Queen Mary University of London

Senate

Paper title	**Assessment Handbook 2026-27**
Outcome requested	The Senate is asked to **approve** the Assessment Handbook 2026-27. Specifically, the Senate is asked to: 1. review the Handbook (especially in reference to the points raised on this cover sheet, giving particular attention to the role of AI in marking). 2. approve the Handbook.
Points to note and further information	The Assessment Handbook supplements the Academic Regulations and codifies Queen Mary's policies and arrangements for assessment processes. Amendments for 2026-27 are limited, but include a small number of substantive changes, outlines below and explained in more detail in the attached 'Summary of Changes' document. In addition, there have been minor, non-substantive changes to consolidate and clarify the text. Further amendments of this type leading to a more substantive restructuring and redrafting of the document as a whole are planned for the next edition. • New procedures on the standard-setting of assessment.* • A new clause on the permitted role and scope of artificial intelligence in marking. The Senate is asked to direct particular attention to the wording of this clause. • New, University-wide procedures on mark scaling.* • An increase to the volume of assessment for each module requiring approval by an external examiner at the design stage (now a minimum 60% including all examinations, previously 50% including all examinations).* • Clarification that samples of <u>all</u> elements of assessment for a module require approval of the marking, through sampling, by an external examiner. • Changes to the appointment criteria for external examiners, allowing limited additional flexibility in the appointment of externals from the same institution, and requiring that new externals demonstrate evidence of their pedagogic experience demonstrate recognition of their teaching, either through a formal qualification or through membership of the HEA.* • A new expectation that the contract of an external examiner will be terminated if they fail to submit a report on two occasions.* * These changes were considered and approved by the EQSB in the course of 2025-26 and – as agreed by the EQSB – have now been written into the Assessment Handbook to take effect from 2026-27.
Questions to consider	Is the Senate satisfied with the changes outlined above? In more general terms, is the Senate satisfied that the text of the Assessment Handbook is clear, and covers all relevant points?

	The Senate is asked to focus particular attention on the new clauses around use of AI in marking and feedback, and the requirement for all samples of the marking for all assessments to be reviewed by external examiners.
Regulatory/statutory reference points	OfS B Conditions of Registration, especially B4 (regulatory) UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Assessment (advisory) Queen Mary University of London Academic Regulations 2025-26 (1.8): *"The Senate delegates authority for the consideration of achievement, progression, awards, and other related matters for taught programmes to the Subject and Degree Examination Boards. More details are available in the Assessment Handbook, which is approved by the Senate."*
Strategy and risk	No specific risks in terms of the content – although there are links to the OfS Conditions of Registration, generally only minor changes are proposed to what is an existing set of policies that are known to be compliant with the Conditions. Failure to have approved academic policies and regulations that articulate academic expectations and standards, and mechanisms for their measurement and defence, would be a breach of the OfS conditions of registration. Aligns with 'Education and the Student Experience' in the 2030 Strategy.
Reporting/ consideration route for the paper	EQSB (May 2026) (considered and endorsed) Senate (June 2026)
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Assessment Handbook 2026-27
Summary of changes

Section 3: Setting assessment

Standard-setting (3.5-3.9)

A new section of text, addressing the need for SEBs to ensure that assessments are designed and calibrated at the correct level of difficulty for the disciplinary area and FHEQ level.

This text was approved by the Education Quality and Standards Board in April 2026.

Section 5: Marking Policy

Artificial intelligence and marking (5.4-6)

New clauses, intended to clarify the permitted scope and limitations of the use of AI to support marking. These are deliberately relatively high level, and link to other files and policies that are regularly updated. It is anticipated that, as this field develops, these clauses will be subject to additional updates for future editions:

> "5.4 Staff may – within the limits of this Policy - use artificial intelligence to assist with marking and providing feedback to students, but marks and feedback must not be awarded directly or solely by AI. AI is a tool to support markers in making their decisions, which must be based on academic judgement. The marker remains fully accountable for all marking and feedback decisions.
>
> "5.5 AI-supported marking may only be used where the Subject Examination Board Chair has been informed in advance and is in agreement that its use is appropriate. The SEB and its Chair are responsible for monitoring and recording where and how AI is used to support marking.
>
> "5.6 AI-supported marking may only be used where the AI tool is approved for use at Queen Mary, and where its use fully complies with the University's policies on AI and IT, including but not limited to data protection, privacy, and information security. Its use must also align with the requirements set by the relevant Faculty and School or Institute, and with the University's expectations for the use of AI in education."

A long-standing clause addressing assessments that are marked automatically by computer (typically where there are clear right and wrong answers) has also been updated to explicitly reference AI and the continued need for humans in the loop:

> "5.42 Electronic marking refers to cases where marking is completed automatically, generally by a computer or AI system. The human marker remains accountable for the final award of marks, and results of electronically marked assessments should be checked by the SEB for item difficulty and discrimination. Missing data points shall be checked against the original forms. Any items that do not perform correctly should be reviewed, with the possibility of scaling or exclusion of the question."

Mark scaling (5.54-98)

A substantive new set of procedures on mark scaling have been added, to address situations where there is a need to adjust marks across a cohort where an issue with the design or difficulty of an assessment is identified.

Queen Mary has not previously had a single scaling policy, and SEBs have operated local arrangements. The new procedures ensure a level of institutional consistency and robust consideration.

These procedures were developed by the EQSB Assessment Sub-Board and approved by the EQSB in April 2026 for inclusion in the Assessment Handbook 2026-27.

Section 8: External examining

Approval of assessment tasks by external examiners (increase to threshold) (8.9.ii)

Assessments totalling a minimum 60% of each module must be approved by external examiners before students attempt them (including all examinations)

This is an increase from the previous minimum figure of 50%, and was approved by the EQSB in April 2026. It reflects changes in assessment design in recent years, with fewer modules that have one very heavily weighted assessment and one or more 'minor' elements in favour of two or more significant but fairly equally weighted elements. The change ensures thorough consideration of all significant elements, to provide a better experience for students and a robust test of the quality and standards of the assessments and , further supporting alignment and compliance with OfS Condition B4.

External examiner appointment criteria (8.14 and appendix 5)

Revised appointment criteria (Appendix 5) were approved by the EQSB in April 2026. These include two notable changes:

1. New external examiners must demonstrate recognition of their teaching, either as a formal qualification or through membership of the HEA.

2. The provisions around the appointment, or succession, of externals from the same institution have been revised to allow a small degree of flexibility for exceptional cases while maintaining a meaningful variety of viewpoints.

Termination of an external examiner's contract where they do not submit reports (8.23)

Queen Mary already has provisions to terminate an external examiner's contract where there is a breakdown in the working relationship and where the external fails to perform their duties. An additional clause has been added with an explicit expectation that an external who fails to submit an annual report on more than once occasion should have their contract terminated. This was approved by the EQSB in April 2026.

Approval of marking by external examiners (clarification) (8.33 and 5.7)

Samples of marked assessments for each module must be approved by external examiners as part of the marking process. The main detail of the provision is covered at 8.33, but it is also referenced in the Marking Policy at 5.7.

Specifically, this is a reminder that an illustrative sample of submissions for *all* marked elements of assessment should be considered by an external rather than a selection (for example, a sample limited to the examination or two a single element).

The policy aligns with ongoing changes to assessment design, with fewer modules that have one very heavily weighted assessment and one or more 'minor' elements in favour of two or more significant but fairly equally weighted elements. The change ensures thorough consideration of the marking of all significant elements, to provide a robust test of the quality and standards of the assessments, further supporting alignment and compliance with OfS Condition B4.

New appendices

Three appendices on external examining have been added to the Assessment Handbook: the revise appointment criteria outlined above, the pre-existing external examiner fee calculation guidance, and a new appendix setting out detailed operational guidance for SEBs on external examining.

Other changes

Minor amendments to drafting have been made throughout the Assessment Handbook. These are not substantive, and either serve to consolidate and clarify the text, or to update terminology, titles, and style to reflect current usage.

Queen Mary University of London
Assessment Handbook 2026-27

Queen Mary
University of London

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1. Introduction

Scope

1.1 The Assessment Handbook provides the regulatory framework, policy, and procedures for the assessment of all taught students (and research students taking taught modules). It is designed to ensure consistent approaches to the management of academic standards.

1.2 The Assessment Handbook contains useful advice and information for all staff involved in the assessment of students, including academic and administrative staff. It does not extend to postgraduate research programmes.

1.3 The Assessment Handbook should be used as a companion document to the Academic Regulations. It should also be used alongside the Assessment and Feedback Strategy, which focuses on pedagogical issues. The Academic Regulations (including previous iterations) and other policy documents, can be found on the Governance and Legal Services (DGLS) website.

1.4 The Assessment Handbook is approved by the Senate.

1.5 The following are common acronyms used in the Handbook and in assessment at Queen Mary:

- DGLS Directorate of Governance and Legal Services
- DEB Degree Examination Board
- EC/ECs Extenuating circumstance(s)
- PG/PGT Postgraduate/Postgraduate taught
- SEB Subject Examination Board
- TNE Transnational education
- UG Undergraduate

1.6 In a situation where external factors mean that Queen Mary cannot, for operational reasons, deliver the provisions of the Assessment Handbook exactly as written, the University may approve reasonable temporary alternative measures provided that those are compliant with the regulator's conditions of registration and are designed to protect the student experience and to maintain academic quality and standards.

Further information

1.7 Staff comments or queries on the Assessment Handbook may be directed to Governance and Legal Services. The Handbook is written for staff, but if a student has a query then they should contact their academic school or institute.

1.8 The following external sites hold information applicable to the sector more generally. Queen Mary is not responsible for the content of external websites:

- The Office for Students (OfS)
- The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)
  - Quality Code
  - Subject benchmark statements
  - The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (FHEQ)
- The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education
- Advance HE

Assessment calendar 2026-27

1.9 The assessment calendar details key dates and deadlines including the windows in which Subject Examination Board meetings can take place, the dates of the Degree Examination Boards, and deadlines for mark entry and submission of examination board documentation. The assessment calendar is published on the DGLS website.

2. Assessment framework and delegations

Degree awarding powers

2.1 Queen Mary also possesses and exercises independent degree awarding powers, and also holds delegated authority to make awards in the name of the University of London. All new cohorts are registered for Queen Mary awards unless individual programme/award regulations specify otherwise.

Management of academic standards

2.2 Responsibility for the management of academic standards is delegated to the Senate. The Senate delegates authority for the consideration of awards, progression, and student achievement to the examination boards. The application of this authority is specified in the Academic Regulations.

2.3 The Office for Students (OfS) sets Conditions of Registration that include Conditions relating to assessment. Queen Mary is required to adhere to all of those Conditions. Queen Mary also aligns its practices for the management of academic standards and the assessment of students with good practice guides published by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), in its Quality Code for Higher Education.

Examination boards

2.4 Queen Mary operates a two-tier system of examination boards: Subject Examination Boards (SEBs) and Degree Examination Boards (DEBs). The terms of reference and membership of Subject and Degree Examination Boards are included in the Assessment Handbook.

2.5 SEBs agree module results and failure, student progression, and extenuating circumstances claims. They make recommendations to DEBs on awards, classifications, retakes/first takes, and requests for the suspension of regulations. SEBs meet in February (associates), June (main UG boards, PG resit/progression), August/September (UG resit/progression), and October (main PG boards).

2.6 DEBs consider and agree recommendations for awards, classifications, and retakes/first takes. Progression and module marks are implicitly endorsed by DEBs. DEBs consider recommendations for the suspension of regulations and must endorse these requests if they are to be considered by DGLS. DEBs ensure consistency and fairness between SEBs and the proper application of regulations; an external member may sit on a DEB to help meet these aims. DEBs meet in June/July, and October.

Relationship between examination boards and other committees of the Senate

2.7 Programme and module proposals and amendments are considered by the Academic Programmes Board and/or the relevant Education Committee (or equivalent). Changes to the Academic Regulations and other institutional governance and policy are considered by the Senate. Task and finish groups may be established to work on specific assessment projects and make recommendations to the Senate. There is more information on the Senate and its committees on the DGLS website.

Delegated authority

2.8 Authority for the award of degrees and management of academic standards is delegated through a clear cascade from the Senate. The full framework of these delegations is in the Academic Regulations; this includes delegations to Heads of Schools and Institutes.

2.9 Heads of Schools/Institutes will normally appoint nominees for procedures such as authorising interruptions of study, and investigating academic misconduct and disciplinary cases. Further advice on appropriate delegations of authority can be sought from DGLS.

Academic Regulations

2.10 The Academic Regulations set out common rules for the management of academic standards and form the basis of Queen Mary's contract with students. In publishing the Academic Regulations, Queen Mary makes a clear statement on the ways in which it assesses the achievement of academic standards and the bases for the conferment of awards.

2.11 The Academic Regulations are amended annually and issued with guidance identifying changes from previous iterations. The majority of regulations apply to all students. Examples of regulations that may not normally be amended during an individual student's period of registration include those on progression, award, and duration of study.

2.12 Advice for staff on the application and interpretation of the Academic Regulations can be sought from Governance and Legal Services. Students should consult AskQM their school/institute, or the Student Advice Centre.

Queen Mary Academic Credit Framework

2.13 The Queen Mary Academic Credit Framework provides a structure for all Queen Mary programmes leading to an award of Queen Mary or the University of London. The Credit Framework informs curriculum design and structure, and the ways in which Queen Mary understands and expresses its academic standards. The Credit Framework is reflected in the Academic Regulations and in programme and module regulations.

Assessment requirements for modules, programmes, and awards

Modules

2.14 Assessment requirements (including weightings and reassessment details) for every module are laid out in the module specification. These are agreed through module approval as part of the academic development processes, information on which is published by DGLS.

2.15 Students will be informed of the assessment requirements for each module at the start of the academic year. Only approved assessment methods can be used in the processing and agreement of results. Rarely, it may be necessary to make minor amendments to module assessment in the course of the academic year due to unforeseen circumstances. In this situation, advice must always be sought from DGLS.

2.16 All elements of assessment are categorised as one of the following types:

- Examinations and timed assessments:
    - Centrally timetabled and administered examinations:
        - In-person written (EWR).
        - In-person computer-based (ECO).
        - Remote computer-based (EOL).
    - School/institute timetabled and administered examinations and assessments (EXN).

- Coursework (CWK): An assessment that takes place during the module.
  To include but not limited to: essays, reports, presentations, poster presentations, seminar/tutorial work, in-class or in-semester tests, mid-sessional examinations, project proposals, gobbet exercises and homework sheets.

- Practical (PRA): An assessment that requires the application or demonstration of knowledge and/or skills/competencies in a practical context.
  To include but not limited to: laboratory work, computer work, performances, fieldwork, Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) and oral assessments in languages.

- Dissertation/project (DIS): An extended piece of independent study that is assessed by the output report or long essay.
  To include but not limited to: dissertations, research projects and project reports.

- Professional capability (CAP): An assessment of a student's professional attitude and conduct to meet the requirements of a Professional and Statutory Regulatory Body.
  To include but not limited to: assessment of behaviour and conduct (primarily for primary qualifying medical and dental qualifications but may be appropriate in other programmes).

- Final mark (FIN): Used to denote module marks awarded for by non-Queen Mary modules.
  To include: intercollegiate and study abroad modules.

2.17 It is good practice to review module syllabi and requirements annually. Any changes must be made by a specified deadline well before the start of the academic year, using Curriculum Manager. These shall be considered for approval by the relevant school/institute Education Committee (or equivalent). The exact processes and levels of approval required depend upon the nature of the amendments; further details are available online, and from Governance and Legal Services.

2.18 When changes to modules are approved, the responsible school or institute must communicate this to other schools whose students take the modules as part of their programmes of study.

2.19 Modules may specify prerequisites. These may be generic (e.g. 'A-Level French or equivalent'), or specific modules. Prerequisites can be waived on the direct or delegated authority of the Head of School/Institute; this is normally delegated to programme directors or module organisers.

2.20 Each module is 'owned' by a single Subject Examination Board (SEB), which is responsible for setting assessment and agreeing results. Teaching may be delivered by other schools or institutes where appropriate and necessary, though this is rare.

2.21 Students frequently take modules belonging to multiple SEBs. SEBs must ensure that all results are submitted to SITS by the published deadlines, and that the dates of other SEBs are noted. The responsible SEB must inform those other affected SEBs if any results will not be submitted by the deadline. Failure to submit marks by the deadline risks the other SEB making incorrect decisions.

Programmes

2.22 Programme requirements are detailed in the programme specification and regulations, agreed through the programme approval and amendment processes. Programme specifications include learning outcomes, and how those are to be assessed. Programme specifications also include details of modules that are core, compulsory, and elective for the programmes, and the patterns through which these will be studied; this is known as the 'diet'. Students should be informed of their programme requirements at the start of their studies.

2.23 Any regulations that deviate from the Academic Regulations must be stated in the programme specification. Deviations (known as special regulations) are subject to approval from the Education Programmes Board and/or the Academic Quality and Standards Board (as appropriate) and will be granted only in exceptional cases, e.g. where professional accreditation requirements apply. Guidance on programme approval and amendment is available online, and from Governance and Legal Services.

2.24 Changes to the programme structures are normally phased in so that changes only affect new cohorts of students. This is not always possible however and, where there is a clear rationale, changes may be proposed during the course of a student's studies. The student body must be consulted in these instances to take account of their concerns. Once this consultation has taken place, changes to programme specifications must be approved by the appropriate authority in line with Queen Mary's academic development procedures.

2.25 Should changes to programme specifications be required for one year only, or should they only relate to a specific group of students, then a suspension of regulations may be sought to permit students to take a diet of modules that is not formally approved. For example, should a module be unexpectedly cancelled at late notice, a suspension of regulations should be sought to permit students for whom the module was compulsory to take an alternative module.

Awards

2.26 Award and progression requirements are specified in the Academic Regulations (Sections 4 (UG) and 5 (PGT)). Where non-standard requirements have been approved, these are detailed in the Special Regulations (Sections 6 and 7).

3. Setting assessment

General

3.1 Assessments are set and approved as part of the module approval process, and details (including reassessment information) should be communicated to students at the start of the academic year.

3.2 Every element of assessment must be tied to specific learning outcomes for the associated module. The marking scheme for the assessment should likewise measure the learning outcomes, though where these are 'generic', the assessment marking schema may likewise be generic. The most commonly used marking schemes/systems are criterion referencing, model answers, and skeleton answers. Queen Mary recognises the need for variations in practice in the use of marking schemes to take account of discipline-based differences.

3.3 All assessments should be designed in line with the listed procedures, which are published on the DGLS website. The Queen Mary Academy can provide additional advice on effective assessment design:

i. AI in Assessment Position Paper
ii. Assessment and Feedback Strategy
iii. Principles of Assessment Design

3.4 Schools and institutes shall ensure that their programmes provide students with practice in the required assessment techniques and familiarity with the marking schemes for major components of assessment.

Standard-setting

3.5 Standard-setting ensures that assessments are designed and calibrated at the correct level of difficulty for the disciplinary area and FHEQ level. It forms a core element of assessment design and approval, and SEBs are responsible for confirming that assessments meet the required academic standards.

3.6 SEBs should maintain clear standard-setting procedures that reflect expectations at different academic levels and for different assessment types. The standard Queen Mary marking schemes, and any discipline-specific adaptations, should be referenced during assessment design and approval.

3.7 SEBs and Module Organisers should determine a normal expected mark range for each assessment, informed by a longitudinal review of outcomes from comparable assessments and modules at the same FHEQ level. Where results fall outside the expected range, further analysis is required to determine whether the pattern is academically justified or whether scaling should be considered.

3.8 For very small cohorts, predetermined ranges and statistical comparisons may have limited value. In such cases, contextual information and academic judgement should guide interpretation.

3.9 Effective standard-setting provides the primary safeguard against inappropriate assessment difficulty and reduces the need for corrective measures such as scaling.

Setting examinations

3.10 SEB Chairs are responsible for overseeing the production and agreement of examination papers. For this purpose, SEBs operate Scrutiny Sub-boards which ensure that paper are set at appropriate level of difficulty, that the questions (and answers) are fully correct, and that no errors in spelling or grammar are present.

3.11 SEB must follow the Queen Mary procedures and policies defined in the Production of Examination Papers document, circulated by the Directorate of Registry Services.

3.12 Examination papers (both questions and solutions) shall be prepared by internal examiners in accordance with Queen Mary's approved minimum standards and template. This guidance is set by the Examinations team in Academic Registry and circulated to examination boards each semester. Papers shall be reviewed by scrutiny committees (sub-committees of SEBs) before being sent to the appropriate external examiners for review and approval. All examination papers require external examiner approval.

3.13 SEBs must ensure that papers are entirely free of grammatical and typological errors before sending them to external examiners. SEBs must supply marking schemes to external examiners at the time of sending the assessment itself. These can (and should) still be amended following comments from the externals or discovery of alternative solutions. Any comments or amendments suggested by the external examiner must be responded to and acted upon.

3.14 Should an external examiner refuse to agree an examination paper, a report must be submitted to the Chair of the DEB, and to the Head of Academic Quality and Standards (or nominee). The Chair of the DEB shall rule on whether or not the paper should be approved, or if amendments are needed. This decision shall be based upon consideration of both the external examiner's objections, and the viewpoint presented by the school or institute responsible for setting the examination paper.

3.15 The final copies of examination papers shall be approved by SEB Chairs before the question paper is submitted to Registry Services by the set deadline.

3.16 Examination papers for all sittings of examinations must be set, scrutinised and approved according to the approved procedures and to the required minimum standards. External examiners must review and approve all examination papers (including resit papers just for resitting students), even where individual questions have been agreed separately in the past.

3.17 SEBs are strongly encouraged to approve more than one paper per module; the second paper can be used for resits/first sits, or as a fall-back if a problem is discovered with the first paper or there is a security breach. If the second paper is not used, it can be used the following year provided that the syllabus has not changed.

3.18 All specified provisions for the setting and approval of examination papers apply equally to online and in-person examinations. Additionally, online and computer-based examinations must be designed carefully and in accordance with current Queen Mary policies on online and computer-based examinations, including policies on format and duration.

Setting In-course assessment

3.19 In-course assessment refers to all module assessment except for examinations. The following assessment categories used at Queen Mary are considered as in-course assessment: coursework, practical assessment, professional capability, and dissertation/project. Definitions of the assessment categories are detailed in section 2 of the Assessment Handbook.

3.20 Examples of good practice and approaches for designing in-course assessment can be found in the Assessment and Feedback Strategy and the Queen Mary Academy webpages.

3.21 Where agreed with the external examiner, in-course assessment should be reviewed and approved by external examiners to ensure assessment is equitable and entirely free of grammatical and typological errors. Where modules are assessed solely by in-course assessments, SEBs are strongly encouraged to discuss the assessment design with the external examiner, as well as student performance and results. SEBs must supply marking schemes to external examiners at the time of sending the assessment itself. These can (and should) still be amended following comments from the externals or discovery of alternative solutions.

Setting in-class tests

3.22 The dates of tests shall be released at the start of the academic year, and the conditions under which the tests will take place shall be communicated to students in writing in advance of the test.

Setting dissertations and projects

3.23 Titles for individual dissertations and projects shall be agreed between students and supervisors. Titles may be selected from prescribed lists or derived from discussions. Marking schemes tailored to the specific module learning outcomes shall be made available to students at the beginning of the academic year (as is the case for all modules).

3.24 It is strongly recommended that supervisors and students keep summary records of supervision meetings. These are helpful for monitoring progress and can be useful in allegations of inadequate supervision.

Setting oral examinations

3.25 Oral examinations shall only be used as approved elements of module assessment for taught programmes, with detailed and criterion-based marking schemes, Oral examinations cannot not be used as an unofficial assessment method to determine outcomes in borderline cases.

Assessment for resitting students

3.26 Students shall be informed of all arrangements for assessment, including reassessment, when they commence modules for the first time. These arrangements must be in accordance with the approved module specifications and regulations.

3.27 Reassessment is ‘synoptic’, or ‘standard’ (i.e. not synoptic). Where synoptic reassessment is used, students failing the modules take a single assessment weighted at 100 percent for the resit (rarely, and where approved in the module specification, synoptic reassessment may comprise more than one element of assessment). Where standard reassessment is used, students shall resit the failed elements of assessment, and the marks for any elements that were passed on the first attempt shall stand.

3.28 Students may need to resit out of attendance. While resitting out of attendance, they are not enrolled, and have limited entitlement to use campus facilities (libraries, computer rooms, schools and institute facilities, laboratories, etc) (Academic Regulations, Section 2).

3.29 Where a student has resit attempts (in or out of attendance) these must be taken at the next normally available assessment opportunity (Academic Regulations, Section 2).

3.30 Students are automatically registered for resit and first sit assessments. Students may opt out, but in doing so they forfeit any remaining attempts to pass the relevant module, and students resitting out of attendance may have their registration terminated (Academic Regulations, Section 2).

3.31 Resitting students are only permitted to attempt the assessment again; they are not entitled to attend teaching for the modules.

3.32 Resitting students will be assessed on the curricula from when they first attempted the module in attendance. Examiners must consider the specific needs of resitting students when setting formal assessment.

3.33 The elements to be reassessed for each module and student shall be agreed by SEBs. The SEBs' decisions must not contravene any previously published information on resit arrangements.

Resitting assessment that requires regular attendance

3.34 Where assessments require regular attendance (such as laboratory sessions, or field work), students cannot resit and must retake the module(s). However, in common with all retakes, this must be explicitly agreed by the DEB. Further information on retaking modules is provided in Section 7.

Resitting in-course assessment

3.35 Where students (i) fail to meet prescribed in-course assessment hurdles, or (ii) pass examinations but not whole modules, it is possible to resit only the in-course assessment (where standard reassessment is used). In these cases, examination marks shall be carried forward and combined with the new in-course assessment marks. The marks from the best attempt shall be used where students fail again.

3.36 In-course assessment for resitting students shall be designed so that it can be completed and submitted without full attendance, and shall be based upon the curricula that students studied when they last took the module in attendance. Module organisers are advised to contact resitting students to ensure that they are aware of the in-course assessment requirements and deadlines. Deadlines for submission shall match those for the current cohort of students.

3.37 Resitting students are eligible to take in-class tests in reassessment, as these only require attendance on a single day. Resitting students shall sit the assessment at the same time as the current cohort and shall be informed of the test dates as soon as those are agreed.

Resitting dissertation and projects

3.38 Where students fail dissertations or projects and do not meet their award requirements, SEBs shall determine whether a resit or a retake for the module should be awarded. The dissertation or project is often core (must be taken and passed), and in those cases it is impossible to meet the award requirements without passing the module.

3.39 Resitting dissertations and projects requires students to rework and improve their original submissions to bring them up to a passing standard; for projects, only the report may need improvement. Students shall receive minimal support (no more than two supervision sessions are advised). As for all resits, the module mark achieved shall be capped to a bare pass.

3.40 Retaking dissertations and projects requires students to undertake new pieces of work, with full supervision and full access to facilities. Students pay pro-rata fees and their marks are capped. Permission to retake any module can only be granted by DEBs, on the recommendation of SEBs. Further information on retaking modules is provided in Section 7.

Resitting examinations

3.41 Resitting students shall always be assessed on the curriculum from when they last took the module in attendance. Therefore, all examination papers shall be prepared with resitting students in mind.

3.42 If the curriculum for a module has changed to such an extent that resitting students may not be expected to answer the examination paper set for the current cohort, then either, (i) a separate examination paper must be set; or, (ii) a limited number of specific questions to be answered only by resitting students shall be included within the examination paper.

3.43 Changes to the format of examinations do not necessarily require separate papers for resitting students; however, this *is* required for changes to the examination duration.

Alternative assessment

3.44 The conditions for and procedure to follow for approving a one-off exception to set an alternative assessment for an individual student are defined in Academic Regulations, as follows:

Exceptionally, Queen Mary may use its discretion to use alternative methods to those stated in the module specifications for individual candidates, either when making assessment arrangements for students with registered disabilities (on the advice of the Disability and Dyslexia Service), or when setting a resit or first sit assessment, subject to the following conditions:

i. The alternative assessment must involve some additional assessment activity that constitutes a justifiable and efficient assessment of the intended learning outcomes;
ii. A full statement of the alternative assessment methods and the reasons for their use is made in a Chair's action form from the SEB Chair, submitted to DGLS.

Further information may be sought from Governance and Legal Services. Governance and Legal Services must always be consulted in advance where a SEB intends to employ alternative assessment.

3.45 As detailed in the Academic Regulations, a SEB must submit a Chair's action request to DGLS. This must provide details of the alternative assessment (sequence number, description, and weighting) and provide reassurance that the alternative assessment adequately tests achievement of the relevant learning outcomes. DGLS will communicate the outcome to Academic Registry and work with them to set up the alternative assessment within SITS.

3.46 If it is anticipated that a module may regularly require a form of alternative assessment linked to the practicalities of delivery rather than individual student circumstances then this alternative should be set out in the module specification. Assessment should be inclusive by design, and if it is found that there is a regular need to use alternative assessments to accommodate the individual needs of students then consideration should be given as to whether the approved assessment scheme remains appropriate.

3.47 The arrangements described here relate to one-off requests that generally are not foreseen. Where a student requires and is entitled to longer term adjustments in assessment, the Reasonable Adjustments in Academic Assessment Policy applies.

4. Conduct of invigilated examinations

4.1 This chapter details arrangements for the delivery and conduct of invigilated examinations. The student-facing Examination Regulations for Students are published by Registry Services.

Official examination periods

4.2 Queen Mary's hours of operation stipulate our teaching periods, holidays, and examination periods. These dates are approved by the Senate and can be found online. Students are required to be available during those periods, and commit to this as part of enrolment when they confirm acceptance of the Academic Regulations.

4.3 Queen Mary has three main examination periods, in January, April-June, and a resit period in August. There are also separate dates for MBBS and BDS examinations. The dates are included in the assessment calendar.

Examination and assessment access arrangements

4.4 Students with specific learning differences may apply to sit examinations with access arrangements, formerly known as 'special arrangements' (Academic Regulations, Section 3). Applications are considered by the Disability and Dyslexia Service, which will agree the arrangements and notify the student, the school or institute, and Registry Services or the FMD Student Office. Applications for access arrangements must be submitted by the date specified in the Assessment Calendar.

4.5 Access arrangements are intended for students with existing or long-standing circumstances, and as a result may also apply outside of the examination periods. Emergency and *ad hoc* requests just before the examination period will be considered, but no guarantee can be given that students can be accommodated. For example, should a student break their writing arm just before the examinations and request an amanuensis (scribe), it may not be possible to grant this. Where this is not possible, the student should not attempt the examination and instead should submit an extenuating circumstances claim form; if the SEB accepts the claim, the student may be granted a first sit at the next available opportunity.

4.6 Further advice on access arrangements and support for students with disabilities or specific learning differences can be sought from the Disability and Dyslexia Service: www.dds.qmul.ac.uk. The Amanuenses and Readers Policy is published in the DGLS Policy Zone.

Religious holidays

4.7 Students may inform Queen Mary, using a standard form, of any religious holidays that fall during the official examination periods that will prevent them from attending. This form must be submitted by the deadline specified in the assessment calendar. Efforts will be made to accommodate these requests so far as is practicable, but this cannot be guaranteed. This procedure applies only to specific dates in the year, not to normal religious practice.

4.8 Students are expected to participate in teaching, learning and assessment activities during Queen Mary's approved term and semester dates and hours of operation (Academic Regulations, Section 2). If the occurrence of a religious festival or holiday will result in absence, students may make formal requests to their Heads of School or Institute to permit the absence. If students miss any assessments as a result of approved absences then a best effort approach should be taken to permit late submission, or to rearrange tests or laboratory sessions.

Examination timetables

4.9 Students will receive personal examination timetables approximately one month before the main official examination period is scheduled to begin (Academic Regulations, Section 3). These will be provided electronically through MySIS, and students must confirm that they have read the 'Examination Regulations for Students' document before accessing the timetables. Students not in attendance receive their timetables by post; it is the responsibility of students to ensure that address details are correct.

4.10 Students with specific learning differences, or SpLDs, (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia) may be granted additional time in invigilated examinations. The amount of additional time allotted to each student shall be based upon the recommendations made by the University's Disability and Dyslexia Service. The Disability and Dyslexia Service will consider the content of the diagnostic evidence presented by the student when making their recommendations. The scripts of students with specific learning differences shall be identified to markers.

4.11 Students are responsible for informing themselves of examination dates, times and venues. This includes responsibility for routinely checking for timetable amendments and making enquiries if they think there are any errors or omissions (for example, incorrect module registration) (Academic Regulations, Section 3).

4.12 Forgery of an examination timetable is academic misconduct (Academic Regulations, Section 3).

Clashes

4.13 Queen Mary completes a detailed examination scheduling process using data from individual records in SITS; examination clashes are therefore rare. However, where clashes are unavoidable, affected students shall sit both examinations on the same day and be quarantined during the interim period (Academic Regulations, Section 3). Quarantine arrangements are the responsibility of the academic school or institute.

Invigilation arrangements

4.14 All in person examinations are monitored by invigilators. Invigilators are paid members of staff who are hired for the role and given professional training. Staff and students from academic schools and institutes may not act as invigilators. The prescribed ratio is one invigilator to 50 students, including one senior invigilator for each venue. The senior invigilator is ultimately in control of the conduct of the examination. Queen Mary's Chief Invigilator is the Director of Registry Services.

4.15 An internal examiner must be contactable for the entirety of each invigilated examination to provide any clarifications needed through the senior invigilator. Senior invigilators will note any queries in their reports. Clarification of examination questions is limited to the correction of misprints or typographical errors, and announcements will be made to all students. See also Academic Regulations, Section 3.

4.16 Separate invigilation arrangements may apply for examinations in the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry.

Problems with examinations

4.17 SEB Chairs and examiners shall be notified of problems with examinations through invigilators' reports; more details are provided below.

Emergency evacuations

4.18 In the event of an emergency evacuation, the intention is always to resume the examination. Students shall be kept under examination conditions (silence, and no consultation of unauthorised materials) by the invigilators and Registry Services staff, and question papers and answer scripts shall be locked in the room by the senior invigilator. Where disruptions last longer than 15 minutes, or where 25 percent or less of the examination duration remains, examinations shall be abandoned. The Chief Invigilator shall rule on whether examinations should be abandoned or resumed (Academic Regulations, Section 3).

4.19 When examinations are abandoned, this shall affect only those students whose venue was abandoned. If a cohort is split between two venues and only one is affected, the scripts of the students in the unaffected room will stand. The SEB must make allowance for the fact that not all students in a cohort took the same examination in these instances.

Suspected examination misconduct

4.20 Details of alleged examination misconduct shall be included in invigilators' reports. These shall be provided to SEBs for information only, as the resulting investigations shall be conducted by DGLS.

4.21 Where examiners suspect that misconduct has been committed but not detected during the examination, they shall inform their SEB Chair. The SEB Chair shall return the script, with a report, to DGLS for further investigation.

Invigilator and student reports

4.22 Senior invigilators are instructed to make reports on each examination. These reports are sent to the relevant SEB chair as soon as possible after the examination. The reports note any problems that arose in the conduct of the examination, with the question paper, and issues raised by students.

Consideration of reports by Subject Examination Boards

4.23 Each SEB will receive invigilators' reports for its examinations. These reports shall note where issues arose in examinations and the nature of those issues, and also where examinations ran smoothly. SEBs shall note the reports and agree actions where required.

4.24 A student unable to raise a report with the invigilator, or who finds an issue in an un-invigilated examination, should raise the issue with their School/Institute in writing as soon as possible after the assessment.

4.25 Appropriate actions for SEBs to take in response to invigilator and student reports will vary depending on the situation; these may include discounting one or more questions where these are deemed invalid. It is paramount that SEBs ensure that all students are treated equitably, and that all marks awarded are true reflections of achievement. Marks cannot be awarded in compensation for problems with examination questions, though such issues can be taken into account when calculating marks; all such actions must be included in the SEB's report to the DEB.

Archiving examination scripts

4.26 Answer scripts, absence forms, attendance sheets, and a final set of marks for each module shall be stored in labelled boxes (or an electronic equivalent), arranged by module and then by Student Identity Number. Schools and institutes shall retain scripts for around four weeks after results have been released by Registry Services to allow for any administrative checks, and to provide feedback; this may be requested by students, or by DGLS as part of an academic appeal case. After this time, schools and institutes must make arrangements for boxes of scripts to be delivered to Academic Registry. These shall be archived and kept for a period extending until five-years after the end-date of the student's programme of study for a period of five years after the end date of a course or for a period of one calendar year from the date of the examination, depending on whether or not the assessment falls within the work retained by the University to comply with the Office for Students' requirement for providers to retain "appropriate records of students' assessed work for such regulatory purposes for a period of five years after the end date of a course".

5. Marking Policy

Scope

5.1 Marking is the process by which numerical marks and/or letter grades are assigned to a student's assessment to recognise the level of achievement. It is a key quality assurance mechanism that ensures assessment outcomes are fair, valid, and reliable and in turn ensures that classification and award outcomes achieve those same qualities.

5.2 This Marking Policy applies to the marking of assessments for all taught modules delivered by Queen Mary University of London. This includes the assessment of taught modules (though not to other assessments) delivered as part of postgraduate research programmes.

Definitions

5.3 The following terms are relevant to this Policy:

- Confirmed marks: marks which have been approved by a Subject Examination Board (SEB) and are considered final.
- Degree Examination Board (DEB): a Faculty- and University-level assessment committee.
- Double marking: marking of the same assessment twice, by different markers.
- External examiner: an educationalist and/or subject expert external to Queen Mary who completes a series of defined tasks to assure the quality of marking, assessment, and some related processes. An external examiner does not generally act directly as a marker.
- Formative assessment: an assessment for which the mark does not count towards the module mark.
- Internal examiner: a person who conducts marking, double-marking, or moderation. An internal examiner is not necessarily a Queen Mary employee; their 'internal' status is defined in opposition to the separate role of 'external examiner'.
- Moderation: review of a defined sample of marked work to confirm the quality of marking, which may result in mark adjustments if an issue is identified.
- Peer assessment: assessment of students by other students in their cohort.
- Provisional marks: marks that have not yet been considered by a SEB and therefore are potentially subject to change.
- Scaling: adjustment of marks where there was an issue with the assessment design.
- Standard-setting: Calibration of the difficulty level of an assessment, in line with expectations for the discipline and the academic level of the module.
- Subject Examination Board (SEB): a school/institute-level assessment committee.
- Summative assessment: an assessment for which the mark counts towards the module mark.

Artificial intelligence and marking

5.4 Staff may – within the limits of this Policy - use artificial intelligence to assist with marking and providing feedback to students, but marks and feedback must not be awarded directly or solely by AI. AI is a tool to support markers in making their decisions, which must be based on academic judgement. The marker remains fully accountable for all marking and feedback decisions.

5.5 AI-supported marking may only be used where the Subject Examination Board Chair has been informed in advance and is in agreement that its use is appropriate. The SEB and its Chair are responsible for monitoring and recording where and how AI is used to support marking.

5.6 AI-supported marking may only be used where the AI tool is approved for use at Queen Mary, and where its use fully complies with the University's policies on AI and IT, including but not limited to data protection, privacy, and information security. Its use must also align with the requirements set by the relevant Faculty and School or Institute, and with the University's expectations for the use of AI in education.

Stages of marking

5.7 All assessments must be first marked by an appropriate marker in line with the appropriate marking criteria.

5.8 To assure standards in marking, a minimum 50 percent of the assessment for each module must undergo one of five approved quality assurance mechanisms. This comprises 50 percent of the elements of assessment by weighting, not 50 percent of the students or 50 percent of the submissions for each element. For example, where a module's assessment comprised 'Essay 1' (40%) and 'Essay 2' (60%), the marking of 'Essay 2' would have to be quality assured. The SEB would also have the option of applying the quality assurance mechanism to 'Essay 1'. Where two (or more) elements of assessment from the same module will be subject to the process, the SEB does not need to use the same mechanism for both elements.

5.9 Once this quality assurance is complete the Subject Examination Board (SEB) should send samples of marked work from all elements of assessments to a formally appointed external examiner for review. The external examiner will conduct an objective review and either endorse the marking or raise queries or concerns with the SEB. External examiners cannot change individual marks. Additional details on the role of external examiners in marking is given in Section 8 of the Assessment Handbook.

5.10 The SEB will consider the quality assured marks and, if it is fully satisfied, will approve the marks for the assessments.

Responsibilities

Markers

5.11 Markers are responsible for assigning marks and grades to students' assessments in accordance with the published marking criteria, and for providing feedback on students' work.

5.12 Marking must be completed within a defined period:

i. for all assessments other than those specified in point ii, below, marking must be completed to allow for provisional marks to be returned to students within 15 working days of the assessment date or deadline. "Working days" are defined as weekdays, excluding institutional closure periods and bank holidays. Where a student makes an accepted late submission, Queen Mary will make a best effort approach to return provisional marks within 15 working days of the submission or as soon as possible thereafter.

ii. the following must be marked in time to process the marks for *either* the scheduled release of provisional results *or* the examination board, whichever is sooner and as defined by the Head of School/Institute Director:

a. summative assessments taking place in designated examination periods; and,
b. projects with no immediate feed-forward point; and,
c. dissertations.

Feedback and provisional marks for these assessment types will be released after the end of the examination period.

5.13 Heads of School/Institute Directors are responsible for monitoring and enforcing this policy. A Head of School/Institute Director may agree a turnaround time longer than 15 days as a reasonable adjustment within the scope of the Equality Act (2010); this should not normally exceed 20 working days. Reasons for a longer turnaround should be recorded by the Head of School/Institute Director for future review.

5.14 The Head of School or Institute Director must agree and record any exceptions where it is not possible - for good reason, in the view of the Head of School or Institute Director - to return marks within the defined period; in such cases, students should be advised of the delay and of updated expected return dates.

5.15 A marker who has good reason to believe that academic misconduct is likely to have occurred will immediately report the case to the Academic Misconduct Officer in line with the Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy.

Subject Examination Boards (SEBs)

5.16 The SEB is responsible for ensuring that marking is completed in accordance with this Policy. The SEB Chair – acting on the authority of the Head of School/Institute Director and with the delegated authority of the Senate – oversees this work and must satisfy the SEB and the Degree Examination Board (DEB) that all specified requirements are met. The Chair works with other SEB members and academic and professional services staff to achieve this aim.

5.17 The SEB, led by its Chair, must ensure that:

a. Marking criteria are in place for each assessment.
b. First markers and (where appropriate) second markers or moderators are assigned to each assessment.
c. Assessment submission/completion dates are set for students.
d. Deadlines for the completion of marking and the return of marks are set for markers, based on those assessment dates.
e. Marking is completed to at least the minimum standards set out in this Policy.
f. Mark distributions are reviewed at assessment and at module level to ensure that they are appropriate.
g. Action is taken to address any anomalies in the results where appropriate to do so.
h. Satisfactory assurance is provided to the DEB that marking has been conducted in accordance with this Policy.

Heads of Schools/Institute Directors

5.18 The Head of School/Institute Director appoints the SEB Chair, through the delegated authority of the Senate, and is ultimately responsible for the actions of the Chair and the Board.

5.19 The SEB Chair will not generally have management responsibility for staff and will refer any management matters to the Head of School/Institute Director, or their nominee, for action.

Degree Examination Boards (DEBs)

5.20 A DEB has oversight of all SEBs under its authority and considers the assurances on marking presented by the SEBs. Should a DEB have any concern it may require that actions be taken to remedy that concern and, where the DEB deems it appropriate, make the concern known to appropriate University authorities.

Appointing markers

5.21 Markers are assigned to assessments and modules by the relevant SEB.

5.22 A marker must have an appropriate level of relevant subject knowledge for the assessment in question. The SEB and its Chair determine the appropriate level of knowledge and whether potential markers meet that threshold.

5.23 All markers must complete training in marking at Queen Mary or be deemed as having knowledge and experience equivalent to that delivered through the training. The Queen Mary Academy offers online training in marking. Markers must also be inducted into local marking procedures for the discipline including understanding normal grade distributions. Markers acting as moderators must be specifically trained by the school/institute and inducted into its moderation procedures and norms. The SEB and its Chair determine – based on Queen Mary and school/institute requirements – the appropriate level of training and whether potential markers meet that threshold.

5.24 Teaching assistants (including postgraduate research students), staff on honorary contracts, and externally appointed staff may act as markers where they have appropriate knowledge, training, and experience as determined by the SEB and its Chair.

Marking schemes and assignment of marks

5.25 Marking must be criterion-referenced (rather than norm-referenced), and each mark awarded must be an accurate representation of the student's attainment as demonstrated in the assessment under consideration. Marking must never seek to represent a student's potential.

5.26 Criterion-referenced marking schemes must be developed with reference to the module- and programme-level learning outcomes that the assessment is designed to test. Markers use academic judgement in interpreting those schemes to assign marks to assessments.

5.27 Schools and institutes apply marking criteria with reference to their academic discipline, and generally have detailed criteria designed for their local context. These pay due regard to the academic level of the module, the nature of the assessment, and the subject area. In the absence of a specific marking scheme, default to the relevant generic Queen Mary scheme occurs.

5.28 Discipline- and assessment-specific marking schemes must align with Queen Mary's generic schemes. Certain programmes or modules may diverge from the normal assessment criteria; where this is the case this must be explicitly brought to students' attention; this is particularly common for collaborative programmes involving Queen Mary and another institution.

5.29 Marking schemes must ensure the effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner that appropriately reflects the level and content of the module.

5.30 The marking scheme must be communicated to students clearly and in advance of the assessment to make clear what is being assessed and what is expected.

5.31 Undergraduate generic marking scheme:

Grade	Mark range	Descriptor	Corresponding award classification
A	70.0 – 100.0	Excellent	First Class
B	60.0 – 69.9	Good	Second Class (Upper Division)
C	50.0 – 59.9	Satisfactory	Second Class (Lower Division)
D	40.0 – 49.9	Pass (threshold pass)	Third Class
F	0.0 – 39.9	Fail	Fail

5.32 The standard pass mark for assessments on certain undergraduate programmes is 50.0; these include the MBBS, the BDS, the BSc Oral Health and the FdCert Clinical Foundation Studies. Additionally, all undergraduate modules at academic level seven have a pass mark of 50.0. In both cases there is no D grade, and the F grade extends from 0.0-49.9.

5.33 Prior to 2024-25 the undergraduate scheme included an E grade (40.0-44.9) alongside a smaller D grade banding (45.0-49.9). Results for modules on which students were first registered prior to 2024-25 will reflect that previous scheme.

5.34 Postgraduate taught generic marking scheme:

Grade	Mark range	Descriptor	Corresponding award classification
D	70.0 – 100.0	Excellent	Distinction
M	60.0 – 69.9	Good	Merit
P	50.0 – 59.9	Satisfactory	Pass
F	0.0 – 49.9	Fail	Fail

Rounding of marks

5.35 Minimising rounding ensures that marks are accurate reflections of student achievement, and only of achievement. Assessments should be marked to integers; if the overall mark for a single assessment is generated from multiple component marks (for example multiple questions on an exam paper) then the overall assessment mark should be rounded up (from ≥.50) or down (from <.50) to the nearest integer). Module marks and the Classification Mark are held to one decimal point and are generated automatically based on the assessment marks.

Peer assessment

5.36 Peer assessment provides valuable experience in assessment literacy and may be used either as formative assessment or as evidence to inform a summative mark awarded by a Queen Mary marker. Clear marking criteria and expectations for feedback must be made known to students. Direct peer assessment under which students directly award final summative marks to each other is not permitted.

Quality assurance mechanisms

5.37 Having established which elements of assessment will be reviewed, the SEB selects and applies one of five approved quality assurance mechanisms: blind double marking, open double marking, mark checking, electronic marking, or moderation.

5.38 More than one of the five methods may be applied within a single assessment provided they are applied consistently across the cohort. For example, an examination paper might employ double marking for long-form prose questions and mark checking for short-answer questions.

a. Dissertations and project reports must be double marked (through blind or open double marking). Mark checking, moderation, and electronic marking are not available. This is due to the differences between individual students' dissertations and projects; they can cover wide-ranging topics, and typically employ larger pools of markers than other modules. Therefore, moderating a sample would not guarantee a consistent level of scrutiny across the module as it would for other assessments.

b. Where 'live' assessments such as presentations are selected for quality assurance the SEB should apply double marking (conducted live). Second marking of a recording is permitted where the second examiner is not able to attend. Mono

Blind double marking

5.39 Blind double marking is the independent assessment of the work by two markers, where neither sees the comments or marks of the other until the whole procedure has been completed.

Open double marking

5.40 Open double marking is the assessment of the work by two markers, where the second marker can see the comments and marks of the first marker.

Mark checking

5.41 Mark checking is available only for assessments with very detailed marking schemes that allow little or no discretion to the marker (for example, assessments with right and wrong answers). The checker reviews the first marker's work to ensure that all questions have been marked, that they have been marked correctly, and that the marks have been correctly totalled.

Electronic marking

5.42 Electronic marking refers to cases where marking is completed automatically, generally by a computer or AI system. The human marker remains accountable for the final award of marks, and results of electronically marked assessments should be checked by the SEB for item difficulty and discrimination. Missing data points shall be checked against the original forms. Any items that do not perform correctly should be reviewed, with the possibility of scaling or exclusion of the question.

Moderation

5.43 Where moderation is employed, a sample of student submissions for the assessment is reviewed by a second individual, the moderator.

5.44 The moderator does not have the power to change individual marks as this would be unfair to the students not included in the sample. Instead, the moderator may:

a. approve the marking for the assessment, for all students;

b. approve the quality of the marking, but deem it either too lenient or too stringent across the cohort in the marks awarded, recommending that marks for the entire cohort be either raised or lowered by an appropriate amount;

c. approve the quality of the marking for part of the cohort, but deem that the full range of marks has not been used effectively, recommending that marks falling within certain affected range(s) be either raised or lowered by an appropriate amount;

d. reject the marking as unsound, requiring re-marking and quality assurance of the full set of assessments.

5.45 Where moderation results in recommendations to adjust the marks, this may be either by a percentage or by a set number of marks, depending on the case under consideration. The adjusted marks will be presented to the external examiner and to the SEB, together with an explanation of the need for and the nature of the adjustments.

5.46 Moderation adjustments may be applied by question or by paper as appropriate. Where different questions in a paper are marked by different individuals, it may be that only one question requires scaling or re-marking. In that situation, all answers to the affected question shall be considered for adjustment or re-marking. Where an entire paper is marked by a single marker the total mark for the paper will normally be considered for scaling/re-marking, unless there is a clear justification for targeting specific questions.

5.47 The minimum moderation sample size is 10% of the submitted assessments, with a minimum ten assessments. Where there are ten or fewer submissions in total the SEB should not use moderation and should use another of the quality assurance methods.

a. SEBs should apply judgement to determine an appropriate sample size, beyond the minimum 10%. The nature of an assessment and the number and experience of first markers may warrant larger sample sizes.

b. Samples should include assessments from across the range of performance from each first marker, including failed work and work from each grade band.

c. The moderator should have access to all assessments, including those that do not form part of the sample, and to the full spread of marks. Detailed analysis of module marks and outcomes is available in the Module Results Analysis app in PowerBI.

5.48 Moderators may complete additional tasks such as (for example) reviewing all borderline marks (this cannot be limited to those in the sample), where specifically agreed by a SEB and where clear criteria are approved for the purpose.

Multiple markers or marking pairs

5.49 Where, for one assessment, multiple markers are used, the SEB must ensure that appropriate measures are undertaken to ensure consistency of approach between markers. Examples of appropriate measures include:

a. Where moderation is employed, representative samples from each marker should be included in the marking sample. If the moderator discovers an issue with the marking then they may isolate any adjustments to assessments marked by a particular first marker.

b. Where double marking is employed and there are multiple pairs of double markers the SEB should ensure that each pair is marking to the criteria consistently with other pairs. This may be achieved through a form of moderation, either actively sampling the work of each pair or by reviewing the overall marking distributions of each pair to identify outliers.

Marking trails

5.50 SEBs must ensure that there is a clear marking trail of comments and notes that can be used by a reviewer to understand and justify how marks were assigned. This is particularly important for external examiners, as evidence in the consideration of appeals that may challenge the marking procedure, and in ensuring compliance with the Office for Students' regulatory obligation to retain appropriate records of assessed work for a period of five years after the end date of a programme.

5.51 The marking trail is not intended as a student feedback mechanism but may serve a supporting role in providing feedback.

5.52 The marking trails of the first marker and the second marker or moderator must be clearly distinguishable, to allow a reviewer to understand who made which comments and notes.

5.53 Where moderation is used the SEB must agree and implement a means to ensure that there is clear written evidence of the moderation process. In most cases this will exist separately to the student assessments, as not all submissions will have been part of the moderation sample.

5.54 As part of the marking trail, markers must record the total mark for the assessment and the breakdown of marks by individual question or section.

Reconciliation of marks between markers

5.55 Where double marking is used the first and second marker may differ on the marks for individual students' submissions. Where this is the case they should attempt to agree upon a mark. Where they cannot reconcile their mark:

a. the first and second markers may agree to split the difference, rounding to the nearest whole number, if the difference is of 10% of the total marks available or fewer.

b. if the difference is greater than 10% or if the markers do not agree to split the difference then the assessment will be marked for a third time, and that third mark will stand. The third marker will have access to the marking trails of the first two markers. The third marker should be independent and experienced, with appropriate subject knowledge. They will normally be an internal examiner but may be an external examiner (by specific agreement with the external examiner, as this is not part of their core responsibilities).

Mark scaling

5.56 This section sets out how and when mark scaling may be applied to ensure that marks reflect academic standards and are comparable across modules and cohorts. Scaling must only be applied in line with these institutional scaling procedures.

5.57 Mark scaling adjusts marks across a cohort where an issue with the design or difficulty of an assessment is identified. It is distinct from moderation, which addresses issues with the quality of marking rather than the assessment design itself.

5.58 Scaling may be required when marks fall outside typical distributions and evidence suggests that they do not accurately reflect achievement against academic standards. Examples include:

- errors in an assessment brief;
- questions or tasks containing incorrect information or set at an inappropriate level;
- an assessment found to be too difficult or too easy overall;
- disruption during an assessment.

5.59 Distortions may appear only in parts of the mark distribution. For instance, unusually high marks may result from insufficient challenge in specific questions, even where mid-range marks look typical. Scaling may therefore be non-linear and applied only where the distortion occurs.

5.60 Scaling is an exceptional measure. Most assessments should not require scaling in any given year. It is used only when issues in assessment design or standard setting become apparent after students have completed the assessment. Its purpose is to ensure fairness within and across modules, so that a given mark represents a comparable level of achievement regardless of module, cohort, or discipline.

5.61 Academic reasons for scaling fall into two main categories:

- issues arising from the assessment itself (for example, recognising afterwards that its design was flawed, or an incident occurring during the assessment). If a *marking* problem is identified, that should be addressed by moderation;
- contextual academic factors such as an overly ambitious syllabus or inexperienced teaching.

5.62 Where such issues occur, the SEB Chair must take immediate steps to prevent recurrence in future cohorts, alongside applying any necessary scaling for the present cohort.

5.63 Guidance on assessment design and standard setting is provided in the Setting Assessment chapter. Scaling should only be considered where these processes have not produced an appropriate level of difficulty.

Scaling principles

5.64 Scaling may only be used where there is clear evidence of a problem with the design or difficulty of an assessment. It must never be applied to meet target distributions or preconceived norms. SEBs considering scaling must consult the DEB Chair and Academic Quality and Standards before making any changes.

5.65 Scaling should not be applied purely because outcomes differ from typical grade patterns. A deviation may prompt investigation, but scaling requires a clear academic justification linked to the assessment.

5.66 Where possible, students' work should be retained and marks adjusted rather than discounting an assessment. Scaling should support the accurate evaluation of learning outcomes and avoid removing valid evidence of achievement.

5.67 Scaling should be applied cautiously. It is preferable to under-scale than over-scale, particularly when adjusting marks downward.

5.68 Scaling can only be applied to individual assessment elements or sub-elements, not overall module marks. Elements of assessment counting for 20 per cent or more of a module mark should normally be scaled; for smaller components, discounting may be more appropriate. 'Elements' refers to SITS-defined elements, even where these are aggregates.

5.69 Where scaling raises marks, especially across the pass–fail boundary, SEBs must ensure that students have provided sufficient evidence that required learning outcomes have been met.

5.70 All scaling must preserve the rank order of marks through a monotonic transformation. Students whose marks are amended must not overtake those who originally achieved higher marks.

5.71 The potential impact of scaling on students' ability to meet any specific accreditation requirements of a PSRB (for example, minimum qualifying marks) should be considered as a contextual factor.

No detriment

5.72 SEBs should adopt a no-detriment approach wherever feasible. If a scaling method would lower a student's overall grade, consideration should be given to excluding that student from that specific adjustment.

5.73 In exceptional circumstances, scaling marks downward may be necessary to preserve academic standards. SEBs must seek guidance from the DEB Chair and Academic Quality and Standards before applying any downward scaling.

Scaling roles and responsibilities

5.74 The Module Organiser must alert the SEB Chair whenever assessment results indicate that scaling may be required. If concerns arise, feedback may be released, but marks should not be issued until the issue has been reviewed.

5.75 The SEB Chair and Module Organiser should jointly consider whether scaling may be appropriate and review the assessment again at the next formal examination board meeting. This review should compare the results with relevant benchmarks such as overall cohort performance, marks across other assessment components, and expected mark ranges.

5.76 If scaling is deemed necessary, the Subject Examination Board must evaluate the available approaches (as set out below) and agree on the most appropriate method. A proposal must be submitted to the Faculty DEB Chair and the Academic Quality and Standards Team, including:

- the academic justification for scaling;
- the rationale for the chosen method;
- the original and scaled marks.

5.77 The Degree Examination Board has final authority to approve or reject any scaling proposal. Discounting an entire assessment or module requires a suspension of regulations, which must be approved by the Principal's Nominee.

5.78 Record-keeping: SEBs must maintain written records of all instances of scaling and include them in reports submitted to the DEB.

Scaling procedure

5.79 Once marks have been recorded and checked, the assessor (normally the Module Organiser) should review summary data including the grade distribution and compare this with patterns from previous years. For most assessments, the past three years provide an appropriate baseline. For new modules or assessments, comparison with other modules, the wider cohort, or sector norms may help determine whether results are broadly as expected.

5.80 If concerns arise about the module, the assessment, or the mark distribution, the Module Organiser should explore whether a straightforward correction is possible before considering scaling. Examples include re-grading to correct the misapplication of a marking scheme or removing a flawed multiple-choice question and adjusting the total accordingly. After addressing such fixes, the Module Organiser should advise the SEB Chair on whether scaling may still be required and, if so, the potential approach.

5.81 The Module Organiser should also provide the SEB with any relevant contextual information, such as:

- retrospective views on assessment difficulty;
- reports of errors or disruptions;
- comments from external examiners or internal scrutiny;
- feedback from Student Voice committees;
- unusual cohort performance across modules or assessment types;
- emerging patterns suggesting a broader issue (for example, consistently weak performance across all laboratory assessments).

5.82 Lack of engagement alone is not a basis for scaling. Poor attendance or limited preparation may explain low marks, but this does not justify adjusting outcomes.

5.83 The SEB Chair will review the distribution of marks, the Module Organiser's recommendation, and all supporting information, then make a provisional decision on scaling. Results should be revisited at the next formal SEB meeting to check alignment with wider cohort benchmarks and module-level patterns. The Chair will then submit a recommendation, with supporting evidence, to the relevant DEB Chair.

5.84 If scaling is approved by the DEB, the Professional Services team responsible for mark entry will enter the revised marks into the system. All decisions must be documented, with explanations for any scaling applied. A summary must be provided to external examiners ahead of the main SEB meeting and included in the SEB paperwork for the final DEB.

5.85 Where marking reveals an issue with assessment design, markers may raise the possibility of scaling with the SEB Chair. Scaling is used to correct design-related problems and may involve adjusting grade boundaries, altering the distribution where difficulty was misjudged, or discounting compromised elements while preserving the remainder.

Forms of scaling

5.86 The forms of scaling are presented in approximate order of preference. SEBs should begin with the least intrusive adjustments and aim to preserve as much valid assessment evidence as possible. Different approaches may be combined, but overly complex arrangements applying different methods to different groups should be avoided, particularly where this would undermine the no-detriment principle.

Discounting specific questions

5.87 Where one or more questions are compromised or set at an inappropriate level, they may be removed from the assessment. Marks should then be recalculated (for example, removing 10 marks from a 100-mark exam and scaling the remaining 90 marks back to 100 per cent).

5.88 Variants may be appropriate depending on the structure of the assessment, such as marking the best three out of five questions and scaling accordingly. This method retains maximum valid student work and is likely to be one of the most widely used.

5.89 Example: A question is attempted by very few students and yields almost no marks, indicating inappropriate difficulty. The question can be removed and marks recalculated from the remaining items. Under the no-detriment principle, SEBs should check whether students who attempted the question would be disadvantaged by its removal and exempt them if necessary.

Grade scaling

5.90 Grade scaling adjusts marks for the whole cohort or a clear subgroup. The method used depends on the assessment design and performance patterns:

a. Basic scaling: A fixed number of marks is added or removed. Simple but rarely appropriate.
b. Proportionate scaling: All marks are raised by the same proportion. May be useful alongside discounting but is generally simplistic.
c. Logarithmic scaling: Marks are adjusted by differing amounts depending on position in the distribution, smoothing distortions.
d. Raised scaling: Students within a particular band are lifted to the next threshold. Appropriate where many students cluster just below a boundary.

Example: A paper is overly challenging with no single flawed question. Logarithmic scaling lifts weaker performance while avoiding excessive inflation at the top end.

Modified weightings within an assessment

5.91 Modified weighting is suitable where a substantial part of an assessment is flawed and must be removed. If too little valid evidence remains for meaningful scaling, weightings may be rebalanced.

Example: Students were not given sufficient time to complete an exam. Removing individual questions is not appropriate. Reducing the weighting of the assessment may offer the fairest solution.

Discounting the assessment

5.92 Where the assessment cannot be salvaged because valid marks cannot be meaningfully distinguished (for example, extreme clustering), the entire assessment may be discounted. This should normally apply only to assessments worth up to 50 per cent of the module.

5.93 SEBs must consider the learning outcomes the assessment was intended to test; discounting is not appropriate where specific skills are being assessed that are not tested elsewhere in the module's assessments.

5.94 Where an element is discounted, the weightings of the remaining assessment components must be increased proportionately so that the module mark is calculated solely from the elements that remain. Weightings must not be adjusted in a way that disproportionately increases a single component or alters the balance of intended learning outcomes. For example, if a 25 per cent component is discounted from a module with a 50/25/25 structure, the remaining components become 66.67 per cent and 33.33 per cent.

5.95 Discounting an assessment requires a suspension of regulations.

Example: A multiple-choice exam too closely resembles practice questions, creating extreme mark compression. Discounting is more defensible than scaling.

Discounting the module

5.96 In extreme cases, all assessments within a module may be problematic or an insufficient proportion of valid evidence remains. The module may then be discounted from year-average calculations. The DEB Chair and Academic Quality and Standards must be consulted before considering this approach. Discounting a module requires a suspension of regulations.

5.97 A discounted module on the transcript to show that it was taken, and (depending on the circumstances) may show a mark and grade, but the mark will not contribute to classification algorithm, and the year average mark will be the generated using only the remaining credits. Normally no more than one 15-credit module may be discounted within a year.

5.98 If discounting is considered, the SEB must provide evidence that all necessary programme level learning outcomes have been appropriately tested elsewhere.

5.99 Additional special considerations are required for postgraduate programmes (to address condoned failure rules), accredited programmes, and international students (as module discounting may affect progression or external recognition). In such cases, an alternative form of scaling may be necessary even if less desirable.

Example: A final-year module with a single practical assessment fails due to equipment malfunction and cannot be replaced in time for graduation. Discounting the module and recalculating year marks is likely to be the only viable solution.

5.100 Together, these procedures ensure that scaling is used responsibly and transparently, supporting consistent and defensible academic standards across Queen Mary.

Anonymity in marking

5.101 Examinations must be marked using the Student Identity Number. The MBBS programme maintains anonymity using separate Candidate Numbers rather than the Student Identity Number for technical reasons associated with mark-reading software.

5.102 Coursework and other non-examination assessments will be marked anonymously by Student Identity Number where this is practicable. Queen Mary recognises that this is not always possible.

Students who answer too many questions

5.103 Where a student answers more questions than required by the assessment rubric, only the first *x* answers will be marked, where *x* is the number of questions specified in the rubric. Any answers given beyond the first *x* will not be marked.

Students who exceed or do not meet a specified word count

5.104 Each school/institute may choose whether or not to apply a penalty where students exceed a specified word count. This may include consideration of the length of a submission as part of the marking criteria rather than a statutory penalty.

5.105 Where a school/institute applies a penalty for exceeding the maximum specified word count this must be published to students in advance of their submissions.

5.106 There is no fixed penalty for submissions under the specified word length. Students will either have displayed skill in covering the material concisely or have failed to fully address the material; in either situation the normal marking criteria should take this into account.

Students who submit an "incorrect" version of an assessment

5.107 A student who submits an "incorrect" version of an assessment (for example a blank, draft, incomplete, or corrupted file) may not resubmit it after the submission deadline has passed. Under the fit to sit policy, the submission counts as an official attempt and will be marked in the normal way.

Late submission of assessments

5.108 Assessments submitted after the published deadline will be marked as late and will receive a penalty, unless a student has approved extenuating circumstances. The penalty depends on the type of assessment:

Examinations

a. Late submission is not possible for in-person written exams or for online exams where answers are uploaded automatically in real time. In these cases, the work will be marked as it stands at the exam's scheduled end time.

b. Online exams that require students to manually upload their work include time for uploading within the exam duration. After the scheduled end time there is a ten-minute period during which submissions are still accepted, but they will be marked as late and receive a penalty of 10% of the total marks available (e.g. ten marks deducted from a total of 100). After that point, the submission portal closes, and no further uploads are allowed; the assessment will be recorded as a non-submission and given a mark of zero.

Other assessments

c. For assessments other than exams, students may submit up to seven calendar days after the deadline but a penalty of 5% of the total marks available will be applied to the assessment for each 24-hour period (or part of it) that the work is late (e.g. five marks deducted each day from a total of 100). After seven calendar days the assessment will be recorded as a non-submission and given a mark of zero.

d. In some cases, assessments may no longer be accepted once feedback has been given to the class. If feedback is released before the seven-day limit, any submissions made after the feedback point will also receive a mark of zero. Students will be informed in advance if this applies.

General provisions

e. A student may receive a passing mark on an assessment but still fail the module due to late penalties. If they are eligible for a resit, the original (pre-penalty) mark will be used for the resit attempt. This does not apply where the student is not eligible for a resit.

f. Extensions may be granted by the school or institute if a student has valid extenuating circumstances. Students must apply before the deadline and include supporting evidence. Extensions cannot go beyond the next meeting of the relevant Subject Examination Board. If more time is needed, the Board may instead consider offering a first sit.

g. If a late submission is due to approved extenuating circumstances, the late submission penalty may be removed. For this to be considered, a student must submit a formal claim with supporting evidence.

Illegible assessments

5.109 A student must submit legible assessments. Illegible handwriting or assessments will not normally be transcribed, nor will a student be permitted to dictate the contents. Any part of a script deemed illegible by a marker will normally be awarded no marks. Exceptions may apply where a student has a declared specific learning difference (SpLD).

Marking the assessments of students with specific learning differences (SpLDs)

5.110 The assessments of students with declared specific learning differences (SpLDs) will be marked in precisely the same manner as those of other students, although the markers will be asked to consider the advice on the SpLD Cover Note provided by the Disability and Dyslexia Service. Amongst the advice provided is that marks should not be deducted for poor sentence structure, punctuation, or spelling (unless those are elements being assessed by the assessment).

5.111 It is the student's responsibility to attach the SpLD Cover Note to all assessments following diagnosis. The Disability and Dyslexia Service will send the relevant School/Institute a document (known as a 'Student Support Summary') which includes details of the provision of the Cover Note only where consent is given by the student, and this does not replace the need for students to use the SpLD Cover note when submitting assessments.

Late diagnosis of a disability

5.112 Where a student is diagnosed with an SpLD after the commencement of their studies, they may request that any work from the present academic year be re-marked with the advice of the SpLD Cover Note in mind. The student should contact their school/institute directly to request this – re-marking will not happen automatically. Results from previous academic years cannot be re-marked; it is not possible to do so on a basis that is fair and consistent for all students or in a way that does not base results on potential rather than evidenced attainment. Students and schools are encouraged to engage with the Queen Mary Disability and Dyslexia Service as soon as possible where they feel they have reason to do so (eg, they are concerned they might be dyslexic) to ensure that support is in place as early as possible. Any student who declares a disability – including a SpLD – on application or at enrolment will be proactively contacted by the Disability and Dyslexia Service to arrange support.

5.113 Students who believe their studies are impacted by symptoms and/or circumstances but have not yet received a formal diagnosis can utilise the Extenuating Circumstances procedure, which does not require a formal diagnosis of a disability. Where a student receives diagnosis of an SpLD or any other disability after the commencement of their studies and believe there is evidence that:

a. the circumstances related to their disability had a significant negative impact on their ability to complete their studies; and/or,
b. there is a good reason that the circumstances impacting them could not have been made known previously,

they may use the Academic Appeal Policy to request reconsideration of their results and/or current academic position, as outlined in section 10 of the Assessment Handbook. There are timeframes for submission of an Academic Appeal, however, where a student has a good reason and evidence that they could not make the information known earlier they should explain this when submitting their appeal and consideration will be given as to whether or not the appeal should be accepted outside of the normal timeframes.

Contingency arrangements

5.114 Circumstances may occasionally arise that mean, for operational reasons, it is not possible or appropriate to deliver all aspects of the Marking Policy in the manner set out in this document. In such cases Queen Mary will, through an appropriately constituted institutional group, develop, communicate and implement alternative contingency marking arrangements that pay due regard to internal and external expectations and obligations.

6. Subject and Degree Examination Boards

6.1 Examination boards act on behalf of the Senate in assessing students and recommending and approving awards. Queen Mary operates a two-tiered system of examination boards: Subject Examination Boards exist at disciplinary level and report to Degree Examination Boards, at award level.

SEB terms of reference

6.2 Subject Examination Boards (SEBs) consider and can approve marks and progression, can agree failure and award resits, and can approve extenuating circumstances claims. SEBs make recommendations for awards, first takes/retakes, and suspension of regulations. The SEB terms of reference are:

i. to take an overview of the assessment processes that operate for the programmes and modules in the subject area, with a particular view to ensuring fairness and impartiality, including: setting examination papers, essay titles, and other assessment tasks, marking processes (including double marking), application of regulations, and the conduct of oral examinations (where used as part of the approved module assessment);
ii. to receive reports from invigilators and students on examinations, and to consider appropriate actions in the light of such reports;
iii. to agree the results of students in individual assessments and modules;
iv. to consider claims of extenuating circumstances and, where valid, to approve any proposed actions to be taken;
v. to make recommendations to the DEB for results to be set aside where there are accepted extenuating circumstances;
vi. to approve the progression of students;
vii. to approve the progression of students to alternative programmes, if applicable;
viii. to make recommendations to the DEB for the exclusion of students due to failure;
ix. to make recommendations to the DEB for award and classification;
x. to agree actions in the event of failure of a module (including qualified failure) by a student, including resit provisions that may include appropriate alternative assessment arrangements;
xi. to make recommendations to the DEB for students to retake or first take modules, where applicable;
xii. to make recommendations to the DEB and to the Senate (or its delegated authority) for the suspension of regulations for individuals or groups of students, where applicable;
xiii. to exercise discretion, where appropriate and within the permitted scope of any Queen Mary policy or regulation, in order to agree results or progression and make recommendations for awards and classifications;
xiv. to review statistics on academic performance and to comment upon the performance of cohorts in particular assessments;
xv. any other duties delegated to the SEB by the DEB or the Senate.

6.3 Each meeting of an examination board is discrete. Boards cannot reverse decisions taken at previous meetings of the same board, excepting cases considered under the Academic Appeals Policy. Boards cannot make decisions that would affect future meetings, except in setting precedents.

Membership and officers

6.4 The membership of a Subject Examination Board is:

i. a Chair, appointed to the role by the Senate, or its delegated authority;
ii. a Deputy Chair, appointed to the role by the Senate, or its delegated authority;
iii. the programme coordinators or directors;
iv. the internal examiners for the modules under consideration;
v. the external examiners;
vi. the DEB Chair, who may attend any examination board under the DEB's jurisdiction as a member;
vii. the Vice-President and Deputy Vice-President (Education), who may attend any examination board as a member.
viii. in the case of the MBBS SEBs, the Head of Year and Head of Assessment shall be members, and the internal examiners shall be defined as the Principal and Senior Internal Examiners (PIEs and SIEs).

6.5 The following are not SEB members and do not count towards the quorum, but may attend:

i. the Secretary, and other professional services staff associated with the SEB;
ii. representatives from other SEBs, where joint programmes are under consideration;
iii. the Chief Governance Officer and University Secretary (or nominee);
iv. representatives from Governance and Legal Services and/or Registry Services.
v. the Principal, Faculty Vice- President & Executive Dean, and Faculty Dean for Education.

6.6 Each examination board must have a Chair and a Secretary; these are the primary points of contact between the SEB and the wider University.

Chair

6.7 SEB Chairs are appointed on the delegated authority of the Senate. To appoint a new Chair, the relevant Head of School/Institute should send a short email nominating and endorsing the candidate to Governance and Legal Services. This is an important process that places the authority of the Senate behind the Chair.

6.8 Chairs must be experienced members of academic staff, but not serving Heads of School/Institute, Deans for Education, honorary member of staff, or programme directors for programmes under consideration at the board.

6.9 A Chair (or Deputy Chair) is appointed for a three-year term, renewable for a second term (six years in total). Renewals should be notified to Governance and Legal Services.

6.10 SEBs are strongly advised to appoint one or more Deputy Chairs, who can take action in the Chair's absence and gain experience of the role for the future.

6.11 The Chair is responsible for the conduct of the examination board, and for ensuring that the Academic Regulations are adhered to (both at the meeting and throughout the year). The Chair is also responsible for the approval of examination papers and the accompanying security arrangements.

6.12 The Chair must complete a Report to the DEB after the SEB meeting, summarising all points requiring particular discussion at the DEB (more details are given later in this section, at 'SEB reports to DEBs').

6.13 The Chair shall maintain a list of internal and external members of the examination board, and ensure that steps are taken to replace members when terms of office end. This may be delegated to the Secretary in practice.

Secretary

6.14 A Secretary will be appointed by the SEB; there is no formal appointment process, but any changes must be notified to Governance and Legal Services in order to maintain accurate records and mailing lists. The Secretary is not a member of the board but is always in attendance. The Secretary can be a member of administrative or academic staff.

6.15 The Secretary is responsible for, among other matters, the circulation to members of meeting invitations; the production of the agenda; assisting the Chair during meetings; and producing minutes. The generation of results for consideration is normally the responsibility of the Secretary.

6.16 The Secretary shall circulate information on final arrangements for the examination board meeting at least two weeks in advance (having previously ensured that the dates are in members' diaries). The agenda should also be circulated at this point.

6.17 There is more information on the Secretary's role later in this section of the Assessment Handbook under 'Servicing examination boards'.

Scheduling SEB meetings

6.18 SEB meetings must be scheduled within the defined periods specified in the Assessment Calendar . Meetings must not be held outside of these periods, and SEBs will be unable to run accurate board reports or guarantee technical support from Registry Services at other times.

6.19 Once set, SEB dates should be sent to Governance and Legal Services for publication online, and to other SEBs where cross-representation is needed.

6.20 When scheduling a meeting, ensure that the venue is fit for the purpose. The confidential nature of the meetings requires that boards not be held in venues where discussions may be overheard by students or other individuals. Venues should be booked for a period of time that allows for the meeting to run past its expected end-time if necessary.

6.21 It is strongly recommended that a preliminary meeting be held before the meeting of an examination board. These informal meetings shall discuss and resolve problems in order to expedite the main meeting.

Cycle of SEB meetings and meeting arrangements

6.22 SEB meetings must be scheduled within the defined meeting periods specified in the Assessment Calendar published on the Examination Board webpages.

6.23 The defined meeting period falls on specific months for the SEBs to consider different groups of students for progression or award, as appropriate. To note that TNE programmes and Medicine and Dentistry undergraduate programmes may need to arrange SEBs outside the standard meeting windows. Scheduling of such meetings needs to be agreed with DGLS and the Academic Registry to ensure that student records can be updated and reports run for the Board to review.

September: Late Summer undergraduate SEB

- SEB to consider all finalists and all pre-final year students whose award/progression was pending the outcome of late summer resits
- To note that external examiners are not required to attend

October: Postgraduate SEB

- SEB to consider all finalists and all students on multiyear PG programmes, whose progression was pending the outcome of late summer resits

January: Associate student SEB (UG and PG)

- SEB to consider semester one associate students and any other pending results
- To note that the Associate SEB is not a full board meeting, and requires attendance only from the SEB Chair, Director of Education, and the associate student coordinator. Minutes should be taken as usual. No direct external examiner involvement is required

February: Postgraduate (January start) SEB

- SEB to consider students from January intake programmes and any outstanding outcomes from previous October meeting

June: Undergraduate and postgraduate SEBs

- UG SEB to consider all final year students
- PG SEB to consider all students in resit from a previous board

6.24 The SEB meeting dates must be sent to Governance and Legal Services for publication online, and to other SEBs where cross-representation is needed.

6.25 The confidential nature of the meetings requires that boards meet in appropriate venues where discussions cannot be overheard by students or other individuals. Venues should be booked for a period of time that allows for the meeting to run past its expected end-time if necessary.

6.26 It is strongly recommended that a preliminary meeting be held before the meeting of an examination board. These informal meetings shall discuss and resolve problems in order to expedite the main meeting.

Preparing for the SEB meeting

Generating reports

6.27 When preparing for the SEB meeting, the Chair and Secretary shall ensure that all results have been entered into SITS with the module results calculated, by the specified deadline.

6.28 Provisional assessment marks shall be entered into the Student Information System as soon as possible; there is no need to wait for the results of review by external examiners. This shall normally be within a few days of the end of the examination period (though provisional in-course assessment marks can be entered earlier, throughout the academic year). The deadline for uploading marks is specified in the 'Key dates' section of the Assessment Handbook. SEBs are likely to consider students taking modules from the domains of other boards, and early entry of marks enables other SEBs to run smoothly by granting time for the respective chairs to identify any issues and discuss possible solutions.

6.29 The Chair and Secretary can run reports online. Guidance is given on the DGLS website. A range of reports are available:

i. Student detail: An individual profile of each student (Word format);
ii. UG/PG/FMD UG summary: a summary of all students (Excel format). This is generally the main report to be used in decision making;
iii. Module detail: a breakdown of performance by student on each module (Excel format);
iv. Module summary: summary information on each module, such as spread of marks, number of students achieving each grade, etc (Excel format).

6.30 Reports can be run with names, or anonymously. Unless specific guidance applies for a programme, this decision rests with the SEB. Anonymity is taken into account in the marking stages, so Queen Mary does not demand that it be used at the SEB.

6.31 SEBs can also use the module results app within Power BI, the Queen Mary Business Intelligence Tool. This provides a greater detail and more flexible reporting at module level, but does not make progression or award calculations.

Review of reports

6.32 The Chair shall review the SEB reports, considering students' results and identifying those that might require special discussion or further information. These may include those with borderline marks, those who have taken a number of modules from another SEB's domain, and those making claims for extenuating circumstances. These initial discussions may take place wholly or partly in the setting of an informal preliminary meeting of the SEB or a subset of its members.

6.33 Careful preparation can greatly expedite proceedings, and may include requests for further information and discussions with the chairs of other SEBs. Even where there is cross-representation, the Chair shall consult informally with the chairs of other SEBs concerned. There are diagrams showing all Queen Mary exam boards and their reporting lines in the appendices of the Assessment Handbook.

Production and circulation of papers

6.34 The agenda shall be drawn up by the Secretary in consultation with the Chair; it shall follow the online template, available on the DGLS website.

6.35 Mark-sheets and summaries of student performance should not be circulated with the agenda; these shall normally be tabled at the board. Mark-sheets shall be clearly labelled to indicate which group of students is under discussion.

6.36 The Secretary shall also circulate or table any further information that the board requires for its work. This should include, as a minimum, the following:

i. the Assessment Handbook;
ii. Academic Regulations for all cohorts under consideration.
iii. Programme regulations for all programmes under consideration.
iv. Approved conventions for the exercise of the borderline classification policy.
v. The SEB's scaling policy, where relevant.

6.37 Where regulations have changed recently, copies of the iterations that refer to each cohort under consideration shall be provided, and it shall be made clear at the beginning of the meeting which iteration applies to which cohort of students.

6.38 Examination boards may be held using electronic copies of papers. Those using this approach must ensure that all information is provided in a format that is accessible for all members; paper copies shall be provided where required. The security of information before, during, and after the board shall be considered thoroughly.

Sub-boards

6.39 Subject Examination Boards may establish sub-boards to assist in their work. Establishing a sub-board requires the support of the Senate and the relevant external examiner(s). Sub-boards must have clear terms of reference and membership approved by the SEB.

6.40 The most common sub-boards are:

i. Scrutiny Sub-board
These sub-boards are required, and are tasked with the responsibility for drafting, checking, and proofreading examination papers. This is in addition to the requirement for question paper(s) to be approved by at least one external examiner.

ii. Specialist Sub-boards
SEBs with a wide remit may establish subcommittees to give initial consideration to the performance of students within a particular discipline.

6.41 Sub-boards are intended to assist examination boards, and not to carry out the work of full boards. Sub-boards cannot approve decisions, and their recommendations shall be subject to ratification by the full examination boards. SEBs may elect to take alternative decisions without recourse to the sub-board.

Running an SEB meeting

6.42 The section below follows the structure of an SEB meeting as set out in the standard agenda. It should be used to inform the running of each meeting.

Preliminary items

Quorum

6.43 The SEB must ensure that it meets the quorum before it can proceed with the meeting. If the meeting does not meet the quorum then its decisions are not valid or binding. Where there is exceptionally good reason why a meeting will not meet the quorum, a suspension of regulations may be sought via Governance and Legal Services to make the board's decisions binding. However, this should be sought in advance of the board, and SEBs are responsible for ensuring that members attend.

6.44 The quorum for a Subject Examination Board is 50 per cent of the total membership or five members, whichever is fewer. This shall include the Chair and/or Deputy Chair, and at least one external examiner. External examiners shall not be required to attend late summer or associate SEBS (though they may choose to do so), though their views and endorsement shall still be sought. There should normally be a higher number of internal members than external examiners at a meeting.

6.45 Members, including external examiners, may be counted as in attendance if joining remotely.

6.46 Though highly desirable, it is not a fixed requirement for all external examiners to attend an SEB. At least one must normally be present, but if others are unable to attend the board can proceed provided that absent externals are consulted before the board, that their views are communicated to the board, and the outcomes are reported back to and endorsed by the absent externals after the board.

6.47 Exceptionally, a meeting may go ahead without the presence of an external examiner where a SEB has provided the external with the papers beforehand and given the external an opportunity to comment. After the meeting, the SEB Chair will discuss the matters raised at the meeting with the external examiner and seek the external's endorsement for any decisions taken.

6.48 The quorum does not apply to preliminary board meetings, or to sub-boards.

Joint honours programmes and cross-representation

6.49 Students registered for joint degree programmes must be considered by a single SEB. Each programme has a lead school or institute, and the SEB associated with that school should be the one to consider students for award and progression decisions. Module results should be considered by the SEB responsible for the module, and the results communicated to the lead SEB for the programme.

6.50 Detailed arrangements shall be discussed between the boards involved, and the Chair of the lead SEB shall ensure that there is cross-representation from the other SEB. Cross-representation should be used where students have taken one third or more of their modules (by credits) from another SEB's domain.

6.51 DEBs have a specific responsibility to ensure that joint programme students are treated fairly and equitably.

Confidentiality

6.52 Once the board has been confirmed as meeting the quorum, the Chair shall note that the business of the meeting is strictly confidential. Discussion of any detail of a meeting is highly irresponsible and undermines the authority of the board; this includes detailed discussions of marks and performance with students.

6.53 The Chair should also note the means by which results will be communicated to students. Generally, a statement that these will be made available to students via MySIS on the official release of results date will be sufficient, but if the board will be making supplementary arrangements then those should be noted. Outcomes of the board must not be communicated to students or others through any other channels.

6.54 Any breach of confidentiality may be considered as a disciplinary offence.

Conflicts of interest

6.55 Following the confidentiality statement, the Chair shall invite all of those present to declare any conflicts of interest. Conflicts of interest arise where a chair, member, or attendee of an examination board has a familial or other close relationship with any student under consideration.

6.56 Where a conflict of interest is declared at an examination board meeting, this shall be recorded in the minutes by the Secretary and the individual concerned shall take no part in decision-making related to the students concerned.

Debtors

6.57 Students with University Fee debts should be considered as normal at the meeting. When the debt is cleared, a student will be able to view the results in MySIS. The Chair should note Queen Mary's policy of withholding official notifications of results from students with University Fee debts. If the SEB has any queries over a debt then it should contact Finance.

6.58 If a debtor comes forward with queries, or seeks to make a subject access request to access their results then they should be referred to the Records & Information Compliance Manager in DGLS.

Minutes of the previous meeting

6.59 The minutes of the previous meeting should be considered by the board for accuracy. The board should then either confirm the minutes as an accurate record of proceedings, or confirm them subject to specified changes.

Matters arising from the previous meeting

6.60 Typically, there should not be any matters arising from the previous meeting as each meeting of an SEB is discrete, and any outstanding actions should have been resolved by Chair's action. However, if there are exceptions then this is the point at which they should be considered and acted upon.

Report of Chair's action

6.61 A report of all Chair's actions taken since the previous meeting should be available to the board. These should be recorded (in summary form) at the end of the minutes of the previous meeting. There is no need for an oral report or for discussion unless the board members have any queries.

Regulations and borderline classification conventions

6.62 The Chair should confirm that the board has complied with the Academic Regulations and note the regulations that apply to the programme – especially any special regulations. Where standard regulations apply it is sufficient to state that (for example) the standard BA progression and award regulations will be used. It can be helpful to give some details of the regulations for external examiners and new board members. The Chair should also explain the borderline classification policy.

Consideration of module results

Report on the monitoring of marking practices

6.63 The next section of the meeting looks at results in individual modules. The Chair should open the section by detailing the marking practices used by the board, and in particular confirming that the Marking Policy was followed.

Invigilator and candidate reports

6.64 The Chair should then present for discussion any invigilator or candidate reports that have been received, giving details of events in the examinations/assessments, including alleged irregularities. Where the board determines that there has been an actual irregularity that may have had an impact on an examination/assessment, action shall be taken to remedy the problem, and details shall be recorded in the minutes.

Module results and internal examiners' comments

6.65 Finally, and most significantly, the board should look at performance in individual modules. Each module convenor shall give a brief oral report on how things have gone, commenting in particular on any irregularities, the general level of performance (and whether it is broadly in line with the same module in past years, and other modules in the current year), and whether changes may be required to the module for future years. The board shall consider the module marks for approval, taking action to address any outstanding issues where necessary.

Consideration of student results

Outstanding investigations into academic misconduct

6.66 The Chair should begin this section of the meeting by identifying candidates who are under investigation for alleged academic misconduct. The board cannot consider these candidates at all, and they must be dealt with by Chair's action once the allegation has been resolved. Even if the allegation only pertains to one module, the penalty may affect all modules.

Pre-final year performance and progression

6.67 The board should then consider the progression of first year students into the second year (or progression to the project for some postgraduate programmes; single-year programmes with no progression point can skip this stage). This process should then be repeated for each subsequent developmental year.

6.68 The board shall make recommendations and decisions as follows, paying close attention to individual cases:

i. approval of progression, where students are eligible;
ii. approval of first sits, and other EC related decisions;
iii. approval of resits;
iv. recommendations for deregistration where students have failed and have no attempts remaining (and recommendations for exit awards, where appropriate);
v. recommendations for first takes and retakes;
vi. recommendations for suspension of regulations.

6.69 The board should note and consider recommendations of extenuating circumstances claims. The board should approve the recommendations; this can be done implicitly in straightforward cases such as first sits, but some cases, notably recommendations for first takes (reattempting the year with full teaching) must be presented to the Degree Examination Board for authorisation.

Final year performance and award recommendations

6.70 The board should next consider the performance of final year students. Please refer closely to the awards and classification regulations in Academic Regulations (Sections 4 and 5), and remember that where Special Regulations have been approved (Section 6 and 7), these override the standard rules.

6.71 The board shall make recommendations and decisions as follows, paying close attention to individual cases:

i. recommendations for award, where students are eligible (including exit awards);
ii. recommendations for exercise of the borderline classification policy (see below);
iii. recommendations for suspension of regulations;
iv. recommendations for application of unusual regulations (notably deferral of classification, and recommendations for aegrotats – these recommendations are only permissible where strictly defined criteria have been met, and not all of these are possible for all programmes);
v. recommendations for first takes and retakes;
vi. recommendations for deregistration where students have failed and have no attempts remaining (and recommendations for exit awards, where appropriate);
vii. approval of first sits, and other EC related decisions;
viii. approval of resits.

6.72 The board should note and endorse the recommendations of the extenuating circumstances sub-board, and discuss any cases that could not be resolved by the sub-board (see Section 9 for more details). The board should approve the outcomes of the recommendations; this can be done implicitly in straightforward cases such as first sits, but some cases, notably recommendations for first takes (reattempting the year with full teaching) and deferral of classification must be presented to the Degree Examination Board for authorisation.

Advanced standing in classification

6.73 Marks achieved at other institutions shall not be included in the calculation of the Classification Mark. Instead, a truncated weighting shall be used, which simply removes the year that will not count; for example, 1:3:6 becomes 3:6.

Discretion and borderline policy

6.74 SEBs have a certain degree of flexibility in applying certain regulations, for example:

i. SEBs may recommend the award of a higher classification of degree where the Classification Mark is marginally below the required threshold, within the bounds of the borderline classification policy (see below, under 'Borderline classification policy').

ii. SEBs may condone failure in up to 30 credits of modules for most postgraduate programmes, where students achieve marks of 40.0 in the failed module and 50.0 across all modules (Academic Regulations, Section 5). The required marks vary for some programmes on special regulations.

Borderline classification policy

6.75 The borderline classification can be used to award a higher classification than that indicated by a student's Classification Mark where strict criteria are met to indicate that the higher classification is more reflective of the student's overall performance.

6.76 The borderline policy does not apply at the pass/fail border, as this is a minimum standard of achievement for award. However, the board should look carefully at the marks for these borderline students to ensure that it is fully confident in them.

6.77 The borderline classification policy shall never be used to lower the classification of a student once the individual module marks have been agreed.

6.78 The use and consideration of the borderline classification policy shall always be recorded clearly in the minutes of the board, with a rationale for the decision. All students in the zones of consideration should be discussed; the minutes will then give an accurate record of discussions, which is important as the decision may need to be defended on academic grounds in the event that a student lodges an academic appeal. The views of external examiners are particularly important in such cases; these shall be sought and recorded in the minutes where the borderline classification policy is applied, along with their agreement.

6.79 As with all award decisions, recommendations from the SEB on the exercise of the borderline classification policy are subject to approval from the DEB.

6.80 Queen Mary has a formal borderline policy that applies to all students completing classified awards in 2014/15 or later (with the exception of the MBBS, BDS, and pre-2020-21 LLB cohorts). Discretion outside of these bounds requires suspension of the *Academic Regulations* and will not normally be approved. The Borderline Classification Policy was amended with effect from the 2021-22 Academic Regulations – please ensure that the correct policy is applied, and refer to the relevant edition of the Academic Regulations in case of doubt.

2014-15 – 2020-21 policy

i. Students with Classification Marks within one per cent of a borderline (except at the pass/fail border) shall be determined to fall within the 'zone of consideration';
ii. Students with Classification Marks within 1.5 per cent of a borderline and with significant extenuating circumstances in the final year not taken into account elsewhere may be determined to fall within the zone of consideration. However, if this approach is taken then the extenuating circumstances may not also be used as a reason to raise the classification itself;
iii. All students falling within a zone of consideration shall be considered as possible cases for application of the borderline policy;

iv. Students falling within the zone of consideration and with at least half of their final year credits (half of all credits at PG level) with marks at the level of the upper classification (or higher), shall be raised to the higher classification. The credits at the higher level may include the dissertation or project, but this is not a requirement. Where a student studies on a part-time basis, all modules comprising the full-time equivalent final year shall be used in the borderline policy.

v. Students falling within the one per cent zone of consideration and not meeting the requirements of point 4, but with significant extenuating circumstances in the final year not taken into account elsewhere shall be raised to the higher classification provided the SEB is confident that – without the effect of the extenuating circumstances – the student would have achieved the higher classification.

2021-22 and later policy

i each student with a Classification Mark within 1.5 per cent of a borderline (except at the pass/fail border) is determined to fall within the 'zone of consideration' and will be considered as a possible case for application of the borderline policy;

ii a student falling within the zone of consideration and with at least half of their final year credits (half of 'all' credits for postgraduate taught awards) with marks at the level of the upper classification (or higher), will be raised to the higher classification.

iii Where the final year includes advanced standing credits from another institution, only Queen Mary credits will be considered in the borderline policy (i.e. at least half of the 'Queen Mary' credits must be at or above the level of the higher classification).

iv Where a student studies on a part-time basis, all modules comprising the full-time equivalent final year will be used in the borderline policy.

6.81 The borderline policy is applied after the initial award and classification calculations (based on the Classification Mark only). Where awards have specific requirements for marks in particular modules, those rules take precedence over the borderline policy (i.e. if a student meets the borderline policy requirements but does not meet the additional requirement, the classification will not be raised).

Field of study

6.82 SEBs may need to consider the recommended field of study when making decisions on classification and award. Fields of study are the approved titles of awards made to students. These are determined by programme titles, and are therefore agreed when students register for their programmes, though approved exit titles may apply in some cases.

Award outcomes and classification distributions

6.83 The Board should consider data on progression, completion, award, and classification to determine whether the distributions are credible and in line with sector recognised standards. With any concerns raised possible actions and appropriate timelines should be recorded for future reference.

External examiners' reports and other matters

List of outstanding external examiner reports from the previous year

6.84 The board should note where an external examiner has not submitted a report from the previous year (where they were expected to do so). In such cases, the SEB should remind externals of the need to submit reports. The SEB should consider whether it would be appropriate to terminate an appointment where a report has not been received, but this last should be handled outside of the meeting in liaison with DGLS.

Matters arising/outstanding from previous reports

6.85 The externals and the board should discuss progress made on points raised in the previous set of reports, and any issues that have not been resolved should be flagged, and action agreed where appropriate.

Oral reports from the external examiners

6.86 The externals should be invited to give short oral reports on their experiences with the board (both at the meeting and throughout the year). These comments should be recorded in the minutes, though it should also be noted that externals submit written reports that go into more detail.

Authority for the Chair to act on behalf of the board

6.87 The board should then agree to confer authority upon its Chair, to act on its behalf until the next SEB meeting. This conferral of authority should be recorded in the minutes. A log of Chair's actions taken after the meeting should also be maintained throughout the year; it is convenient to maintain this at the end of the minutes, so that they can be noted at the board's next meeting.

Arrangements for the next meeting

6.88 The board should discuss the details of the next meeting. It is not necessary to set an exact date (though this can be helpful, where possible), but the published windows of time in which SEBs must take place should be noted and adhered to.

Prizes

6.89 The allocation of prizes, where used, may be discussed either at the end of the consideration of student results or, separately, at the end of the meeting. Prizes are managed by the Bursaries, Grants and Scholarships Office.

6.90 Schools and institutes shall inform the Bursaries, Grants and Scholarships Office of all prize details (both nominations and awards). These shall be communicated at the earliest possible opportunity, in a separate list from the SEB minutes. The communication must include the following details:

i. Student name and Identity Number;
ii. Title of the prize;
iii. Whether it is a nomination for, or an award of the prize;
iv. Amount of prize money to be awarded
v. Whether the prize is funded by the school/institute, Queen Mary, or an external body.

6.91 The Bursaries, Grants and Scholarships Office confirms awards with schools and institutes, and informs students of awards (though not nominations). The Office shall also arrange payments and the production of certificates. Students may collect prizes from the Office, or have them posted to their registered addresses.

6.92 Schools and institutes are encouraged to inform students of awards and nominations themselves, rather than awaiting confirmation at the degree ceremonies. Where a student has been nominated but the actual prize has not yet been allocated, this fact shall be made clear in correspondence.

After the SEB meeting

6.93 Immediately after the SEB meeting there are a number of tasks that must be completed within a short timeframe to meet the deadlines for the associated DEB. These include:

i. Entry to SITS of any mark changes agreed at the SEB, and recalculation of module marks for affected modules;
ii. completion of the SEB minutes, EC monitoring form and first take/retake forms by the Secretary;
iii. completion of the report to the DEB by the Chair;
iv. submission of all of the above to Academic Quality and Standards and to Student Records.
v. Release of provisional module marks.

6.94 Once SEBs have confirmed assessment and module marks, any changes to marks shall be updated immediately by staff in SITS. Extenuating circumstances outcomes ('0 NA' (extenuating circumstances accepted), '0 NR' (extenuating circumstances rejected), or '0 EH' (extenuating circumstances awaiting outcome)) will transfer into SITS automatically from the EC system, but schools must ensure everything is complete within the EC system to allow that transfer. When using the EH code, be sure to update it as soon as the outcome is known. Further details on extenuating circumstances may be found in Section 9 of the Assessment Handbook.

6.95 Once the confirmed marks and certified absence details from SEBs have been entered, Registry Services shall lock down marks for consideration by DEBs. Schools and institutes must not modify marks after this point. The date of lockdown is specified in the assessment calendar.

6.96 Changes to individual marks after a SEB (or DEB) has met shall be approved only with completed Chair's Action memoranda, which shall be sent to the Head of Student Records, who is authorised to action these changes, and copied to the Head of Academic Quality and Standards.

6.97 DGLS will review submissions, generate DEB reports, and liaise with SEBs to resolve queries during the period between the SEB and the DEB.

Chair's action

6.98 Any SEB decisions taken after the SEB meeting (before and after the DEB) are taken by the Chair alone, as Chair's action. These must be submitted on the Chair's action template to the Head of Academic Quality and Standards (for items requiring DEB approval), and the Head of Student Records.

Servicing examination boards

General

6.99 Examination boards must be properly serviced. Each meeting shall have an agenda, and all decisions shall be formally recorded. Each SEB meeting must also produce a report to the DEB. This expedites the meeting's business, and is also required to:

i. Provide a clear audit trail should there be a question on the board's decision-making;
ii. Provide a clear record should there be a challenge to the board's decisions (for example, in case of an academic appeal);
iii. Enable the board to examine past decisions, and to set and follow precedents.

Minutes

6.100 Minutes must provide a clear summary of the decisions taken at each meeting, and also of the discussions leading to those decisions where this is required to understand the decision or to set a precedent.

6.101 The template for SEB minutes must be used to guide the format of minutes wherever possible. The template is available from the Governance and Legal Services website.

Style of minutes

6.102 Minutes shall be written in such a way that a person not in attendance at the meeting can follow the decisions made. Minutes will or may be read by a variety of groups external to the board, including other SEB Chairs, DGLS staff, and the OIA.

6.103 The following standard conventions shall be used when writing SEB minutes:

i. All minutes shall be written in the past tense;
ii. The Board is singular, not plural;
iii. Begin the minutes with an attendance table, listing:
    a. members present;
    b. members who are absent or have sent apologies ;
    c. individuals present 'in attendance' (separately to avoid confusion with members);
iv. Never refer to individuals by name in the actual minutes, and only refer to them by role where it is directly relevant that the role holder made the point (e.g. 'The CLA4001 module organiser noted that failure rates had improved since last year.'). For more generic points, use 'The Board…'.
v. Record student details as follows: SURNAME Forename (ID number). Minutes should not be anonymous.
vi. Begin each minute with 'The Board action… Use the following actions:
    a. The Board **noted** (information received);
    b. The Board **received** (documents received);
    c. The Board **considered** (debate);
    d. The Board **approved** (decisions taken);
    e. The Board **recommended** (recommendations to the DEB where the SEB is not empowered to act, e.g. suspension of regulations requests or awards).

Information to be recorded

6.104 Boards are not required to minute decisions in respect of every student; it is standard practice to refer to an attached schedule of marks or pass list ('as detailed in the SITS-generated report'). However, individuals shall be referred to in the following situations:

i. where a board has considered and/or recommended the exercise of the borderline policy on classification;
ii. where a decision of the board is not in accordance with past precedents.
iii. where there is a request for suspension of regulations.
iv. where there are extenuating circumstances (if a student requests the review of a board's decisions through an academic appeal, it is important to know whether extenuating circumstances were reported, and if they affected the board's decision).

6.105 Extenuating circumstances shall be referred to in the minutes, but detail is not required. This ensures that it is clear where circumstances have been considered and taken into account.

6.106 Comments from the external examiners shall be summarised in the minutes, in addition to the separate, written reports from external examiners.

6.107 Minutes shall always be approved by the Chair, with any amendments made, before being released. Once approved by the Chair, a copy shall be sent to each member of the board including the external examiners, and to the Head of Academic Quality and Standards. The Secretary shall retain a copy as part of the SEB records for the year, and may distribute further copies to new external examiners appointed in the following year.

SEB reports to DEBs

6.108 The SEB Chair is responsible for the production of the Report to the DEB. This document is used by DGLS in the production of the DEB reports to ensure that all items requiring specific discussion or approval at the DEB are flagged.

6.109 For programmes other than the MBBS and BDS, reports shall be submitted electronically to the Head of Academic Quality and Standards and the Head of Student Records by the prescribed deadline so that they can be checked, collated, and circulated to members of the DEB. The deadlines are provided in the 'Key dates' section of the *Assessment Handbook*.

6.110 Although this is a tight deadline, SEBs must ensure the accuracy of the information provided in order to avoid delays in the decision making processes for awards.

6.111 There may be queries on the content of the Report to the DEB, and SEB chairs and secretaries shall aim to be available for the period of time before the DEB meeting. SEB chairs shall notify the DEB Secretary and Chair of any difficult cases in advance of the meeting.

6.112 The SEB shall provide the following items for the DEB.

i. report to the DEB;
ii. minutes of the SEB;
iii. extenuating circumstances monitoring form;
iv. signed retake/first take forms (if any).

6.113 The most recent approved templates for these documents must be used. These templates are available online: www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/quality/examination-boards

Degree Examination Boards

6.114 Degree Examination Boards consider and may approve the recommendations made by SEBs for awards, suspension of regulations, and retakes/first takes, and ensure (as far as possible) that academic standards are comparable across all disciplines. DEBs pay particularly close attention to these final responsibilities when considering joint honours degrees.

6.115 The terms of reference of Degree Examination Boards are:

i. to consider and approve recommendations from Subject Examination Boards to set aside results affected by accepted extenuating circumstances;
ii. to consider and approve recommendations from Subject Examination Boards for the termination of registration and enrolment of students due to academic failure;
iii. to exercise discretion - where appropriate, and within the permitted scope of any Queen Mary policy - in order to agree results, progression and award;
iv. to pay particular regard to matters of consistency across programmes leading to the same awards;
v. to resolve differences between and within SEBs, where these occur;
vi. to consider recommendations for the suspension of regulations, and to make recommendations where appropriate;
vii. to consider recommendations for retakes and first takes, and to approve these where appropriate;
viii. to ensure the consistent application of the Academic Regulations;
ix. to monitor the performance of Subject Examination Boards;
x. to consider other matters referred by the Senate.

6.116 Where there are reservations concerning any degree recommendation, the DEB shall refer the matter back to the SEB to ensure that comparability between students is maintained. Where the issue concerns a single student, the chairs of the two boards shall normally settle the matter, consulting with an external examiner if necessary. Where a group or whole cohort of students is affected, the SEB shall be reconvened.

6.117 Issues that cannot be resolved at the DEB shall be handled by Chair's action, through Governance and Legal Services.

6.118 The membership of a Degree Examination Board is as follows:

i. a Chair, appointed to the role by the Senate, or its delegated authority;
ii. the Chairs of the Subject Examination Boards reporting to the DEB;
iii. external members, where appointed to DEBs by the Senate, or its delegated authority;
iv. external examiners shall be members where the functions of SEB and DEB are combined;
v. the Vice-President and/or Deputy Vice-President (Education) may attend any DEB as a member;
vi. in the case of the MBBS DEB, the Head of Assessment and the Head of Year 5 shall also be members.

6.119 The following are not DEB members and do not count towards the quorum, but may be in attendance:

i. the Secretary to the DEB;
ii. the Chief Governance Officer and University Secretary (or nominee);
iii. staff from Registry Services and DGLS;
iv. Deputy Chairs of the SEBs reporting to the DEB;
v. Secretaries of the SEBs reporting to the DEB;
vi. External examiners;
vii. the Principal, Faculty Vice-President & Executive Dean, and Faculty Dean for Education.

6.120 Should a DEB Chair be unable to attend a meeting and there is no Deputy Chair, an SEB Chair shall deputise, but shall not be empowered to take Chair's action.

6.121 The quorum for a DEB is 50 per cent of the total membership for the SEBs under consideration, excluding the Vice-President and Deputy Vice-President (Education).

Academic Regulations

6.122 The Academic Regulations set out a common set of rules for the management of academic standards, and form the basis of Queen Mary's contract with its students.

6.123 In publishing the Academic Regulations Queen Mary makes a clear statement on the ways in which it assesses achievement of academic standards and the basis for the conferment of awards. It is therefore paramount that the Academic Regulations are followed.

6.124 It is not permissible for boards to create and impose alternative regulations where an examiner (internal or external) disagrees with an element of the Academic Regulations. Such actions shall be overturned by the DEB in almost all cases.

6.125 Students may request the review of an examination board decision, through an academic appeal, on the basis that the examinations or the board meetings were not held in accordance with the relevant regulations. This includes both the application of the wrong regulations, and the incorrect application of the proper regulations.

6.126 Advice on the application and interpretation of the Academic Regulations must always be sought from Governance and Legal Services.

Quick reference guide to examination board authorities

6.127 The table below is a quick reference guide, showing where authority in decision making lies for examination board processes:

Action	SEB	DEB
Marks	Approve	(implicitly endorsed)
Failure of assessments/modules	Approve	(implicitly endorsed)
Failure of programme	Recommend	Approve
Resits	Approve	(implicitly endorsed)
Progression	Approve	(implicitly endorsed)
Award and classification	Recommend	Approve
Borderline policy in classification	Recommend	Approve
Extenuating circumstances claims	Approve	(implicitly endorsed)
Extenuating circumstances outcomes (excluding first takes)	Approve	(implicitly endorsed)
Deferring classification pending first sits	Recommend	Approve
First takes/retakes	Recommend	Approve
Suspension of regulations	Recommend	Recommend

7. Student Failure and Reassessment

Agreeing failure

7.1 SEBs must agree failure of the previous attempt before a reassessment attempt can be granted. There have been past instances of reattempts awarded prior to SEB meetings. These actions shall in most cases invalidate the original failure, and do not conform to the requirement for collective decision-making at the SEB.

7.2 Where students are permitted multiple attempts at tests or other forms of assessment, this shall be clearly specified and a cut-off point established for the agreement of pass or failure.

7.3 Where students fail to meet award requirements and have no further attempts remaining, this shall be clearly indicated in the SEB minutes and reflected on the pass-list. These students shall be identified as distinct from those with remaining reassessment opportunities.

7.4 It is recommended that all failures be subject to a double-checking process by examiners and SEBs, especially where students are awarded a '0 NS' mark for non-attendance/submission, and in borderline pass/fail cases.

Reassessment

7.5 There are two forms of reassessment: resits and retakes. The main difference between the two is that retakes require students to sit the module again (including attendance at lectures, and completion of all assessments), while resits simply require students to reattempt the failed assessment.

7.6 The form of reassessment shall be agreed by the SEB. However, retakes can only be awarded when specifically agreed by the DEB, on the recommendation of the SEB.

7.7 Students must be informed of the reassessment methods at the start of each module.

7.8 Students cannot reattempt modules that they have already passed, although exceptionally, a first take may be permitted. The BDS and MBBS are exceptions to this rule.

7.9 The majority of programmes permit at least one reattempt, though the exact numbers of attempts permitted (including the original attempt) vary as follows:

i.	MBBS and BDS:	
	a. Pre-2023-24	2 (a first attempt and a resit, with discretionary provision for a retake as a third attempt)
	b. 2023/24 and later:	3 (a first attempt, a resit, and a capped retake)
ii.	All other UG awards:	2
iii.	All PGT awards:	2

7.10 A student due for a reattempt must take it at the next available opportunity (Academic Regulations, Section 2). Where students opt out of a reattempt, or register and fail to complete the reassessment, this shall count as one of the permitted attempts. Students who opt out of a reattempt must still be considered by the SEB.

7.11 The SEB may recommend to the DEB that Queen Mary should terminate the registration and enrolment of students who fail to reattempt at the next available opportunity. This should be clearly documented in the SEB minutes and the report to the DEB (Academic Regulations, Section 2).

7.12 Where students opt out of a reattempt at the next available opportunity, they shall not be permitted to register at a later point and shall lose all remaining attempts.

Resits

Note: first sits are discussed in Section 9.

7.13 Resits are by far the most common mode of reassessment. Resitting students reattempt assessment from failed modules at the next available opportunity.

7.14 Resits do not incur additional fees.

7.15 Each resit shall count as one permitted attempt at a module unless a 'first sit' is agreed (see here).

7.16 Resit marks are capped (for the module) at the pass mark for all programmes except for a small number of programmes with special regulations. Resit marks count toward the developmental year in which the module was first attempted, not the year in which the resit occurred.

7.17 Each module has an approved mode of reassessment, held in the module regulations and in SITS:

i. Synoptic reassessment overrides all elements of reassessment (whether passed or failed) from the original failed attempt at the module with one (or more) mark from a new element of assessment weighted at 100 percent of the module (or adding up to 100 percent).

ii. Standard reassessment requires students to reattempt only those elements of assessment from a failed module that were failed on the original attempt. The marks from passed elements on the first attempt and from reattempts shall be combined to produce the module mark. Where students fail elements of assessment repeatedly, the mark from the best fail shall stand (rather than the most recent mark) unless special regulations apply. Where students fail individual elements of assessment but still pass the module, no reassessment is permitted.

Timing of resits

7.18 The timing of resits shall be determined by the module concerned, rather than by the student reattempting the module or the programme on which they are registered.

7.19 Resits shall be taken at the next normally available assessment opportunity for the module(s) in question.

7.20 There are normally two assessment opportunities for each module each year. The appropriate Subject Examination Board must agree failure in the module (not just the assessment) before any resit can take place. Queen Mary has a system of semester-based examinations for most modules; the first attempt will occur at the end of the semester in which teaching ended, and the resit opportunity in the late summer examination period.

7.21 The semester one module examination period takes place in January, and the semester two and year-long module examination period takes place in May/June each year. A late summer examination period for non-MBBS and BDS students takes place in August each year before the start of the next academic year.

7.22 Late summer resits are available to all students (UG and PG, including finalists). The late summer period shall be the next normally available assessment opportunity for all programmes except the MBBS and BDS (below) and certain postgraduate programmes with programme specific examination dates.

MBBS resits

7.23 MBBS students resit in the late summer examination period of the same academic year for Parts 1 – 4. Resits for Part 5 shall normally occur in May or June of the same academic year.

BDS resits

7.24 BDS students resit in July for Parts 1-4, and in June for Part 5.

Resitting individual elements of assessment

7.25 Where standard reassessment is used (see above), students may select which failed elements they wish to reattempt when registering for reassessment. Where students elect not to register for one or more elements of reassessment, this shall count as a missed opportunity. Students may not reattempt failed elements of assessment where the module as a whole has been passed.

Resitting dissertations and projects

7.26 Where students fail dissertations or projects and do not meet their award requirements, the SEB shall determine whether a resit or a retake for the module should be awarded. The dissertation or project is core (must be taken and passed) for many programmes, and in these cases it is impossible to meet the award requirements without passing the module.

7.27 Resitting a dissertation or project requires students to rework and improve the original submission to bring it up to a passing standard; for projects, only the report may need improvement. Students should receive minimal support; no more than two supervision sessions are advised. As for all resits, the module mark achieved is capped to a bare pass.

7.28 The procedure for retaking a dissertation or project is entirely distinct from resitting; details on retaking these modules are given below, under 'Retakes'.

7.29 Deadlines for students reattempting projects or dissertations shall be set for the next normally available assessment opportunity (as for all reassessments).

Retakes

7.30 Retakes are the second, much less common, mode of reassessment. Examination boards may require or permit students to retake one or more modules. Retake students reattempt entire modules from scratch, including tuition and completion of all elements of assessment, at the next available opportunity. Retakes shall only be awarded following a recommendation from an SEB and approval from a DEB.

7.31 Retakes incur pro-rata tuition fees; retake students attend lectures and classes and complete all elements of assessment.

7.32 Each retake shall count as one permitted attempt at a module, unless a 'first take' is agreed.

7.33 Marks for retakes are capped at the pass mark (for the module) ('first takes' are not capped).

7.34 Retakes are generally best applied to postgraduate dissertations and projects (especially in science-based disciplines), where students are required to complete considerable additional practical work in order to pass.

Required retakes

7.35 Retakes may be required in place of resits (i.e. a retake is the standard mode of reassessment) where students cannot resit due to the nature of the assessment (e.g. laboratory-based assessment, or field work). For in-class tests, a resit may be awarded rather than a retake, as students only need to attend for test.

Retaking dissertations and projects

7.36 Where students fail dissertations or projects and do not meet their award requirements, SEBs shall determine whether resits or retakes for the modules should be awarded. The dissertation or project is core (must be taken and passed) for many programmes, and in these cases it is impossible to meet the award requirements without passing the module.

7.37 Retaking a dissertation or project requires students to undertake a new piece of work, with full supervision and full access to facilities.

7.38 The procedure for resitting a dissertation or project is entirely distinct, and the two must not be confused; information on resitting these modules is provided above.

Recommending and agreeing retakes

7.39 Retakes shall only be awarded on the recommendation of SEBs and with the approval of DEBs.

7.40 SEBs must discuss the issues and implications of retakes with affected students before they present retake recommendations to DEBs. Retakes involve attendance and the payment of fees; there are funding implications for all students, and visa implications for overseas students. These issues must be discussed with and explained to students.

7.41 Where retakes are required for modules where it is impossible to resit the assessment (fieldwork, laboratory work, etc), all students on the module must be informed at the start of the module (students must always be informed of reassessment methods at the start of each module.

7.42 Students shall be charged pro-rata fees to retake modules, irrespective of any accepted extenuating circumstances. Undergraduate students paying home fees will generally receive SFE funding for an additional year; however, overseas and postgraduate students must generally fund retakes themselves.

7.43 Visas for overseas students do not permit part-time study, which will in some cases limit the available scope of retake opportunities. Further information on visas can be sought from the Advice and Counselling Service.

7.44 SEBs shall recommend retakes to DEBs using the appropriate form, available from Registry Services. All retakes, and the details of the retakes, shall be agreed at DEBs (or, exceptionally, by Chair's action), using these forms. Retakes cannot be recommended or agreed during the following academic year; this includes retakes of semester two modules.

7.45 When retakes are agreed, students shall retake the modules that were failed; they may not replace the failed module with a 'retake' in a module that has not been taken previously, unless the original module has been discontinued, the module is not running, there has been an approved change to the code or title of the module, or there is a clash with another module (only core or compulsory modules take precedence) (Academic Regulations, Section 2).

7.46 Students are not permitted to take new or additional supplementary modules where they are retaking less than 120 academic credits.

7.47 The SEB shall determine the nature of reassessment, and whether this should be a resit or a retake. Individual members of staff cannot supersede the SEBs' decisions. Individual students cannot simply switch from resitting one element of assessment to retaking the entire module upon payment of the appropriate fee; approval from SEBs and DEBs is required in such cases, and this shall only be granted in truly exceptional cases.

Requests to retake after the SEB

7.48 School and institute handbooks shall inform students that retakes can only be agreed by SEBs and DEBs, in concert. Requests from students to retake rather than resit modules after the publication of results cannot and shall not be considered.

7.49 Students seeking to retake a module after the publication of results shall be advised to submit academic appeals. These appeals shall request the review of the examinations boards' decisions to award resits rather than retakes. Further information on academic appeals may be found in Section 10 and on the Governance and Legal Services website

8. External Examining

General

8.1 This chapter outlines the appointment and duties of external examiners and external member for taught programmes of study. This document does not cover external expertise for postgraduate research programmes or non-award bearing continuing education.

8.2 External examiners are appointed to Subject Examination Boards (SEB).

8.3 External Members are appointed to Degree Examination Boards (DEBs)

External Examiners

Role

8.4 External examiners are appointed by the Senate (or its delegated authority) in accordance with the approved processes and criteria; these pay due regard to both the OfS B Conditions of Registration relating to quality, standards and student outcomes and the QAA Quality Code.

8.5 External examiners are accountable to the Principal, and make their reports to the Principal. However, reports are emailed to DGLS, who are responsible for their acknowledgement, review and forwarding to the SEB.

8.6 External examiners are appointed to each programme of study and are members of the Subject Examination Board for the appropriate programme. In some cases, multiple external examiners may be appointed to a single programme of study, or a single external examiner may be appointed to multiple cognate programmes.

8.7 The number of external examiners appointed to a programme and their range of expertise must be sufficient to permit the effective completion of their duties. This is a requirement of the external examiner appointment criteria.

8.8 External examiners are permitted to view and comment upon all student submissions for all forms of assessment. The precise role of an external examiner shall be agreed by the Subject Examination Board in consultation with the appropriate academic schools or institutes.

Core duties (see also Appendix 4)

8.9 The core duties of external examiners are:

Assessment tasks

i. to comment upon the assessments for each module for which they are responsible, the extent to which the assessments cover the syllabus, and whether they enable students to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes;

ii. in consultation between the external and SEB Chair, to approve at least 60% of assessment question papers/tasks;

iii. to comment upon marking schemes for individual assessments, assessment criteria, and model answers;

Marking and feedback

iv. to confirm whether, or not, the standard of marking is satisfactory by scrutinising a sample of assessment for each module;

v. to observe oral examinations. where applicable;

Module results analysis

vi. to comment upon the standards of achievement of students, and the comparability of this achievement to standards elsewhere;

vii. to advise the Subject Examination Board on appropriate actions where the marks for a module are significantly outside the normal pattern, and to confirm recommendations by markers for actions where the marks for a module are significantly outside the normal pattern;

Overall student achievement

viii. to make known any causes for concern in relation to academic standards achieved by students, the standards of modules, and the standards of awards to be made;

ix. to comment upon the standards of proposed awards, and their comparability to similar awards made elsewhere;

Subject Examination Boards

x. to attend meetings of the Subject Examination Board, and to participate fully in decision making;

xi. to endorse decisions on results, progression and recommendations for award;

xii. to perform any other duties requested by the Senate or the Degree Examination Board, following appropriate consultation over the nature of those duties;

xiii. to submit a full report, including an optional confidential report to the Principal;

xiv. to attend meetings of the Degree Examination Board, where the external examiners choose

8.10 By agreement with the Subject Examination Board and in consultation with the relevant schools and institutes, external examiners may also carry out other duties including: the approval of project topics and essay titles, interviewing students on their programmes of study and experiences, commenting informally on proposed curriculum changes, commenting upon proposed changes to assessment methods.

Purpose of external examiners

8.11 External examiners ensure that the standards of awards and assessment at Queen Mary are consistent with those of other UK institutions.

8.12 External examiners also ensure that all students are treated equitably, and that due consideration is given to individual students.

8.13 External examiners review assessment processes and comment upon their operation in both informal and formal reports, which offer valuable counsel at examination boards and, individually, to programme and module organisers.

Appointment of external examiners

8.14 External examiners are appointed by the Faculty Deans for Education. This authority is delegated from the Senate.

8.15 SEB Chairs are responsible for managing external examiner nominations and discuss potential nominees with colleagues and the Head of School/Institute. Nominations are submitted to DGLS using the external examiner nomination form, together with a short CV of no more than three pages. Nominations without a CV will not be considered. DGLS will review nominations against the Queen Mary appointment criteria (Appendix 5: Appointment criteria for external examiners).

8.16 Where a nominee meets the appointment criteria, the nomination will be recorded by DGLS and passed to the Faculty Dean for consideration.

8.17 Where approval is given by the Faculty Dean, DGLS will complete the nomination process and confirm appointment of the external examiner with the SEB.

8.18 Where a nominee does not meet the appointment criteria or is rejected by DGLS/the Faculty Dean, DGLS will refer the matter back to the SEB. Where there is an exceptionally strong case for appointment, the SEB may resubmit the nomination with a statement of justification. These appointments may require final approval from the Vice- President (Education), in addition to the Faculty Dean. In most instances, the SEB will be required to seek an alternative candidate when nominations are rejected.

8.19 SEBs are required to submit all external examiner nominations to DGLS but the 30th June deadline, so that appointments can be confirmed by 1st September following. Nominations may be received after this date, where good reason is provided for the delay.

Period of appointment

8.20 External examiners are appointed from 1 September to 31 December four years later. In very exceptional circumstances an appointment may be extended for a fifth and final year. An extension of appointment request must be submitted to DGLS using the external examiner extension request form and DGLS will arrange for review by the relevant Faculty Dean.

8.21 An external who wishes to resign before the expiry of their appointment, is required to write formally to the Principal, via DGLS, giving sufficient notice for the appointment of a replacement. Usually three months.

8.22 Where a programme ceases to be offered by Queen Mary, and the services of an external are no longer required, it is the responsibility of the SEB Chair to inform both the external examiner(s) and DGLS.

8.23 SEBs may seek the termination of an external examiner's appointment where they have failed to perform their duties, e.g. the non-submission of two consecutive annual reports, regular non-attendance at exam boards, and/or the breakdown in the relationship with Queen Mary.

8.24 If seeking a termination, the SEB Chair shall request the termination of an external examiner's appointment, following endorsement by the relevant Faculty Dean for Education. The Dean will make the final decision to proceed with the termination request. Requests, together with the support of the Faculty Dean for Education, are submitted to DGLS who will then seek formal approval from the Vice President (Education).

8.25 It is the responsibility of SEBs to manage the appointments of their external examiners to ensure sufficient and timely appointments. DGLS maintains a database of appointments and shares this information with Faculty Deans to assist with the annual nomination process.

Briefings for newly appointed external examiners

Briefing by Directorate of Governance and Legal Services;

8.26 Upon appointment, DGLS will email a letter of appointment together with the following documentation:

- external examiner agreement form;
- personal details form (required for payment purposes); and
- the last report of the previous external examiner and the SEB response, where applicable.

8.27 The Queen Mary appointment letter will include hyperlinks to relevant resources, including the DGLS external examiner resource page which provides the following resources:

- external Examiner Guidance document;
- annual report template;
- current version of the Academic Regulations (noting any major revisions);
- current version of the Assessment Handbook (noting any major revisions); and
- external Examiner summary report.

Briefing by the SEB Chair

8.28 Once a nomination is approved, DGLS will email a copy of the external examiner appointment letter and signed nomination form to the SEB Chair, Deputy Chair and Secretary. SEBs should retain these documents as a local record of external examiner nominations and appointment dates.

8.29 SEB Chairs are expected to arrange a short briefing for all new external examiners which will cover the following:

- general information on the school/institute and programme(s) of study, including information provided to students, E.g. the Student Handbook;
- the names of the other external examines appointed to the SEB together with details of programme(s) and modules for which each are responsible;
- the relevant programme specification(s), together with module syllabi and assessment patterns for the modules they are responsible for;
- the relevant marking criteria/model answers used by the SEB when setting and making assessment for the modules they are responsible for;
- a calendar of events for the coming year, including SEB dates, a schedule of tasks and deadlines and instructions on how to access samples of student work and assessment tasks;
- names and contact details of key School/SEB staff.

Review of assessment tasks, samples of student work and marking

8.30 External examiners have a key role in assessment. They are required to review both assessment tasks before they are released to students to completed. (See Chapter 3), and samples of student work and the associated internal examiner feedback. (See Chapter 5)

Review of assessment tasks

8.31 Module assessment patterns are proposed and approved as part of the module approval / amendment process, and communicated to students and external examiners at the star of the academic year.

8.32 SEBs will establish an up-to-date database of all modules and associated assessment, to manage the various internal and external examiner processes. At, or prior to, the start of each academic year SEBs will identify which assessment tasks, and model answers, will require external examiner review and share this information with internal examiners.

8.33 External examiners are required to approve at least 60% of a module's assessment tasks before they can be released to students. Assessment tasks of all new modules, all timed examination papers and/or large weighted tasks must be reviewed by the external examiner.

8.34 Externals will be provided with notification of which modules and which elements of assessment will require their review of the tasks at the start of the academic year along with a clear timetable of submissions and deadlines for comment together with instructions on how information will be shared.

8.35 Following internal review of assessment tasks by internal examiners (See Chapter 3), tasks are submitted to externals with any relevant module information, marking criteria and school / institute assessment strategies. Externals are not proofreaders and it is the responsibility of the SEB to ensure all assessment tasks are free form any typographical or grammatical errors before sending these to the external examiner.

8.36 When assessing assessment tasks, the external must satisfy themselves that the assessment task:

- is appropriate to the level of the module;
- is an appropriate means of testing the stated learning outcomes of the module;
- covers the full range of the syllabus, or that stated in the module outline; and
- is equitable, in that some students will not be at an advantage other than by virtue of their academic ability and commitment.

Review of student work and internal marking/feedback

8.37 External examiners are required to review samples of student submissions for all modules. When doing so, the external examiners' role is to review the marking of internal examiners; they are not markers and should therefore not be involved in double marking, moderation or the reconciliation of marks.

8.38 Sampling arrangements for the review of assessment shall be agreed between the SEB and the external examiner in advance. Care should be taken to ensure easy access to samples of student work and associated feedback in addition to the relevant module information. Sampling documentation should be presented in a standard format across all modules, the SEB should avoid externals having to navigate too many QMPLUS / SharePoint sites.

8.39 External examiners must be provided with sufficient evidence to determine whether the internal marking and overall classification for honours is consistent, and of an appropriate standard. Therefore, in addition to the samples of student work, SEBs must provide the following module specific information:

- module marking and moderation report, detailing the comments of internal markers and confirming which of the five quality assurance mechanisms detailed in the Marking Policy was used;
- overall module results detailing the spread of marks for all elements of assessment together with statistical data on overall rates of achievement for the module;
- the module outline/handbook and relevant marking rubrics/model answers.

8.40 Sampling will include a sample of all assessment used on the module, where practical these should be complete profiles of student work. Assessments shall be sent together with all comments from the internal examiner(s). The range of assessments sampled shall include examples of the following (excepting significant differences of opinion, there is no need to include all examples from each category):

- assessments from the top, middle, and bottom of each classification range;
- first class or distinction grade assessments;
- failed assessments;
- assessments of borderline students;
- assessments where the internal examiners' marks differed significantly, together with the method of reconciliation (it is not an external's responsibility to resolve mark differences, but to confirm that the reconciliation was achieved in line with Queen Mary's policy).

8.41 Externals do not have the authority to change individual agreed marks, as this would be unfair to those students whose work was not included in the sample. Where review indicates that significant alterations to one or more marks may be necessary, the external examiner shall review the marks for the entire cohort: to either confirm the marking or reject it as unsound. The SEB then has discretion on whether to re-mark all submissions, or (if appropriate) to scale marks according to an agreed benchmark. Rescaling shall be reported to, and endorsed by, the DEB.

Oral examinations and practical assessments

8.42 External examiners are not required to be present at oral examinations. Where externals do attend, they are not markers, but act as an observer to comment on the conduct of the assessment.

8.43 SEBs must ensure that feedback and marking trails are made available to the external for any oral examinations or practical assessments such as presentations or performances. Where practicable any recordings should be made available to external examiners where required.

Examination boards and external examiners' views

8.44 External examiners are members of the SEB and should attend meeting either in person or remotely. It should not be necessary for an external examiner to visit Queen Mary more than three times a year. At least one external examiner should be present at the Examination Board.

8.45 External examiners comments on assessment tasks and marking are informal comments directed at the Chair and individual module organisers. These comments must be retained by the SEB to confirm adherence to our quality processes. Verbal reports by external examiners is a standing item on the SEB agenda, and Chairs of Examination Boards will ensure that external examiners are invited to express their views throughout the Examination Board. This is especially important for difficult or contentious decisions, as external examiners' views carry a particular weight.

8.46 Where the board disagrees in a routine case, the final decision shall be reached by a majority vote; chairs have a second and casting vote in the event of a tie. However, where external examiners express grave concerns that particular decisions would be improper or inequitable, Chairs must seek the views of all external examiners on the issue. The board shall defer to the majority decision of the external examiners, and the substance of the discussions shall be recorded in the minutes.

Views that contravene regulations, policies or guidance

8.47 External examiners may occasionally recommend courses of action that contravene Queen Mary's regulations or guidance documents. The Head of Academic Quality and Standards should be consulted without delay in such cases; discussion of the issue shall be closed until guidance is received.

External examiners' reports

8.48 External examiners are required to complete a formal written report for each academic year of their appointment. The External Examiner Report template is made available via the external examiner resources webpage and shall be used in all cases. Both the DGLS and the SEB will email a copy the report template to external examiners as part of their usual examination board correspondence.

8.49 External examiners are instructed to email their reports to DGLS. DGLS will acknowledge reports and highlight any issues in the reports before forwarding them to the SEB. The SEB Chair must provide a written response to the external examiner where any issues have been highlighted, and a copy of this response is also sent to DGLS. Reports are shared with Faculty Deans and may be considered by the Vice-President (Education).

8.50 DGLS monitors the rates of submission of both external examiner reports and SEB responses. A summary report is provided annually for Academic Quality and Standards Board. DGLS also supplies copies of written reports, SEB responses and rates of submission to faculties.

8.51 In addition to the SEB, reports should be received by the school/institute Education Committee, who will monitor the progress of any actions arising from the report(s). Reports are a key document in the quality assurance process for the review, enhancement and amendment of academic provision.

8.52 Universities are expected to make external examiner reports available to students. Schools and Institutes should summarise reports, and SEB responses, and share these with students through Student Voice Committees. Reports are available to individual students on request.

8.53 The appointment of an external examiner who fails to submit two consecutive written reports may be terminated, and a replacement found. (Para 8.23)

External examiner payments

Annual Fee

8.54 External examiner fees are paid on receipt of the annual report. The former, paper based, HR One-Off Payment process is used for the payment of taught external examiners and DGLS will request payment instruction from the SEBS when forwarding on reports. Once received, DGLS will liaise with the external and Payroll to process the fee payment.

8.55 The fee payable is at the discretion of the school/institute and should take into account the standard fee payment formula, to endure the minimum fee is paid to each external examiner (Appendix 6 – External examiner (taught) fee payment guidance).

8.56 SEBs are advised to prepare all one-off payment form and pass these on to DGLS following the SEB. This will ensure prompt processing of fees by DGLS when reports are received.

8.57 SEBs are required to carry out right to work checks in the first year of an external's appointment. Details of right to work checks can be found on the HR webpages - https://hr.qmul.ac.uk/workqm/righttowork/. SEBs are strongly advised to carry out a remote right to work check *before* any work is undertaken to ensure compliance. Copies are then taken when the external examiner visits Queen Mary and these verified copies are passed on to DGLS.

Expenses

8.58 Expenses incurred by the external examiner whilst carrying out their duties for Queen Mary are reimbursed by the SEB on receipt of a signed expenses claim form with relevant receipts. Expenses claims are reimbursed in line with Queen Mary's Expenses Policy.

External Members

Purpose

8.59 An external member is appointed to Degree Examination Boards only. Normally one external member is appointed jointly to the Undergraduate Humanities and Social Sciences and Undergraduate Science and Engineering Degree Exam Boards.

8.60 No external member is appointed to the Undergraduate Medicine or Dentistry Examination Boards. The MBBS and BDS Part 5 SEBs act as the programme DEB and already have external membership.

8.61 The primary role of the external member is to ensure that the standards of Queen Mary's taught programmes are credible, consistent and comparable to those awarded across the UK Higher Education System.

8.62 External members are appointed due their expertise and experience within the sector. They offer valuable advice and counsel to the DEB.

Appointment of external member

8.63 Nominations for the appointment of the external member are submitted to DGLS using the external member nomination form, together with a short CV.

8.64 Nominations are reviewed for approval against the appointment criteria, initially by the UG HSS and UG S&E Degree Examination Board Chairs and approved by the Vice-President (Education).

Period of appointment

8.65 The external member is appointed for a period of four years, from 1st September to 31 December four years later.

8.66 Extensions for a final, fifth year are permitted in exceptional circumstances. Extension requests are made by DGLS and approved by the Vice-President (Education).

8.67 An external member who wishes to resign before the expiry of their appointment are required to write formally to the Principal, via DGLS, giving sufficient notice for the appointment of a replacement. Usually three months.

8.68 DGLS may seek the termination of an external member's appointment if they have failed to perform their duties i.e. regular non-attendance at exam boards, non-submission of annual reports and/or a breakdown in the relationship with Queen Mary.

8.69 Request for a termination of an external member's appointment by Queen Mary should be made by DGLS to the Vice-President (Education).

Briefing and guidance

8.70 Upon appointment DGLS will email a letter of appointment together with the following documentation:

- external member agreement form;
- personal details form (required for payment purposes); and
- the last report of the previous external member and the Institutional response.

8.71 The appointment letter will include hyperlinks to relevant resources including the DGLS external examiner resources webpage.

8.72 External members are instructed to use the web page to access guidance, regulation and templates as this will ensure that they are always referring to the most up-to-date of each.

8.73 It is the responsibility of DGLS to update the external member webpages on an annual basis, which includes a "summary of changes" document to outline any amendment to the Academic Regulations or Assessment Handbook.

8.74 DGLS are responsible for the briefing of the external member, and this should cover the following:

- general information on policy and procedures at Queen Mary;
- the purpose and regulations used by the Degree Exam Boards; and
- a calendar of events and diary invitations for the Degree Exam Boards.

Duties of the external member.

8.75 The external member has the following core duties:

- to comment on the standards of achievement, as represented by both the Classification Mark and final degree classification and the comparability of these achievements to standards elsewhere;
- to make known any cases for concern in relation to academic standards;
- to provide an external perspective in the interpretation of regulations an on recommendations for the suspension of regulations;
- to provide advice on the use of discretion, within the permitted scope of Queen Mary regulations to agree results, progression and award;
- to attend the meetings of the UG HSS and UG S&E Degree Examination Boards and participate fully in decision making;
- to endorse the awards, degree classifications and deregistration decisions made by the Board;
- to submit a full report, including an optional confidential report to the Principal;
- to perform any other duties requested by the Degree Examination Board, Academic Quality and Standards Board or the Senate, following appropriate consultation over the nature of those duties.

8.76 External members also have a less tangible role in encouraging best practice and advising the Degree Examination Board on the appropriate resolution of exceptional cases.

Examination Boards.

8.77 External members are required to attend the Degree Examination Boards for which they have been appointed. Exceptionally, where an external member is unable to attend, the meeting may go ahead in their absence.

8.78 It should not be necessary for an external member to undertake more than three in person visits to Queen Mary.

Views of external members

8.79 The Chair of Degree Examination Boards must ensure that external members are invited to express their views, particularly on complex or contentious cases, and these views will always carry a particular weight.

8.80 Where an external member recommends an action that contravenes Queen Mary regulations or policy the Examination Board decision will be deferred and guidance sought from DGLS.

Reports.

Oral Reports

8.81 Once the DEB has completed its deliberation on students, the external member will be invited to give a brief, oral report to the Board.

8.82 The external member's oral report is summarised within the minutes and covers the following:

- their comments on the examination boards' proceedings;
- any recommendations for improvements in regulatory and procedural arrangements; and
- their opinion as to whether recommendations made in previous years have been properly followed up.

Annual Report

8.83 External members are required to complete a formal written report every year. This report is part of Queen Mary's quality assurance framework and is a key document for ongoing reviews and enhancements.

8.84 Reports are submitted directly to DGLS, who formally acknowledge receipt on the part of Queen Mary.

8.85 The External Member Report template will be emailed to the external member by DGLS, and it is also available to the external member via the External Examiner Resources webpage.

8.86 An external member may attach a confidential report as an appendix where they wish to report a matter relating to an individual student.

8.87 The external member report is discussed at the Academic Quality and Standards Board, and the Head of Academic Quality and Standards will respond to any comments directly. The report and Institutional response are also received by the subsequent Degree Examination Boards.

8.88 DGLS will inform the Vice-President (Education) where an external member's report contains particularly sensitive comments. Where required, the SEB and relevant Head of school / institute will also be expected to provide a written response to any criticism direct to the Vice-President (Education).

8.89 Queen Mary aims to establish and maintain, constructive and effective relationships with is external members. However, any problems experienced by the external member or a SEB should be reported immediately to the Head of Academic Quality and Standards or the Vice-President (Education).

External Member payments.

8.90 External members are paid their fee directly by DGLS on receipt of their annual report, following the HR one off payment process.

8.91 Queen Mary reserves the right to refuse payment for reports that are received more than six months after the DEBs.

8.92 Expenses are reimbursed by DGLS on receipt of a signed expenses claim form with associated receipts. Expenses claims are reimbursed in line with Queen Mary's Expenses Policy.

9. Extenuating Circumstances

9.1 Queen Mary's Extenuating Circumstances Policy is published on the Policy Zone webpage. Please follow this link to read the Policy: https://www.qmul.ac.uk/governance-and-legal-services/policy/policies-by-category/

10. Exceptions and Special Cases

Loss of work, scripts and marks by Queen Mary

10.1 Every effort must be made to ensure the security of in-course assessments, examination scripts, and mark details. In the unlikely event that these items are mislaid by Queen Mary, the SEB chair should immediately notify the Head of Academic Quality and Standards, who will provide advice on how to proceed.

10.2 Students should be advised to retain copies of in-course assessment submissions. Where the lost item is a written in-course assessment, students shall be asked to resubmit the assignment; the resubmission shall be marked, or remarked, as normal.

10.3 Where students cannot or will not resubmit assignments without good cause, bare pass marks shall be applied. These may be offered alongside the option of submitting a further assignment, in order to seek to achieve higher marks.

10.4 Students may occasionally have good cause for being unable to resubmit assessments. Such instances may include examination scripts and practical or skills assessments that leave no physical copy. Two approaches are available to ensure that students are not disadvantaged and academic standards not compromised:

i. Where the lost assignment is not the sole element of assessment for the module and the remaining elements provide sufficient evidence of achievement of the module learning outcomes, the lost assignment shall be disregarded. The module mark shall be calculated only on the elements that are marked. This shall be done by increasing the remaining elements proportionately. For example, if a module should have been assessed by: Exam (50%), Essay 1 (25%), Essay 2 (25%), and 'Essay 2' was lost, the remaining elements should be rescaled to Exam (66.67%) and Essay 1 (33.33%). Remaining elements with similar learning outcomes shall not be disproportionately increased to attempt to replace the missing element (e.g. keeping 'Exam' at 50% but doubling 'Essay 1' to 50% in the example above)

ii. Where the lost assignment was the sole element of assessment for the module, or where the remaining elements do not provide sufficient evidence of achievement of the module learning outcomes, the module shall not count toward the calculation of the developmental year mark or the Classification Mark. This approach is preferable to attributing marks without sufficient evidence of students' achievements, though of course this should be avoided wherever possible.

10.5 Students may, on occasion, wish to submit a new assignment or resit an examination to replace the lost work. SEB chairs shall use their discretion in such instances, and may elect to set an alternative assessment for the purpose.

Suspension of regulations

10.6 Requests for the suspension of regulations (module, programme, or Academic Regulations) shall be extremely rare; all possible efforts must be taken to avoid the need for suspension.

10.7 As set out in Section 1 of the Academic Regulations, requests for suspension of regulations will be considered in only two circumstances:

i. where a situation has arisen that was not foreseen by the regulations (where the regulations require amendment, but a suspension is needed for the current cohort);
ii. where the application of the regulations would be manifestly unfair to one or more students.

Authority to request and grant a suspension of regulations

10.8 Requests for the suspension of regulations are reserved to Heads of Schools, Institutes, Directorates or equivalent, and to the Degree Examination Boards.

10.9 Heads of Schools, Institutes, Directorates or equivalent will normally only request suspensions that do not relate to examination board proceedings, for example admissions decisions, but may act on behalf of a SEB Chair/Deputy where unavailable.

10.10 All requests for the suspension of regulations related to examination board proceedings shall be endorsed by the appropriate Degree Examination Board. Such requests shall normally derive from a recommendation placed by the Subject Examination Board.

10.11 The DEB may elect to endorse the SEB's recommendation, or to agree an alternative approach; this may include the suspension of other regulations than those proposed by the SEB. Where a DEB does not endorse a request for the suspension of regulations, the matter shall be closed.

10.12 The suspension of any regulation can only be agreed by a designated nominee of the Principal; no other individual or group may approve suspension requests. Where the nominee of the Principal does not approve a request for the suspension of regulations, the matter shall be closed.

Requesting the suspension of regulations

10.13 A request for suspension of regulations should be made using the Suspension of Regulations template which can be found with the SEB document templates on the DGLS website. As noted on the template, requests should include the following information:

i. details of the student (full name and identity number), the module (code and title), or the programme (title) concerned.
ii. details of the regulations to be suspended (if necessary, seek guidance from DGLS).
iii. the requested outcome.
iv. a rationale, i.e. an explanation why the suspension is necessary.
v. details of actions that have and will be taken to ensure that the error causing the need to suspend the regulations can be avoided in the future.

10.14 Once signed by the SEB Chair (or Head of School or equivalent) the request should be submitted to DGLS for seeking DEB endorsement and approval from the Principal's Nominee.

10.15 If necessary, DGLS can require further information or clarifications before submitting the request for approval.

10.16 DGLS will communicate the outcomes of suspension requests to those who requested the suspension. These individuals are responsible for ensuring that outcomes are communicated to the affected students (Academic Regulations, Section 1). DGLS will also communicate the outcome to Academic Registry where updates to student, programme, or module records and are required.

10.17 The case details and rationales of suspension requests made by SEBs shall be included in the SEBs' reports to the DEBs. Suspensions sought by Chairs between Boards shall be reported at the next Board meeting.

10.18 No decisions on the students affected by the suspension of regulations may be published until the Principal's nominee has taken a final decision.

10.19 DGLS submits annual reports on suspensions of regulations to the Senate, to ensure full academic oversight and to identify problematic regulations.

Academic Misconduct

10.20 Academic misconduct refers to actions or working methods that undermine academic integrity during an assessment task or educational activity. Academic misconduct includes actions that undermine the integrity and/or purpose of an assessment, provide a student(s) with undue advantage over others, or undermine the educational standards and reputation of Queen Mary. Queen Mary takes any allegation of academic misconduct seriously, and will investigate it in accordance with the Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy. Penalties for academic misconduct can be severe, including failure with no right of resit, and expulsion from Queen Mary.

10.21 Please read the Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy for full details of what constitutes academic misconduct and the processes and possible outcomes of investigations. Additional points specific to the marking and assessment processes are outlined below.

10.22 Some schools and institutes require students to sign plagiarism statements, which confirm that the work submitted is that of the student. This is good practice, but not absolutely necessary. Students may be accused and found guilty of academic misconduct even where a plagiarism statement is not submitted.

10.23 Most onsite examination offences are discovered in the exam itself, and immediately reported to DGLS for investigation. Where an examiner suspects a student of having committed an examination offences on receipt of the answer script, the script shall be marked as normal but then forwarded to DGLS with a full report. Investigations into offences discovered in this manner may remain unresolved at the time of SEB meetings due to the timescales involved.

10.24 Students with unresolved allegations of academic misconduct cannot be formally considered by SEBs. Consideration shall be delayed until the cases are resolved. Results and recommended awards shall not be disclosed to students in this situation.

10.25 SEBs shall authorise their chairs and one named external examiner to act on their behalf in order to consider these students upon resolution of alleged academic misconduct cases. DGLS will inform the SEB Chair of the case outcome.

10.26 The SEB Chair will then submit a Chair's action memorandum, detailing the necessary actions, to Governance and Legal Services. If the action is a recommendation for award then DGLS will seek approval from the DEB Chair.

Debtors

Terminated students

10.27 Individuals who have had their registration and enrolment terminated due to non-payment of University Fees are not students, and are not entitled to attend Queen Mary, or to attempt any form of assessment. Should such an individual attempt an examination or assessment regardless, the submission or script shall be passed to Registry Services, unmarked.

Registered students

10.28 Formal results shall be withheld from students who have University Fee debts but who are still enrolled at Queen Mary.

10.29 These students shall be assessed, and decisions on progression and award shall be made. However, formal notification of their results shall be withheld until clearance has been received.

10.30 Where these debtors request information on their marks under the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation, the SEB shall refer them to: data-protection@qmul.ac.uk.

10.31 Results cannot be withheld from students with debts that do not relate directly to their University Fees. These debts include accommodation charges, nursery fees, wheel clamping fees, failure to repay hardship loans, and library debts. These students shall not appear on debtor lists, and the appropriate departments shall take action to recover the funds in other ways.

Aegrotat provisions

10.32 An aegrotat is an honours degree classified 'aegrotat'. Full details on aegrotat provisions may be found in the Academic Regulations (Section 2)

10.33 SEBs may recommend the award of an aegrotat where students have taken the full complement of modules required for award, but missed the final examinations for the programme due to illness or other medical cause judged sufficient by the SEB. Exceptionally, this may also apply to a student who was present at the examinations, considers that their performances were adversely affected by serious illness or other cause judged sufficient by the SEB, or where a student has died. An aegrotat award shall only be made where there is no reasonable prospect of the student being able to return to complete the programme of study.

10.34 Where a student has not taken the full quota of academic credit, the SEB shall consider the evidence available from other assessments. Where SEBs agree that the students would have achieved the required standards for award, a recommendation for the award of an aegrotat may be made.

10.35 Where students are offered aegrotat awards, they may accept the offer, upon which the award shall be conferred, or decline the offer and take the missed or failed assessments as first sits (where applicable). A student who chooses to take the missed or failed assessments shall cease to be eligible for the aegrotat award. A student who chooses to accept the aegrotat award shall cease to be eligible to take the missed or failed assessments.

Academic appeals

10.36 Academic appeals are formal requests from students to review the decisions of examination boards. All taught students may submit academic appeals, but this shall only be done in accordance with the Appeal Policy. Please refer to the Appeal Policy for full details on the grounds, process, and possible outcomes of the appeal process. Additional points specific to the marking and assessment processes are outlined below.

10.37 Students cannot appeal against academic judgement, and it is important that students are made aware of this. In particular, it should be noted that assessments shall not be remarked. The following are examples of appeals which are not eligible and will not be accepted, including (but are not limited to):

a) Appeals about provisional results
b) Appeals which are out of time
c) Appeals against academic judgement
d) Appeals which are not accompanied by appropriate evidence
e) Appeals based solely on the marginal failure to obtain a higher classification
f) Appeals that fall outside the scope of the Appeals Policy
g) Frivolous or vexatious appeals

10.38 All schools/institutes are required to offer 'results surgeries' or similar to enable students to discuss concerns about assessment outcomes with members of academic staff. Schools and institutes may vary their mechanisms for providing this opportunity for students, but the process should be publicised at key points in the assessment process. Results surgeries (or equivalent) should be made available to students as soon as results are released and students should be able to obtain feedback within 14 days of receiving their results in order to comply with the deadline for the submission of an academic appeal. The provision of some detailed feedback to students who are unhappy with their results, both in these surgeries and elsewhere, is often sufficient to prevent further actions such as academic appeals. This should include information on assessment performances, and where students went wrong.

10.39 Where students submit academic appeals, there is no automatic change to the agreed decisions of examination boards; there is no such status as 'pending appeal outcome'. The status, marks, and classifications of students remain unchanged until and unless appeals are found to have *prima facie* grounds and are referred to the examination board for reconsideration.

Revocation of degrees

10.40 The revocation of degrees is rare, and shall occur only in instances of administrative errors, successful academic appeals, and where former students are found to have committed academic misconduct. Revoked awards shall generally be replaced with reclassified awards, rather than alternative awards.

10.41 Revocations are managed by DGLS, with (in some cases) the University of London, and cannot be processed until the original degree certificates are returned. Further information on the revocation of degrees may be sought from DGLS.

Data protection and release of information

10.42 The General Data Protection Regulation prevents Queen Mary from divulging personal details on students without their express permission.

10.43 Relatives may occasionally contact schools and institutes to enquire about students' progress or whereabouts; even in these circumstances, absolutely no information can be provided. The standard response to such queries shall be along the lines of, *"I'm sorry, but under data protection legislation I cannot give any information on this individual."* This is a legal obligation, and therefore should make the response clear, if no less difficult upon occasion.

10.44 Requests for transcripts must be forwarded to Registry Services together with information release forms signed by the students concerned. Similarly, requests for references must be made directly by students, or with students' acknowledgement.

10.45 More information on data protection and freedom of information may be found on the DGLS website.

Appendices and important policies

Appendices within this document:

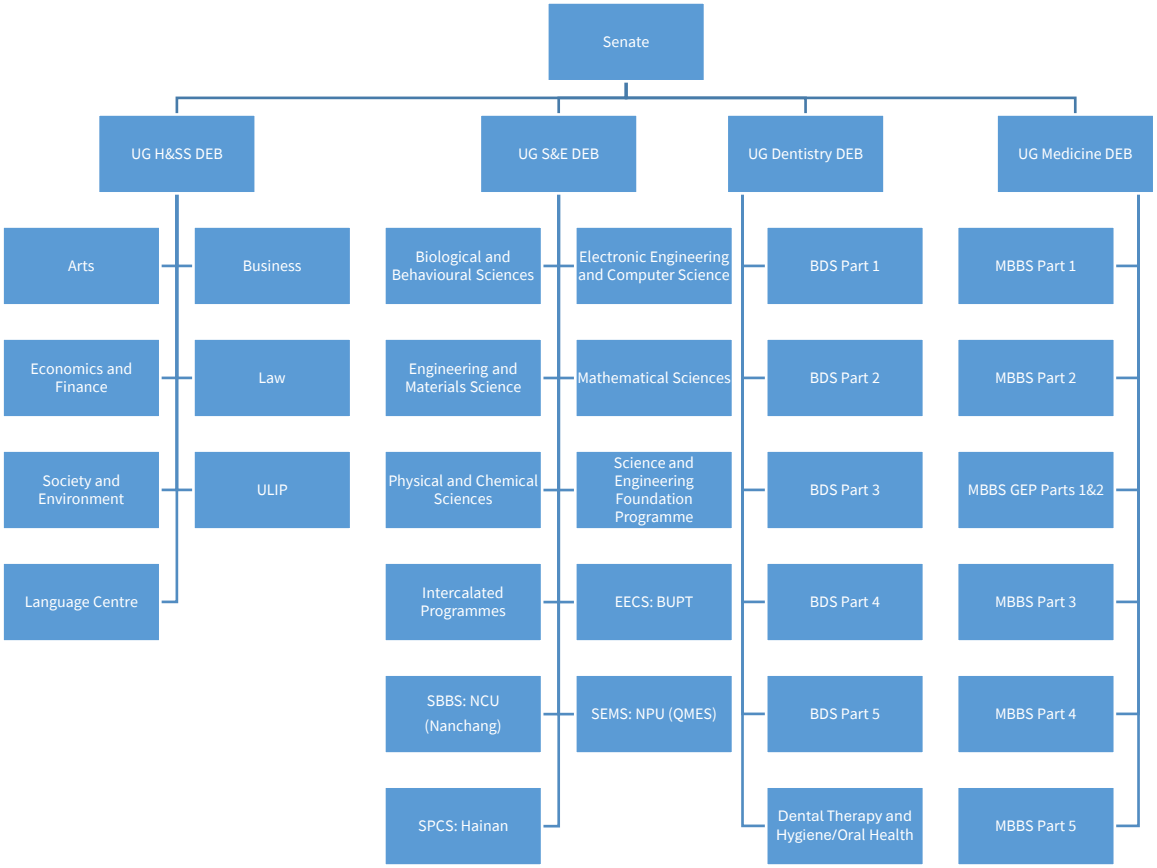
1. Appendix 1: Examination Board Structure 2026-27
2. Appendix 2: SITS progression and award codes
3. Appendix 3: Academic Misconduct outcomes and relevant SITS codes
4. Appendix 4: External examiner core duties: operational guidance for SEBs
5. Appendix 5: Appointment criteria for external examiners
6. Appendix 6: External examiner (taught) fee payment guidance

Links to Queen Mary web pages:

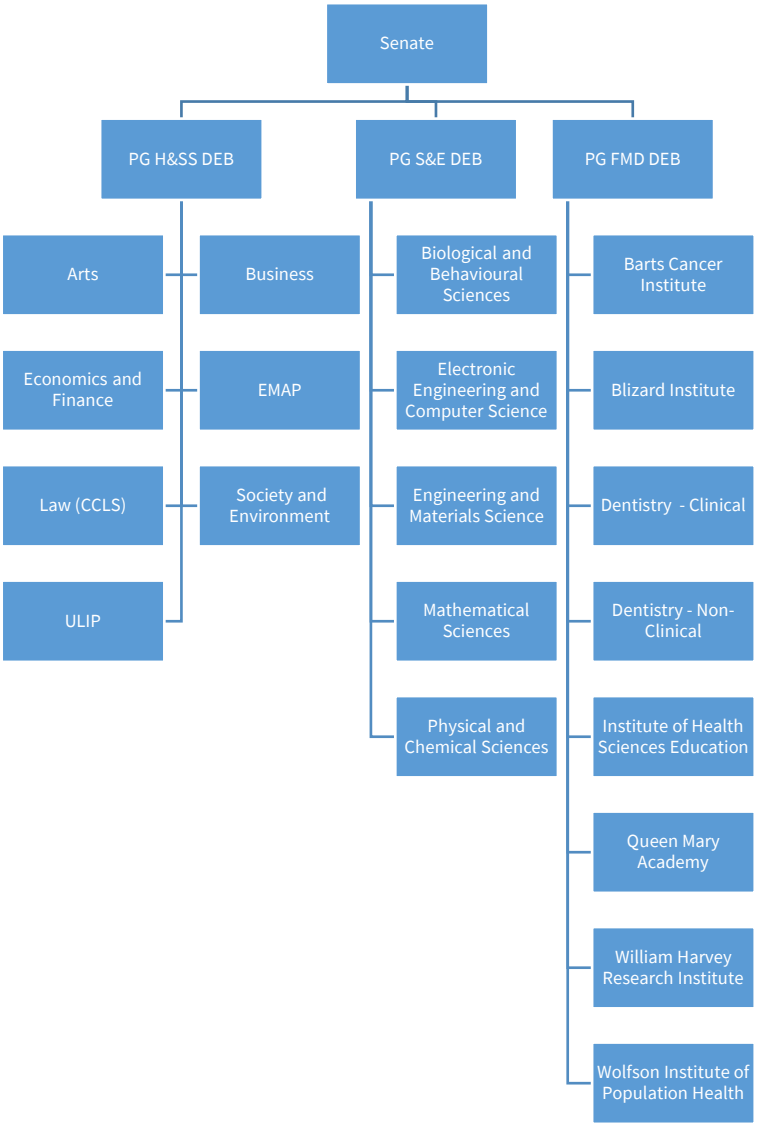
- Academic Credit Framework
- Academic Regulations
- Amanuenses and Readers Policy
- Assessment and Feedback Strategy
- Extenuating Circumstances Policy
- Guidance on generating SEB reports
- Reasonable Adjustments in Academic Assessment Policy

Appendix 1: Examination Board Structure 2026-27

Undergraduate examination boards



Postgraduate examination boards



Appendix 2: SITS progression and award codes

Code	Meaning
Award Codes	
CAA	Completing with an alternate award: student has exhausted all attempts to achieve the intended award.
CFA	Completing with intended award by condoned failure (PG): all resit attempts have been taken.
CGS	TNE Nanchang only: has passed QM degree Years 3/4, to award and progress
CIA	Completed with intended award
CLN	TNE Nanchang only (year 5): QM award already made, closing record
CRA	Completing with intended award by condoned failure or for a resit (PG): students must accept the award, or they will automatically be entered for any resit(s).
CXA	Completing with an alternate award by condoned failure (PG): student has exhausted all attempts to achieve the intended award and awarded an exit award by condoned failure
Students yet to complete	
ADA	Admin progression with resits (PG): Students who are yet to complete the dissertation and have resits in the late summer.
ADM	Admin progression (PG): Students who are yet to complete the dissertation.
PGA	Progress with trailing credit (UG), students can progress to the next year of study and also have deferred first sits in the late summer
PGD	Progress Demote - for UG Integrated students who cannot meet progression to the L7 year of study.
PGP	Progress Promote – for UG Integrated students who meet progression requirements to the L7 Year of study
PGR	Progress with trailing credit (UG) - students can progress to the next year of study and also have resits in the late summer
PGS	Progress in good standing (UG)
REF	Reassessment in the same academic year: where progression/award cannot be confirmed until resits/first sits are complete.
RES	Resuming study after a period of interruption
RMO	Interrupted student who is remaining out of attendance and not for consideration at the Board
Student records requiring further action by the SEB	
FNF	Fail no Further attempts (SEBs should double check that deregistration is correct).
HOL	On hold (Student on hold due to alleged academic misconduct/ or SEB Admin Hold).
MMK	Missing Marks (Students progression/award cannot be calculated until missing marks have been entered).
ROA	Resitting out of attendance (SEBs should double check that all resits marks are up to date in SITS).
RVW	Review (Students progression/award cannot be automatically calculated due to an error on the record.)

Appendix 3: Academic Misconduct outcomes and relevant SITS codes

No.	Outcome*	SITS code
	misconduct referral for consideration	OI
i	Formal reprimand	n/a
ii	a requirement that the student undertake a specified educational activity of formative task, within a specified timeframe.	n/a
iii	a requirement that the element of assessment in which misconduct occurred be resubmitted. This will not count as an additional attempt at the module, and the resulting assessment mark will not be capped.	XD, until mark is known
iv	failure (a mark of zero) in the element of assessment in which misconduct occurred. Reassessment is permitted where eligible.	XF
v	failure (a mark of zero) in the element of assessment in which misconduct occurred, with no right to resubmit the assessment.	XR
vi	capping to the minimum pass mark for the module in which misconduct occurred.	XM
vii	failure (a mark of zero) in the module of which the assessment forms a part, with the maximum mark on any resit or retake limited to the minimum pass mark.	X
viii	failure (a mark of zero) in the module of which the assessment forms a part, with no permission to resit or retake the module	XN
ix	capping to the minimum pass mark for all modules taken (and yet to be taken) in the current academic year. Any module marks below the minimum pass mark will stand.	XM
x	Requirement that data affected by the misconduct be destroyed, and/or a restriction on the publication or dissemination of the research	XH -until mark available
xi	Requirement that the student rectify any material affected by the misconduct within a specified timeframe	XH -until mark available
xii	a recommendation to the Principal that the student be suspended from the programme for a period of up to one academic year; where it is deemed appropriate, the Chair of the Panel may also recommend that the student receive marks of zero in all modules taken during the academic year in which the misconduct occurred.	XH, and suspension
xiii	a recommendation to the Principal that the student be expelled from Queen Mary; where it is deemed appropriate, the Chair of the Panel may also recommend that the student receive marks of zero in all modules taken during the academic year in which the misconduct occurred.	XH, and expulsion

Appendix 4: External examiner core duties – operational guidance for SEBs

The core duties of external examiners are listed within the Assessment Handbook. The following provides further guidance for SEBs to manage the external examining process.

8.93 Assessment Tasks i. to comment upon the assessments for each module for which they are responsible, the extent to which the assessments cover the syllabus, and whether they enable students to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes; ii. in consultation between the external and SEB Chair, to approve at least 60% of assessment question papers/tasks; iii. to comment upon marking schemes for individual assessments, assessment criteria, and model answers;	
Timing:	Annually as part of the module assessment task review - usually at the start of each teaching semester including Semester C for January intake programmes with non-standard calendars – Task to be completed prior to the assessments' release to students.
Action by SEB	▶On appointment, ensure externals are provided with clear details of programmes and module allocation. This should include access to all module handbooks. assessment patterns and marking criteria for every module under their review. (Information should be coordinated in a standard format for ease of reference.) ▶ Collate a list of modules and associated assessment for each module under the review of the SEB for the coming academic year. ▶Assign internal markers and external examiners to each module and share information with all examiners. ▶Review and identify which element(s) of assessment for each module, across the whole academic year, will require external review. ▶Set deadlines for assessment review by both internal and external examiners to ensure this task is completed prior to assessment being released to students. ▶Schedule and service SEB Exam Paper Scrutiny sub-Board. ▶Share relevant exam papers/tasks with external examiner(s) and record comments and endorsement. ▶Liaise with internal and external examiner where further action is required, or ▶Confirm approval of assessment, so that module organisers can prepare for the release of assessment tasks to students.
Evidenced	Formally: Annual Report, specifically sections 3 and 4 a-c.. Informally: with the SEB during the consultation period.

8.94 Marking and Feedback iv. to confirm whether the standard of marking is satisfactory by scrutinising a sample of assessment for each module;	
Timing:	Annually, at the end of each Semester, including Semester C for January intake programmes with non standard calendars, as soon as marks become available.
Action by SEB	▶Establish timetable and deadlines for the return of marked work by internal marker(s), and co-ordinate deadlines for the completion of internal second marking/moderation. ▶Provide externals with a timetable and instructions for when samples will become available and how to access samples. ▶Ensure externals are provided with a standard format for the review of student work and associated feedback, including instructions on how to review work outside of the sample if required. ▶Endure samples is accompanied by the module results spreadsheet summary and the moderation report which details all internal marking arrangements, analysis of results and internal comment on issues with assessment, marking and or attainment. ▶Close monitoring of both internal and external review to ensure confirmed marks are received in time for the SEB to formally confirm results.
Evidenced	Formally: Annual Report, specifically sections 2, 3 and 4 d-k. Formally: oral report at the SEB, summarised in the SEB minutes. Informally: with the SEB during the consultation period

v. to observe oral examinations, where applicable	
Timing:	Annually. In year as part of the assessment calendar, with the potential to visit Queen Mary in person.
Action by SEB	▶Establish a list of modules requiring Oral examinations, including OSCEs / practical's. ▶Schedule and circulate assessment dates to students, internal and external examiners. ▶ Secure adequate venues for the conduct of the assessment, including recording devices where required.
Evidenced	Formally: Annual Report, specifically sections 3 and 4 j-p. Formally: in person with the internal examiner(s) to agree marks.

3. Module Results Analysis vi. to comment upon the standards of achievement of students, and the comparability of this achievement to standards elsewhere;	
Timing:	Annually as part of Marking and Feedback, based on module level data and as part of SEB attendance, based on programme level data included within SEB paperwork.

Action by SEB	▶Establish a system to extract, compare and display results at both module and programme level once marks are available. ▶Efficient management of the internal marking and moderation process to provide individual module results and statistics. ▶Prompt circulation of SEB paperwork and associated programme results commentary to enable a detailed review by both internal and external examiners.
Evidenced	Formally: Annual Report, specifically sections 2 and 4 d-k. Formally: oral reports at the SEB, summarised in the SEB minutes. Informally: with the SEB during the consultation period.

vii. to advise the Subject Examination Board on appropriate actions where the marks for a module are significantly outside the normal pattern, and to confirm recommendations by markers for actions where the marks for a module are significantly outside the normal pattern;	
Timing:	Annually, as part of the assessment review (iv) and Subject Exam Boad (vi). Ideally concern concerning module results should be raised prior to the SEB to enable the Board to take any relevant action in advance of the SEB.
Action by SEB	▶Efficient management of the internal marking process to provide results statistics so that external(s) have sufficient time to raise any queries concerning module results before the SEB. ▶Responding promptly to queries and taking appropriate action required where issues are identified.
Evidenced	Formally: oral reports at the SEB, summarised in the SEB minutes. Formally: Annual Report, specifically sections 4, 5 and 6 Informally: with module organisers /SEB during consultation period. Informally: with SEB Chair prior to the SEB.

4. Overall student achievement viii. to make known any causes for concern in relation to academic standards achieved by students, the standards of modules, and the standards of awards to be made;	
Timing:	Annually, as part of the Subject Exam Board process.
Action by SEB	▶Provide overall results analysis, including breakdown by programme, ideally with comparative data from previous year(s) as part of SEB paperwork. ▶ Prompt circulation of SEB paperwork and associated results commentary to enable review by internal and external examiners.
Evidenced	Formally: Annual Report, specifically sections 2, 4 and 6.

ix. to comment upon the standards of proposed awards, and their comparability to similar awards made elsewhere;	
Timing:	Annually, as part of the Module Results Analysis (iv), and SEB data (vi). Ideally concern concerning module results should be raised prior to the SEB to enable the Board to take the relevant action in advance of the SEB. However, externals may raise queries on overall results for modules/programmes they are not responsible for.
Action by SEB	▶Efficient management of the internal marking process to ensure externals have sufficient time to raise any queries concerning module results before the SEB. ▶Responding promptly to queries and taking appropriate action required where issues are identified.
Evidenced	Formally: oral reports at the SEB, summarised in the SEB minutes. Formally: Annual Report, specifically sections 4, 5 and 6 Informally: with module organisers /SEB during consultation period. Informally: with SEB Chair prior to the SEB (in relation to standards of award).

4. Subject Examination Boards x. to attend meetings of the Subject Examination Board, and to participate fully in decision making;	
Timing:	Annually, during relevant Exam Board window, attendance can be in person or remotely. SEBs are reminded that externals should not be required to visit Queen Mary more than three times a year.
Action by SEB	▶Preparation for the meeting to include scheduling, room booking and circulation of paperwork. ▶Providing absent external examiners with copies of the Board paperwork so that they can supply comments to the Chair, who will present any comments on their behalf. ▶Professional servicing of the meeting to include the monitoring of attendance responses to ensure quoracy and the production of accurate paperwork and minutes using the template provided by DGLS. ▶During the Board the Chair will ensure that externals are given the opportunity to comment on all discussions. ▶External examiner verbal reports is a standing item on the SEB agenda.
Evidenced	Formally: within the SEB minutes and SEB Report to the DEB (where required).

xi. to endorse decisions on results and progression, and recommendations for award;	
Timing:	Annually, at the SEB

Action by SEB	▶Chair's will ensure that the views of externals are received at the Board or sought following the Board if they are unable to attend. ▶Secretary will minute attendance or apologies, which act as a formal written record of external examiner endorsement of SEB decision making.
Evidenced	Formally: within the SEB minutes and SEB Report to the DEB (where required).

xii. to perform any other duties requested by the Senate or the Degree Examination Board, following appropriate consultation over the nature of those duties;	
Timing:	Ad hoc throughout the period of their appointment.
Action by DGLS/SEB	▶Liaison with external examiners to provide context and outline of additional duties.
Evidenced	Dependent on duties required.

xiii. to submit a full written report annually, including an optional confidential report to the Principal;	
Timing:	Annually, reports are submitted within 30 days of the main Summer (UG) or Autumn (PG) SEB.
Action by DGLS/SEB	▶DGLS will make the Report template available on the dedicated External Examiner Resources webpage (updated annually). ▶DGLS will email all external examiners a copy of the template together with a reminder of Queen Mary processes. ▶SEB will also email externals a copy of the template following their attendance at the SEB. ▶Following submission DGLS will confirm receipt, read the report and pass copies on to the SEB, noting any comments requiring a formal response. ▶SEB will respond to any comments raised in the report and discuss comments with School/Institute colleagues (via Education Committee) and students (via Student Voice Committee). ▶Copies of external examiner reports and SEB responses are shared with Faculty by DGLS
Evidenced	Formally: DGLS maintains a record of submission and retains copies for Queen Mary records. Formally: used by the School/Institute as part of their continuous programme review process, shared with Students via Student Voice Committee and discussed at School/Institute Education Committee. Formally: DGLS provides a high-level Institutional summary and reports on submission rates to Academic Quality and Standards Board.

8.7 By agreement with the Subject Examination Board and in consultation with the relevant schools and institutes, external examiners may also carry out other duties including: the approval of project topics and essay titles, interviewing students on their programmes of study and experiences, commenting informally on proposed curriculum changes, commenting upon proposed changes to assessment methods.	
Timing:	Ad hoc. Commentary as part of other duties i.e. assessment task (i), marking and feedback task (ii) and module results analysis (iv).
Action by SEB	▶Identification and justification of additional duties. ▶Liaison with external examiners to confirm acceptance and timeline for additional duties. ▶Provide opportunity for the external to contribute to discussions on assessment design at the Board and/or when supplying feedback on assessment tasks, marking and result analysis. ▶Capture comments as part of SEB minutes and in responses to comments raised by the external in their Annual Report.
Evidenced	Formally: Annual Report specifically sections 3, 4, 5 and 6 Informally: with SEB during consultation period.

Appendix 5: Appointment criteria for external examiners

Appointment Criteria for External Examiners (Taught Programmes)

Queen Mary will apply the following set of criteria for the appointment of external examiners (taught programmes) to ensure that external examiners are competent to undertake the core duties outlined in Chapter 8 of the Assessment Handbook.

The criteria ensure that potential conflicts of interest are identified prior to appointment.

Experience of external examining of postgraduate research students, whether at Queen Mary or not, is not relevant to these criteria.

Person specification

Queen Mary appoints external examiners who can show appropriate evidence of the following:

i. knowledge and understanding of UK academic standards and of the assurance and enhancement of quality,
ii. relevant qualifications, either:
    a. academic qualification(s) to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, including professional qualifications/recognition e.g. membership of the HEA, or,
    b. professional qualification to at least the level of the qualification being external examined, or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate,
iii. competence and experience of designing and operation of assessment/feedback and of the enhancement of the student learning experience,
iv. competence and experience of the standards expected of students to achieve UK awards,
v. breadth of knowledge and standing within the discipline to be able to command the respect of academic and, where appropriate, professional peers,
vi. fluency in English, and where programmes are delivered and assessed in languages other than English, fluency in the relevant language(s),
vii. demonstrating applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies, where required,
viii. awareness of current developments in curricula design and delivery within the UK HEI sector.

Conflicts of interest

Queen Mary cannot appoint, as external examiners, anyone if the following categories or circumstances:

ix. a current member of the Senate or Council,
x. anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme(s) of study,
xi. anyone who is, or knows they will be in a position to influence significantly the future

of students on the programme of study due to their sanding in other roles such as funding bodies or relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies,

xii. anyone significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme,

xiii. former staff or students of Queen Mary, unless a period of five year has elapsed and all students taught by, or with, the external examiner have completed their programme(s),

xiv. a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another higher education provider,

xv. the succession of more than one external examiner by a colleague from the external's home department/school and provider in any given year*,

xvi. the appointment of more than one external examiner from the same department/ school of the same higher education provider.*

Terms of Office

xvii. appointments are for four years. An exceptional extension of one year may be permitted to ensure continuity or due to programme teach out,

xviii. reappointment is permitted in exceptional circumstances only. Justification will be required and a minimum period of five years will have elapsed since the nominee's previous appointment,

xix. external examiners should not hold more than two external examining appointment for taught programmes at any one time

*In extremis, SEBs may appoint two externals from the same HEI; externals must be from different schools/departments and a clear rationale provided on the nomination form. To ensure varied externality SEBs may only appoint one pair of external examiners from the same HEI at a time, the remining externals appointed to the SEB must be from different HEIs.

Policy Information and Document Control

Policy title	*Appointment Criteria for External Examiners.*
Version number	*V1*
Approval level	*Education Quality and Standards Board.*
Approval date	*15 April 2026*
Policy owner	*Alice de Havillan, Academic Standards and Quality Officer. DGLS*
Policy contact	*Alice de Havillan, qualityandstandards@qmul.ac.uk*

Version Control

Version	Date	Reason for updates/Summary of key changes
1	*15/4/26*	*Replace the former Quality Code (QAA) criteria*

Appendix 6: External examiner (taught) fee payment guidance

Calculation form for the payment of UG taught external examiners

Payment Formula (for guidance only)

A lump sum is calculated by the SEB and distributed amongst the external examiners based on the amount of work they have undertaken i.e the modules under their review.

The lump sum will compromise:

A. A minimum payment of £250 to cover responsibilities for modules up the to the value of 120 credits (i.e. 8 x 15 credits) with up to 200 student registrations in total.
B. £20 per 15 credit module beyond the minimum noted under A
C. 50p per student registrations beyond the minimum noted under A
D. £10 per finalist enrolled on each programme of study under the review of the SEB.

Individual external examiners must be paid a minimum of £250

Calculation

1. Total number of 15 credit modules = **A** 2. Total number of 15 credit modules registrations = **B** 3. Lump sum (for modules to the value of 120 credits and 200 student module registrations 4. A-8 = **C** 5. B-200 = **D** 6. Number of Finalists = **E** 7. C x £20.00 8. D x £0.50 9. E x £10.00	£250

Calculation form for the payment of PG taught external examiners

Payment Formula (for guidance only)

There is a core element of £300, plus an additional £10 per FTE beyond a minimum of 10 FTE. The SEB will distribute the additional payments between the external examiners based on the number of modules under their review.

Individual external examiners must be paid a minimum of £300

Calculation

1. Core Element 2. Total number of students (=A) 3. (A – 10) x £10.00 Total	£300