is an appropriate gender balance). Students should be notified that they may lodge an objection to the membership of the Committee on the basis of previous contact with a member of staff. A student would be required to provide a rationale for the objection and, if deemed to be reasonable, an alternative member may be sought.
3. confirm the identity of any witnesses called by the College
4. ensure that all relevant evidence is collected and made available to the Committee
5. call any witnesses who may be relevant to substantiate the allegation (normally including the individual who identified the alleged offence and/or the module leader)
6. obtain information about any previous proven examination or assessment offences. This information will not be disclosed to the Committee unless and until it has completed its consideration of the case and found the student to have committed an offence. It would then be disclosed as a factor in considering an appropriate penalty.

5.3.2.2 The Committee is required to examine all the evidence relevant to the circumstances of the alleged offence and to interview the student and any witnesses in order to establish the facts of the case. The Committee will be formally convened by the Director of Cluster (or his/her nominee) who will determine the membership of the Committee and its Chair. Should the student be unable to attend s/he has the right for her/his case to be heard in absentia and to submit a written statement. Should a student who has indicated their intention to be present at the Committee subsequently not attend, the case will be heard in absentia. Letters to students confirming arrangements for Committee meetings should include an emergency telephone number for students to ring should they be unable to attend the meeting due to exceptional unforeseen circumstances and wish the meeting to be rescheduled.

5.3.2.3 The Committee may decide that the student be subject to a viva voce examination as a means of determining whether an offence has occurred. The viva voce examination will be conducted by the Director of Cluster or nominee, together with one member of the Committee who will be considering the case.

5.3.2.4 If the Committee decides that there is no case to answer, the Curriculum Lead must ensure that all records relating to the allegation are removed from the student file.

5.3.2.5 The outcome of the Committee hearing will be reported to the student in writing within five working days of the meeting. Penalties for proven cases are given in paragraph 6.1 below.

**6. RECOMMENDATION OF PENALTY TO SUBJECT ASSESSMENT PANEL**

6.1 If an offence has been committed, the Panel or Committee will recommend an appropriate penalty to the Subject Assessment Panel. The recommendation will take account of the seriousness of the offence, the student’s intent or otherwise and, where relevant, any previous offences of which the student has been found guilty, together with custom and practice across the College. The penalty imposed would be more severe in the case of a repeat offence. The recommendation may be:

1. that no mark penalty be applied but the offence be recorded on the student’s file
2. that a mark of zero be recorded for the work in question
3. that a mark of zero be recorded for the work in question and the student must undertake reassessment in the entire element, either as a referral or a repeat (depending on the student’s overall profile)
4. that a mark of zero be recorded for the module of which the assessment formed a part
5. that a mark of zero be recorded for the module of which the work formed a part, the student is barred from taking the module again and must withdraw from the programme.

6.2 Exceptionally, the Committee may conclude that an offence is so serious that it should be referred to the Third Stage of the Student Disciplinary Procedure. This might be invoked for instance where a student has persuaded another person to impersonate him/her in an examination; where a student has taken another student’s work without consent and thereby involved an innocent student in an investigation; where a student has committed multiple offences. In such cases the outcome of the procedure will be reported to the next meeting of the relevant Subject Assessment Panel. The Secretary of the relevant Committee of Investigation must formally notify the CEO, the Director of Higher Education and the Complaints and Appeals Manager where such a decision is made.

1. **SUBJECT ASSESSMENT PANELS**
   1. The HE Assistant Registrar (or nominee) must ensure that all recommendations from Assessment/Examination Offences Panels or Committees ofInvestigation are notified to relevant Subject Assessment Panels.

* 1. A Subject Assessment Panel, for quality assurance purposes, must formally receive a report on all cases of proven examination or assessment offences. All cases must be recorded fully in the minutes and reported to the relevant Award Assessment Board.

# AWARD ASSESSMENT BOARD

* 1. The Award Assessment Board will accept the penalty recommended by the Assessment/Examination Offences Panel/Committee. Should further information come to light which cause the Board to doubt the proposed decision/penalty, the case should be referred back to the relevant Panel/Committee of Investigation for reconsideration.
  2. A student found guilty of an examination or assessment offence the penalty for which is such as to make them ineligible for the award on which they are registered (or to result in their exclusion from the College under the Student Disciplinary Procedure) is nonetheless eligible for any intermediate award for which s/he has legitimately met the academic requirements, and any such award must therefore be conferred. It is entirely proper within these Regulations for a student’s prior results to be investigated in the light of a later examination/assessment offence, but those results must stand unless an offence in direct relation to them is proven under the Regulations.

# ALLEGATIONS MADE AT OR AFTER THE ASSESSMENT PANEL/AWARD ASSESSMENTBOARD

* 1. Exceptionally, an alleged offence may come to light at or after the meeting of an Assessment Panel/Board. Allegations made at a Panel or Board must be investigated as soon as practicable thereafter. In the meantime the decision on the student must be deferred.
  2. Where an offence is discovered after an Award Board has met and results have been published, the allegation must be referred directly to the College Complaints and Appeals Manager who will consult with the Curriculum Lead, programme leader and Chair of the Award Assessment Board. They will take account of the nature of the evidence presented; the seriousness of the offence; the time which has elapsed; the reasons why it was not discovered earlier; and the regulations of any professional validating and accrediting body in determining whether or not to take action.
  3. The College has the power to rescind an award or distinction made by the College if it considers that there is due cause.

## APPEALS

* 1. The decision on the penalty for an assessment/examination offence will be reported to and confirmed at the Award Assessment Board and a student has the right to appeal by the deadline date indicated in the Appeal Regulations.
  2. A student may only appeal on the grounds that:

1. the procedures outlined in these Regulations have not been followed
2. evidence is available which was for good reason not available to the Panel/Committee of Investigation and that evidence has a direct bearing on the case.
3. the penalty imposed is disproportionate to the nature of the offence.

## REPORT

* 1. At the end of each academic session, the Complaints and Appeals Manager (or nominee), in liaison with the HE Assistant Registrars (or nominees) will produce a report indicating the number of cases considered by Committees of Investigation, the number where the allegation was found to be true, the nature of the allegation in each such case and the penalty invoked. The report shall not name individual students.
  2. The report will be considered by the Academic Regulations Sub-Committee which will identify any regulatory issues, consider any issues of consistency of practice, develop guidance notes as necessary and make recommendations for revisions to this Regulation as appropriate.

**APPEAL AGAINST THE DECISION OF AN ASSESSMENT BOARD**

1. **GROUNDS FOR APPEAL**

1.1 The College may only accept an appeal where the student can produce evidence that:

1. Assessments were not conducted in accordance with the current Assessment Regulations; or
2. Some other demonstrable material irregularity related to assessment has occurred

1.2 Extenuating circumstances (whether relating to College issues, personal or medical problems or any other issue) which are not submitted to the HE Operations Office by the due date may be considered as grounds for appeal only in the most exceptional circumstances (for instance where the student was unable to disclose the circumstances in advance because of a medical condition). Since the College permits the submission of extenuating circumstances under confidential cover, the fact that a student did not wish to disclose personal information will not normally be considered as an exceptional circumstance.

1.3 An appeal cannot be made against the academic or professional judgement of the examiners as such (that is, the marks allocated). Students may not therefore challenge the validity of their marks other than in the case of an alleged transcription error or on the basis of evidence of material irregularity related to assessment.

1.4 The appeal procedure is concerned only with the decisions of Assessment Boards and the assessment processes which give rise to these. It is not appropriate to deal with problems experienced with programme delivery or availability of facilities (for example) via the appeal procedure. Students should raise such problems by the appropriate means when they arise (e.g. via the College complaints procedure).

1.5 If, within an appeal, the student identifies issues which, in the view of the Complaints and Appeals Manager (or nominee)would be more appropriately dealt with via the Student Complaints Procedure, the student will be directed to that procedure. If the Complaints and Appeals Manager (or nominee) believes that the outcome of the complaint may be a factor in determining the appeal, the student will be advised accordingly and the appeal procedure suspended in relation to those issues until:

* the complaint is resolved, or
* the student indicates that they do not wish to progress further with the College Complaints Procedure or
* the College Complaints Procedure has been exhausted.

Where an appeal encompasses a range of issues, those which are not factors likely to be material to the determination of the appeal will be investigated via the complaints procedure and the outcome notified to the student in advance of consideration of the appeal. Students will be advised that whilst the College will take steps to ensure that their case is dealt with expeditiously, it may not be possible to conclude a complaint (and hence appeal) prior to any resit assessments, or by the Assessment Board at which the student’s profile will next be considered, or by the commencement of the next stage of their course.

1.6 The decision of an Award Assessment Board stands until such time as it may be changed by that Board.

1.7 The relevant Cluster Office will be advised by the Complaints and Appeals Manager (or nominee) of any appeals submitted and of the decision of the Appeal Panel/Appeal Committee on those appeals.

1. **TRANSCRIPTION ERRORS**

2.1 Students who suspect that an error has occurred in relation to the transcription of marks (e.g. the wrong mark for a module has been entered on to the transcript), should raise the matter directly and in writing with the HE Operations Office. Such enquiries will not be treated as formal appeals.

2.2 Where a student, having been informed in writing that there has been no error, wishes to appeal, s/he must make a formal appeal to the Secretary to the Complaints and Appeals Board in the normal way, after marks have been ratified by the Award Assessment Board. If the advice to the student that there was no error is given after the deadline for submission of appeals, the deadline will be extended until two weeks (10 working days) after the date of that advice.

**3. SUBMISSION OF APPEALS**

3.1 Appeals against the decision of an Award Assessment Board must be made by the student him/herself and all subsequent correspondence from the College will be addressed to the student. In line with the provisions of the Data Protection Act, the College has a policy on the confidentiality of information held about individual students, including their assessment results, such that information may not be released to any third party other than when required by law or at the written request of the student.

* 1. Appeals must be made in writing to the Complaints and Appeals Manager and not to the HE Operations Office, Chair of Award Assessment Board, etc. Students are required to complete and submit an Appeal Pro-forma.

3.3 The College wishes to assure students that they will not be disadvantaged if they make an appeal in good faith.

**4. DEADLINES**

4.1 For programmes operating within the standard structure, a specific date will be identified annually as the deadline by which appeals must be received by the Secretary to the Complaints and Appeals Board. This deadline will be 10 working days after the deadline for publication of results lists (not the date of issue of the student’s transcript), as specified in the College Academic and Administrative Timetable.

4.2 For non-standard programmes a deadline of 10 working days after the actual date of publication of the official results list (not the date of issue of the student's transcript), will be set and notified to students in writing.

* 1. Late Appeals

4.3.1 Appeals submitted after the College’s published deadlines will be out of time and will not normally be considered. However, the College recognises that sometimes events occur outside of a student’s control which prevent them from engaging with the College’ s Appeals Procedure at the relevant time.

4.3.2 If a student submits an appeal out of time they will need to demonstrate that exceptional circumstances existed that prevented them from submitting their appeal at the appropriate time. Students will need to provide corroborative evidence such as a medical certificate to support the fact that they were prevented from submitting their appeal by the College’s published deadlines.

4.3.3 The decision on whether or not to accept an appeal submitted out of time will be taken by the Complaints and Appeals Office and is the final decision of the College, against which there is no further right of appeal. Students who dispute the decision to reject an appeal for being out of time can pursue the matter with the OIA.

**5. CONSIDERATION OF APPEALS**

5.1 The Complaints and Appeals Manager (or nominee) will acknowledge all appeals within ten working days of receipt.

5.2 Initial Scrutiny of Appeals

* All appeals will be subject to an “Initial Scrutiny of Appeals” procedure. The Complaints and Appeals Manager (or nominee) will be permitted to reject any appeals which are not based on the grounds indicated in paragraph 1.1. Appeals based on the following grounds will therefore normally be rejected by this initial filtering process:
  + Questioning the academic or professional judgement of the examiners unless, as stated in paragraph 1.3, there has been evidence of a material irregularity related to assessment. If there are other elements included in the appeal, such as an allegation of bias or prejudice or, for example, disagreement with the marks attributed by peer assessment, the appeal will be processed in the normal way.
  + A student’s disappointment with a result or classification where marks have been accurately recorded, assessment regulations correctly followed and where no evidence of material irregularity exists.
  + Extenuating circumstances have already been considered by the appropriate Award Assessment Board.
  + No appropriate explanation has been provided on the appeal form/letter to account for the fact that evidence of extenuating circumstances was not submitted to the Cluster by the required deadline date. Discretion will be exercised and an appeal processed where it appears that the student has had significant personal issues which may haveimpacted onher/his ability to follow due process. In these cases the existence of these issues must be supported by independent corroborative evidence.

If an appeal covers a number of grounds the Complaints and Appeals Manager (or nominee) may exercise discretion and process the appeal in the normal way.

* A student whose appeal has not been accepted following the “Initial Scrutiny” procedure will be informed of this decision within 20 working days of the date of receipt of the appeal (or receipt of any evidence in support of the appeal that may have been requested) and will be issued with a “Completion of Procedures” letter to enable her/him to request that the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) reviews this decision. The decision of the Complaint and Appeals Manager (or nominee) in this respect will be final.

**5.3 Formal Consideration of Appeals**

* + 1. The case will be investigated by the Complaints and Appeals Manager (or nominee). This may require additional relevant information to be gathered from the student, the Cluster and/or other staff, as appropriate. A student who is asked to produce additional information in support of her/his appeal will be given a deadline for submission which, if not adhered to, will result in the appeal being considered as originally submitted.

5.3.2 Once all relevant information is available, the Complaints and Appeals Manager (or nominee) will prepare a summary of the appeal. If in the view of the Complaints and Appeals Manager (or nominee) the case is such that it should be referred to an Appeal Committee, it will be dealt with under Section 6 below.

5.3.3 In all other cases, the Complaints and Appeals Manager (or nominee) will circulate the summary of the case and recommended action to an Appeal Panel, drawn from nominations from across the Clusters and the Students’ Union. None of the Panel will be from the Cluster in which the appellant is registered. The Complaints and Appeals Manager (or nominee) will ensure an appropriate gender balance in determining Panel membership.

5.3.4 The recommended action may be to:

1. Reject the appeal since there are no grounds under the Regulations: or

* Allow the appeal to proceed and refer back to the Award Assessment Board (The Appeal Panel would make a decision regarding the appellant only; the issue of any possible implications for other students would be referred to the Cluster; or

1. Allow the appeal to proceed and refer relevant issues back to the Cluster Extenuating Circumstances Screening Meeting; or
2. Allow the appeal to proceed, inform the Award Assessment Board that its decision was outwith College Regulations and cannot stand and advise the Board of the options available under the Regulations.

5.3.5 Panel members will signify their agreement or disagreement with the Secretary’s recommendation in writing within five working days of receiving it.

* Where the recommendation to uphold and allow the Appeal to proceed is made, this course of action will be implemented providing the majority of Panel members consulted agree to it.
* Where the recommendation to reject the appeal is made, this course of action will only be implemented provided all Panel members consulted agree to it.
* If there is disagreement amongst the Panel members consulted as to whether an appeal should be rejected, the case will be considered by two other nominees drawn from across the Clusters and the Students’ Union, neither of whom will be from the Cluster in which the appellant is registered. The Complaints and Appeals Manager (or nominee) will continue to ensure an appropriate gender balance in Panel membership when determining the additional members to be consulted. The final decision on the appeal will be that indicated by the majority of Panel members.

5.3.6 If one or more Panel members (or the Complaints and Appeals Manager or nominee) feel that a case is particularly complex and that a face-to-face hearing would provide a better understanding of the issues, an Appeal Committee hearing will be held (see Section 6 below).

5.3.7 The Complaints and Appeals Manager (or nominee) will process all appeal cases as soon as is practicable. It is anticipated that all cases arising from the Summer Award Assessment Boards will normally be concluded by the last working day in August.

5.3.8 All appellants will be advised of the Appeal Panel’s decision in writing.

**6. APPEAL COMMITTEE HEARING**

6.1 An Appeal Committee will comprise at least three members drawn from nominations across the Clusters and the Students’ Union, taking into account gender balance, at least one of whom will be a student member and none of whom will be from the Cluster in which the appellant is registered.

6.2 The appellant will be informed by the Complaints and Appeals Manager (or nominee), in writing, that an Appeal Committee hearing will be held and given information about the process and requirements.

6.3 The Complaints and Appeals Manager (or nominee) will convene the hearing as soon as is practicable, and normally within 15 working days of the decision of the Appeal Panel and will ensure that all relevant information is made available to the Committee members in advance of the hearing.

6.4 The appellant will be offered the opportunity to submit a clear and concise written statement of their case to the Complaints and Appeals Manager in advance of the hearing. This will be presented to the Appeal Committee.

6.5 The appellant will have the right to appear in person before the Appeal Committee and to be accompanied by a friend who may offer support and advice (but not represent the appellant).

6.6 The Appeal Committee and the appellant will each be entitled to call witnesses and to call for the production of relevant documents. The appellant is encouraged to notify the Complaints and Appeals Manager of the identity of any witnesses s/he wishes to call in advance of the meeting. Where an appellant believes that it is essential that the Appeal Committee hear evidence from (a) specified member(s) of College staff, the appellant must advise the Complaints and Appeals Manager that he or she wishes to call those staff as witnesses. If the Complaints and Appeals Manager is notified at least five working days in advance of the hearing, he or she will arrange for the attendance of those staff. If the Complaints and Appeals Manager is not so notified, it will be the appellant’s responsibility to make necessary arrangements. The appellant will be responsible for arranging for the attendance of any witnesses he or she wishes to call who are not members of the College.

6.7 The procedure for the hearing itself will be as follows:

1. The Appeal Committee will meet in private session to consider the appellant's written statement (and any other documentation) and determine matters for clarification.
2. The appellant will then be invited to present his or her case, accompanied by any friend. The appellant may call witnesses to support his or her case. The Appeal Committee may question the appellant and her/his witnesses in order to clarify any matters. The appellant and any persons accompanying him or her will then withdraw.
3. The Appeal Committee will then interview any other witnesses as necessary to clarify the case.
4. Following the withdrawal of witnesses, the Appeal Committee may again interview the appellant (accompanied by his or her friend) if it considers that there are issues which remain unclear.
5. The Appeal Committee will meet in private session to consider the case and all the relevant evidence and come to a decision.

6.8 The Committee may adjourn at any point, if it becomes necessary to seek additional information relevant to the case.

**7. OUTCOME OF THE APPEAL COMMITTEE HEARING**

7.1 The Appeal Committee may:

1. Reject the appeal since there are no grounds under the Regulations: or
2. Allow the appeal to proceed and refer back to the Award Assessment Board; or
3. Allow the appeal to proceed and refer relevant issues back to the Cluster Extenuating Circumstances Screening Meeting; or
4. Allow the appeal to proceed, inform the Award Assessment Board that its decision was outwith College Regulations and cannot stand and advise the Board of the options available under the Regulations.

7.2 The Committee's decision on whether to allow the appeal to proceed or not, and the subsequent action to be taken, will be confirmed in writing to the appellant by the Complaints and Appeals Manager within 2 working days of the decision being taken.

**8. AUTHORITY OF THE COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS BOARD**

8.1 Decisions within the College on whether or not to allow an appeal to proceed rest solely with the Complaints and Appeals Manager (working through the **“**Initial Scrutiny” of appeals procedure, an Appeal Panel or Appeal Committee as appropriate) and such decisions are therefore final.

**9. REFERRAL BACK TO THE AWARD ASSESSMENT BOARD**

9.1 Recommendations from Appeals Panels/Committees will normally be considered by a sub-set of the Award Assessment Board agreed by the Board (comprising, as a minimum, the Chair of the Award Assessment Board and the HE Assistant Registrar. Provided the proposed decision is not outwith those agreed at the Board, an External Examiner will only be involved if s/he has stipulated on the declaration form signed at the original Board that s/he wishes to be consulted on amendeddecisions following appeals.If full agreement is not reached, or if it is believed that there should be further discussion, a full meeting of the Award Assessment Board will be held at which a member of the Appeal Panel/Appeal Committee which considered the case should be present.

9.2 The Award Assessment Board will normally reconvene, if required to reconsider the case, within 20 working days of notification of the decision of the Appeal Panel/Appeal Committee.

9.3 The Secretary to the Award Assessment Board will inform the Complaints and Appeals Manager of the decision immediately after the Board.

9.4 Where the Board has changed its decision a revised results list and transcript will be prepared by the HE Operations Office and submitted to the Complaints and Appeals Manager within 5 working days. The HE Operations Office will notify the student, in writing, of the Award Assessment Board’s decision. If a student remains unhappy with the outcome of their appeal at this stage they can request an OIA ‘Completion of Procedures’ letter within 10 working days of the revised Board decision.

9.5 If however the Award Assessment Board believes that its original decision should stand, its Secretary will prepare a full minute of the debate and rationale, including information on comparable cases where relevant, which will be forwarded to the Complaints and Appeals Manager within 5 working days. The Complaints and Appeals Manager will advise the student that the appeal is still ongoing. The minute will be forwarded to the Appeal Panel/Committee which originally considered the case to ensure that the decision is in line with College Regulations and with good practice.

9.6 If the Appeal Panel/Committee believes that the Board’s final decision, taken after specific consultation with the Award External Examiner, is out of line with the spirit of the College’s regulations, or with best practice across the sector, the Chair of the Teaching, Learning and Quality Committee will be advised. The Chair, in liaison with the Complaints and Appeals Manager, will prepare a report to Academic Board and ask Academic Board to make a decision on the action to be taken, which may involve Academic Board substituting its own decision for that of the Assessment Board. Academic Board’s decision in this respect will be final and the case will then be deemed to have exhausted the College’s appeal procedures. The Secretary to the Academic Board will notify the Secretary and Chair of the Teaching, Learning and Quality Committee and the Chair of the Assessment Board of Academic Board’s decision. The Complaints and Appeals **Manager** will communicate that decision to the student in writing and will issue a “Completion of Procedures” letter (see note at end of these regulations).

**10. ATTENDANCE AT GRADUATION CEREMONIES**

10.1 In some instances, a Graduation Ceremony may be held within the three week deadline period for the submission of appeals. In such cases, students will be permitted to attend the Ceremony, without prejudicing any appeal they may later submit, providing the appeal is submitted within the deadline.

10.2 Students whose appeals are undergoing consideration at the time of a Graduation Ceremony may also attend the Ceremony without prejudicing the outcome of the appeal process. Such students will not receive an award certificate until the appeal is concluded.

**12. REPORT TO THE ACADEMIC BOARD**

12.1 The Complaints and Appeals Manager will collate general issues arising from appeals and make recommendations to the Academic Regulations Sub-Committee and to agree a report to the Academic Board.

* 1. The Complaints and Appeals Manager may also refer cases where it believes an Assessment Board is acting perversely to the Academic Board as and when such cases arise.

12.3 Where a student complaint is upheld, in whole or in part, and in the opinion of the Complaints Office the issues complained of could have impacted on assessment, or on the decision of an Award Assessment Board, or cast doubt on the outcome of an appeal, the Complaints Office will make a report to Academic Board if the case is not resolved satisfactorily. The report will not identify the student concerned but will provide sufficient information about the case to enable Academic Board to determine the appropriate course of action. This may include referring the matter back to an Award Board or substituting the decision of a Board. However, the fact that a complaint may be upheld does not of itself mean that the decision of an Award Assessment Board will change.

**13. COMPLAINTS WHICH MAY HAVE A BEARING ON ASSESSMENT BUT FOR WHICH NO CORRESPONDING APPEAL HAS BEEN SUBMITTED**

Where a student submits a formal (written) complaint to the Complaints Office which raises issues which may have impacted on assessment, or the decision of an Award Assessment Board, the Complaints and Appeals Manager (or nominee) will advise the student that the issues being complained of will be investigated via the complaints procedure. If the complaint is upheld, the case will be referred to an Appeal Panel to determine whether the outcome might form the basis for an appeal. The appeal procedure as described in the current appeal regulations will then be followed.

**NOTE**

Referral to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)

Students will be issued with an OIA ‘Completion of Procedures’ letter when they have completed the College’s internal academic appeals procedure.

**CERTIFICATION OF AWARDS AND SUPPLEMENTARY CERTIFICATION**

**1 CERTIFICATION - CURRENT STUDENTS**

**1.1 CERTIFICATE OF AWARD**

The Certificate of Award granted under the College’s Regulations will record:

* + The name of the institution – The Cornwall College Group
  + The student’s full legal name;
  + The award;
  + The title of the programme;

The certificate will bear the signature of the CEO and the Director of Higher Education and will be prepared by the HE Operations Office.

**1.2 SUPPLEMENTARY CERTIFICATION**

1.2.1 Transcript

1.2.1.1 A Transcript will be issued to all registered students.

1.2.1.2 The Transcript will indicate:

* + The student’s full legal name;
  + The academic year of study to which the transcript refers and date of issue;
  + The elements of study, with details of level and mark/grade achieved
  + The credit points awarded.

1.2.1.3 The Transcript will incorporate a brief explanation of the College’s Credit system and may be used to negotiate admission with credit to another programme of study either within the College or at another institution.

1.2.1.4 Transcripts will be produced by the HE Operations Office

**2 CERTIFICATION – FORMER STUDENTS**

**2.1 DUPLICATE CERTIFICATE OF AWARD**

A student who has lost a certificate of award should contact the HE Operations Office for the appropriate form of application for a duplicate.

**2.2 TRANSCRIPTS (Historical)**

Official (historical) transcripts are produced by the HE Operations Office for former students and bear the official office stamp and signature of the officer who produced the document.

**3 CERTIFICATES OF ATTENDANCE**

3.1 Clusters may, at their discretion, issue a Certificate of Attendance. The wording appearing on such certificates will normally record:

* + The student’s full name;
  + The name of the programme of study;
  + The fact that s/he has attended the programme of study;
  + Dates attended/duration of programme of study;
  + The date of completion or production of the certificate.

3.2 The certificate may be signed by the Course Co-ordinator or the Director of Cluster as appropriate.

3.3 **Under no circumstances** may the certificate imply that the student has gained a named award; hence the word “Certificate”, if used, may not appear alone and must always be followed by “of Attendance”

**EXCLUSION OF A STUDENT ON THE GROUNDS OF UNSATISFACTORY PROGRESS (EITHER ACADEMIC OR IN TERMS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT)**

A student who is considered by the Chair of an Award Assessment Board, in consultation with the Course Co-ordinator, to be making unsatisfactory progress (either academic or in terms of professional development) or whose conduct is unethical or unprofessional or dangerous may be required to withdraw from a programme of study.

This action may only be taken when the Course Co-ordinator can demonstrate (with, for example, notes from tutorial sessions or copies of e-mails/letters sent to the student in question) that appropriate steps have taken to resolve any perceived lack of engagement with the programme or misconduct.

A written formal warning will be issued at the time of the incident by the HE Assistant Registrar (or nominee) after consultation with the Course Co-ordinator indicating the grounds for the warning. It will also inform the student that if the problem is not resolved the Award Assessment Board may require the student to withdraw.

**PAYMENT OF FEES AND WITHHOLDING OF STUDENT AWARDS DUE TO OUTSTANDING FEES**

1. Students are required to ensure that the relevant fees for their programme of study are paid by Student Finance England/Wales/Northern Ireland or the Student Awards Agency for Scotland, other sponsor or by themselves by the due date(s) in each stage of their programme of study. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all relevant application and renewal forms are submitted to the Student Loans Company, as appropriate, by the required date and at the required frequency. Students who are sponsored will be required to provide a letter confirming financial support.
2. Students must settle all College accounts presented to them promptly. The procedure for student debtors and deregistration will be invoked for those students who do not settle outstanding tuition fee debts within the designated timeframe
3. For students with a debt of £100 or less, or who become debtors after the deregistration process, their results will appear on the results list. However, students will be notified in writing that their award documents will not be available to them, nor requested from any external body, nor will they receive transcripts or letters of confirmation of awards for third parties until the debt is cleared in full. Students who have a debt of £100 or less will, however, be permitted to attend their awards ceremony.

4. Continuing students must clear any debt before being permitted to re-enrol for a subsequent stage of their programme of study.

NOTE: If a sponsor subsequently fails to pay or withdraws from a sponsorship agreement, the student will be personally liable for the fee debt.

**SUBJECT ASSESSMENT PANELS AND AWARD ASSESSMENT BOARDS**

**Introduction**

The College operates a two tier system of Subject Assessment Panels feeding into an Award Assessment Board. Subject Assessment Panels (with Subject External Examiners in attendance) are set up to confirm or modify module marks, to review the standard of assessment in the 'subject' and to decide on recommendations on the form of referral for individual modules. The confirmed marks and recommendations are then considered by the Award Assessment Board (with one of the Subject External Examiners designated as the Award External Examiner in attendance) which makes decisions on the final results for a particular award or group of awards.

For some programmes this has in practice normally meant, one 'Panel' for a particular award feeding into an Award Assessment Board and, for logistical reasons, it has been appropriate for the two meetings to be subsumed essentially into one. The first half of the meeting has operated in 'Panel' mode, focusing on the standard of assessment in the overall subject/modules, and the second half as a 'Board', focusing on the overall award and decisions on final results.

**OPERATIONAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBJECT ASSESSMENT PANELS**

**1 Constitution**

The membership of the Panel will be: Chair (normally the subject leader or equivalent), Module Leaders, the Subject External Examiner(s), and the HE Assistant Registrar or nominee acting as Secretary to the Panel (non-voting member). It is vital for all Module Leaders to be present at the Panel. If, due to unforeseen circumstances a Module Leader is prevented from attending a Panel, he/she MUST ensure the Panel is provided with written comments on the marks and the standard of assessment in the module(s).

**1.1 Absence of a Module Leader from a Panel**

It is expected that arrangements will have been made to ensure that the standards within a module and the range of marking are agreed between the Module Leader and the Subject External Examiner BEFORE the Panel meeting. Should it be impossible for a Module Leader to attend a Panel, s/he should notify the Chair of the Panel in advance and nominate a suitable alternate member with appropriate background and knowledge to act in her/his place. Alternatively, s/he may provide comments on module delivery and assessment and on the performance of students in advance of the meeting, or s/he may be deemed to be present and in attendance through a video link or through teleconferencing, provided it is possible to ensure that s/he is as well informed as other members and has access to all necessary documents.

If a Subject External Examiner raises issues about the standard of a module or the marks awarded, and the Module Leader is absent and is not available through a video link or teleconferencing, the marks for the module cannot be finalised until there is the opportunity for discussion between the Module Leader and the External Examiner.

This should not arise if arrangements have been made to agree standards and range of marking in advance of the Panel meeting.

**1.2 Absence of the Chair of a Subject Assessment Panel**

Should it be impossible for the Chair of a Subject Assessment Panel to attend a Panel meeting, s/he should notify the Curriculum Lead. An alternative Chair may be appointed from among staff with experience of chairing Panels.

**1.3 Absence of a Subject External Examiner**

In the unavoidable absence of a Subject External Examiner, the Panel may proceed provided the External Examiner has provided comments on the standard of all modules for which s/he has responsibility, and any queries regarding marks have been resolved in advance with the Module Leader. If it is clear at an earlier stage in the academic year that a Subject External Examiner will not be able to fulfil all the duties required of her/him, it may be appropriate for an emergency replacement External Examiner to be appointed for that year. If the Subject External Examiner is unable at the last minute to attend a Panel, s/he may be deemed to be present and in attendance through a video/telephone link provided it is possible to ensure that s/he is as well informed as other members and has access to all necessary documents. If the above conditions are not met, the Subject Assessment Panel must be postponed. This may also result in the postponement of the Award Assessment Board.

**2 Areas of Responsibility of the Panel**

The Subject Assessment Panel will consider the results of all modules in the subject irrespective of the programme or award on which the students are registered. The areas of responsibility of the Panel are as follows:

a) to review the standard of assessment in the subject, and ensure the maintenance of appropriate academic standards at subject level in modules and across centres, as appropriate, including discussion of the data provided on marks distribution for modules,

b) to confirm or modify module marks (marks once confirmed by a Panel may not subsequently be altered by an Award Assessment Board unless an error in transcription or an omission is discovered),

c) to discuss any problems with assessment (NOT individual students),

d) to make recommendations on the form of referral for individual modules which are to be forwarded to the Award Assessment Board, through the Chair of the Panel (or nominee),

e) to receive information from the Panels/Committees of Investigation on proven examination and assessment offences; these must be fully recorded in the notes of the Panel,

f) to receive the report from the Subject External Examiner(s) for the previous academic year, together with any written response/action plan, in order to ensure that all issues raised have been addressed. (Issues raised in the annual reports of the Subject External Examiner(s) will be discussed by the staff involved in the Subject Assessment Panel. Discussion may take place at a special meeting of the Subject Assessment Panel or an alternative forum if more appropriate. A written response will then be agreed. If appropriate, the Chair of the Award Assessment Board (or the Curriculum Lead) could co-ordinate the responses from Panels to the External Examiner(s)).

The Panel does not receive details of extenuating circumstances relating to individual students and does not consider the overall performance of individual students.

**3 Before the Meeting of the Panel**

It is essential that marks have been verified by Module Leaders by the time the Panel sits, to ensure that:

a) marks are correct,

b) where marks are missing for a particular candidate, this is the correct position, and

c) Subject External Examiners must notify the SAP Chair of any disagreement about marks in advance of the Subject Assessment Panel.

Where academic staff are assessing the work of academic colleagues within the same Cluster, that work should always be referred to an external examiner as part of the requisite sample.

**4 Role of the Chair of the Subject Assessment Panel**

It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Subject Assessment Panel to conduct the meeting of the Panel in a manner which ensures that module marks are properly confirmed. The Panel Chair should be fully aware of the module assessment regulations for each module to be considered by the Panel.

The Chair of the Panel (or nominee) is the representative of the Panel at the Award Assessment Board and must ensure that the proceedings and any recommendations of the Panel are properly represented at the Board.

**5 Standard of Assessment in the Subject**

A review of the standard of assessment in the subject, and comparability of standards across modules, is the most important task of the Panel and all discussions must be formally minuted. The maintenance of standards and quality is the central role of the Subject External Examiner, whose views will be crucial in this debate. The Subject External Examiner will have been required to sample work from all modules, in advance of the meeting in order to comment on the overall standard.

The Panel should ensure that the assessments have been conducted in accordance with the regulations for the modules.

To aid the debate on standards Panels should be provided with the statistical information normally available from the student record system (e.g. means and standard deviations). It would be helpful for the Panel to discuss the range for the means and standard deviations which would normally be expected. The agreed ranges are merely tools to encourage discussion of standards and are not intended to cause automatic normalisation of marks**.** Naturally, these are only used as a guide, and most useful where the numbers of students on a module are of a reasonable size. The HE Assistant Registrar should also normally have available the module marks for the previous year in case the results should need to be compared.

It is important that Panels consider and specifically comment upon the spread of marks and the pass rates for ALL modules in the light of the statistical data provided. When considering the statistics for each module, all modules with a pass rate <85% at level 0, <90% at level 4 and <95% in levels 5 and above should be of particular concern and should include commentary to take forward to the module action plan to raise standards for the future (where class sizes are less than 30 the Panel should use its discretion). Individual Panels may wish to consider pass rates even where they are above these thresholds.

This discussion will provide the basis for any debate on the need for the reference to the Programme Committee of issues of underlying concern. All discussions MUST be carefully noted by the Secretary of the Panel.

Disability has been included as an item on the standard agenda. The Panel will be expected to report and discuss any inclusive/alternative assessments or reasonable adjustments made to assessments and a formal statement will be required from the Panel, to be included in the notes of the meeting, confirming that these appropriately tested the learning outcomes.

**6 Confirmation of Marks**

Module marks may be modified and must be confirmed at the Panel. Discussion should focus on the span of overall marks in a particular module and not on individuals. In the modular system Panels are responsible for maintaining standards at the module level and the overall profiles of results for individual candidates are not available to Panels. The regulations for passing individual Modules must be clearly reported at the outset.

Overall module marks will be automatically rounded up or down to two decimal places by the computer system.

In a modular system it is important that module examiners use the full range of marks available (0 – 100%).

**7 Problems Affecting the Assessment of all Students in a Module**

Any problems affecting the assessment of all students in a module (for example power failure during an examination) should be reported to the Panel before marks in that module are considered. It would be good practice for the Module Leader to have a clear remedy for the problem formulated ahead of the meeting - if possible one which has been discussed with the Subject External Examiner responsible for the module and the Chair of the Panel.

**8 Moderation of Marks**

It is the role of the Subject External Examiner to be able, where necessary, to alter the characteristics of the marks distribution and, where there were inconsistencies of marking, it would be appropriate for marks to be amended where a representative sample of scripts had been appropriately reviewed. For example, the marks of one member of staff may seem to be out of line with those of other staff, or the distribution of marks for a particular module may appear skewed, perhaps with a very large proportion of marks above 55 or 60%.

The College currently does not have a policy for the norm-referencing or scaling of marks. Should the marks for a particular module need to be adjusted an appropriate fair and just method will need to be devised with the full agreement of the Subject External Examiner (where appropriate). It is good practice that such adjustments are only made on the basis of a well-constructed sample of work.

Subject External Examiners must notify the SAP Chair of any disagreement about marks in advance of the Subject Assessment Panel. If a disagreement with the marks could not be resolved with the Module Leader, the SAP Chair would convene a meeting between the academic staff who marked the work and the relevant Subject External Examiner. The purpose of the meeting would be to determine and resolve the disagreement, taking into account the assessment criteria for the module. If the meeting could not resolve the dispute, the assessment should be reviewed by another Subject External Examiner(s) from the group appointed to the subject area. It may be necessary as a result to defer consideration of the results of the student(s) involved. If there is only one Subject External Examiner for the subject area, the Cluster will be expected to identify another suitable person to act as a second reviewer for the work, and should seek the advice of the HE Operations Office on the appropriateness of this nomination.

**9 Examination and Assessment Offences**

Any offences should have been dealt with, following the procedure outlined in the Regulatory Document “Examination and Assessment Offences” prior to the meeting of the Panel. The Subject External Examiner does not have a specific role in relation to offences since these are not directly related to the moderation of work, although it is recognised that an undiscovered offence may be identified during the process of moderation.

The HE Assistant Registrar (or nominee) will ensure that all recommendations from Assessment/Examination Offences Panels or Committees of Investigation are notified to relevant Subject Assessment Panels. A Subject Assessment Panel, for quality assurance purposes, must ensure all proven cases are recorded fully in the minutes of the Subject Assessment Panel and reported to the relevant Award Assessment Board.

Should there have been insufficient time for an alleged case to be dealt with following the approved procedures the appropriate position would be to defer consideration of the mark until this has been done.

**10 Extenuating Circumstances**

Extenuating circumstances can **only** be discussed at the Award Assessment Board and are **not** within the remit of the Panel. Therefore, marks for a particular student should not be adjusted at the Panel on the basis of extenuating circumstances.

It has been agreed for modules with multiple tests, or laboratory practicals, that where one of the series of tests or labs is missed for valid extenuating circumstances then the module leader may, where it is deemed academically appropriate, calculate the marks by, for example, averaging across those tests/labs completed. The principle that averaging may be permitted for a particular module should be agreed with the Subject External Examiner in advance and could only be allowed provided the learning outcomes for the module would be satisfactorily completed. If each test/lab assessed different learning outcomes then averaging across modules could not be permitted. Where averaging has been agreed, this must be reported to the Award Assessment Board.

**11 Form of Referral**

The Panel is required to make recommendations on the form of referral for individual modules to the Award Assessment Board(s), through the Chair of the Panel (or nominee).

**12 Involvement of Subject External Examiners with Work which is to be Reassessed**

The Subject External Examiner(s) would be expected to agree the form and content of referred examination papers and the form of referred coursework. For referred examination papers this should normally be undertaken at the same time as approval was sought for the main examination papers. The form of referred coursework may be dealt with at the Panel or by correspondence. The Subject External Examiner(s) has the right to sample work and/or see marking schemes; alternatively, s/he may express satisfaction with standards in the summer and on that basis decide that s/he does not wish to see referred work nor be involved in the Panel/Board meeting. In such case, the Subject External Examiner(s) should be asked to sign the appropriate statement on the declaration form to that effect.

**13 Representation on the Award Assessment Board(s)**

The Chair of each contributing Panel is a member of the relevant Award Assessment Board(s) which are charged with the responsibility for making decisions on progression and awards. Should the Chair be unable to represent the Panel at an Award Assessment Board, the Panel **must** decide on an alternative representative from among their membership. This is important in order to ensure, *inter alia,* that Award Assessment Boards are quorate.

**14 Communication between Subject External Examiners and Award External Examiner**

Where it is logistically possible, HE Assistant Registrars/Chairs of Award Assessment Boards should make arrangements for a meeting between relevant Subject External Examiners and the Award External Examiner in order that any issues could be aired and discussed prior to the meeting of the Award Assessment Board. Where this was not possible, HE Assistant Registrars should ensure that the Cluster has in place an appropriate means of facilitating communication between examiners responsible for the same group of awards, for example, the exchange of email addresses.

**15 Minutes of Panels**

Minutes of the proceedings must be produced as soon as possible following the Panel meeting, and a copy forwarded to the Chair of the Panel, the Subject External Examiner and any other member of the Panel who is attending an Award Assessment Board on behalf of the Chair.

For the cases where modules may contribute to more than one Award Assessment Board, perhaps in different Clusters, copies of the notes or minutes should also be distributed, in confidence, to other Cluster Offices, as appropriate, in time for the meeting(s) of the relevant Award Assessment Board(s).

**16 Signatures of Subject External Examiners**

The Secretary of the Panel will be responsible for ensuring that the Subject External Examiner(s) sign the appropriate Declaration Form.

**SUBJECT ASSESSMENT PANEL**

**STANDARD AGENDA**

1. **Membership** 
   1. To welcome members.
   2. To receive apologies.
   3. To receive any declarations of interest.
2. **Confidentiality**

To note the confidentiality of the proceedings.

1. **Minutes of Previous Panel Meeting** 
   1. To receive the Minutes of the Subject Assessment Panel meeting held in the previous academic year.
   2. To consider matters arising from the Minutes.
   3. To receive the written annual reports for the previous academic year of the Subject External Examiners and Award External Examiners (i.e. those primarily linked to the Panel) together with any formal response and to consider any matters arising.
2. **Subject Assessment Panel Regulations** 
   1. To receive a statement of the purpose of the Panel:
      1. to review the standard of assessment in the subject, and ensure the maintenance of appropriate academic standards in modules,
      2. to confirm or modify module marks (NB once the marks have been confirmed by the Panel they may not be subsequently altered by an Award Assessment Board unless an error in transcription or an omission is discovered),
      3. to decide on recommendations which are to be forwarded to the Award Assessment Board through the Chair of the Panel on the form of referral for individual modules,
      4. NOTE: the Panel will NOT consider details of extenuating circumstances relating to individual students and does NOT consider the overall performance of individual students,
   2. To note the regulations for passing modules.
3. **Standards of Assessment and Marks in each Module** 
   1. To review the standards of assessment in the module by consideration of the following:

* the mechanisms used to ensure academic standards,
* when considering the statistics for each module, all modules with a pass rate <85% at level 0, <90% at level 4 and <95% in levels 5 and above, should include commentary within the module action plan to raise standards for the future (where class sizes are less than 30 the panel should use its discretion),
  1. To report and discuss any problems affecting the assessment of all students in the module.
  2. Disability – to report and discuss any inclusive/alternative assessments or reasonable adjustments made to assessments. (Formal statement required in the notes of the meeting to confirm that these appropriately tested the learning outcomes).
  3. Professional Body/Subject Association Issues – to discuss developments in relation to assessment – in particular those relating to disability.
  4. To receive the module marks.
  5. To receive a report on any examination and assessment offences.
  6. To confirm the module marks.

1. **Referral**

To agree recommendations to the Award Assessment Board on the form of the referral, the date for submission of referred work and the involvement of the External Examiner in referred work.

1. **Subject External Examiner(s) Matters** 
   1. To receive the Subject External Examiner(s) Report(s) for the current academic year.
   2. To confirm the Subject External Examiner’s agreement or otherwise that the assessment strategy is appropriately enacted in the questions set.
   3. To confirm whether there are any matters that require discussion with the Award External Examiner prior to the Award Assessment Board.
   4. To obtain signature(s) of the Subject External Examiner(s) on the declaration form.
   5. To receive a report on the status of the Subject External Examiner(s) appointment and, where appropriate (a year before that appointment was due to come to an end), steps that had been taken to identify a replacement.
   6. To record thanks to External Examiner(s), particularly if their period of office is ending.
2. **Board Representation**

To agree Panel representatives for Award Assessment Boards.

1. **Date of the next meeting of the Subject Assessment Panel**
2. **Any Other Business**

**The following documents should be available at the meeting for reference purposes:**

* **The regulatory document entitled "Operational Instructions for Subject Assessment Panels**
* **Regulations for passing specific modules**
* **Minutes/Notes of Subject Assessment Panel meeting held in the previous academic year**
* **Previous Subject External Examiner Report and Responses**

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**SUBJECT EXTERNAL EXAMINER’S DECLARATION**

**CLUSTER:**

**SUBJECT ASSESSMENT PANEL:**

**DATE OF MEETING:**

**This is to confirm that:**

* I agree with the outcomes of the Panel in relation to the standard of assessment in the subject.
* I have/have not identified any matters that require discussion with the Award External Examiner
* I have approved the form and content of referred examination papers and the form of referred coursework.
* **EITHER**

Since I have deemed standards to be appropriate, I do not require being involved in examining any referred work

**OR**

I wish to see samples of referred work (sampling in line with that agreed for the original assessments).

**(Please delete/amend as appropriate)**

**NAME OF SUBJECT EXTERNAL EXAMINER:**

**SIGNATURE:**

**OPERATIONAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR AWARD ASSESSMENT BOARDS**

**1 Constitution**

The membership of the Award Assessment Board will be as follows: Chair (normally the appropriate Director of Cluster), the Chair of each contributing Subject Assessment Panel or nominee, the Course Co-ordinator(s) or equivalent, the Award External Examiner(s), the HE Assistant Registrar (or Nominee) as secretary to the Board (non-voting members).

Where the panel and board is subsumed into one meeting the Subject External Examiners must be present for the Panel Business but may not participate in the Award Assessment Board discussions.

The membership of the Award Assessment Board may be extended to include Subject External Examiners and other Module Leaders where this is a requirement for professional accreditation. In such cases the membership of the Award Assessment Board must be clearly specified in the current Award definitive document.

The Award External Examiner must be present at the Board. If an Award External Examiner is unable to attend an Assessment Board, a substitute appointment will be made by the relevant Director of Cluster after appropriate consultation from amongst the other Subject or Award External Examiners.

**1.1 Absence of the Chair of an Award Assessment Board**

In the unavoidable absence of the Chair of an Award Assessment Board, the Director of Cluster should nominate another appropriate senior staff member with experience of an Award Assessment Board, who is also fully conversant with the College and programme regulations, to take the Chair.

**1.2 Absence of an Award External Examiner**

In the unavoidable absence of an Award External Examiner, the Award Assessment Board may proceed provided an alternative Award External can be appointed from within the group of Subject/Award External Examiners.

The Award External Examiner may be deemed to be present and in attendance through a video/telephone link provided it is possible to ensure that s/he is as well informed as other members, has access to all necessary documents.

**2 Responsibilities of the Board**

The responsibilities of the Award Assessment Board are as follows:

a) To make decisions on progression (if appropriate) and awards for all students registered for the named award(s) for which the Board is responsible.

b) To ensure that decisions are arrived at fairly and democratically and in accordance with the appropriate College Academic Assessment Regulations (and any approved modifications for the particular award stated in the definitive document), that justice is done to the individual student.

c) To ensure that threshold academic standards of student performance are being maintained at award level, on the basis of the reports received from each of the constituent Subject Assessment Panel chairs on the standard of assessment in subjects/modules, and are comparable with similar awards in other UK institutions, in the expert opinion of the Award External Examiner.

d) To ensure that in making decisions all corroborated extenuating circumstances relating to individual students have been fully taken into account before a decision is reached.

e) To report and discuss, where appropriate, any examination or assessment offences and take appropriate action. The Award Board will accept the recommended penalty. Should further information come to light which causes the Board to doubt the proposed decision/ penalty the case should be referred back to the relevant Panel/Committee of Investigation for reconsideration.

f) The Board will also formally receive the Award External Examiner’s report for the previous academic year, together with any written response/action plan, in order to ensure that all issues raised have been discussed.

**3 Extenuating Circumstances**

It is the responsibility of the Award Assessment Board to take into account any fully documented extenuating circumstances evidence relating to the student.

It is recommended that HE Assistant Registrars should prepare a summary of all the facts which have been submitted on Extenuating Circumstances Forms (in typed format), including the name of the student, the dates during which the student's performance was affected and the tests/examinations/ presentations missed and any late coursework submitted.

All extenuating circumstances will have been reviewed prior to the meetings of the Subject Assessment Panels and the Award Assessment Board to determine whether the circumstances are validated within the definitions established in the Extenuating Circumstances policy.

**4 Examination or Assessment Offences**

Proven cases will have been notified to the Subject Assessment Panel and formally recorded in the minutes of the Panel and on the student records system. The Award Assessment Board will accept the penalty recommended by the Panel/Committee of Investigation. Should further information come to light which causes the Board to doubt the proposed decision/penalty, the case should be referred back to the relevant Panel/Committee of Investigation for reconsideration.

Should multiple offences not come to light until the Board meeting, for example where assessment offences have been considered by different Clusters, the Board would need to reconsider the penalties to be applied to a student.

Exceptionally an alleged offence may come to light at or immediately after the meeting of the Subject Assessment Panel/Award Assessment Board. Such allegations must be investigated as soon as practicable thereafter and in the meantime the decision on the student must be deferred.

Where a student, whose alleged assessment offence was proven, has submitted valid extenuating circumstances covering the module in question, the Award Assessment Board may, where it considers the severity of the circumstances could have affected the student’s judgement, re-open discussion concerning the penalty. Clusters would need to ensure that details of the nature of the offence were available for the Board and that the case had been discussed with the Award External Examiner.

A student found guilty of an assessment offence, the penalty for which is such as to make them ineligible for the award on which they are registered (or to result in their exclusion from the College under the student Disciplinary Procedure) is nonetheless eligible for any intermediate award for which s/he has legitimately met the academic requirements, and any such award must therefore be conferred by the Award Assessment Board.

**5 Before the Meeting of the Board**

Students’ academic profiles, together with the minutes of Award Assessment Boards which previously considered the students’ previous results, should be available for the Chair of the Award Assessment Board, the Course Co-ordinator (or equivalent) and the HE Assistant Registrar to peruse before the Board meeting, in that:

a) overall student performance can be reviewed in the light of valid extenuating circumstances,

b) any potentially difficult/complex issues and examination and assessment offences can be identified and discussed with the Award External Examiner (if appropriate and necessary).

HE Assistant Registrar must be informed of any difficult cases.

**6 Role of the Chair of the Award Assessment Board**

It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Award Assessment Board to:

• conduct the meeting of the Board in a manner which ensures that decisions on progression or awards for individual students are arrived at fairly and in accordance with the College Assessment Regulations (and any approved modifications for the particular award).

• ensure that decisions are clear and that they have been agreed by the Board in a democratic manner.

• ensure that all extenuating circumstances relating to individual students have been fully taken into account before a decision is reached on progression or an award.

• where possible, make arrangements for meetings between relevant Subject External Examiner(s) and the Award External Examiner in order to ensure that any matters could be aired and discussed prior to the meeting of the Award Assessment Board.

• ensure that there is a formal written response to all issues raised by the Award External Examiner in her/his annual report, whether these are programme specific or related to matters of a wider nature.

**7 The Meeting**

**7.1 At the beginning of the meeting**

The Chair should check the membership of the Board and ensure that the meeting is quorate (a quorum is one-third of the specified membership) and should subsequently ensure that the meeting remains quorate.

The Chair should also check that documents or information indicated on the standard agenda, together with relevant minutes of previous Board meetings, are available to the Board. The Board should formally receive the written annual report for the previous academic year of the Subject External Examiners (ie those primarily linked to the Board) and the Award External Examiner(s) together with any formal response, and consider any matters arising.

The Board must agree guidelines for the treatment of marks/grades obtained at other institutions (e.g. exchange programmes).

The Board should receive reports on standards of assessment in modules from the Chairs (or nominees) of Subject Assessment Panels.

**7.2 Criteria for progression and Awards**

The Award Assessment Board may not alter the marks agreed at a Subject Assessment Panel except in exceptional circumstances (i.e. where there has been an error in transcription of the marks or an omission).

**7.3 Progression and Award**

The criteria for progression or awards, and the rules for compensation and reassessment are specified in the Academic Assessment Regulations.

**7.4 Decisions**

The decisions reached for individual students must be very clearly recorded. All decisions relating to students with particular extenuating circumstances, and any discussion of cases of examination and assessment offences, together with other instances where a Board has used its discretion, should be very carefully minuted.

**7.5 Consideration of Extenuating Circumstances**

Decisions regarding the validity of the extenuating circumstances claim may not be overturned by a Board.

Students with extenuating circumstances who have failed to achieve a pass in a module or modules should normally be required to undertake assessment(s) as a ‘same’ attempt.

Two principles should guide an Award Assessment Board in considering extenuating circumstances:

a) equity, ensuring that all students are given equal consideration

b) confidentiality, ensuring that personal information is disseminated only as widely as is strictly necessary for the Board to be confident with its decision

Equity can only be achieved by all students being given an equal opportunity for their case to be heard and by the Board being consistent in its treatment of individual students. In practice this means that 'special pleading' on behalf of a student with whom a member of the Board happens to be familiar must not be permitted.

Decisions on the number of credits of same attempt referrals are made on an individual basis. Students could be permitted more than the standard credit limit of same attempt referrals if this were felt by the Board to be achievable (for students with extensive problems this would usually be following fitness to study process). The reasons for the decisions for all students with extenuating circumstances should be carefully minuted in order that this information was available for any subsequent appeal.

If a student’s extenuating circumstances have prevented the completion of an award during the normal period of registration, or have prevented her/him from making academic progress in the previous session, an Award Assessment Board has the option of requiring the student to interrupt studies or withdraw from the programme (subject to the fitness to study process having been followed).

It is also possible for an Award Assessment Board to require a student who has developed a health condition or other problem which prevents her/him from meeting the learning outcomes of her/his programme to be granted the appropriate exit or aegrotat award. (This is also subject to the fitness to study process where possible).

**7.6 ‘Chair’s Action’ with respect to Awards**

An Award Assessment Board is operating under delegated authority from Academic Board. The Award Board chair cannot agree standards and therefore the phrase ‘Chair’s Action’ should not be used. The action which can be taken by Chairs between meetings of the Award Assessment Board should be clarified. The Summer Board should if possible make decisions for students with outstanding assessments that if ‘X’ is achieved then ‘Y’ degree/award will be conferred; such decisions should be clearly recorded in the minutes. Results for such students can then be released if they satisfy the requirements. If ‘X’ is not achieved there would have to be a meeting of the Award Assessment Board, with a subset of the membership as agreed by the Summer Board.

**7.7 At the end of the Meeting**

The date of the Referred Assessment Board and the composition of that Board should be agreed. The Award External Examiner will be asked to indicate how much involvement s/he wishes to have with amended decisions following appeals and in the referral process.

The Award External Examiner may wish formally to endorse the amended/referred results or alternatively, s/he may sign a statement authorising decisions to be made in her/his absence.

The HE Assistant Registrar must ensure that the appropriate declaration form (see attached) is signed by the Award External Examiner.

**8 Referred Award Assessment Board**

The Referred Board should confirm marks, and make decisions on progression/awards.

**AWARD ASSESSMENT BOARD**

**STANDARD AGENDA**

1. **Membership** 
   1. To note the membership of the Board and to welcome members.
   2. To receive apologies.
   3. To receive any declarations of interest.
2. **Confidentiality**

To note the confidentiality of all the proceedings of the Board

1. **Minutes of the Board meetings held in the previous academic year** 
   1. To receive the minutes of the previous Award Assessment Board.
   2. To receive the minutes of the Referred Award Assessment Board.
   3. To consider any matters arising from the minutes.
   4. To receive the written annual reports for the previous academic year of the Award External Examiner(s) together with any formal response and to consider any matters arising.
2. **Decisions made on progression and awards following the last meeting of the Board**

To receive a report on any decisions made on progression and awards as a result of amended/deferred results and the outcomes of appeals.

1. **Award Assessment Board Regulations** 
   1. To receive a statement of the purpose of the Board:
      1. To make decisions on progression and awards for all students registered for the Named Award(s) for which the Board is responsible.
      2. To ensure that decisions are arrived at fairly and democratically and in accordance with the College Assessment Regulations (and any approved modifications for the particular award) and that justice is done to the individual student.
      3. **To ensure that threshold academic standards of student performance are being maintained at award level, on the basis of the reports received from each of the constituent Subject Assessment Panel chairs on the standard of assessment in subjects/modules, and are comparable with similar awards in other UK institutions, in the expert opinion of the Award External Examiner.**
      4. To ensure that in making decisions all corroborated extenuating circumstances relating to individual students have been taken fully into account before a decision is reached.
      5. To report and discuss, where appropriate, any examination or assessment offences.
   2. To receive an outline of the Assessment Regulations for Awards considered, noting any modules which are essential for an award or progression or are deemed non-compensatable and cannot be compensated.
   3. To agree, in accordance with the Operational Instructions for Award Assessment Boards, guidelines for the treatment of marks/grades obtained at other institutions (e.g. exchange programmes).
2. **Subject Assessment Panel Reports** 
   1. To receive reports from Subject Assessment Panel chairs on the standard of assessment in subjects/modules.
   2. To report any issues raised by Subject External Examiner(s) and discussed with Award External Examiner prior to Board.
3. **Results** 
   1. To receive the students’ results and consider individual student’s performance.
   2. To consider valid extenuating circumstances in relation to individual student results.
   3. To report and discuss, where appropriate, any examination or assessment offences.
   4. To agree decisions on individual student progression and award.
4. **Referral** 
   1. To note the form of referral.
   2. To agree the date of the Referred Assessment Board and its composition.
5. **Prizes and Awards**
6. **Award External Examiner Matters** 
   1. To receive the Award External Examiner's Report.
   2. To obtain the signature of the Award External Examiner on the declaration form.
   3. To receive a report on the status of the Award External. Examiner’s appointment and, where appropriate (a year before that appointment was due to come to an end), steps that had been taken to identify a replacement.
   4. To record thanks to the Award External Examiner (particularly where their term of office is ending).
7. **Confidentiality**

To remind the Board of the confidentiality of the proceedings and the procedures governing publication of results.

1. **Date of next meeting of the full Award Assessment Board**

1. **Any Other Business**

**The following documents should be available at the meeting for reference purposes:-**

* **The College “Academic Regulations, Notes for Guidance and Procedures for Taught Programmes”**
* **Definitive programme document(s)**
* **Regulations for passing specific modules**
* **Rank order list of students, based on the aggregate percentage mark (for final stage boards)**
* **Summary list of personal circumstances relating to students to be considered by the Board**
* **Minutes from relevant Subject Panel meetings**
* **Minutes from Boards held in the previous academic year**
* **Operational instructions for Award Assessment Boards**

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**AWARD EXTERNAL EXAMINER’S DECLARATION**

**CLUSTER:**

**AWARD ASSESSMENT BOARD:**

**DATE OF MEETING:**

**This is to confirm that I agree:**

* **that the responsibilities of the Award Assessment Board, as set out in the Operational Instructions, have been fulfilled**
* with the decisions reached by the Award Assessment Board
* **that threshold academic standards of student performance are being maintained at award level and are comparable with similar awards in other UK institutions with which I am familiar**.

**AND**

**EITHER**

I do not wish to be consulted on amended decisions following appeals or to attend the Referred Award Assessment Board and hereby authorise decisions to be made in my absence, subject to my confirmation of any which are out with those agreed today.

**OR**

I wish to be consulted on all proposed amended decisions following appeals and to be present at the Referred Award Assessment Board.

***(Please delete the option which does not apply/amend as necessary)***

**NAME OF AWARD EXTERNAL EXAMINER:**

**SIGNATURE:**

**ANONYMOUS MARKING OF EXAMINATION SCRIPTS - INFORMATION FOR ACADEMIC STAFF**

1. **What is required of students?** 
   1. Students are required to write their student reference number on the examination answer folder and all supplementary answer books. As a safety mechanism, they will also write their names on the top right hand corner of the answer folder, which will be folded and stuck down at the end of the examination. If students are required to answer on the examination paper they will need to write their registration number on the front of the examination paper and enclose it in a folder.
2. **Procedural Principles for Academic Staff** 
   1. The purpose of anonymous marking is to remove any unconscious bias in the marking process and the names of students should not therefore be revealed until the end of that process. As a result the packets of examination scripts will contain a list of the registration numbers of the students who undertook the examination, not a list of the names. The anonymity is not carried through to the Subject Assessment Panel and Award Assessment Board meetings.
   2. As far as possible, the scripts of students who have had special examination arrangements (related to disability, for example) and who have sat their examination in a separate location should not be able to be identified (e.g. by being batched separately). It has been agreed that the scripts from separate locations should be collated into the main batch of scripts before being delivered to or collected by staff.
   3. If it is intended that scripts will be split between markers, the number of markers should be indicated on the stationery form that accompanies the examination paper. This will enable the Examinations Office staff to distribute the appropriate number of answer folders to each marker.
   4. Any double-marking should also be anonymous.
   5. There are two methods of marks entry which may be used by Clusters:

(a) The entry of marks by registration number, allowing the anonymity of students to be completely preserved. The sealed-down flaps of examination scripts would be opened probably after the marks entry to check mark sheets and ensure that the correct mark had been recorded against the students’ names.

(b) The entry of marks by name, which reduces the time constraints experienced in (a) above and the possibility of errors, yet achieves the main purpose of anonymous marking. Module Leaders would compile the marks and would open the sealed down flaps of examination scripts to ensure that the correct mark was recorded on the mark sheet.

* 1. It is expected that the latter method would be the one chosen by the majority of Clusters.

2.7 Module Leaders already have the responsibility for confirming the accuracy or otherwise of module marks and it is equally as important that marks are checked where anonymous marking has been used. This means that Module Leaders must enter marks or must ensure that marks are checked prior to the Subject Panel.

**CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

The College's Regulations (and the regulations of external bodies, where appropriate) require External Examiners to be involved with all examinations and other forms of assessment which contribute to the students' final awards. External Examiners must therefore be involved in assessments of pre-final stages of programmes if there is a carry forward mark to the final award.

Normally one External Examiner will be appointed for each subject area. The range of modules for which s/he is to be responsible should not normally exceed 360 credits. If it is proposed that the number of credits exceed 360 (up to a maximum of 480 credits) the nomination should be accompanied by a rationale, which should include details of the size of the cohort/s concerned, and confirmation from the nominee that s/he is confident of being able to cover the workload.

The number of External Examiners will vary from programme of study to programme of study.

External Examiners are normally appointed for a period of four academic years, with appointments normally running from 1 November to 31 October. An appointment may be extended in exceptional circumstances, for example, where a programme is being withdrawn.

**Process of appointment**

1. The Course Co-ordinator nominates a potential External Examiner using the EE1 Form
2. The application is forwarded to HE Operations, along with the External Examiner’s CV and a copy of their passport
3. The application is formally agreed by HEMC
4. The application is confirmed by the Academic Board

Overall responsibility for the timely nomination of external examiners to ensure sufficient opportunity for the required Home Office checks to be conducted in advance of their appointment, and for appropriate induction, remains with the Course Co-ordinator.

**Criteria for the selection and appointment of Subject External Examiners**

When making the nomination of an External Examiner, the Course Co-ordinator in consultation with other Course Co-ordinator (if appropriate) will ensure that:

* where there is a team of External Examiners for a programme of studies or leading to an award there is an adequate balance including:
  + examining experience
  + academic and professional practitioners
  + members from different institutions of higher education
* the nominee has achieved academic or professional qualifications in an appropriate subject and at a level appropriate for the modules/programme of study to be examined (at least to the level being examined, preferably to the level above).
* the nominee is of an appropriate academic and/or professional standing to command the respect of colleagues and tomaintain the comparability of academic standards in the context of higher education. Retirees can be considered provided they have sufficient evidence of continuing involvement in the academic area in question.
* the nominee has sufficient recent experience of examining at the required level, preferably including experience as an external examiner, or comparable related experience to indicate competence in assessing students in the subject area concerned. For example, the external examiner should be capable of assessing whether a student is capable of proceeding to level 6 and therefore should have experience of teaching and assessing at level 6. Information on proposed arrangements for the induction and support of an inexperienced nominee should be included with the nomination form. The lack of previous external examining experience does not in itself normally bar the nomination of an otherwise suitable nominee provided that effective induction and briefing arrangements can be put in place to support the individual concerned. The appointment of a mentor may be a condition of approval in some circumstances.
* the nominee has knowledge of standards of academic assessment in the UK sufficient to make the required academic judgement about comparability of standards with other UK HE institutions. Potential nominees who do not have experience of delivering and assessing in UK HE should be briefed in advance of this requirement and their attention drawn to the relevant elements of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.
* the nominee has expertise in the enhancement of the student learning experience and, where appropriate, awareness of modern developments in the design and delivery of the flexible curriculum. Where appropriate, the nominee meets the criteria set out by the professional or accrediting body.
* External Examiners are drawn from a wide variety of institutional/professional contexts and traditions in order that individual subjects or programmes of study have the benefit of wide ranging external scrutiny. Normally there must not be:
* reciprocal external examining between subjects or programmes or departments in two institutions (this means that an external examiner should not be appointed from another institution where a member of the College’s staff is serving as an external examiner for a cognate programme);
* replacement of an External Examiner by an individual from the same department in the same institution;
* an External Examiner from an institution in which the subject area concerned has been the source of examiners in the recent past (normally four years).
* the nominee will not have such other extensive examining commitments that they cannot properly discharge their duties in respect of this College.
* External Examiners should not normally hold more than the equivalent of a total of two substantial appointments at the same time.
* If a proposed External Examiner already holds two appointments, the Course Co-ordinator will be required to provide a clear argument for the nomination being pursued. This should include a commentary on the amount of work, numbers of students and dates of meetings of Assessment Panels and Boards at other institutions to which the External Examiner is already committed.
* the nominee will be impartial in judgement and over the last four years the nominee normally must not have been:
* a member of staff, a governor, a student or a near relative or partner of a member of staff in relation to the programme of studies or who had a relationship with any of the above;
* an examiner for another cognate subject/programme in the College;
* a member of staff of any HEI that the College has formal agreements with regarding the delivery of Higher Education;
* involved as an External Examiner for the subject or programme of study when it was approved by another validating body;

and over the last two years must not have been:

* involved in a close research collaboration with a member of staff associated with the programme/subject area;

in addition, the nominee must not be:

* personally associated with the sponsorship of students from the subject/programme;
* required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the modules or programme of study;
* in a position to influence significantly the future employment of students on the modules or programme of study;
* likely to be involved with student placements or training in the examiner's organisation.
* An external examiner may be reappointed in exceptional circumstances but only after a period of four years has elapsed since the end of their appointment.
* The nominee should be fluent in English.
* The Course Co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that any potential intellectual property difficulties, such as might arise from the need for commercial confidentiality, are resolved prior to appointment.
  + If the nominee does not meet any one of the above criteria a supporting rationale must be provided with the nomination form.
  + An External Examiner must immediately notify the Director of Higher Education in writing of any material change in circumstances which would lead to a breach of the conditions of appointment outlined above.

**Criteria for the selection and appointment of Award External Examiners**

* The principal role of the Award External Examiner is to ensure that the College’s regulations are being implemented consistently, fairly and in line with national standards and expectations for such processes. The Award External Examiner therefore needs to be fully conversant with the College’s regulations and standard regulatory policies and practices across the sector.
* The Award External Examiner may also be a member of the appropriate group of Subject External Examiners. Nominees should be drawn from an academic background relevant to the discipline in which the awards being considered reside in order to ensure those taking on this role are appropriately qualified to make a judgement on the academic standard of the award and on student performance at award level.

**Home Office requirements**

The Home Office expects universities/colleges to carry out right to work in the UK checks on all external examiners. The EE1 form completed at the start of the nomination process requires nominees to provide the necessary information to enable these checks to be undertaken.

**EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

**FOR MODULES AND TAUGHT PROGRAMMES OF STUDY**

**NOTES FOR GUIDANCE**

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1. Contact with Students
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**EXTERNAL EXAMINERS FOR TAUGHT MODULES AND PROGRAMMES**

**NOTES FOR GUIDANCE**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

External Examiners are essential to the academic well-being of the College. Their involvement ensures that

* Standards are appropriate by reference to published national subject benchmarks, the National Qualifications Framework and the College’s programme and module specifications
* The assessment process measures student achievement against the intended learning outcomes
* The assessment process is in line with the College’s Assessment Policy
* The College’s awards are comparable in standard to awards conferred by other UK HE institutions
* The assessment process is operated fairly and equitably and in accordance with College Regulations.

External Examiners must be appointed for all programmes leading to a College award whether delivered within the College. The majority of the College’s programmes operate within a standard modular framework. For such programmes the College operates a two-tier assessment process which is reflected in the College’s definition of the separate roles of Subject and Award External Examiners.

The **Subject External Examiner** is primarily concerned with the standards of assessment in a specific group of modules (the subject) irrespective of the study programme(s) or award(s) to which the modules are attached. The Subject External Examiner will be asked to comment on assessment processes, and on the standard, content and development of the modules within the subject. S/he will be a member of the Subject Assessment Panel which confirms or modifies module marks and ensures that the students are being assessed in accordance with the assessment programme and the intended learning outcomes for the subject modules.

Subject External Examiners do not attend Award Assessment Boards (unless they are required to do so by a professional accrediting body). Nor do they see or comment on student profiles. Their focus is on the standards in the subject.

The **Award External Examiner** acts as the "critical friend" of the Award Assessment Board, to ensure that decisions on progression or awards for students are made in accordance with the assessment regulations, and that justice is done to the individual student, taking account of any recommendations resulting from prior consideration of extenuating circumstances or assessment offences. For each named award with which s/he is associated, the Award External Examiner will be asked to provide informative comment and recommendations upon whether or not the College is maintaining the threshold academic standards set for its awards and about the comparability of standards of student performance at award level with similar awards in other UK institutions with which s/he is familiar. S/he will be a member of the appropriate Award Assessment Board(s), which makes decisions on progression and awards on the basis of the module marks confirmed by the Subject Assessment Panel.

The Award External Examiner may also be a member of the appropriate group of Subject External Examiners.

1. **THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUBJECT EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

**A Subject External Examiner can expect the College to**

* provide sufficient information at the time of nomination to enable him/her to make an informed decision as to whether to accept the appointment, including the honorarium payable for the appointment
* provide briefing packs, with full access to all relevant documentation, and offer appropriate induction (including an explanation of the College’s responsibilities for equality and diversity)
* clarify at the time of appointment the range of modules within the subject area for which s/he is to be responsible (which should not normally exceed 360 credits)
* agree dates of meetings of Assessment Panels with all the External Examiners well in advance
* agree with the Subject External Examiner(s) the means by which they are to be offered the opportunity to comment on draft examination papers
* provide draft assessments in accordance with those procedures, in sufficient time for the External Examiner(s) to comment
* agree with the Subject External Examiner(s) the means by which they will be able to scrutinise assessment tasks in order to confirm (or otherwise) that the assessment strategy is appropriately enacted in the questions set and invite them to provide formal confirmation of this at the time of the Subject Assessment Panel meeting
* agree with the Subject External Examiner(s) procedures by which the Subject External Examiner(s) will sample assessed work, including the criteria for sampling and the means by which material will be made available (e.g. by post in advance of the Panel, at the time of an interim visit, and/or in the College shortly before a Panel)
* include marks and appropriate comments on, or with, all scripts, projects and dissertations submitted to a Subject External Examiner for consideration
* report any case in which there has been a problem with an assessment affecting or potentially affecting a group of students (e.g. an unseen examination paper has apparently been 'leaked', an examination has been seriously disrupted or students have been issued with conflicting information about a coursework submission date) and consult on appropriate remedial measures
* report any alleged breach of Assessment Regulations, confirm the means by which it has been investigated, and consult on the recommendations arising from that investigation
* enable him/her, where necessary, to alter the characteristics of marks distribution and, if there are inconsistencies in marking, to amend marks, provided that all scripts in the ‘disputed category’ have been appropriately reviewed. The College would expect that proposed amendments to marks would be discussed and agreed at the Subject Assessment Panel.
* refer to the Award Assessment Board (through its Secretary and Chair) any major disagreement on a point of principle between Examiners (whether internal or external) which cannot be resolved.
* facilitate communication between Subject External Examiners and the Award External Examiner prior to the Award Assessment Board
* agree the mechanism by which responses will be provided to any issues raised in the annual report of the Subject External Examiner(s) and ensure that any comments from the Subject External Examiner(s) on the response are formally minuted at the Subject Assessment Panel
* pay expenses promptly on receipt, and honorarium on receipt of the annual report (subject to payroll deadlines)
* consult him/her about proposed changes to programme-specific assessment regulations which will directly affect students currently registered on the modules for which s/he has responsibility
* provide a considered and timely response to any report received, outlining any actions that will be taken as a result.

**The College will expect a Subject External Examiner to**

* take up his/her appointment in full knowledge of College regulations, policies and procedures and undertake to operate within them
* ensure that the standard of the subject assessment is maintained
* approve the assessment scheme for all modules contributing to a final award or classification. This will normally include approval of the form of coursework assessment and the form and content of examination papers, together with accompanying marking schemes
* confirm (or otherwise) that the assessment strategy is appropriately enacted in the questions set
* ensure that the assessments are conducted in accordance with the approved regulations for the modules/programmes of study
* ensure that students have been assessed fairly in accordance with the syllabus and regulations for the programme of study and have fulfilled the objectives of the module or programme at the relevant standard
* discuss with the subject team the types of disabilities within the current cohort and the adjustments made to support those students, including provision for alternative/inclusive assessments
* raise with the subject team other appropriate equality and diversity issues (covering disability, race and gender) relevant to the assessment of students
* carry out at least one interim engagement per year (which may take the form of a ‘virtual’ visit by video conference/skype) and at least one face to face visit during his/her term of office to obtain feedback from staff and students on assessment in practice at times other than at the end of the academic year and to strengthen his/her engagement with the ongoing teaching and learning process
* discuss with subject leaders and students the formative assessment included within modules
* review an appropriate sample of work submitted for summative assessment (usually encompassing a sample within each range of marks and a sample of project/dissertation work) and agree with the subject team the means by which that sample is to be selected
* discuss with the subject team any previously undetected suspected assessment/examination offence(s) discovered during the review of assessed work
* agree with the subject team an appropriate method for adjusting module marks as and when necessary.
* agree with the subject team the extent of the involvement of Subject External Examiners in resits/reassessment, which must include agreeing the form and content of resits (for resit examination papers this should normally be undertaken at the same time as approval is sought for the main examination papers; the form of coursework reassessments may be dealtwith at the Summer Panel or by correspondence) and agreeing marking standards, either on the basis of satisfaction with standards overall or through further sampling of work
* be a full and equal member of the Subject Assessment Panel (which will also comprise the subject leader or equivalent as Chair, and internal examiners associated with assessments for the particular subject specific modules). The College expects its Subject Assessment Panels to discuss issues fully in order that they can reach decisions by consensus. If an External Examiner disagrees in principle with a proposed decision, s/he should notify the Chair that s/he will be unable to sign the declaration in respect of that decision, so that the Chair can consider deferring the decision until the disagreement has been reviewed on behalf of Academic Board.
* attend meetings of the relevant Subject Assessment Panel at which consideration is being given to assessments which contribute to a final award. The date of the meeting of the Subject Assessment Panel will be agreed early in the Academic Year and a Subject External Examiner will be expected to keep this date free in her/his diary.In the unavoidable absence of a Subject External Examiner, the Panel may proceed provided the External Examiner has provided comments on the standard of all modules for which s/he has responsibility, and any queries regarding marks have been resolved in advance with module examiners. If it is clear at an earlier stage in the academic year that a Subject External Examiner will not be able to fulfil all the duties required of her/him, it may be appropriate for an emergency replacement examiner to be appointed. If the Subject External Examiner is unable at the last minute to attend a Panel, s/he may be deemed to be present and in attendance through a video link provided it is possible to ensure that s/he is as well informed as other members, has access to all necessary documents, and that a visual link can be maintained.
* sign a declaration form as confirmation of agreement with the marks confirmed by the Subject Assessment Panel
* provide a report within six weeks of the meeting of the SubjectAssessment Panel, for consideration as part of the required evidence base for annual review.

**The Subject External Examiner has the right to**

* see and moderate all forms of subject assessment, including examination scripts, coursework, continuous assessment, project reports, design work and dissertation in order to fulfil his/her role
* request sight of the final stage results list for programmes with which s/he is associated
* raise any concerns arising from the assessments or relating to academic standards with the Chair of the Assessment Panel and/or the Director of Cluster
* make a confidential report direct to the CEO/Director of Higher Education if not satisfied that appropriate action has subsequently been taken. Where an External Examiner has a serious concern relating to academic standards and has exhausted allinternal procedures, including the submission of a confidential report to the CEO/Director of Higher Education, he/she may invoke QAA’s Concerns scheme.

**The College does not expect a Subject External Examiner to**

* act as a second marker
* amend the marks of individual students
* make use of viva voce examinations except where these have been arranged with the subject team in advance as a means of resolving concerns about standards of marking in a module.
* consider cases of extenuating circumstances (which will be reviewed at the Award Assessment Board)
* act concurrently as an advisor to a programme team on programme design, or be a member of any panel(s) established to review programmes(s) on which s/he examines.

**3 THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF AWARD EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

**An Award External Examiner can expect the College to**

* provide sufficient information at the time of nomination to enable him/her to make an informed decision as to whether to accept the appointment, including the honorarium payable for the appointment
* provide briefing packs, with full access to all relevant documentation, and offer appropriate induction
* agree dates of meetings of Award Assessment Boards well in advance
* report on proven examination and assessment offences and the penalties recommended by the Panel/Committee of Investigation
* involve him/her in discussions of students who may be required to withdraw from a programme because of unsatisfactory progress, academic or professional, or conduct considered to be unethical, unprofessional or dangerous (except where these issues have been resolved through the College Disciplinary Procedure)
* refer to the Academic Board any major disagreement on a point of principle between Examiners (whether internal or external) which cannot be resolved
* facilitate communication between Subject External Examiners and the Award External Examiner prior to the Award Assessment Board
* agree the mechanism by which responses will be provided to any issues raised in the annual report of the Award External Examiner and ensure that any comments from the Award External on the response are formally minuted at the Subject Assessment Panel
* pay expenses promptly on receipt, and honorarium on receipt of the annual report (subject to payroll deadlines)
* consult him/her about proposed changes to programme-specific assessment regulations which will directly affect students currently registered on the modules for which s/he has responsibility
* provide a considered and timely response to any report received, outlining any actions that will be taken as a result.

**The College will expect an Award External Examiner to**

* take up his/her appointment in full knowledge of College regulations, policies and procedures and undertake to operate within them
* ensure that the Award Assessment Board is conducted in accordance with the approved regulations for the programme(s) of study and that students are treated equitably within those regulations
* ensure that all relevant extenuating circumstances and assessment offences relating to individual students have been taken into account in reaching decisions
* be a full and equal member of the Award Assessment Board (which will also comprise the relevant Director of Cluster and Director of Higher Education (or nominee), Course Co-ordinator(s) and the Chairs of relevant Subject Assessment Panels, as approved at programme approval). The College expects its Award Boards to discuss issues fully in order that they can reach decisions by consensus. If an External Examiner disagrees in principle with a proposed decision, s/he should notify the Chair that s/he will be unable to sign the declaration in respect of that decision, so that the Chair can consider deferring the decision until the disagreement has been reviewed on behalf of Academic Board.
* attend meetings of the relevant Award Assessment Board at which consideration is being given to progression to the final stage or to conferment of awards. In the unavoidable absence of an Award External Examiner, the Board may proceed provided that an emergency replacement examiner has been appointed, or that s/he may be deemed to be present and in attendance through a video link which ensures that s/he is as well informed as other members, has access to all necessary documents, and that a visual link can be maintained. In all other cases, the Award Board must be deferred.
* provide informative comment and recommendations upon whether or not the College is maintaining the threshold academic standards set for its awards and about the comparability of standards of student performance at award level with similar awards in other UK institutions with which s/he is familiar
* act as a conduit for communicating overall good practice and/or concerns from the Subject External Examiners to the Award Assessment Board
* participate in discussions about the impact of extenuating circumstances bearing in mind the College’s Regulations, and the custom and practice of the Board in question
* sign a declaration form as confirmation of agreement with the decisions taken and awards conferred by the Award Assessment Board
* provide a report within six weeks of the meeting of the AwardAssessment Board, for consideration as part of the required evidence base for annual review
* formally endorse the results of resits/reassessment, either through her/his presence at the Referred Board or by post/fax. Alternatively, the Award External Examiner may sign a statement indicating that the Referred Assessment Board is authorised to process and confirm results without further consultation.

**The Award External Examiner has a right to**

* request sight of the final stage results list for programmes with which they are associated
* raise any concerns that academic standards are not being maintained, that justice is not being done to the students or that there is any matter of serious concern arising from the assessments with the Chair of the Assessment Board and/or the Director of Higher Education
* make a confidential report direct to the CEO if not satisfied that appropriate action has subsequently been taken. Where an external examiner has a serious concern relating to academic standards and has exhausted all internal procedures, including the submission of a confidential report to the CEO, he/she may invoke QAA’s Concerns scheme.

The College does **not** expect the Award External Examiner (or Award Assessment Board) to adjust marks agreed by the Subject Assessment Panel.

**4. EXTERNAL EXAMINERS’ REPORTS**

External Examiners have a vital role to play in the monitoring of academic standards and in providing information on outcomes, as demonstrated through assessment.

Every External Examiner is therefore required as a condition of their appointment to complete and submit to the relevant HE Assistant Registrar an annual report in accordance with the standard template. Award External Examiners are also required to complete a separate Award External Examiner’s report. The report/s should be submitted as soon as possible after the Panel/Board meetings, and by 31 July at the latest (or within six weeks if the Panel/Board meetings are after this date).

Where more than one Panel/Board meeting is held per year (for example, for programmes with professional accreditation) the External Examiners concerned are required, in addition to completion of the annual report, to complete an abbreviated version of the report template (the ‘interim’ or ‘dissertation’ report) following attendance at subsequent Panel/Board meetings to provide the College with ongoing assurance of standards. HE Assistant Registrars will provide additional guidance on reporting requirements and deadlines where this additional requirement applies.

On receipt of an External Examiner’s report the College will

* save the report centrally in HE Operations
* make copies available to the CEO, Director of Higher Education and Director of Cluster
* make the report available to all members of staff teaching on the modules/programme
* copy Award External Examiners' reports to relevant Subject External Examiners, and vice versa, for information
* provide a response by the final Friday in September to each External Examiner using the final section of the External Examiner’s report template, with a copy lodged with the HE Assistant Registrar, The response should be signed off by the Director of Cluster for Subject EE Reports and the Director of Higher Education for Award EE Reports before being sent to the External Examiner
* ensure that the Chair of the Award Assessment Board responds directly to issues raised by the Award External Examiner, whether these are programme specific or related to wider matters
* share the full report with students through the VLE and appropriate student/staff committee structures to strengthen student involvement in quality assurance and enhancement
* ensure that the report and response are considered by the relevant programme committee/s as part of the evidence base for annual programme review and that the External Examiner is sent a follow up action plan and subsequent updates, if appropriate.

External Examiners should note that if the College receives a request for a report under the Freedom of Information Act, then the report will normally be released, subject to omitting any reference to named individuals and deleting the name and contact details of the examiner concerned.

Individual students or staff should **not** be identified in the report. Examiners should note that where an individual is named in a report, if s/he requests copies of personal information held by the College Data Protection legislation, the College would normally release that information.

An External Examiner’s report may have implications for the way in which the modules/programme are designed and delivered, but it is for the College rather than the External Examiner to consider what changes should be made.

**5. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT WITH EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

In line with the relevant indicators of sound practice in Chapter B7: External examining of the QAA Quality Code, the College makes Subject External Examiners’ details (name, position and home institution only,) and their report, available to students via the VLE. It is, however, made clear to students that theymay not initiate contact with External Examiners. If any such contacts are attempted then details, with copies of any correspondence, should be notified to the relevant HE Assistant Registrar, who will liaise with the relevant Director of Cluster.

**6. TERMINATION OF APPOINTMENT**

If an External Examiner is for whatever reason unable to fulfil his/her role, s/he will be expected to tender his/her resignation.

While the College expects that a prospective External Examiner will have been briefed about College Regulations and procedures in advance of accepting the nomination, if an Examiner subsequently identifies that s/he is not comfortable about operating within these Regulations and procedures, or in accordance with these guidelines, the College expects that the Examiner will tender his/her resignation in sufficient time for a replacement appointment to be made.

If an External Examiner has for whatever reason not carried out the full range of his/her responsibilities within the terms of these guidelines and of College Regulations, or if there is a material change of circumstances which would lead to a breach of the conditions of appointment, the College may terminate the appointment.