



Academic Quality Framework

Section 12: Boards of Examiners

2023-2024

Academic Quality Framework

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This Section should be of particular interest to Course Leaders and External Examiners of the UCO and Collaborative Partners, and all those involved in the assessment and examination of foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses that lead to a UCO award.

Version number	Dates produced and approved (include committee)	Reason for production/ revision	Author	Location(s)	Proposed next review date and approval required
V1.0	March 2014 Academic Council	To define the procedures for the management of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning at the UCO.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Registrar	Master Version: J:\0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V2.0	Sept 2016 Academic Council	Reviewed to update staff role and policy titles and to reflect current practice.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Registrar	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Aug 2017 and on an “as required” basis.
V3.0	Sept 2017 Academic Council	Annual Review including amendments to reflect the name change of the British School of Osteopathy to the University College of Osteopathy.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality Registrar	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V4.0	Sept 2018 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to update staff role titles and weblinks.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality Registrar	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V5.0	Sept 2018 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to update weblinks and footnotes, correct typographical errors and to include reference to the new QAA UK Quality Code for HE to clarify how UCO Exam	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality & Partnerships	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version:	Annually and on an “as required” basis.

Academic Quality Framework 2023-2024 / Section 12: Boards of Examiners

		<i>Board processes align to this. Added "Associated UCO Documents" section for ease of reference.</i>	<i>Registrar</i>	<i>Website</i>	
V6.0	Aug 2020 PRAG Chair	<i>Annual Review Administrative amendment to reflect the UCO's revised committee structure.</i>	<i>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality Registrar</i>	<i>Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website</i>	<i>Annually and on an "as required" basis.</i>
V7.0	Aug 2021 PRAG Chair	<i>Administrative Amendments to correct committee titles and update staff roles.</i>	<i>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality Registrar</i>	<i>Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website</i>	<i>Annually and on an "as required" basis.</i>
V8.0	Jun 2022 PRAG Chair TQSC	<i>Administrative Amendments to reflect partner equivalences relating to Exam Boards and policies.</i>	<i>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality Registrar</i>	<i>Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website</i>	<i>Annually and on an "as required" basis.</i>
V9.0	Jun 2023 TQSC	<i>Minor Amendments to reflect staff changes, clarify definitions and to incorporate Collaborative Partners more clearly.</i>	<i>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality Registrar</i>	<i>Master Version: SharePoint – Quality Team Published Version: Website</i>	<i>Annually and on an "as required" basis.</i>
Equality Impact					
Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)					
Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)					X
Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)					
If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this document, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk					

Academic Quality Framework**Section 12: Boards of Examiners****Contents**

12.1	Introduction to Boards of Examiners	5
12.2	Types of Boards of Examiners	5
A)	Course Teams	5
B)	Pre-Boards of Examiners	6
C)	Boards of Examiners	6
12.3	Collaborative Partner Boards of Examiners	7
12.4	Membership & Terms of Reference of Boards of Examiners	7
12.5	Board of Examiners Chair's Action	8
12.6	Presentation of Data to the Board of Examiners	9
12.7	Unscheduled Boards of Examiners	9
12.8	Confidentiality of Boards of Examiners	10
12.9	Conflicts of Interest	10
12.10	Disclosure of Examination Grades to Students	10
12.11	Appeals against Decisions of Boards of Examiners	10
AQF12:	Appendices	10

12.1 INTRODUCTION TO BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

- 12.1.1 For every course leading to an award of the University College of Osteopathy (UCO), the Academic Council will appoint a Board of Examiners to make final judgements and decisions on the awarding of academic credit and qualifications awarded by the UCO in line with the Expectations and Practices of the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, specifically those regarding assessment¹.
- 12.1.2 Boards of Examiners operate within the Board of Examiners Terms of Reference (or approved partner equivalent) which clearly specify the powers, authority and accountability within its remit.
- 12.1.3 All Boards of Examiners are accountable to the UCO's Academic Council; no recommendation for the progression of a student, award of academic credit or conferment of an award of the UCO may be made by anybody other than the appropriate Board of Examiners.

12.2 TYPES OF BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

- 12.2.1 The UCO has three types of Boards of Examiners that contribute to decision-making on student progression and awards:
- a) **Course Teams** that review interim (provisional) examination and course work results and approve them for publication.
 - b) **Pre-Boards of Examiners**, a non-decision-making Board that take place in advance of Boards of Examiners meetings and consider Course Team approved student award, progression, and assessment profiles and then make proposals for consideration by the Boards of Examiners in accordance with the UCO's or approved Collaborative Partner's regulations.
 - c) **Boards of Examiners**, the ultimate decision-making Boards that consider the results of assessments at all stages of a course, determine progression and recommend awards, including the classification of awards where appropriate.
- 12.2.2 All three types of Boards of Examiners operate within defined Terms of Reference to ensure that academic decisions are considered and ratified appropriately.

A) COURSE TEAMS

- 12.2.3 Course Teams review interim (provisional) examination and coursework results and approve them for publication.
- 12.2.4 If a particular assessment within any unit shows an anomalous range of grades (which may further lead to irregularity or aberration within the unit grades), the appropriate Course Leader and Unit Leader should consider the reason for the apparent anomaly and what adjustment to those grades might be recommended to the Board of Examiners.
- 12.2.5 Any proposed adjustments should then be discussed with the appropriate External Examiner and confirmed at the next Board of Examiners meeting.
- 12.2.6 Course Teams consider:
- a) Unit statistics which normally include the mean and standard deviation of the marks in each assessment.
 - b) The impact of any complaint that may impact negatively on a student's performance; where a complaint procedure is completed prior to a Board of Examiners, and is claimed to have

¹ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/assessment>

Academic Quality Framework 2023-2024 / Section 12: Boards of Examiners

impacted negatively on a student's performance, it is legitimate, where that complaint has been upheld through the UCO's complaints process, for the Board of Examiners to consider any impact of that complaint on the performance of the student (it is only after Board of Examiners confirmation that such consideration is confined to the academic appeal process). Complaints that have not been upheld (i.e. both those specifically not upheld, and those not yet decided) cannot be considered by Boards of Examiners.

- c) The impact of any action taken by the UCO or Partner that may impact negatively on a students' performance; where a member of academic staff believes that one or more students have been impacted by such action or by circumstances arising within the teaching and learning process (but excluding the conduct of examinations) other than personal circumstances formally processed by relevant Student Support staff (an example being unexpected disturbance of an examination, or an assessment profile that does not appear to have operated effectively etc.), this must be raised at the appropriate Pre-Board of Examiners by the relevant Course Leader (or equivalent).
- d) Whether the performance profile of a unit is at variance with the general performance of the cohort or reflects a continuing problem in the operation of the unit such that the grades may reasonably be held not to reflect satisfactory assessment of a unit as identified by the relevant Unit Leader to the relevant Course Team for consultation in advance of the Board of Examiners.

12.2.7 Course Teams will ensure that Boards of Examiners are made aware of any complaints or action that may have impacted on students' performance and of any variance in the general performance of a cohort. In all of the above cases:

- a) Boards of Examiners must consider the circumstances and their impact to determine whether there was material impact on a student's performance (e.g. in respect of their performance in other similar assessments and units).
- b) External Examiners must be part of the process of consideration of any alteration to be made to the expected outcome (e.g. an additional attempt allowed).
- c) The decision and the reasons must be recorded in detail to ensure that the basis for any changes made is clear.

B) PRE-BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

12.2.8 Pre-Boards of Examiners are held prior to each Board of Examiners' sitting, for both postgraduate and undergraduate courses, in order to prepare proposed decisions on the awards and course progression based on the student profiles and unit results which will be recommended to the Board of Examiners.

12.2.9 Pre-Board of Examiners also considers any legitimate Special Circumstances submitted and makes recommendations to the Board of Examiners in light of those circumstances. This is to ensure that students' circumstances are appropriately weighted and also to protect students' right to privacy by not discussing the case at the full Board of Examiners meeting.

12.2.10 Pre-Boards of Examiners are normally attended by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (or other appropriate senior academic staff), the Registrar, the Course Leader of the relevant course and a Student Support Representative (or Collaborative Partner equivalents).

12.2.11 Pre-Board of Examiners also considers the unit statistics which are to be presented to the Board of Examiners.

C) BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

Academic Quality Framework 2023-2024 / Section 12: Boards of Examiners

- 12.2.12 Boards of Examiners consider the results of assessments at all stages of a course and determine the progression of students and recommend awards to the Academic Council, including awards of distinctions or similar where appropriate.
- 12.2.13 The membership of Boards of Examiners should consist of one or more External Examiners attached to the courses under consideration and all members of academic teaching staff as appropriate.
- 12.2.14 The business of the Board of Examiners will be noted by the Registrar (or Collaborative Partner equivalent) who will also advise on matters of regulation.
- 12.2.15 The responsibilities of Boards of Examiners are:
- a) To ensure the assessment programmes enable students to demonstrate that the course learning outcomes have been met, and to make observations as appropriate to the Course Leader and other relevant staff.
 - b) To determine action to be taken where a student fails to complete all or part of the assessment for a unit and agree arrangements for the consideration of the performance of those students who have been reassessed, ensuring that External Examiners are appropriately involved.
 - c) To make recommendations on final awards for students within their remit; Boards of Examiners will report to the Academic Council on any matters of policy which may arise for the assessments and their conduct.
 - d) To formally record the reasons should Boards of Examiners recommend a different award from that estimated.
 - e) To consider issues raised at Course Teams and Pre-Boards of Examiners such as complaints, circumstances arising within the teaching and learning process and performance on profiles which are at variance with the general performance of the cohort.
- 12.2.16 In all the above cases Boards of Examiners must consider the circumstances and their impact and keep a full and definitive record of discussions.
- 12.2.17 All External Examiners present shall confirm their endorsement of decisions of final Boards of Examiners by signing final results lists.

12.3 COLLABORATIVE PARTNER BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

- 12.3.1 Collaborative Partners may operate to a schedule of variance regarding Boards of Examiners which is approved at Partner Approval. Where this is the case, the UCO will normally Chair Collaborative Partner Boards of Examiners to retain oversight and responsibility for the progression, award and classification decisions of students that study on courses that lead to a UCO award, and the Partner shall be responsible for the administration of Boards of Examiners.

12.4 MEMBERSHIP & TERMS OF REFERENCE OF BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

- 12.4.1 The Membership and Terms of Reference of Boards of Examiners stipulate the frequency and quorum of Board of Examiner meetings.
- 12.4.2 The Terms of Reference of Boards of Examiners of Collaborative Partners are approved at Partner Approval and are recorded on the Schedule of Variance for the Partner.
- 12.4.3 In all cases:

Academic Quality Framework 2023-2024 / Section 12: Boards of Examiners

- a) For courses delivered by the UCO, the Chair will normally be an External Senior Academic.
 - b) For courses delivered by Collaborative Partners that lead to a UCO award, the Chair will normally be the Partnerships Quality Manager or their nominee of appropriate seniority.
- 12.4.4 The Chair has overall responsibility for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are made with External Examiners, for chairing the meetings of Boards of Examiners and for monitoring all aspects of the examination process. They also ensure that appropriate weight is given to the comments of the External Examiners and confirm the final list of examination results.
- 12.4.5 The Secretary to the Board of Examiners is the Registrar (or Collaborative Partner equivalent) who is responsible for:
- a) Making appropriate arrangements for liaison with the External Examiners.
 - b) Prompt notification of the dates and times of Board of Examiner meetings to those required to attend.
 - c) The circulation of course assessment regulations, marking schemes used by internal examiners, the full draft mark sheet including a profile of the marks awarded to each student in each piece of assessed work and an analysis of the mean and standard deviation of the marks in each assessment and recommendations on decisions.
 - d) Taking accurate and comprehensive minutes of Board of Examiner meetings and recording decisions taken and any comments made.

12.5 BOARD OF EXAMINERS CHAIR'S ACTION

12.5.1 Chair's Action **may** be used for:

- a) The input of grades not available to a prior formal Board of Examiners at which the student and/or the unit were considered.
- b) Administrative correction of input and recording errors.
- c) Decisions regarding Special Circumstances recorded as identified by student support staff (or Collaborative Partner equivalent) as in process at the time of the Board of Examiners.
- d) Implementing academic appeal decisions reached through the UCO's or approved Collaborative Partner's academic appeals process.
- e) When a student completes their course of study (i.e. submits assessment) after the standard Board of Examiners schedule (although Chair's Action may only be used where the work involved has been subject to moderation and / or external examination to ensure that cohort standards are maintained).

12.5.2 In all cases, Chairs' Actions must be recorded (i.e. reasons for changes) and be noted at the next meeting of the Board of Examiners at which the decision should have been recorded (i.e. the Chair's Action has to be recorded at the next Board of Examiners meeting).

12.5.3 Every Chair's Action must also be recorded in the appropriate Course Team's records to identify the cause of any administrative delay and to provide a clear record demonstrating that any grade change is made on the basis of one or more of the above grounds and, where a student completes assessment outside standard schedules, to confirm that moderation and / or external examination has been conducted.

12.5.4 Chair's Action **may not** be used to:

- a) Decide the results of students or cohorts meeting outside the standard schedule.

b) Change the results of any student on the basis of appeal or complaint.

12.5.5 Once Chairs' Actions have been agreed and recorded in detail by the Board of Examiners, they should be submitted to the Chair of the UCO's Academic Council via the minutes of the appropriate Board of Examiners meeting, for ratification.

12.6 PRESENTATION OF DATA TO THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS

12.6.1 The Board of Examiners records its decisions on a series of summary reports and through minutes.

12.6.2 On each report the students are listed in rank order by name with the estimated outcome.

12.6.3 The Board of Examiners will focus on borderline students.

12.6.4 A complete assessment profile is provided for each student.

12.6.5 Where amendments are necessary, these are recorded by altering the decision by marking the appropriate result. These amendments must be made immediately after the meeting by the Secretary to the Board of Examiners and a report of amendments will be produced to be checked by the Chair and appended to the minutes of the meeting.

12.6.6 There are broadly six possible decisions that may be made by the Board of Examiners regarding a student's performance as follows:

P	Pass and free to progress on a course of study
DEF	Defer assessment(s) (indicating that a student has delayed their attempt of an assessment until the next scheduled assessment point).
REF	Refer assessment(s) (indicated that a student has failed their attempt of an assessment and is required to repeat the assessment at the next scheduled assessment point).
F	Fail (indicating that student has either left their course or is required to do so)
CP	Condoned Pass (indicating that the student has failed the assessment but meets the criteria within course progression criteria to be have the failed grade condoned)
NS	Non-Submission (indicating that the student has not submitted an assessment)
LS	Late Submission (indicating that the student submitted an assessment after the required deadline)
ABS	Absent (indicating that the student was not present for an assessment)

12.7 UNSCHEDULED BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

12.7.1 Unscheduled Boards of Examiners (in addition to those scheduled) must be conducted where a cohort completes its study at a time outside the standard Boards of Examiners schedule. They must be formed and operated in accordance with the UCO's Academic Regulations (AQF Section 7) (or approved Collaborative Partner variance to these Academic Regulations).

12.7.2 Unscheduled Boards of Examiners must be quorate and be preceded by standard arrangements for moderation and external examination.

12.8 CONFIDENTIALITY OF BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

- 12.8.1 All discussions of final judgements and decisions on the awarding of academic credit and qualifications awarded by the UCO at meetings of Course Teams, Pre-Boards of Examiners and Boards of Examiners shall be regarded as confidential, as will the minutes of Boards of Examiners meetings.
- 12.8.2 Details of the discussion and deliberation at Boards of Examiners meetings will not be disclosed to students, except in very exceptional circumstances and then only with the agreement of the Registrar (or Collaborative Partner equivalent).

12.9 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- 12.9.1 Any examiner who has family or other personal connection to or relationship with any student other than the normal professional relationship required by their role as an academic shall declare that relationship and shall take no part in any discussion relating to that student's performance.

12.10 DISCLOSURE OF EXAMINATION GRADES TO STUDENTS

- 12.10.1 It must be made clear to students that where grades have not yet been considered by a formal Board of Examiners that these grades are provisional, pending endorsement by the appropriate Board of Examiners.

12.11 APPEALS AGAINST DECISIONS OF BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

- 12.11.1 Academic appeals are the route by which students may seek reconsideration of the decision of a Board of Examiners. They are the only basis on which changes, other than the correction of administrative errors, may be made.
- 12.11.2 The criteria for appealing against a decision of the Board of Examiners are detailed in the UCO's Academic Appeals Policy² (or approved partner equivalent).
- 12.11.3 The UCO will not consider appeals based solely on a student's disagreement with the examiners' academic judgement.
- 12.11.4 Complaints upheld in respect of Board of Examiners' decisions already made are transferred to the UCO's or the approved Collaborative Partner's Academic Appeals process as appropriate for action.
- 12.11.5 Where a student lodges a complaint that is upheld after the relevant Board of Examiners and is found, after submission, to be a valid academic appeal, notification of the outcome of the complaint should be sent to the Vice-Chancellor (or approved Partner equivalent), who will initiate the Board of Examiners review as an outcome of an appeal.

AQF12: APPENDICES

Appendix Reference Number	Appendix Title
N/A	N/A

² <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>