



## Board of Studies in Mathematical Sciences Examination Guidelines

Effective for academic years 2018-19 onwards

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The following guidelines apply to all modules owned by the Board of Studies in Mathematical Sciences (BSMS), regardless of which Board of Examiners has responsibility for the degree programmes to which they contribute. This document has been prepared in accordance with the responsibilities of the BSMS and Board of Examiners in Mathematical Sciences (BEMS) outlined in the University Code of Practice on Assessment (CoPA), see <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/aqsd/academic-codes-of-practice/code-of-practice-on-assessment/>.

These guidelines were approved by the Board of Studies in Mathematical Sciences on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 2019.

### 1 Preparation of examination papers

Academic staff are responsible for the setting, checking, and marking of Examination Papers. The allocation of setting, checking, and marking duties is the responsibility of the Cluster Examination and Assessment Officers, in consultation with the relevant Teaching Coordinators. Setting and marking duties are normally allocated to the Module Leader (Examiner).

#### 1.1 Duties & responsibilities of the Examiner and Checker

- 1.1.1. The Examiner and Checker are **jointly responsible** for ensuring that examination papers are free from errors and conform to these Examination Guidelines **before** they are sent to the External Examiner for review.

- 1.1.2. When setting an examination the Examiner should aim for the amount of work and level of difficulty to be such that a student who has completed, to an acceptable standard, a majority of the work associated with the module can demonstrate knowledge and competencies in line with Quality Assurance Agency Subject Specific threshold Benchmark Standards<sup>1</sup> and consistent with the Departmental Qualitative Marking Descriptors (QMDs) for the range 40-49 (or 50-59 at level 7).

- 1.1.3. When setting an examination, the Examiner may wish to use the following contextual indicators as guidance:

- (a) The mean mark of the examination paper should normally lie between 55% to 68%;
- (b) The difference between a cohort's performance, as measured by their mean score, in the module should not be substantially<sup>2</sup> different than the same cohort's performance in earlier year(s).

- 1.1.4. For papers that offer a choice from a set of questions of equal merit, a rubric of the form

*This paper contains X questions, all carrying equal weight. Full marks will be awarded for complete solutions to Y questions. Candidates may attempt all questions, but only the best Y solutions will be taken into account.*

**must** be used. For papers where all questions are compulsory, the **required** form is

*This paper contains X questions. Candidates should attempt all questions. Full marks will be awarded for complete solutions to all questions.*

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<sup>1</sup>The current Benchmark Standards for Mathematics, Statistics, and Operational Research can be found at: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/sbs-mathematics-15.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup>Generally a difference of more than 5% is considered substantial.

For papers with two sections, the first being compulsory and the second having some choice, the **required** form is

*Answer all questions in Section A. This section is worth X% of the total marks. All questions in Section B carry equal weight. Candidates may attempt all questions, but only the best Y solutions will be taken into account. Section B carries Z% of the available marks.*

Any variation of these rubrics **must** be approved, in advance, by BSMS and in good time to allow approval at the Curriculum Board, School Scrutiny Panel, and Faculty, if necessary.

- 1.1.5. If the use of calculators is permitted, then the following statement **must** be added to the rubric:

*Candidates are **only** permitted to use calculators deemed acceptable, and affixed with an official holographic sticker, by the Department of Mathematical Sciences.*

If calculators are not permitted, then the following statement **must** be added to the rubric:

*Candidates are **not** permitted to use calculators in this examination.*

- 1.1.6. When a question has separate independent parts, the marks for these parts should be given separately (and not just a single mark for that question). The notation (a), (b), (c) etc should be used for independent parts and (i), (ii), (iii), etc. reserved for dependent parts.

- 1.1.7. The Examiner of a paper **must** provide model solutions and a detailed marking scheme with clearly defined assessment criteria, (preferably typed but, if not, **clearly** handwritten) and have margins such that the full script is clearly visible when photocopied. The Checker **must** ensure that this marking scheme is in line with requirements 1.1.2. and 1.1.3. as appropriate. The Examiner **must** also provide the Checker with a copy of the most recently sat examination paper.

- 1.1.8. Examination papers **must** be typeset to an appropriate standard. It is

**strongly recommended** that papers are prepared using the standard L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X template which is available from SharePoint<sup>3</sup>. The final version of the paper together with the solutions and any other appropriate material will be provided to the External Examiner, via SharePoint, by the Examinations Coordinator. It is the responsibility of the Examinations Coordinator to implement and manage the SharePoint environment in a suitable form.

- 1.1.9. If the examination paper contains multiple choice questions, then a special cover sheet should be generated. The standard L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X template (see §1.1.8.) is capable of generating the required cover sheet.

- 1.1.10. It is the responsibility of the **Checker** to ensure that the exam paper examines all the learning outcomes of the module in a fair and equal way and that students of all abilities are fully tested. Particular attention should be given to exams where the previous year's raw average failed one or more of the indicators listed in 1.1.3., as this may indicate an inappropriate level of difficulty. To assess the level of difficulty of the exam paper, Checkers **must** work through the calculations by hand and ensure that students can complete the questions in a reasonable amount of time.

- 1.1.11. It is **unacceptable** to set exactly the same question in three, or fewer, consecutive academic years. Examiners are strongly encouraged to modify the types and wordings of examination questions where possible.

- 1.1.12. The format of examinations **must** be consistent with the module specifications.

- 1.1.13. For new modules, or where a syllabus or the style of the examination paper has materially changed, a mock examination paper with solutions **must** be provided to the students during the delivery of the module.

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<sup>3</sup>[https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/intranet/maths-staff/documents, and, forms/](https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/intranet/maths-staff/documents_and_forms/)

- 1.1.14. The cohort may contain students who are repeating externally<sup>4</sup> or are returning from suspension. If the syllabus or the style of the examination paper has materially changed, or the lecturer has changed, since the student last **attended** the course, then a special examination paper that reflects the syllabus and style of the examination when the student last attended **must** be prepared. The Examiner **must** consult with the BSMS/BEMS Chair in such cases.
- 1.1.15. Each module should be allocated, by the BEMS Chair, to the relevant External Examiner on the basis of content.
- 1.1.16. The following documentation **must** be completed during the preparation of examinations.
- (a) **Check form one:** Completed by the Examiner for each paper on production of the initial draft. If the previous year's raw marks failed one or more of the indicators listed in 1.1.3., then the Examiner **must** identify what changes have been made as a result, or justify why no such changes have been made.
  - (b) **Check form two:** Completed by the Checker, commenting on the initial draft.
  - (c) **Check form three:** Completed by the Examiner in response to the Checkers comments.
  - (d) **Check form four:** Completed by the External Examiner and contains their report on the paper.
  - (e) **Check form five:** Completed by the Examiner in response to the External Examiner's report.
  - (f) **Check form six:** Completed by the Checker confirming that the External Examiner's comments have been addressed and the paper is in its final form.

This process should be carried out electronically using the managed SharePoint environment wherever possible. Under no circumstances should examination papers be distributed via email.

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<sup>4</sup>that is, resitting the examination and/or CA components without attending lectures.

- 1.1.17. Where suggestions for revision from either the Checker or the External Examiner are rejected, the reasons **must** be recorded on the Examination Check Forms.
- 1.1.18. It is the responsibility of the Cluster Examination and Assessment Officers to ensure that the examination process runs smoothly. In particular, the Examination and Assessment Officers should be aware of any delay in the preparation of examination papers in their cluster and report any such delays to the BEMS Chair. The Examination and Assessment Officers should also work with Examiners, Checkers, and the External Examiners as necessary in order to progress the preparation of papers.
- 1.1.19. Examination materials<sup>5</sup> should be prepared and stored securely, whether in hard-copy or electronic format. Unencrypted electronic copies of Examination materials should not be distributed via email; hard-copies should be stored in locked cabinets and not be left unattended.

## 1.2 Errors on examination papers

- 1.2.1. The marker and Checker are **jointly** responsible for ensuring that there are no errors in the examination paper. It is **not** the responsibility of External Examiners to find errors on examination papers.
- 1.2.2. The checking process is designed to eliminate errors and ambiguities on examination papers. If a material error is nevertheless found before the commencement of an examination, a correction slip **must** be prepared in advance of the examination and provided to the Examinations Coordinator who will ensure that the slip is passed onto SAS and a copy is provided with each examination paper. At the beginning of the examination the Examiner **must** make an announcement and draw students' attention to the correction slip.

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<sup>5</sup>Including examination papers, solutions, and check forms.

- 1.2.3. If an error is discovered *during* an examination, Examiners should consult the invigilation guidance which will provide details of the procedure to be followed.
- 1.2.4. **N.B.:** If errors are found before or during an examination the examination department in SAS must be informed immediately, as there may be students taking the examination in other venues.

## 2 Marking

Unless another arrangement has been explicitly agreed and approved by the BEMS Chair and the Head of Department, the lecturer(s) assigned to the module is (are) responsible for marking the corresponding exam scripts and ensuring that all deadlines are met. In order to comply with tight schedules for the production of papers for Examiners' meetings, it is essential that staff give **first priority** to the marking and checking of scripts after a paper has been sat.

### 2.1 Anonymous marking & recording of marks

- 2.1.1. The Examinations Coordinator will prepare, in an appropriate format, spreadsheets for the recording of marks (mark sheets) and distribute these mark sheets to Examiners via SharePoint.
- 2.1.2. The Examiner will mark each script without breaking the seal and put the marks on the front cover. It must be made clear on the script that all parts of all questions have been marked. Part marks and totals for questions must be indicated clearly on the script. Total marks **must** be recorded in the form "a/b" in the left or right margin, with part marks and total marks clearly distinguished. Each page **must** be clearly marked so as to indicate that it has been fully assessed; for empty, or almost empty, pages a line should be drawn through the page.
- 2.1.3. The Checker **must** check all marks awarded on each script, that the totals are correct, and that everything has been marked. The Checker **must** mark the front page of each script to indicate that it has been checked. Any suspected errors in marking **must** be corrected in consultation with the Examiner.
- 2.1.4. The Checker **must** break each seal and put the scripts in alphabetical order.
- 2.1.5. For all except the smallest groups (fewer than twenty students), both the Checker and Examiner **must** be involved in ensuring that the marks on each script are correctly transcribed to the mark sheet supplied by the Examinations Coordinator and cross-checked. For example, the Checker might enter the marks and read them back to the Examiner or vice-versa. The Examiner and Checker should pay special attention to all students with surnames in common to check that their marks have been correctly assigned.
- 2.1.6. Any Continually Assessed (CA) component **must** be supplied by the Examiner and transcribed and cross-checked as above.
- 2.1.7. Some students may be resitting<sup>6</sup> certain modules. Generally, students who are resitting without attendance are not required to re-submit CA elements and their mark from the previous sitting should be carried forward. Such students will be indicated on the mark sheet and in Tulip with the *ER* status flag. If the Examiner is unsure as to the status of any student, they should contact the Student Support Office or the BEMS/BSMS Chair to determine how the CA marks should be treated.
- 2.1.8. Where the Extenuating Circumstances Committee (*see* §4.1) recommends that action should be taken in relation to a student's mark for a component of CA, the recommended action will be clearly communicated to the Examiner by the Secretary to the Extenuating Circumstances Committee. The Examiner **must** implement all necessary adjustments to a student's CA mark on the mark sheet before it is submitted to the Examinations Coordinator.
- <sup>6</sup>That is, having taken the module already, they are resitting the examination and may be doing so with or without attendance at lectures, with or without resubmitting CA, and with or without first attempt status.

- 2.1.9. The Examiner and Checker **must** complete the examination report form<sup>7</sup> as soon as possible after the examination has been marked. The marks cannot be considered by the BEMS until the examination report form has been completed.
- 2.1.10. The Examiner will propose any scaling procedure required (*see* §3) and have this approved by the appropriate Teaching Co-ordinator. Where the Teaching Coordinator and Examiner disagree regarding the proposed scaling, the scaling decision will be made by the Informal Module Review Meeting (*see* §4.2) on the basis of the information tabled.
- 2.1.11. Unless otherwise stated by the Examiner on the mark sheet, final scaled marks of 34, 39, 49, 59, and 69 will be raised to 35, 50, 60, and 70, respectively, upon entry.
- 2.1.12. Examiners should note that students are entitled to view their individual examination scripts under the Department's Examination Feedback procedures and should therefore refrain from making any unnecessary notations on examination scripts.
- 2.1.13. For examinations containing multiple choice questions, the SAS Examinations Team will provide Examiners with a spreadsheet containing the marks for these questions.

### 3 Moderation & Scaling

Moderation and Scaling are mechanisms for ensuring that overall marks for each module are in line with Departmental QMDs and the module's learning outcomes.

#### 3.1 Moderation

- 3.1.1. Moderation procedures are used to ensure consistency and standards in assessment marking. The module Checker typically acts

<sup>7</sup>[http://www.maths.liv.ac.uk/cgi-bin/latc/exam\\_report\\_form](http://www.maths.liv.ac.uk/cgi-bin/latc/exam_report_form)

as Moderator, but if a unit of assessment is marked by more than one Examiner then an Examiner may moderate another Examiner's marking.

- 3.1.2. Examinations, class tests, or other units of assessments with detailed mark schemes do not need to be moderated if marked by a single Examiner.
- 3.1.3. Units of assessment that are double-marked do not need to be moderated (*see* §3.2).
- 3.1.4. A single unit of assessment worth less than 20% of a module does not need to be moderated. A single unit of assessment worth at least 20% of a module **must** be moderated in any of the following cases:
- (a) The assessment uses a qualitative mark scheme;
  - (b) The same part of the assessment is marked by more than one Examiner;
  - (c) Any part of the assessment is marked by postgraduate marking assistants.
- 3.1.5. The proportion of assessment items that should be moderated depends on the number of submitted assessment items and is given in CoPA. The minimum number  $m$  of items to moderate as a function of the number of submitted items  $n$  is:

$$m(n) = \begin{cases} n, & 1 \leq n \leq 9 \\ 10, & 10 \leq n \leq 39 \\ 0.25n, & 40 \leq n \leq 149 \\ 0.15n, & 150 \leq n \leq 299 \\ 0.1n, & n \geq 300 \end{cases}$$

- 3.1.6. If moderation finds that marking is inconsistent, then **all** assessment items **must** be remarked. For this reason, it is advised that:
- (a) When splitting marking among Examiners, consider marking different questions rather than just sharing scripts;

- (b) Consider moderating a sample of a postgraduate assistant's marking before marking is complete.

3.1.7. If the Moderator finds that the marking is consistent but not in line with standards, then the Moderator and Examiner should consider remarking or scaling as appropriate by considering the learning outcomes, marking criteria and QMDs.

## 3.2 Projects

3.2.1. Projects do not need to be moderated since they are double-marked (*see* 3.1.3.).

3.2.2. A second marker should be nominated by the supervisor.

3.2.3. The supervisor and second marker mark the projects and its components independently, and record their marks on the project report form<sup>8</sup>. Differences in marks against each criteria should be discussed, and the supervisor and second marker should agree on a final mark and justify this mark.

3.2.4. If the marks awarded by the supervisor and second marker are substantially different, the final mark must be carefully justified on the project report form. In all cases, justifications must be based on learning outcomes, marking criteria and QMDs: it is **never** sufficient just to take an average without further justification.

3.2.5. Where the supervisor and second marker cannot agree on a final mark, their respective reports together with the project should be forwarded to the BEMS Chair who will appoint a third marker to write a further report. The BEMS Chair will then consider all three reports and come to a decision on the final mark to be awarded.

## 3.3 Scaling

3.3.1. The scaling procedure is intended to ensure that unexpected outcomes in the examination are taken into account and that there

is consistency with the QMDs of the examination scripts. Scaling should **not** be used to compensate for systematic under- or over-achievement in associated CA components.

3.3.2. If an Examiner determines that the outcomes of an assessment do not align with the QMDs, the Examiner should propose a scaling by setting a new value for each of the borderline marks: 40, 50, 60, 70. Intermediate marks will be scaled (by the mark sheet) using linear interpolation.

3.3.3. The Examiner should give a short explanation of the proposed scaling, or the proposed decision not to scale, as detailed on the Examination Paper Report Form.

3.3.4. The Examiner may wish to use the contextual indicators detailed in 1.1.3. to justify their scaling decisions.

3.3.5. Every overall module mark should be in line with the QMDs regardless of the size of the cohort. This means that Examiners should always consider classification boundaries regardless of the module's average.

3.3.6. Since every overall module mark should be in line with the QMDs, the default scaling for resits will be set to the accepted scaling for the main sitting in the same academic year. This assumes that an exam and resit set at the same time are of a similar level. The Examiner may still propose a different scaling.

## 4 Examiners Meetings

In accordance with CoPA and in order to satisfy the University time scales and requirements for progression and classification the following Examiners Meetings, acting as sub-committees of the Board of Examiners, will take place. The BEMS reports to the BSMS and is responsible to the Senate for the assessment of students and the determination of awards and progression of students. The purpose and composition of each committee

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<sup>8</sup>[http://www.maths.liv.ac.uk/cgi-bin/latc/project\\_report\\_form](http://www.maths.liv.ac.uk/cgi-bin/latc/project_report_form)

and board are outlined below. The Chair of each meeting may, at their discretion, co-opt any member of Academic Staff to the committee or board. The quorum for each meeting, including the full Board of Examiners, is four members of Academic Staff except the Extenuating Circumstances Committee where the quorum is three members of Academic Staff.

#### 4.1 Extenuating Circumstances Committee

- 4.1.1. **Purpose:** To consider applications for Extenuating Circumstances and make such recommendations to the Progression Board and Final Board of Examiners as deemed appropriate.
- 4.1.2. **Timing:** February (preceding the Progression Board), June (Preceding the Progression Board), September (Preceding the Final Board of Examiners). Additionally, the Committee may convene in week 12 of each semester to consider Extenuating Circumstances cases that pertain to CA components.
- 4.1.3. **Members:** Senior Tutor (Chair) Chair (and/or Deputy) of the Board of Studies (Deputy Chair), Chair (and/or Deputy) of the Board of Examiners, and the Secretary to the Extenuating Circumstances Committee.
- 4.1.4. The regulations governing Extenuating Circumstances, and the possible actions open to the Committee, can be found in CoPA, App. M.
- 4.1.5. Documentation provided by a student with a extenuating circumstances claim or created in consideration of a claim must be kept on file in such a manner that no person without permission to access it may view it (e.g. on SharePoint with appropriate permissions) and for a period of time that complies with The EU General Data Protection Regulation.
- 4.1.6. The Extenuating Circumstances Committee should only consider claims submitted on the correct form with supporting evidence. If the original documentation is provided in a language other than

English then an independent and certified translation must be provided by the student. **All cases should be treated in the strictest confidence;** specific details of any extenuating circumstances case should not be reported to the Board of Examiners. Students do not attend the meeting.

- 4.1.7. The Extenuating Circumstances Committee should take into account the following when considering the application:
  - (a) The seriousness of the circumstances, including the length of time they lasted;
  - (b) The documentary evidence provided;
  - (c) The amount of work that was affected by the circumstances;
  - (d) Whether the mark achieved under the circumstances was inconsistent with those achieved in periods of study unaffected by extenuating circumstances.
- 4.1.8. The Extenuating Circumstances Committee should report to the Board of Examiners on the impact of the extenuating circumstances and make a recommendation as to the action to be taken. In formulating its recommendation, the Committee should always seek to act in the best interests of the student. The Extenuating Circumstances Committee should minute the rationale behind any recommendations it makes in order to give External Examiners an insight to the decision making process; this will be treated with strict confidence by the External Examiners.
- 4.1.9. Where an Extenuating Circumstances Committee considers reasons/evidence to support a prior reported absence from an examination or failure to submit an assessment, the Committee should either confirm that the absence was authorised (i.e. absence with good cause) or determine that the reasons/evidence submitted do not constitute good cause for the absence.
- 4.1.10. Exceptionally, where the Extenuating Circumstances Committee considers that there may be valid reasons why a student has been

unable to submit full or sufficient documentary evidence with a claim, the Committee may defer a decision or make a provisional recommendation pending the student being given an opportunity to submit further evidence by a given deadline.

- 4.1.11. The Committee does **not** have the power to change individual marks. However, the Committee may recommend that component(s) of CA be disregarded, or otherwise appropriately adjusted, when calculating the student's overall mark for a given module. Where the Committee makes such a recommendation, the adjustments **must** be made in accordance with 2.1.8..
- 4.1.12. Extenuating Circumstances which are submitted after the Board of Examiners has met can only be considered if the nature of the Extenuating Circumstances themselves could be considered to have prevented a student submitting a claim to the Board of Examiners. Such retrospective cases will be usually considered at the next normal meeting of the Extenuating Circumstances Committee. Students should be made aware that a claim cannot be delayed, nor can evidence relating to it be delayed on the grounds of sensitive personal, family or cultural reasons.
- 4.1.13. Exceptionally the Chair of the Extenuating Circumstances Committee may, in addition to the meeting schedule outlined in 4.1.2., convene an ad-hoc meeting. In such cases, all documentation should be transmitted securely (e.g. via SharePoint with appropriate permissions) and certainly **not** via email.
- 4.1.14. The minutes of the Extenuating Circumstances Committee should be made available, in a suitably secure manner, to the External Examiners upon request.

## 4.2 Informal Module Review Meeting

- 4.2.1. **Purpose:** To review, and revise or ratify, the scaling recommended by the Examiners for each module.
- 4.2.2. **Timing:** February and June, following the examinations in January and May, respectively. The meeting in February will consider all modules, including 100% CA modules, that are assessed in Semester One. The meeting in June will consider all modules, including 100% CA, that are assessed in Semester Two.
- 4.2.3. **Members:** Chair of the Board of Studies (Chair), Deputy Chair of the Board of Studies (Deputy Chair), Chair of the Board of Examiners, Deputy Chair of the Board of Examiners, Teaching Coordinators, and the Secretary to the Board of Examiners.
- 4.2.4. The following information will be tabled giving, for each module, the mark summary with respect to the usual borderlines, the mean mark obtained by each student on all other mathematics modules, the mean mark obtained by each student in their previous year of study (if applicable), the full mark spreadsheet, and the Examination Paper Report Form.
- 4.2.5. Any scaling or non-scaling of the marks for each module will be considered alongside the explanation given on the Examination Paper Report Form and where it is felt appropriate adjustments may be made. For reasons described in §3, 100% CA modules will not normally be scaled, but must still be considered.
- 4.2.6. Examiners do not attend the meeting, unless invited to do so by the Chair.
- 4.2.7. The results of any changes to scaling will be reported to the Examiner together with a request to consider carefully the new implied borderlines and their relation to the QMDs. The Examiner must then confirm to the Chair that they have correctly assigned scripts at the new borderlines.
- 4.2.8. Any significant changes to individual candidate marks **must not** be made at this stage unless correcting an error.
- 4.2.9. Any disagreements with the resulting marks should be brought to the attention of the Module Review Meeting by the Chair.



### 4.3 Module Review Meeting

- 4.3.1. **Purpose:** To review, and revise or ratify, the scaling recommended by the Informal Module Review Meeting for each module; to receive reports from the External Examiners; and to confirm that all module moderation procedures have been properly followed in accordance with CoPA.
- 4.3.2. **Timing:** June, following the Informal Module Review and Extenuating Circumstances Committee meetings and September following the Extenuating Circumstances Committee meeting. An MSc Module Review Meeting will take place at the same time as the Final Board of Examiners for MSc Programmes in November.
- 4.3.3. **Members:** Chair of the Board of Examiners (Chair), Deputy Chair of the Board of Examiners, Chair of the Board of Studies, Deputy Chair of the Board of Studies, module coordinators for all module under consideration, all External Examiners (One External Examiner to attend the meetings in September and November), and the Secretary to the Board of Examiners.
- 4.3.4. Reports from the External Examiners will be received. The BEMS Chair is responsible for reviewing the reports and, in consultation with the BSMS Chair and Head of Teaching, formally responding to the External Examiners. The BEMS Chair must also report, annually, to the BSMS regarding the effectiveness of the Department's assessment strategies and procedures.
- 4.3.5. The same information as in §4.2 will be tabled and the scaling decisions of the Informal Module Review Meeting will be reviewed and revised as necessary. The External Examiners may comment on individual modules, as appropriate.
- 4.3.6. The results of any changes to scaling will be reported to the Examiner together with a request to consider carefully the new implied borderlines and their relation to the QMDs. The Examiner must then confirm to the Chair that they have correctly assigned scripts at the new borderlines.
- 4.3.7. Module Review Boards are required to consider the average mark and the mark distribution for each module in the light of the performance of students from the same cohort in other modules and the Board should ensure that any unusual patterns of distribution of marks are investigated in accordance with CoPA and to ensure module standards are consistent with the QMDs and with each other.
- 4.3.8. There will be no consideration of individual candidates based on their performance in other modules. However, evidence from individual scripts, for example reported by the externals, will be used to help define borderlines.
- 4.3.9. The Module Review Board should consider reports and recommendations made by the Assessment Officer regarding Category C, D and E offences under the Academic Integrity Policy and confirm or determine the appropriate penalty in accordance with the requirements of the Policy. The Module Review Board should make any recommendations as necessary to the Progression Board regarding determinations made under the terms of the Academic Integrity Policy.
- 4.3.10. Following final approval of module marks by the Module Review Board, the marks for students' modules are fixed and cannot be changed. The External Examiner and the Chair will sign off the approved module marks list. If an error in the calculation of a mark is found after formal approval of the mark it may **only** be changed following formal approval by the External Examiner.

### 4.4 Progression Board

- 4.4.1. **Purpose:** To consider the academic progression of students from years one to two, two to three, and three to four. To monitor the performance of students, taking remedial action where appropriate and to deal with unsatisfactory students.
- 4.4.2. **Timing:** February (intermediate meeting), June (final meeting), and

September (resit meeting). Progress boards **must** follow the associated Module Review Meeting and Extenuating Circumstances Committee; and **must** precede the final board of Examiners.

4.4.3. **Members:** Chair of the Board of Examiners (Chair), Deputy Chair of the Board of Examiners, Chair of the Board of Studies, Deputy Chair of the Board of Studies, all Programme Directors of programmes under consideration, and the Secretary to the Board of Examiners.

4.4.4. The rules governing the operation of Progression Boards can be found in CoPA, App. E.

4.4.5. Progression Boards should review students' academic progress at the end of each assessment period.

4.4.6. The following information is tabled: a list of all module marks for each student; module report forms containing recommendations for the raising, or otherwise, of marks where appropriate; recommendations of the Extenuating Circumstances committee; attendance records and any other relevant information for each student.

4.4.7. The Board has the power to recommend *minor* changes to marks at the 35, 40, and 50 boundaries in order to aid progression. The Secretary to the Board of Examiners is responsible for ensuring that these changes are implemented. Changes **must** be made in a consistent way with the convention being agreed prior to the main business of the meeting and clearly stated at the beginning of each Board.

4.4.8. Progression Boards will receive recommendations from the Extenuating Circumstances Committee on the likely effect of a student's circumstances (as reported to the Committee) on their performance in assessment and therefore their ability to progress normally, and will determine what action should be taken.

4.4.9. The decisions permitted to be taken by the Progression Board are normally as follows:

- (a) The student has made satisfactory progress and can proceed to the next year/level of study of the current programme of study or an alternative programme;
- (b) The student is deemed withdrawn and therefore their studies are terminated;
- (c) The student is required to terminate studies because their progress is not satisfactory;
- (d) The student is required to terminate their studies because they have reached the maximum period of registration for the programme they are registered for;
- (e) The student is allowed to re-sit/re-take assessments or examinations or repeat the year of study either with or without attendance.
- (f) Where a student has failed a re-sit assessment that has been affected by Extenuating Circumstances and the student has a strong<sup>9</sup> academic record, then the Board may permit<sup>10</sup> the student to carry<sup>11</sup> up to 15 failed credits into the next academic year. Permission to carry failed credit can only be granted for students progressing from Year 0 to Year 1 and Year 1 to Year 2.

4.4.10. In addition to the above, by convention, the following actions are also normally taken:<sup>12</sup>

- (a) Where a student is absent, without good cause<sup>13</sup>, from one

<sup>9</sup>This is normally evidenced by the student achieving at least 50% in all passed credits.

<sup>10</sup>CoPA, App. M, 6.5.

<sup>11</sup>That is, progress into the next year and re-sit the failed credits along side their other modules.

<sup>12</sup>Where it is impractical to convene a Departmental Progress Panel, such as during the summer break or in the case of students studying without attendance, referral to a Departmental Progress Panel may be replaced by a letter from the Chair of the Board of Examiners expressing the Boards serious concern with regard to the student's absence and/or academic performance.

<sup>13</sup>Good cause is understood as a situation that would normally constitute a prima facie Extenuating Circumstances Case, whether or not a formal submission has been made. Hearsay evidence presented at the Board is admissible for establishing good cause.

or more examinations they will be referred to a Departmental Progress Panel;

- (b) Where a student is absent, without good cause, from all of their scheduled examinations in a particular session they will be deemed withdrawn and their studies terminated;
- (c) Where a student fails four or more examinations, without Extenuating Circumstances being accepted, and has poor attendance (typically less than 50%) their studies will be terminated because their progress is not satisfactory;
- (d) Where a student fails three or more examinations, without Extenuating Circumstances, they will be referred to a Departmental Progress Panel;
- (e) Where the Board otherwise expresses concern at a student's academic performance, they will be referred to a Departmental Progress Panel.

4.4.11. In cases where a student's studies have been terminated, the Progression Board shall inform the Final Board of Examiners so that a recommendation for an award can be made where this is possible.

4.4.12. Progression Boards are responsible for deciding what conditions will apply, if any, when a student is permitted to re-sit/re-take or repeat a year of study, which includes clear identification of those assessments which are to be reassessed as first attempts.

4.4.13. Progression Boards are not permitted to take any decisions which contravene programme ordinances or regulations or CoPA. Any recommendations for approval of exceptions to the ordinances or regulations should be made to Faculty for further consideration by the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education, via the Director of Student Administration and Support.

4.4.14. All decisions taken by the Progression Board should be recorded and those decisions which do not permit a student to progress directly to the next year/level of study should be passed to the relevant Faculty Support Office which is responsible for informing students of the

decisions made by the Progression Board and, where appropriate, providing the student with a right of appeal against decisions to terminate studies.

4.4.15. A report of decisions taken by the Progression Boards should be sent by the Secretary, approved by the Chair, to the Programme External Examiner.

4.4.16. Departmental Progress Panels act on behalf of the Progression Board and, therefore, may take decisions in accordance with 4.4.9.. Departmental Progress Panels should consist of at least two members of the Board of Examiners with one member nominated to Chair the Panel meeting.

## 4.5 Final Board of Examiners

4.5.1. **Purpose:** The Final Board of Examiners is responsible for recommending students' final awards including degree classification and any mark of differentiation in an award (e.g. merit, distinction) for all programmes owned by the BSMS.

4.5.2. **Timing:** June (Undergraduate Students), September (Resitting Undergraduate Students), November (MSc Students). The meetings in June and September **must** be preceded by the Progression Meeting.

4.5.3. **Members:** Chair of the Board of Examiners (Chair), Deputy Chair of the Board of Examiners, Chair of the Board of Studies, Deputy Chair of the Board of Studies, all Programme Directors of programmes under consideration, the designated External Examiner for the programme(s) under consideration, and the Secretary to the Board of Examiners.

4.5.4. All students who are not progressing to the next level of study should be considered for an award. This includes students who are not progressing to year four or five of an integrated Masters programme.

- 4.5.5. The rules<sup>14</sup> governing the classification of Undergraduate Degrees can be found in CoPA, App. I & J.
- 4.5.6. The Final Board of Examiners for postgraduate taught programmes will normally operate also as a Module Review Board to determine marks for the dissertation modules if these marks have not been available for consideration at a previous Module Review Board.
- 4.5.7. The Final Board of Examiners will receive reports from the Extenuating Circumstances Committee and the Progression Board; these reports will be considered when recommending awards.

#### **4.6 Classification and progression decisions *in principle***

- 4.6.1. Due to the size of our cohorts, it is not practical to consider the progression and classification for all students at the Boards. Therefore, progression and classification decisions will be made *in principle* before the appropriate Board.
- 4.6.2. All decisions made *in principle* must be reported to the appropriate Boards, which may then ratify or revise the decisions as necessary.
- 4.6.3. *In principle* progression and classification decisions will be made by the BEMS Chair, the BEMS Deputy Chair, the BSMS Chair, the BSMS Deputy Chair, and the cluster Exam and Assessment Officers. The allocation of responsibilities for *in principle* decisions is made by the BEMS Chair, in consultation with the Head of Department.
- 4.6.4. All *in principle* decisions must be determined by at least two members of Academic staff. Where there are discrepancies or where a joint decision cannot be reached, the decision will be referred to the BEMS Chair.
- 4.6.5. It is the responsibility of the Examinations Coordinator to ensure that progression and classification lists are distributed in good time before the relevant Board to enable *in principle* decisions to be made.

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<sup>14</sup>Unless otherwise stated, students should be classified based on the regulations in force when they first started their degree programme

## **5 Document version & approval history**

**8<sup>th</sup> May 2019:** Original version tabled for approval at the Board of Studies.

**Approval:** Approved for immediate implementation subject to minor clarifications, as detailed in the minutes.

**16<sup>th</sup> September 2019:** Minor modifications to adjust the roles and timing of the Extenuating Circumstances Committee (¶4.1.3, 4.1.12, & 4.1.13). Clarification of the reporting responsibilities of BEMS (§4 & ¶4.3.4). Clarification of the process for *in principle* decisions (¶4.6.4). Allow for the Board to express its cause for concern at a student's academic performance/absence via a letter in lieu of a Departmental Progress Panel where it is impractical to convene a panel (Footnote 12, p. 10). **Approval:** Chair's action.