Panels and Boards of Examiners Protocol

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Panels and Boards of Examiners Protocol

1   Introduction

The University organises Panels and Boards of Examiners to oversee the assessment process for taught degree students. This includes:

- The setting of assessments
- The consideration and verification of module results
- Confirming the progression, awarding and reassessment of students

Panels and Boards of Examiners are organised by each College. A Panel or Board of Examiners may be organised at programme, subject or department level, as agreed by a College's Vice Dean Education.

Panel and Board of Examiners Chairs are selected based on their expertise in University regulation and academic process, and that they are sufficiently independent from the subject/s being considered, so that there are no potential conflicts of interest.

Panels and Boards of Examiners are supported in their work by Taught Programmes Offices (TPO), the Assessment and Curriculum Office (ACO) for CHMLS, and the Quality Assurance Team.

This Protocol provides guidance on the operational and academic requirements for Panels and Boards of Examiners. All other rules relating to the assessment, progression and awarding of students, and directly applicable to Panels and Boards of Examiners are contained within:

- Senate Regulation 2 for undergraduate reassessment, progression and awarding requirements)
- Senate Regulation 3 for postgraduate reassessment, progression and awarding requirements
- Senate Regulation 4 for extenuating circumstances regulations

Guidance on the role of External Examiners is available in the University's External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy.

The University's Apprenticeship, TNE, and online programmes, and programmes delivered through the Brunel Medical School, may operate against a different process for Panels and/or Boards.

Further guidance is available from Quality Assurance via quality-officers@brunel.ac.uk

An overview of the Panel and Board of Examiners process is presented in Section 2.

2   Overview of the Panel and Board of Examiners Process

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┌─────────────┐                                    ┌──────────────┐
│ Marking and │                                    │  Assessment  │
│ moderation  │ ─────────────────────────────────▶ │samples shared│ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ┐
│  completed  │                                    │with External │           ┆
└─────────────┘                                    │   Examiner   │           ┆
       │                                           └──────────────┘           ┆
       ▼                                                   ┆                   ┆
┌─────────────┐                                            ┆                   ┆
│Panel of     │                                            ┆                   ┆
│Examiners    │ ◀ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─┘                   ┆
│Assessment   │                                                                ┆
│Integrity    │                                                                ┆
│Check        │                                                                ┆
└─────────────┘                                                                ┆
       │                                                                       ┆
 Module Grades confirmed    Students who achieved their award  ┌──────────────┐┆
       │ ───────────────── with no opportunity for reassessment│   Awarding   │┆
       ▼                    ──────────────────────────────────▶│process       │┆
┌─────────────┐                                                │students (no  │┆
│  Board of   │                                                │consideration │┆
│  Examiners  │                                                │  by Board)   │┆
│  paperwork  │                                                └──────────────┘┆
│  generated  │                                                       │        ┆
└─────────────┘                                                       │        ┆
       │                                                              │        ┆
       ▼                                                              │        ┆
┌─────────────┐                                                       │        ┆
│Programme    │                                                       │        ┆
│Lead and     │                                                       │        ┆
│Admin Review │                                                       │        ┆
└─────────────┘                                                       │        ┆
       │                                                              │        ┆
       ▼                                                              │        ┆
┌─────────────┐                                                       │        ┆
│  Board of   │ ◀ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ┆ ─ ─ ─ ─┘
│  Examiners  │                                                       │
│   Meeting   │                                                       │
└─────────────┘                                                       │
       │                                                              │
Student progression and award outcomes confirmed                     │
       ▼                                                              │
┌─────────────┐                                                       │
│   Results   │ ◀────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
│  released   │
└─────────────┘
```

3   Panels of Examiners

Role

To ensure the integrity and accuracy of the assessment process.

Responsibilities

Pre-assessment:

- To ensure appropriate internal and external scrutiny of assessment tasks, prior to them being issued to students.

Post assessment:

- To review and confirm grades/marks at the end of each Semester
- To determine the grades/marks for individual students who have attempted assessments within a modular/assessment block.
- To ensure the integrity and fairness of the assessment process, including marking, grading, and moderation.
- To take appropriate action if concerns arise regarding the integrity and fairness of an assessment.
- Publish and adhere to a schedule for the release of grades/marks to the Boards of Examiners.
- Maintain records of proceedings, ensuring transparency and accountability in decision-making.

Members

- Chair, appointed by the Vice Dean Education for a College
- Internal examiners, including relevant modular/assessment block leaders.
- Relevant Programme leaders
- Internal moderators
- External Examiners

Annual Tasks

A Panel of Examiners annual tasks are:

- The scrutiny and approval of assessment tasks prior to them being issued to students
- Confirming the integrity of assessment outcomes.

Scrutiny and Approval of Assessment Tasks

At the beginning of each academic year or semester, the Panel of Examiners will be responsible for ensuring that all assessments to be issued to students during a specific period are subject to internal and external moderation, prior to them being issued.

- Internal moderation process – scrutiny and approval by internal academic staff.
- External moderation process – scrutiny by an External Examiner. Please see the University's External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy for more detail.

Confirming the Integrity of Assessment Outcomes

Following each Semester/the completion of a designated assessment period, a Panel of Examiners will be responsible for ensuring that accuracy of all assessment results recorded within the University's Students Record Database (SITS). The process for a Panel confirming the integrity of assessment outcomes is as follows:

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┌─────────────────┐                              ┌─────────────────┐
│  Marking and    │──────────────────────────────│  Assessment     │
│  moderation     │                              │  samples shared │
│  completed      │                              │  with External  │
└─────────────────┘                              │  Examiner       │
         │                                        └─────────────────┘
         ▼                                                 │
┌─────────────────┐                                        │
│  Panel paperwork│                                        │
│  produced       │                                        │
└─────────────────┘                                   Concerns raised
         │                                                 │
         ▼                                                 │
┌─────────────────┐                                        │
│ Panel paperwork │                                        │
│ shared with     │                                        │
│ Panel via secure│                                        │
│ Teams folder    │                                        │
└─────────────────┘                                        │
         │                                                 ▼
┌──────────────┐  ┌─────────────────┐              ┌─────────────────┐
│ Programme    │─▶│  Module leads   │─Concerns─────│  Panel Decision │
│ Lead         │  │  conduct mark   │  raised      │                 │
│ oversight    │  │  integrity check│              │                 │
└──────────────┘  └─────────────────┘              └─────────────────┘
       ▲                   │                                │
       │                   ▼                                ▼
  Chair concerns   ┌─────────────────┐              ┌─────────────────┐
       └───────────│  Chair Review   │◀─────────────│  Action taken   │
                   └─────────────────┘              └─────────────────┘
                           │
                           ▼
                   ┌─────────────────┐
                   │ Results         │
                   │ confirmed in    │
                   │ SITS            │
                   └─────────────────┘
```
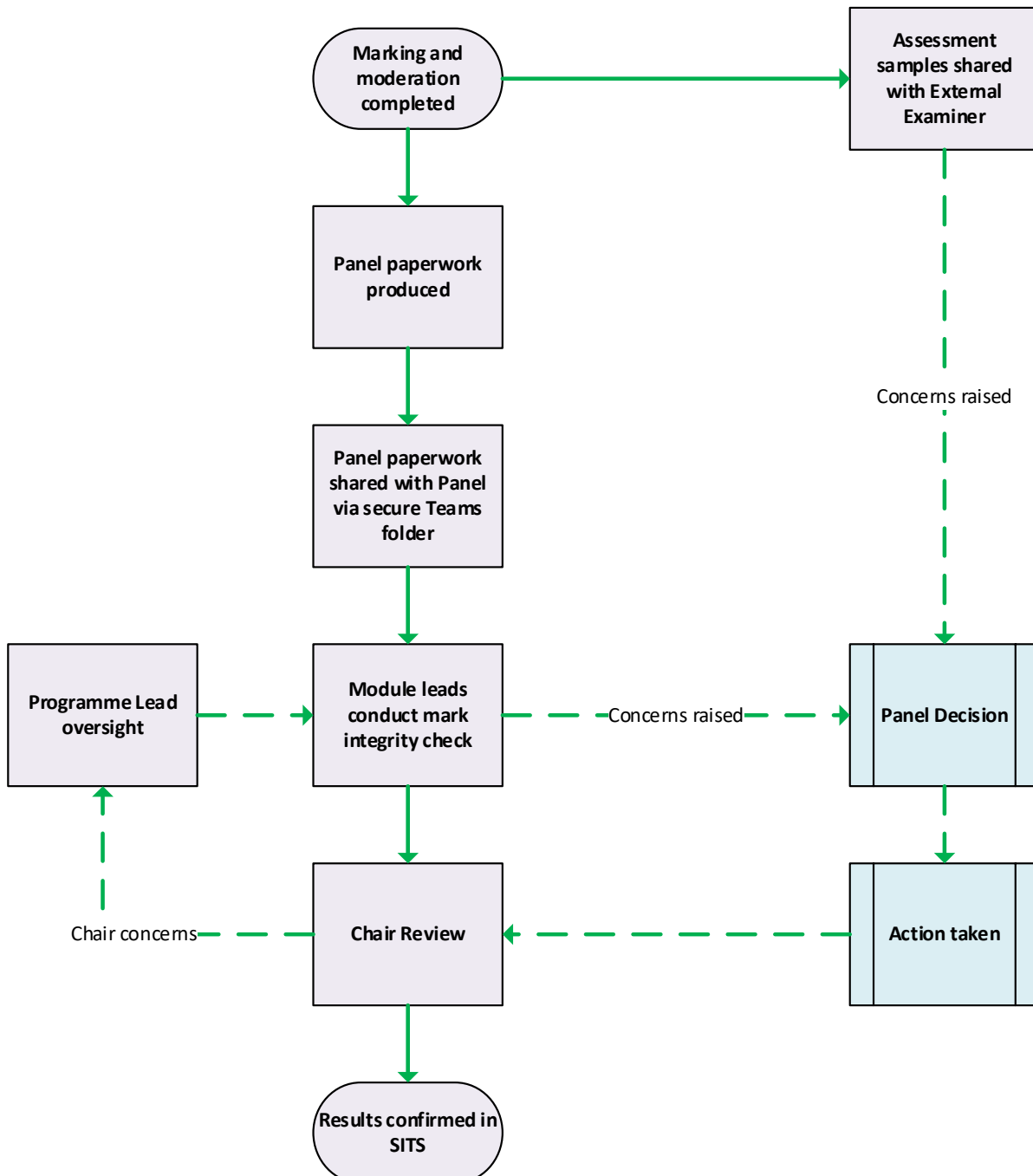
<u>Before the Panel</u>

Producing and Sharing Paperwork
Following completion of the marking and moderation process, the TPO/ACO will produce Panel paperwork via eVision and upload to a secure folder, shared only with members of the Panel. The TPO/ACO should then contact all members of the Panel informing them of the availability of the paperwork and the deadline for module leaders to conduct their assessment integrity check

Setting Deadlines
The deadline for modules leaders to complete their assessment integrity checks will be set by the Panel Chair, as advised by the TPO/ACO in the context of Board of Examiners and other relevant dates

<u>During the Panel Assessment Integrity Check</u>

Conducting an Assessment Integrity Check
Module leaders must conduct and confirm that assessment integrity check using the online form provided by the TPO/ACO. Completed forms will populate a tracking document reviewed by the Chair and TPO/ACO.

Addressing Concerns
Where a module leader feels that their module's grades are not ready to be passed to the Board of Examiners because they require further checking, consideration or discussion, this should be raised with the Panel Chair and relevant Programme Lead. The Chair will determine the most appropriate course of action, conferring with the full Panel where required.

Where a Panel of Examiners has <u>insufficient</u> confidence in the integrity and fairness of the outcomes of an assessment, it shall take appropriate action in order to achieve sufficient confidence. The Panel of Examiners may require one of the following:

- The reconsideration by assessors of the grades/marks for the complete cohort of students taking an assessment.
- Reweighting of assessment elements
- Discounting specific questions where they were unclear/incomplete, and recalculating results
- In exceptional circumstances – the Panel may scale grades/marks for a particular assessment and must then record the justification and rationale for the adjustment. Grades/marks for an individual student may not be adjusted, unless they have been wrongly recorded or additional information is presented.

Any actions taken by the Board must be recorded in the relevant Panel tracking document.

<u>After the Panel</u>

Chair Confirmation
Following the deadline for a Panel's assessment integrity check, the Chair of the Panel will check that all modules have been confirmed by module leaders, and also identify any issues that need to be addressed prior to module grades being Panel confirmed.

Applying Late Penalties
As per the University's Coursework Submission Policy, late penalties will be applied to students' assessment. This can only take place once the Chair has confirmed that Panel has completed its work

Record Keeping
The following documents form the record of a Panel of Examiners Assessment Outcomes Integrity Check:

- Official Panel paperwork exported from eVision
- Tracking document completed by each module lead, signed off by the Panel Chair.

Confidentiality

Panel of Examiners paperwork shall identify individual students by student number only. All papers giving grades/marks or recommendations or other information about a student's performance shall remain confidential, unless the Chair authorises otherwise.

The Responsibilities during the Panel of Examiners Process

A Panel of Examiners is responsible for confirming grades/marks for modular/assessment blocks and assuring the integrity and fairness of the assessment(s) leading to the grades/marks. The responsibility of Module Leads, Programme Leads and Chairs during the Panel of Examiners Process is as follows.

Module Leads
To confirm that module marks can be submitted to the Board of Examiners, on the basis that:

- there is no indication of any technical error which must be addressed immediately
- there is no indication of serious academic or regulatory concern which must be addressed immediately
- internal moderation has taken place appropriately

Programme Leads
To maintain oversight of the Panel process and module outcomes, and, where necessary:

- Identify any actions that should take place immediately
- Provide advice and guidance to module leads
- Address matters referred by the Chair of the Panel of Examiners

Chairs
Ensuring Panel of Examiners process (and post-processes) are properly executed in accordance with Senate Regulations, the relevant programme specifications, and this Protocol

TPO/ACO
To support the administration of a Panel of Examiners, including:

- To produce and share Panel paperwork with Panel members, including the spreadsheet used by module leaders to confirm their module.
- With the Chair, to set deadlines for completion of all work relating to the Panel
- To Panel confirm modules in SITS, following confirmation from module leads
- To work with Panel members ot address any issues
- To communicate with Panel members regarding the availability of Panel Paperwork and the date by which processes must be completed

The Role of External Examiners

The responsibilities of an External Examiner in relation to a Panel of Examiners are detailed in the University's External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy

4 Boards of Examiners

<u>Role</u>

Responsible to Senate for decisions to be taken about the academic progression of students, in accordance with relevant regulations and approved programme specifications.

<u>Responsibilities</u>

- On behalf of Senate, confirm awards based on approved regulations and programme specifications.
- Make decisions regarding student reassessment, including application of accepted extenuating circumstances.
- Ensure compliance with Senate Regulations and report irregularities to Quality Assurance as needed.
- Maintain confidentiality of proceedings while complying with academic appeals and professional suitability processes.

<u>Members</u>

- Chair, independent of programme delivery.
- Chair or nominated member of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel.
- Chair or Deputy Chair of all relevant Panels of Examiners.
- Programme or Course Directors.
- One or more External Examiners (attendance optional)

<u>Annual Tasks</u>

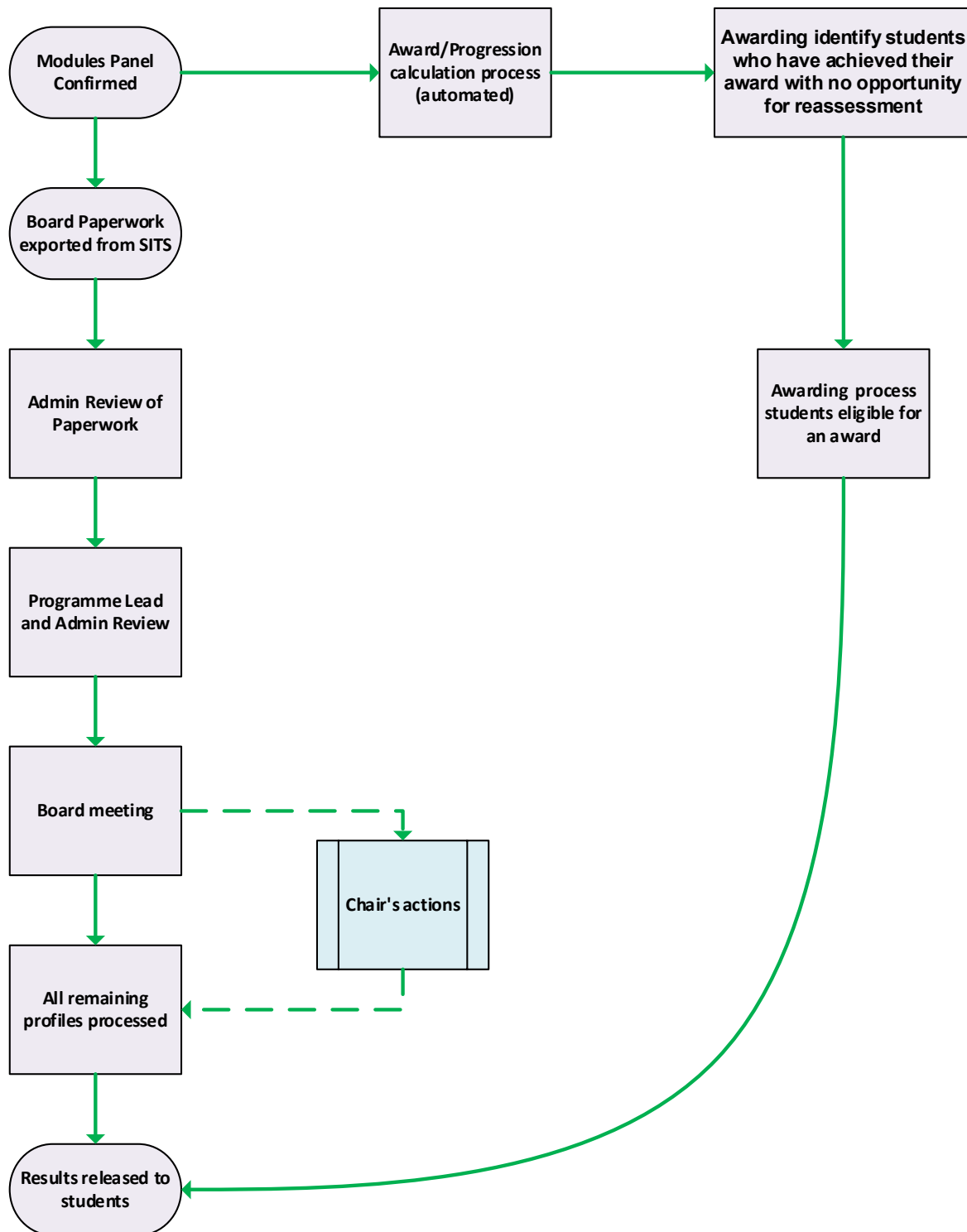A Board of Examiners annual tasks are to:

- Confirm the schedule of meetings
- Conduct Board of Examiners meetings
- Confirm student outcomes.

<u>Board of Examiners Meeting Process</u>

Board of Examiners meetings are where the Board, collectively, confirms outcomes for students. This includes the progression of students from one level to the next, the awarding of students, reassessment, and also where students are to be fail/withdrawn.

An overview of the process for a Board of Examiners meeting is presented on the next page.

Board of Examiners Process Overview

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┌──────────────────┐         ┌──────────────────┐         ┌──────────────────────┐
│   Modules Panel  │────────▶│ Award/Progression│────────▶│ Awarding identify     │
│    Confirmed     │         │ calculation process        │ students who have     │
└────────┬─────────┘         │   (automated)    │         │ achieved their award  │
         │                   └──────────────────┘         │ with no opportunity   │
         ▼                                                 │ for reassessment      │
┌──────────────────┐                                       └──────────┬───────────┘
│ Board Paperwork  │                                                  │
│ exported from SITS│                                                 │
└────────┬─────────┘                                                  ▼
         │                                                 ┌──────────────────────┐
         ▼                                                 │ Awarding process      │
┌──────────────────┐                                       │ students eligible for │
│  Admin Review of │                                       │     an award          │
│    Paperwork     │                                       └──────────┬───────────┘
└────────┬─────────┘                                                  │
         │                                                            │
         ▼                                                            │
┌──────────────────┐                                                  │
│ Programme Lead   │                                                  │
│ and Admin Review │                                                  │
└────────┬─────────┘                                                  │
         │                                                            │
         ▼                                                            │
┌──────────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐                           │
│  Board meeting   │┄┄┄┄┄▶│ Chair's actions│                          │
└────────┬─────────┘      └──────┬───────┘                           │
         │                       ┊                                    │
         ▼                       ┊                                    │
┌──────────────────┐◀┄┄┄┄┄┄┄┄┄┄┄┘                                    │
│ All remaining    │                                                  │
│ profiles processed│                                                 │
└────────┬─────────┘                                                  │
         │                                                            │
         ▼                                                            │
┌──────────────────┐◀───────────────────────────────────────────────┘
│ Results released │
│   to students    │
└──────────────────┘
```

<u>Before the Board</u>

Following each Panel of Examiners period, and alongside TPO/ACO staff preparing Board paperwork, the Awarding team will run daily reports to identify students who have a classified award and <u>no</u> entitlement for reassessment, and process their awards with no requirement for Board of Examiners consideration:

 Students who do not fall into this category will be considered as per the following process.

1. Board of Examiners paperwork will be generated by the relevant TPO/ACO member of staff and annotated with draft outcomes.

2. Annotated Board of Examiners paperwork will be shared with the relevant programme lead/s for review.

3. Programme leads, supported by the TPO/ACO, and where required, Quality Assurance, will review the relevant student profiles and
   o Determine reassessment opportunities for students who have not achieved their maximum award
   o Identify those students who are to receive an intermediate award or are to be fail/withdrawn
   o Identify and flag those students who require particular consideration and decision making by a Board of Examiners, due to the complexity of their profile or other matter.

Where determining student outcomes, a Programme Lead should, for any assessment subject to accepted extenuating circumstances, take action under Senate Regulation 4.40 and 4.41.

A Programme Lead may defer making a progression decision or award recommendation if they have insufficient evidence about a student's performance available to them.

The official and annotated (see point 3 above) Board of Examiners paperwork will be shared by the TPO/ACO with the Board, prior to the Board meeting.

<u>At the Board</u>

At a Board of Examiners meeting, Programme Leads are required to confirm to the Board:

- That all reassessment, fail/withdrawn, or other decisions presented in the paperwork have been made in accordance with University Regulations and academic policies, and the relevant programme specification.
- If there are any students that require consideration and decision making by the Board.

Where a Programme Lead refers a student to a Board of Examiners, the Board shall discuss and determine the most appropriate outcome.

The Board may query any decision of the Programme Lead as presented in the annotated Board of Examiners paperwork, even if the student is not explicitly referred to the Board for discussion.

Where deemed appropriate, College's may determine that all student profiles, with the exception of those already processed by Awarding, should be discussed by the Board of Examiners. However, Boards will still be required to meet all deadlines.

<u>After the Board</u>

Following a Board of Examiners, the TPO/ACO will process outcomes, inform students, and release results according to current practice.

<u>Confidentiality</u>

Board of Examiners paperwork shall identify individual students by student number only. All other information about a student's performance shall remain confidential, unless the Chair authorises otherwise.

<u>The Responsibilities during the Board of Examiners Process</u>

The responsibilities for Programme Leads, Chairs and TPO/ACO staff during the Board of Examiners Process is as follows.

Programme Leads
To determine outcomes for students, in collaboration with the relevant TPO/ACO member of staff, and recommend those outcomes to a Board of Examiners, including the presentation of any complex student profiles.

Chairs
A Board of Examiners Chair is responsible for ensuring that the proceedings of a Board of Examiners are carried out in accordance with this Protocol and relevant Senate Regulations and the approved programme specification.

The Chair will report to Quality Assurance in any case where irregularities occurred in the Board's procedures and which were not remedied at the time, or where one or more External Examiners expressed dissatisfaction with the proceedings or decisions or recommendations of the Board, as soon as possible after the meeting of the Board.

TPO/ACO
To support the administration and decision making of a Boards of Examiners, including:

- To produce and share Board paperwork with Programme Leads
- To work with Programme Leads to determine and record within the Board paperwork decisions regarding progression, reassessment, intermediate awards, fail/withdrawn decisions, and other matters
- To work with Programme Leads on identifying students that require particular consideration by a Board
- To share via a secure Teams folder all relevant Board paperwork with the Board, prior to the meeting.

QA
To review intermediate award and fail/withdrawn decisions resulting from a Board of Examiners.

<u>The Role of External Examiners at a Board</u>

Full guidance on the role of External Examiners as Boards of Examiners is detailed in the University's <u>External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy</u>.

<u>Chair's Actions</u>

Chairs' Actions (CAs) allow the Chair of the Board of Examiners to make decisions outside formal meetings in specific cases. They are used when decisions cannot wait for the next Board meeting, such as fulfilling a Board decision after receiving required evidence, resolving appeals, correcting administrative errors, or awarding intermediate qualifications to withdrawing students.

Requests are submitted via the 'Chairs' Action Facility' in eVision, and then reviewed by Quality Assurance, before being processed by Awarding. NB rescinding awards or mark amendments are submitted directly to Awarding.

All CA requests require a clear rationale, a student profile, and explicit approval from the Chair and, if necessary, the External Examiner. If approvals are given via email, they must include key details (student name, ID, programme, action, and award) and be uploaded in their original form without modification. CAs should only be used if the next Board meeting is more than six weeks away or in exceptional cases.

<u>Confidentiality</u>

The proceedings of a Board of Examiners shall be confidential to members of the Board, Senate and other members of staff permitted to attend the meeting concerned.

The Academic Appeals Committee may require that any material presented to the Board, or any notes or record of its proceedings, be made available to their members, or external stakeholders, to assist in academic appeals, misconduct and professional suitability processes.

Board of Examiners paperwork shall identify individual students by student number only. The Chair and the Chair of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel, or in their absence a named Panel representative, may have grade/mark sheets that contain student names.

All papers from Boards of Examiners shall be stored centrally by the Awards team on behalf of Senate.