Guidelines for Examining Boards held via Electronic Means

1. The University's Academic Quality Handbook enables the practice of holding examining boards via electronic means in appropriate circumstances in chapter 6. This document provides guidelines in relation to this practice in order to ensure that the integrity of the examining process is not compromised.

2. Throughout this document the term videoconference is used but examining board meetings are also allowed to be held by other appropriate electronic means. The University's preferred method will normally be through Microsoft Teams.

3. All members of the examining board will need to have access to appropriate resources to access the board electronically. These include as minimum the ability to access the software used for the board (normally Microsoft Teams), appropriate audio and video equipment, and a private location where confidential business may be discussed. Finally, all participants must have a suitable internet connection.

4. Any participant who has reservations to the holding of an examining board via electronic means needs to notify the Registry at the earliest convenience.

5. Examination boards which are held through electronic means are established under the same terms of reference as those for a physical examining board as set out in the University's Academic Quality Handbook.

6. Deliberate steps will be taken, both in the preparation of the examining board, and during the meeting of the examining board to ensure that the integrity of the process is not compromised, the details of which will be outlined below.

7. In transmitting documentation for the examining board, the Registry will undertake due precautions to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations (2018), by ensuring that documentation transmitted electronically is undertaken through a secure platform or through encryption.

General preparation for electronic examining boards

8. The Examining Board Schedule stored centrally will continue to be the master record of examining board dates and times and it must be kept up to date at all times. Any decisions to change dates and times must be checked with Registry who will subsequently update the central schedule.

9. As always, tutors are required to enter results by the given deadline and run a 'Missing Marks' report on a regular basis to ensure that all marks are submitted in good time.

10. Even though the marks entry portal will remain open, it is imperative that marks are not entered later than the given deadline. **The system will not take into account newly entered marks if the process of calculating recommended decisions has already been triggered in Registry.**

11. If an Institute is planning to apply contingency regulations to the record of a student, the Institute should contact Registry as soon as possible and ask for a manual calculation or amendment to be made. For example, a student who has a missing mark

may need to have a weighted average mark for the module calculated and added as a component mark. Contingency regulations can be found under Chapter 6 at www.uwtsd.ac.uk/academic-office/academic-quality-handbook/

Technical matters to be considered ahead of electronic examining boards

12. IT&S is responsible, in liaison with the Institute and the Registry, for ensuring that electronic facilities are functioning within acceptable parameters for the examining board no less than 48 hours prior to the commencement of an examining board.

13. The Institute / IT&S will ensure that appropriate platforms used to facilitate the meeting are those endorsed through IT&S (e.g. Microsoft Teams, Skype for Business).

14. The Institute, in conjunction with IT&S, will ensure that there are appropriate arrangements should there be in case of connectivity issues, such as confirmation of a direct telephone line which can be used through which to contact each location.

15. The Registry / IT&S will reconfirm the operation of the equipment no less than 30 min prior to the commencement of the scheduled examining board.

16. The Registry / IT&S will confirm with the Chair of the examining board that appropriate checks have been made to ensure that the facilities have been tested.

17. The videoconference between locations will be initiated no less than fifteen minutes prior to the scheduled start of the examining board.

18. Should the connection between the locations experience difficulties during the examining board, the examining board will be temporarily suspended in order to re-establish an appropriate connection.

19. Following the temporary suspension of the examining board, Registry will be responsible for engaging with appropriate staff in IT&S in order to re-establish the meeting.

20. The meeting of the board will reconvene following the reestablishment of an appropriate connection through which the business of the board may be conducted.

21. Should an appropriate arrangement not be found within an hour of the temporary suspension of the examining board, the business of the board will be suspended until a future date at which the examining board can reconvene.

22. Should an examining board be suspended and be required to reconvene at a future date to complete business, the University will request IT Support to undertake an appropriate investigation into the reasons which caused the board to suspend.

23. The Registry will review the effectiveness of videoconferencing arrangements for examining boards through its standing reports to ASC.

Preparation for examining boards held via Microsoft Teams

24. Unless notified otherwise, Registry will presume that all examining boards held between March and August 2020 will be held via Microsoft Teams.

25. Registry will create a 'Team' on Microsoft Teams for every scheduled examining board. They will be given a name in the following format:

Date/Time/Institute Acronym

The discipline areas to be discussed at the board will be listed in the 'Description' field.

26. Once the 'Team' has been created, a nominated Institute Administrative Officer will use the calendar functionality to invite the appointed members, including the External Examiner(s), no later than ten working days prior to the event. For Boards that will include the profiles of students from a Collaborative Partnership, the Collaborative Partnership Office will use Teams to invite representatives from the Partnership.

27. At least 48 hours prior to the board, Registry will upload the agenda and the student profiles to the file section of the Team meeting and all invited members will be able to view them here. For pre-boards, Registry will also upload an overview report that lists the initial recommended progression/award decision generated by SITS. For the main examining board, Registry will upload an overview report that lists the pre-Board decisions. Student profiles **will not be amended** and re-loaded ahead of a board expect in exceptional circumstances.

Operation of examining boards held via Microsoft Teams

28. On the day of the examining board, members should join the meeting at least fifteen minutes prior to the commencement of the board. The administrative representative from the Institute will keep a list of all attendees and upload the list to the file section of the Team at the end of the meeting. A nominated representative from the Institute will use the share functionality so that all members can collectively view the appropriate paperwork.

29. The meeting may be recorded for the purpose of assisting the minute taker who may need to reference a discussion on individual cases.

30. A 'Recommended progression/Award decision' will be given on each student profile. However, careful consideration will need to be given as to whether Contingency Regulations need to be applied. The Registry representative will take notes of all decisions taken at the Board.

31. Minutes of the Examining Board will be uploaded onto the Team's file section as soon as possible after the Board.

UWTSD
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