



Guidance for Chairs of Panels of Examiners

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1. Introduction

Panels and Boards of Examiners are responsible directly to Senate and their actions are governed by [Senate Regulation 4](#). For Panels of Examiners please note in particular Senate Regulation 4.53 – 4.55.

A Panel of Examiners shall not confirm grades/marks for modular/assessment blocks until it is satisfied with the integrity and fairness of the assessment(s) leading to the grades/marks. Where the Panel of Examiners has insufficient 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 the reconsideration by assessors of the grades/marks for the complete cohort of students taking an assessment. Only in very exceptional circumstances may the Panel scale the 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.

As Chair of a Panel of Examiners ensure that you have read and understood the appropriate Senate Regulations and local assessment and programme regulations and that you have available to you and the panel:

- At Element Level
 - Assessment Specifications
 - Marking/Grading Criteria
- At Module Level
 - Modular/Assessment block syllabus
- At University Level
 - [Grade Descriptors](#)
 - [Senate Regulations](#) SR2/3, SR4
- eVision generated panel paperwork giving results for all modular/assessment blocks under consideration. Ensure that ALL of the eVision panel paperwork for each modular/assessment block is printed off (several tabs in each workbook) to allow full consideration of the statistical analysis of modular/assessment block results.

2. Membership of the Panel of Examiners

- Academic Staff (members)
- External Examiners (members)
- Department Administrators (non-members, there to provide administrative support)

(Remember advice can be sought from Quality Assurance (see section 10)).

As Chair of the Panel you should ensure that the Panel considers if the members who are present at the meeting collectively have sufficient expertise to enable the Panel to discharge all its duties. If the Panel believes that this is not the case then the Panel should be adjourned and a report made to the Academic Registrar and Director of Student Services by the Chair.

3. Purpose of the Panel of Examiners

- To ensure fairness to all students and each student.
- To ensure the rigour of assessment.

- To ensure the robustness of the results and decisions.
- To ensure the maintenance of standards.
- To verify and confirm the marks/grades for modular/assessment blocks.
- Not to look at individual students (unless error).
- Where appropriate to make specific recommendations to Boards of Examiners concerning particular assessments.
- To ensure that the grades assigned are a true reflection of student achievement.

4. During the Panel of Examiners' Meeting

- Remember that the award calculation uses Grades (not percentage marks) – Grades and especially Grade Bands for each student, for each modular/assessment block must be “right”.
- Panels of Examiners should exercise their collective academic judgement to ensure that the final grades for the modular/assessment blocks are appropriate, specifically considering:
 - Where there are multiple elements of assessment in a modular/assessment block it will be likely that rounding must be done just below grade borderlines, whether mark or grade entry.
 - SITS does absolutely no rounding – it is up to the Panel to make decisions based on academic judgement for its modular/assessment blocks – Boards of Examiners are not able to alter marks/grades once they have been Panel confirmed but a Board of Examiners may refer them back to the Panel if it not sure that due process has been followed by the Panel.
 - For example, should a calculated average of 69.8% for a particular module be confirmed as a B+ or should it be an A-, and very significantly is it in the B band or the A band? The answer depends on the Panel's academic judgement about the assessment of the modular/assessment block.
- Panels should consider the statistical distribution of marks/grades for each modular/assessment block to assure itself that such distributions are appropriate and acceptable.

It should be noted that Panels receive uncapped grades/marks so that the actual achievement can be considered and monitored. Any penalties will be applied after the Panel, but before the Board of Examiners.

5. Role of the External Examiner(s)

- External Examiners (EEs) have no overriding power over the Panel of Examiners – decisions of Panels of Examiners are collective decisions.
- Comments of External Examiners should always be given full consideration
- EEs do have:
 - Full membership of the Panel of Examiners
 - Influence over the Panel of Examiners (through their independence and their overview)
 - The ability to inform the further development of the programme and its modules, through their annual report
- See SR4.91 – 4.97 for additional details

6. Issues for Consideration by the Panel of Examiners

Topics for consideration

- Assessment design errors, for example:
 - Learning outcome coverage
 - Element weightings
 - Marking/grading strategy

- Academic Judgment:
 - The vast majority of the collective academic judgement is exercised in panels, not in Boards, of Examiners
- Moderation effectiveness:
 - Have due moderation procedures been followed?
- Extraordinary factors:
 - For example, were there any reported issues from the examination?
- Adjustment of Results:
 - Scaling should always be avoided
- Justification of Actions
- Recording of Decisions at all stages!

7. What is the role of the Chair?

- To orchestrate
- To arbitrate
- To guide
- To be knowledgeable
- To take corrective action when things go wrong
- To take responsibility when things go wrong – and you are responsible directly to Senate

8. After the Panel of Examiners' Meeting

- Confirmation of marks/grades on SITS for each modular/assessment block must be done after the panel.
- Unless all marks/grades are confirmed for every modular/assessment block, SITS/eVision will not generate the correct Board paperwork and the Board cannot take place.

9. Chair's Action

The Chair may need to take decisions on behalf of the Panel when a matter cannot wait until the next meeting. There are two types of Chairs Action:

- Pre-sanctioned by the Panel - where a meeting of the Panel knows that a Chair will need to make a decision on an issue that is discussed at the meeting. In this case the Panel will normally define the bounds of the Chairs' Action (e.g., if x then take action y else action z).
- Impromptu – where an issue not discussed by the last meeting of the Panel arises. In this case the Chair must act in good faith on behalf of the Panel following the precedents and general approaches of that body in order to ensure consistency and equity of treatment.

The Chair must ensure that all Chair's Actions are properly recorded and subsequently reported to the following meeting of the Panel and the relevant Board.

10. Help

Guidance on Panels, such as about the application/interpretation of the regulations, is available from Quality Assurance.

Queries relating to processing of results on SITS etc. should be directed to the Awarding Team.