

Higher Education Academic Regulations

Section 5 - Assessment Regulations, Procedures and Moderation

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5. Assessment Regulations, Procedures and Moderation

5.1 Introduction

- I. Taught programmes at Askham Bryan College are modular and organised within academic semesters, with each semester extending to no more than 14 weeks duration with some modules being shared between programmes. This section sets out:
 - a) assessment regulations and associated arrangements for assessment boards (as detailed in **Annex 5.01**).
 - b) arrangements for appointment of external examiners and the role they play in the assessment process.
 - c) organisation of assessment.

5.2 Assessment Regulations

- I. The assessment regulations may only be varied with the agreement of the Higher Education Academic Board. These regulations apply to all undergraduate awards, up to and including level 5, made by Askham Bryan College.

5.2.1 Moderation of Assessment Briefs and Examination Papers

- I. Arrangements for the moderation of assessment briefs are described in **Annex 5.01** and for examination papers in **Annex 5.02**.

5.2.2 Assessment Rules and Procedures

- I. The conduct of written examinations/ time constrained assessments is described in **Annex 5.01** the policy and procedures for the assessment of prior achievement of learning is described in **Annex 5.01** and arrangements for academic appeals and reassessment are set out in **Annex 5.01**.

5.2.3 Moderation of Assessment Results

- I. The arrangements for internal moderation of all assessment results are described in **Annex 5.01** and **Annex 5.02**.

5.2.4 Assessment Criteria

- I. Academic staff are expected to use assessment criteria as a guide to students and as a means of improving consistency of marking as described in **Annex 5.04** These include both generic and assignment specific criteria.

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5.3 The Role of Internal Moderators

- I. All academic staff involved in the teaching and assessment of a module are internal moderators. Internal moderators are responsible for ensuring that the students have been fairly assessed in accordance with the module assessment scheme and assessment criteria and for maintaining accurate records of marks and grades. Where two or more staff are involved in the assessment of a module, the module leader is responsible for moderating marks or grades, entering these results into the computerised student record system, checking them, and signing the module assessment sheet before submission to the Module Assessment Boards.
- II. Internal moderation should take place for all assessment types and records of this moderation should be recorded using the relevant moderation forms. For any assessment that cannot be marked anonymously (e.g., presentations or practical's) internal moderation should take place during the completion of the assessment or via video recordings. These recordings should also be made available to the external examiner where relevant.
- III. Where the internal moderator considers that the marks, they would award for the sample is broadly within 5% of that awarded by the first marker, the marks of the first marker will stand. If there is a difference of above 5% (above or below) the internal moderator and first marker should discuss the sample and agree for the full set of assignments to be increased or decreased appropriately. If agreement cannot be reached then a second moderator should consider the sample and make a final decision whether to retain the marks awarded by the first marker, or to increase or decrease the complete set of assignments.
- IV. Where the internal moderator identifies an anomaly (i.e. where overall the marker and moderator agree, however one, or a small number, of grades are below or above where the moderator would expect them to be) the internal moderator should moderate the entire set of assessments. Only once this is completed can it be recommended that the grade(s) for those students be increased or decreased. As such single grade should be increased or decreased by the internal moderator unless moderation of **all** the assessments has been undertaken.
- V. Where the internal moderator identifies significant issues in grading and/ or feedback across the sample the internal moderator can recommend to the relevant Curriculum Area Manager a full remark of all the assessment scripts.
- VI. Prior to consideration of module results by the Module Assessment Board, the module leader should ensure that tutors have reviewed all aggregate marks which generate a weighted score within 2% of any grade boundary. This review should verify the

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reliability of a marginal failure grade, given the potentially serious consequence for student progression.

- VII. Where there is a case for revising marks, based upon a review of the assessment components, the moderated mark should be entered into the appropriate record system (currently trackers), prior to the Module Assessment Board.
- VIII. Where a score of within 2% of any grade boundary is presented to the Module Assessment Board, the module leader should confirm to the board that the above procedure, for reviewing the mark, has taken place.
- IX. Internal moderators have prime responsibility for determining standards against agreed criteria. This may involve, for example, scaling marks in consultation with the Chair of the Module Assessment Board, if it becomes clear that the format of the assessment was such as to give a false impression of student achievement for reporting and endorsement at the Module Assessment Board.
- X. The moderation process is designed to audit these standards and develop a collective understanding of what they should be. The appropriateness of these standards is established at Module Assessment Boards (**Section 5.7**) which all internal moderators are required to attend (**Annex 5.02**).

5.3.1 Internal Moderation Expectations

- I. Head of HE Academic Services and Quality Assurance should ensure that samples of assessed work are moderated and that a sample of marked and moderated assessments are available for scrutiny by relevant external examiners.

5.3.2 Marking Major Projects/Dissertations

- I. Procedures for the assessment, double marking and reassessment of major projects/dissertations are set out in detail in **Annex 5.02**.

5.4 Appointment and responsibilities of external examiners

5.4.1 Appointment

- I. The HE Registry Co-ordinator will advertise externally for External Examiners. Nominations for appointment to external examiner for any foundation degree programmes will use the proposal pro-forma in **Annex 5.05**. Nominations are taken to HE Academic Board where decisions on appointment or removal of external examiners are made.

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- II. The Head of HE Academic Services and Quality Assurance has a duty to ensure that enough external examiners are appointed to ensure adequate expertise is available to cover all the major areas of the syllabus being examined, including the requirements of professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies. Guidance on the criteria for appointment are given in **Annex 5.05**. The role of the HE Academic Board is to confirm that the recommended candidates fulfil these criteria and to write to the successful nominee setting out terms and duration of appointment.
- III. Where modules on different programmes are shared between different programmes it is the responsibility of the Head of HE Academic Services and Quality Assurance to determine the 'lead' external examiner for that module.
- IV. The number of modules in each subject area will determine the number of subject examiners. Typically, module external examiners will have responsibility for 18 modules per academic session for standard undergraduate modules. External examiners may be required to review up to six additional modules per year, with a supplementary fee payable for each additional module reviewed. No external examiner shall review more than 24 modules, unless exceptionally agreed (e.g., acting as cover for illness) by the Chair of the Module Assessment Board and/or the Head of HE Academic Services and Quality Assurance.
- V. The Head of HE Academic Services and Quality Assurance has the responsibility of nominating Progression and Award Board examiners whose role is to attend several Progression and Award Boards, to provide an overview on the fairness of regulations and consistency of their application (**Section 5.6**). The appointment must be ratified by the HE Academic Board. Taught Award Board external examiners are normally drawn from the cohort of subject examiners and their duties are in addition to their role as subject external examiner. Once the decision for appointment has been ratified the successful nominee will be sent their terms and duration of appointment.

5.4.2 Term of appointment

- I. The term of appointment of External Examiners shall normally be four years (five years for new programmes). All appointees should remain in post until after the last assessments with which they are to be involved to deal with any subsequent review of decisions. Newly appointed examiners should take up their appointments by September or October and, before the retirement of their predecessors. External examiners who are new to the role should, wherever possible, take up their posts in the June before the retirement of the existing examiner.

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5.4.3 Responsibilities of external examiners

- I. The responsibilities of both subject and taught award board external examiners are outlined in **Annex 5.05**.

5.4.4. External moderation expectations

- II. The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that moderation of work and the retention of papers for external examiners does not militate against the prompt feedback essential for effective learning or contravene the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation [\(EU\) 2016/679](#) and the [Data Protection Act](#), 2018.
 - a) All internal moderators and external examiners are provided with guidelines on the **General Data Protection Regulation** [\(EU\) 2016/679](#) and the Data Protection Act, 2018 as they relate to the assessment process (**Annex 5.05**).
 - b) The majority of samples of moderated scripts and student feedback are available on Turnitin (Grademark), External Examiners will be provided with login details to be able to access all student work and feedback. The external examiner can select the work that they wish to review; these should be across the grade bands, amounting to no more than 10%, to include a sample of firsts and fails. In the case of an External Examiner requesting paper copies the Academic Services will print out the students' original work and the feedback given on Turnitin (Grademark). The exception to this will be assessments in which the agreed format does not conform to Turnitin file types.
 - c) Where an assessment is not submitted to Turnitin the assessments should be viewed by the External Examiner on site or may be scanned and provided to the External Examiner on the college EE intranet page.
 - d) All markers will ensure that scripts are annotated as part of the marking process, to assist internal moderators and external examiners in making judgements on the validity of marks awarded.
 - e) All examination scripts are made available to external examiners and thereafter stored securely for a period of six years.

5.4.4 Briefing of new external examiners

- I. Newly appointed examiners shall be invited by HE Registry Co-ordinator to visit the institution as soon as possible after their appointment to be briefed by the Course manager (if appropriate), the Head of HE Academic Services and Quality Assurance and the HE Registry Co-ordinator on:
 - a) the role of external examiners as agreed by Askham Bryan HE Academic Board;

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- b) the rights and responsibilities of external examiners;
 - c) the operation and timing of the module and progression and award boards;
 - d) the assessment scheme for each academic session as determined by the Course team;
 - e) the assessment moderation and exam paper preparation system and the dates of Module and/ or Progression and Award Boards;
 - f) reporting procedures;
 - g) action taken in response to previous external examiners reports;
 - h) arrangements for the payment of fees and expenses (**Annex 5.05**);
 - i)
- II. In addition, the external examiners should be introduced to the Chair(s) of the Module Assessment Board, the Award and Progression Board and the HE Academic Board, and to relevant senior staff and to the Course team and where possible, students. In the case of inexperienced examiners appointed before the retirement of their predecessor, the former shall be invited to 'shadow' the latter during a visit to the College and a meeting of the assessment board(s).

5.4.5 Premature termination of external examiners' appointment

- I. Circumstances that shall lead to the premature termination of an external examiner's appointment shall include:
 - a) a newly arisen or discovered conflict of interest;
 - b) failure or inability to attend boards or carry out moderation;
 - c) behaviour inappropriate to the position of external examiner;
 - d) a loss of academic standing;
 - e) failure to submit appropriate reports.
- II. The decision to terminate the appointment shall rest with the HE Academic Registrar who will write to the examiner stating the reason(s) for the termination.

5.5 Module Assessment Boards

5.5.1 Constitution of Module Assessment Boards

- I. Each subject area shall have an associated Module Assessment Board (MAB) that is empowered to act on behalf of the HE Academic Board, following procedures laid down by the Board or by Academic Quality and Standards Committee acting on its behalf.
- II. Each Module Assessment Board will usually correspond to one or two subject areas (dependent on student numbers) and the membership shall be as follows:
 - a) Curriculum Area Manager (Chair) or nominee

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- b) Head of HE Academic Services and Quality Assurance
- c) HE Teaching, Learning and Scholarship Lead
- d) HE Registry Co-ordinator (minutes and student record systems operator)
- e) HE Curriculum Team Leaders
- f) Course Managers of each programme under consideration
- g) Leaders of each module under consideration
- h) Module and Course external examiners

5.5.2 Terms of reference of Module Assessment Boards

- I. The Module Assessment Boards are empowered to:
 - a) moderate and agree results for each module to ensure that standards are comparable to those of cognate subjects both within the college and in other higher education institutions;
 - b) ensure that students have been fairly assessed in accordance with the module assessment scheme;
 - c) confirm or scale the marks of all students taking the module;
 - d) received confirmation that reassessment assignments have been written, and internally and externally moderated;
 - e) receive subject external examiner's verbal reports on the review of the module assessments;
 - f) appoint members to represent the subject board at each Progression and Award Board;
 - g) make recommendations on assessment issues to Progression and Award Boards, Academic Quality and Standards Committee or HE Academic Board.

5.5.3 Procedures of Module Assessment Boards

- I. The module assessment boards (MABs) alone are responsible for establishing the standards of assessed work in a subject, and in this, the role of the subject external examiner is crucial. Standards are established by:
 - a) comparing the analysis of module marks and grades with those of previous occasions and identify any modules which are atypical;
 - b) considering the implications of the results of sample double marking by internal and external examiners;
 - c) considering the views of external examiners who have reviewed the assessment methods and carried out *viva voce* examinations of individual students;
 - d) reviewing the profile of marks and grades of modules in other Module Assessment Boards, for that assessment stage.

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- II. MABs will be presented with students' marks and grades in each module studied for consideration. Where the module leader, internal second marker, Course manager, Curriculum Area Manager and Head of HE Academic Services and Quality Assurance have, as a consequence of the moderation process, decided to recommend that marks should be modified in some way, they will additionally present the board with a comparison of un-moderated marks and an explanation of the rationale for the modification.
- III. The MAB considers the results for all students (irrespective of programme, or award) who have been assessed in modules in the subject. It is not the responsibility of the Module Assessment Board to consider the overall performance of individual students or extenuating circumstances relating to individual performance. It is, however, the responsibility of the module leader to report to the board the accuracy of incomplete or zero grades and to ensure that non-submission or non-attendance of an individual student has been verified by a medical note or other valid, written evidence.
- IV. Once the marks and grades have been confirmed by the Module Assessment Board, they shall be made definitive in the computerised student record system so that overall results for each student can be considered by the appropriate Progression and Award Boards (**Section 5.8**). All Incomplete grades should be ratified by the programme assessments board in considering the mitigating circumstances of individual students (see section 11 of the assessment regulations at **Annex 5.01**).

5.5.4 The role of the chair of Module Assessment Boards

- I. Module Assessment Boards will be chaired by the relevant Curriculum Area Manager (or Nominee in case of absence), who will be responsible for:
 - a) briefing new subject external examiners on their role together with the HE Registry Coordinator and Course Manager, where applicable;
 - b) receiving confirmation that moderated examination papers and other assessment instruments have been made available, in a timely manner, to the external examiner by the HE Registry Co-ordinator and ensuring that responses are made to his or her moderation by the relevant team concerned, as co-ordinated by the HE Registry Coordinator;
 - c) receive conformation from the HE Registry Co-ordinator that the Course Manager makes available, in a timely manner, samples of marked scripts and in-programme work as required for scrutiny by the external examiner;
 - d) conducting meetings of the board in a manner which ensures that the module marks are properly agreed and recorded;

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- e) determining whether sufficient members are present to properly progress the agenda (all members and all module leaders should normally be in attendance – see **Section 2**);
- f) appointing a secretary to the board and ensuring that detailed and accurate records are kept of the proceedings, of the agreed results and of any recommendations;
- g) approving the draft minutes and ensuring that they comply with guidance given on the Data Protection Act and GDPR.
- h) submitting, in conjunction with the Head of HE Academic Services and Quality Assurance a copy of the minutes to the HE Academic Quality and Standards Committee, including any matters arising;
- i) nominating members of the board to represent it at Progression and Award Board meetings.

5.7 The Progression and Award Boards

5.7.1 Constitution of the Progression and Award Boards

- I. Each programme has an associated assessment board that is empowered to act on behalf of Academic Board, following procedures laid down by Academic Board or the Academic Standards Committee acting on behalf of Academic Board. The membership shall be as follows:
 - a) HE Academic Registrar (Chair)
 - b) Head of HE Academic Services and Quality Assurance (Vice Chair)
 - c) Curriculum Area Managers (or nominee) of each relevant Module Assessment Board
 - d) HE Curriculum Team Leader(s)
 - e) Course Manager(s)
 - f) HE Registry Coordinator (minutes)
 - g) Progression and Award Board External Examiner
 - h) The Campus Principal and or Vice Principal HE (ex-officio)

5.7.2 Terms of reference of Progression and Awards Boards

- I. The Progression and Award Boards are empowered to:

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- a) make decisions on the progression and awards for all students registered for the named award(s) for which the board is responsible in accordance with the approved assessment scheme and regulations for the programme;
- b) approve for publication the agreed recommendations on the results of assessment;
- c) Consider for profiles eligible for consideration of upgrade award classifications as described in **Section 10.2, Annex 5.01**;
- d) consider the advice to be given to students who have failed;
- e) approve the timing of any reassessments, whether reassessment should be allowed without further attendance, and to specify the period of time to be allowed for the completion of reassessment;
- f) receive and consider reports of appeals panels and to determine the appropriate programme of action, having given due regard to the Appeals Panel's recommendation(s);
- g) receive and ratify reports of the Academic Misconduct Panel previously established to determine whether a student (singly or in conjunction with others) has attempted any form of cheating or breach of regulations to gain an unfair advantage in terms of their assessments, and to implement the appropriate programme of action regarding each student against whom an allegation(s) has been substantiated;
- h) Receive and ratify reports of the Mitigating Circumstances Panel with respect to claims for mitigation submitted by students and take appropriate action.

5.7.3 Procedures of Progression and Awards Boards

- I. The focus of the proceedings of the Progression and Awards boards is the student. Progression and award classification decisions made by the Progression and Awards Boards are normally determined by the mathematical rules contained within the assessment regulations. The board **cannot alter any module marks or grades** moderated by Module Assessment Boards unless an error in transcription or an omission is discovered but can decide to compensate or condone a failure in a module under the conditions prescribed in the assessment regulations (**Section 12, Annex 5.01**).
- II. A summary of the potential outcomes available to the Progressions and Awards Board are detailed within **Annex 5.06**.
- III. Thus, the overall performance of the student is indicated by:
 - a) module marks or grades which have been confirmed by the appropriate Module Assessment Boards at each part or stage of the programme;
 - b) documented evidence of mitigating circumstances relating to the student (**Section 5.8.4 and Section 11** of the assessment regulations at **Annex 5.01**);
 - c) performance in programme-wide components.

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- IV. The board may award a different classification from that determined by the marks awarded under the conditions prescribed in the assessment regulations (**Annex 5.01, section 10**). However, it is essential for equity and legal reasons that the same array of marks normally yield the same overall result. The reasons for any decisions that are out of line with the assessment regulations, or for any decision on individual students that are out of rank order, must be clearly specified in the minutes of the board meeting.

5.7.4 Evidence of mitigating circumstances relating to students' performance

- I. All significant mitigating circumstances relating to the performance of individual students must be documented (section 11 of assessment regulations at **Annex 5.01**) and submitted to the Mitigating Circumstances Panel a minimum of 5 days prior to any meeting of the Panel.
- II. Students are individually responsible for providing documented evidence of any mitigating circumstances, which may have affected their performance in one or more assessments. Students should also be advised to inform their Course Manager or another member of the Course team of their personal mitigating circumstances so that the Course team member can, if appropriate, provide written corroboration for the Mitigating Circumstances Panel.
- III. See also the Policy and Procedure on Mitigating Circumstances.

5.7.5 The role of the chair of a Progression and Award Board

- I. The chair of the Progression and Award board shall:
 - a) conduct the meeting of the board in a manner which ensures that decisions on progression, awards and award classifications for individual students are arrived at fairly and in accordance with the assessment scheme and regulations;
 - b) determine whether sufficient members are present to properly progress the agenda (all members should normally be in attendance – see **Section 2**).
 - c) advise the board on the interpretation and application of the assessment regulations;
 - d) lead the board to make considerations of whether Candidates will be eligible for a higher undergraduate award classification other than that indicated by the marks achieved based on the criteria for Eligibility for upgrading award classification as defined in **Annex 5.01, Section 10.2**;
 - e) ensure that decisions are clear and that they have been agreed by the board;
 - f) ensure that all extenuating circumstances relating to individual students have been fully considered before a decision is reached on progression or an award;
 - g) ensure that they have appointed a secretary, and that detailed and accurate records are kept of the board's proceedings and of the agreed outcomes;

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- h) approve the draft minutes, ensuring that they comply with guidance given on Data Protection;
- i) bring to the attention of the Academic Standards Committee any issues, which arise at assessment boards or in the reports of, or responses to external examiners reports that are worthy of consideration by the Committee.

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5.8 The Role of Course Managers in the Assessment Arrangements

- I. Course managers are, amongst other things, responsible for:
 - a) briefing students on the examination rules and assessment regulations;
 - b) ensuring that students are aware that all marked assessments remain unratified until confirmation by the Module, and Progression and Award Boards.
 - c) ensuring that students are aware that all marked assessments remain unratified until confirmation by the Module, and Progression and Award Boards
 - d) monitoring the assessment programme for each cohort of students, in consultation with module leaders and HE Academic Leaders as appropriate, with reference to the timing and nature of assessed assignments;
 - e) publishing the assessment programme to students and staff teaching the programme;
 - f) co-ordinating major projects for assessment and for collating results;
 - g) collating and presenting assessment results for the programme at the Progression and Awards Boards;
 - h) ensuring the accuracy of all Progression and Award Board decisions for each candidate in the student record system before ratification and publication of the results.

5.9 Responses to External Examiners' Reports

- I. Annual reports of external examiners shall be responded to through the Course monitoring processes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee as follows:
 - a) On receipt of the report, the HE Registry Coordinator shall send copies to the Head of HE Academic Services and Quality Assurance and the relevant HE Curriculum Area Manager and course manager. The original will be filed on the HE Team SharePoint.
 - b) Any issue of College-wide significance that requires immediate action shall be reported by the Head of HE Academic Services and Quality Assurance to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee.
 - c) The relevant Curriculum Area Manager (based on Course manager guidance, section 5.9 above) shall write a response to the subject related issues and submit the initial report and the response to the Head of HE Academic Services and Quality Assurance to take for approval to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee. The HE Registry Coordinator will then send it to the relevant external examiner(s) and the relevant Course manager(s).
 - d) The Course Manager shall include the report and responses to it in the annual programme report for debate at the meeting of the Annual Course Programme Monitoring committee.

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- e) Responses on College-wide issues shall be included in Academic Quality and Standards Committee's report to the HE Academic Board and will be sent to each external examiner, together with the response to his or her own report before the end of the calendar year.
- f) The external examiners report and responses will be made available to students on the HE Intranet Pages.
- g) External examiner reports will also be made available to any PSRB where required.

5.10 Conflict of Interest

5.10.1 Assessment of Staff Members

- I. All assessments completed and submitted by a member of Askham Bryan staff, including APRL submissions, should be double-marked and, in addition, should be reviewed by the assigned external examiner. This approach should ensure that individuals are not asked to make sole judgements on the work of their colleague(s). External examiner oversight adds an external, independent reassurance on the reliability of marks.
- II. Colleagues will not have access to electronic records for modules on which they are registered. Colleagues whose achievements are under discussion in either Module Assessment Boards or Progression and Award Boards will be expected to declare their interest at the commencement of the meeting. The Chair will exercise their discretion on whether the individual is excused or asked not to contribute to specific discussions.
- III. Results will be published anonymously removing any potential for staff information being accessible by students.

5.10.2 Assessment of Friends, Family Members, or other potential conflict of interests

- I. In such a situation all assessments completed by a student who is a friend, family member or other contact where there may be a conflict of interest, including AP(E)L submissions, should be double-marked and, in addition, should be reviewed by the assigned external examiner. This approach should ensure that individuals are not asked to make sole judgements on the work of somebody personally known to them. External examiner oversight adds an external, independent reassurance on the reliability of marks.
- II. Colleagues where achievements are under discussion whose friend, family member or other contact where there may be a conflict of interest in either Module Assessment Boards or Progression and Award Boards will be expected to declare their interest at the commencement of the meeting. The Chair will exercise their discretion on whether the individual is excused or asked not to contribute to specific discussions.

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