

- Procedural irregularity in the operation of the assessment processes or the Board of Examiners
- New mitigating circumstances that could not have been reported to the Mitigating Circumstances Group at the normal time

Students may expect appeals to be dealt with confidentially and that their privacy will be respected. However, it may be necessary to disclose information to others in the University (e.g. regarding extenuating circumstances) in order to deal with the appeal.

14.1. Outcome of appeal

The appeal panel will choose between two options when making their decision. No other options are available to the panel. These options are:-

- Confirm course termination
- Permit the student a repeat period of study in line with the regulations

The appeal panel must not change the outcome of any assessment or allow a student to progress if they have not met the conditions for progression.

Where an appeal is upheld, students may expect the Faculty to take action and ensure that they are supported to integrate into a repeat year with an appropriate learning agreement.

Where an appeal is not upheld, students may expect to be informed in writing of the reasons for that decision and to be informed of any further rights to request a review of the decision.

15. Governance of Assessments

The Senate of the University of Buckingham is responsible for academic matters. The Board of Examiners for the MB ChB makes recommendations to the Exam Senate concerning Academic Standards and the progression of individual students.

The function of Boards of Examiners is to be responsible to the Senate for the assessment of candidates and the determination of results of examinations. In so doing, they are empowered to take into account extenuating circumstances which may have affected a candidate's performance and they will have procedures in place for the consideration of such cases.

Boards of Examiners are appointed from among the members of the teaching staff of the MB ChB programme.

15.1. The Board of Examiners

15.1.1. Membership of the Board

The Deputy Director of Medical Education	Chair	ex officio
The External Examiners		
The appropriate Phase for the examination		ex officio
The Assessment Lead		ex officio
The Quality Lead		ex officio
Unit Leads in Phase 1 /Block Lead or Theme Leads in Phase 2		
Assessment manager		Non-voting
One lay representative		Observer

The Phase 1 or Phase 2 lead may chair the Board in the absence of the Deputy Director of Medical Education.

15.1.2. Rules of quoracy:

- The Board will be chaired by the Deputy Director of Medical Education or either of the Phase Leads.
- At least two of the 'domain leads' should be present
- For consideration of assessments in Phase 1 of the curriculum at least two Phase 1 unit leads must be present
- For consideration of assessments in Phase 2 of the course at least two Phase 2 Block leads or their deputies or a Theme Lead must be present
- If decisions to terminate the course of any students are to be taken, at least one external examiner must be present either in person or by teleconference
- A lay representative may also be present.

15.1.3. Conduct of the Board of Examiners

The board meets at each progression point.

All assessment decisions must be recorded and documented accurately and systematically.

Meetings of the Board of Examiners should be held according to a schedule published at the beginning of each year. The Board will meet before any results are issued to students. The timing of Board meetings may be altered under exceptional circumstances.

Meetings of the Board will follow a standard agenda:

1. Apologies for absence
2. Declaration of Interests – any member of the Board must declare if they have a personal interest in any student
3. Consideration of the Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Board relevant to that cohort
4. For each diet of assessments considered at the meeting:
 - A report on the conduct of the assessments, including any circumstances which may have affected the performance of students, an appropriate psychometric analysis of the assessment, and the recommendations of the standard setting processes.
 - Consideration of any adjustments necessary in the light of issues with the assessment(s)
 - Consideration of any academic misconduct reports
 - A table indicating the grades achieved by each student, together with a statement of the rules of progression as they apply to that diet of assessments.
 - Confirmation of individual student grades
 - Consideration of the report of the Mitigating Circumstances Group in the case of any student whose grades would normally lead to a recommendation for course termination, and decision whether to recommend a repeat period of study in accordance with the regulations.
5. Verbal report from External Examiners if present, or written if not present. The verbal report will comment on whether:
 - The University's academic standards and student performance is comparable to that of students of the same level within the same or cognate disciplines nationally;

- The University's assessment process adequately measures student achievement against the intended learning outcomes for the programme and/or module examined; and
 - The University in ensuring the assessment and classification processes are reliable, fair and transparent.
 - In the event an external examiner is unable to attend, the external examiner is expected to provide a written report to be presented during the Board of Examiners.
6. Comments from the lay representative, if present
 7. Confirmation of the release of results and support mechanisms in place.
 8. Any other business

The Chair of the Board of Examiners or a representative will present the progression decisions either to the Exam Senate, or an appropriate body acting for the Exam Senate, for final approval.

The outcome of Meetings of the Board will be published to students as soon as possible after the Board of Examiners, and this should normally be within four working days of the UBMS Exam Board or Exam Senate approval if required. Each student will be informed individually of decisions affecting them. Students must not be informed officially about the individual performance of other students, but may receive feedback about the overall performance of their student cohort.

The Quality Team will act as Secretary to the Board and who will be responsible for producing an accurate formal record of the proceedings and decisions of the Board. Copies of the formal record of the proceedings and decisions of the Board should be forwarded to the external examiners(s) and submitted to the Board at its next meeting.

16. Role of External Examiners

The role of external examiners will be to:

- Attend Board of Examiners meetings and review a sample of summative assessments.
- Comment and give advice on Programme content, balance and structure as reflected in the assessments.
- Report on good practice they have identified.
- Report on the standards of student performance in those Programmes.
- Report on the extent to which processes for assessment, examination, and the determination of awards are sound and have been fairly conducted.
- Advise the Board of Examiners on decision-making based on summative assessments including actions regarding suspected or proven cases of academic misconduct, as required.
- electronically sign the final agreed Examination Grids of awards, as confirmation that they are an accurate record of agreed awards. The signed spreadsheet will show all marks that have been amended during the programme assessment board and the agreed final awards. Once an external examiner has agreed to the final awards, no change in the awards may be made without the approval of the external examiner. Where the Chair of the Board of Examiners and external examiner are in dispute, the decision of the Chair of the Board of Examiners shall be final. If the external examiner remains dissatisfied, they can exercise their right to write to the Vice-Chancellor.
- Submit a written report on an annual basis to the University of Buckingham including commentary and judgements on the validity, reliability and integrity of the assessment process and the standards of student attainment.
- If an external examiner considers it to be appropriate, they may send a separate confidential

report to the Vice-Chancellor. If an external examiner has exhausted all applicable internal procedures in raising concerns and remains dissatisfied, they can exercise their right to write to the 'Office for Students'.

17. Quality Control of Assessment

The Assessment lead and Assessment Unit will work together with the quality team to ensure the quality control of assessments.

Following each examination there is a post assessment quality review, which undertakes to:

- Scrutinise the performance of each assessment item both to identify problem items that may need to be removed before decisions are made and to collect data to inform the future adaptation and use of that item
- Students will be given the opportunity to comment on assessments, and those comments will be reviewed by the Assessment Unit and appropriate action taken.

Comments will be sought from markers and fed into future use of questions and the review of course content design and delivery if systematic weaknesses in student understanding are revealed.

The Assessment unit will produce a report each year reviewing the assessment processes over that year and making recommendations for change. The report will include:

- Statistical analysis and comment on the performance of each assessment conducted across the course over that year and identification of any issues that need to be addressed in subsequent years
- Comment on the operation of assessment processes and any problems that need to be addressed for subsequent years
- Proposals for the evolution and enhancement of assessment systems and processes
- An updated annual 'risk register' for assessment processes and action plans to address risks

18. Information for and Training of Assessors/Examiners

Assessors/examiners should be completely conversant with all the appropriate assessment information for the assessment component.. Particular attention should be given to ensuring that placement and practice assessors have the information and support necessary to conduct assessments in line with requirements.

The Assessment Lead should ensure that all staff responsible for carrying out assessment are fully aware of the Faculty's policies, rules and procedures relating to assessment, as summarised in this Code of Practice.

The Assessment Lead will satisfy themselves that all individual, particularly newly appointed, staff involved in the assessment of students are competent to undertake this role and that any training needs in this respect are identified and met. They should also encourage reflection on assessment issues and the sharing of best practice by staff.

The Faculty will provide staff development sessions aimed at promoting understanding of the theory and practice of assessment and its implementation within the School.

The Assessment Lead and manager will be the main point of contact with stakeholders on all matters relating to assessment, be a source of advice to staff and students on assessment issues.

19. Retention of Examination Scripts and Other Assessed Work

Boards of Examiners have a duty to retain all work either undertaken under examination conditions or which contributes to a final award, for a period of five years from the date on which the award was determined by the Board.

For internal and external review purposes, a sample of any work contributing to an award should be retained. The work retained should be a representative sample, from all ability ranges.

Data

Information (including personal and biometric) collected and held by ExamSoft or (GMC system) will be used for the provision of the online exam service, and invigilation where required of an assessment.

Personal Information collected and held by Examsoft to supply online exam services to UBMS is regulated by the Contract between UBMS and ExamSoft, US State and Federal law and by the End User Licence Agreement (and Notice of Collection of Biometric Data and Consent).

ExamSoft's Privacy Policy can be found at examsoft.com/privacy-policy, and you may preview ExamSoft's End User Licence Agreement and Notice of Collection of Biometric Data and Consent on the online exam support website.

Responsibilities

The Committee for Assessment, learning and Teaching will monitor and review the policy annually, before approval by the Programme Executive.

Assessment Lead

The Assessment lead, supported by the assessment manager, will be accountable to the Director of Medical Education for effective leadership of the Assessment Unit to ensure that the following standard prescribed by the General Medical Council is met.

The Assessment Lead is responsible for ensuring that all University of Buckingham students are treated fairly and consistently.

Assessment Manager

The Assessment Manager is responsible to the Assessment Lead and the Faculty Registrar for the efficient administration of assessment.

Assessment Team

The assessment team ensure the smooth operation of the assessment scheme in line with this policy.

Students

All students should familiarise themselves with the regulations defined in this Code of Practice and how this may impact them and their progression through the course.

Students must behave appropriately during assessment periods and in dealing with staff and peers. The University does not tolerate hostile, aggressive or otherwise inappropriate behaviour by applicants, or their representatives, to University staff, other applicants or students. Such behaviour will be viewed seriously and may result in the termination of a student's studies.

Equality and Diversity

The University of Buckingham is committed to promoting equality and diversity and adheres to the Equality Act 2010.

UBMS is committed to the promotion of equality and will not unlawfully discriminate against a student on the basis of disability, gender identity, ethnicity (including race, colour, caste and nationality), sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, family circumstances, political beliefs or socio-economic status, affiliations, marital status, pregnancy or maternity; or other unreasonable grounds.

The Faculty aim to ensure that no student is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable. This policy will operate in furtherance of this.

Related Policies

- 1 FMHS Mitigating Circumstances Policy
- 2 FMHS Appeals Policy
- 3 FMHS Reasonable Adjustments Policy
- 4 UoB Academic Integrity Policy
- 5 UoB Examination rules for candidates

Document Control

Date policy approved: October 2016

Date of policy review approval: April 2020, May 2023

Date of next policy review: Academic year 2023/24

Appendix - Approval and Verification of Assessed Work

The external examiner must approve examination questions, components and assessed work with a value of 30% or more of the programme.

The external examiner must verify that marking and moderation have been reliable, fair and transparent. All assessed work will be made available for the external examiner to select from for verification. The external examiner is expected to verify 10% or 12 students assessed work across the full range of marks as set in the applicable external examiner's schedule.

In addition to the verification process, specific programmes require external examiner's to complete visits. If an external examiner is required to complete a visit this will be highlighted within their external examiner schedule. During a visit, the external examiner must verify the assessed work is reliable, fair and transparent for students.

Once verification has taken place, the external examiner can recommend to the Chair of the Board of Examiners to moderate a full cohort up or down; but may not do so for individual students or groups of students less than a full cohort. External examiners should not generally be used to resolve disputes between 1st and 2nd markers.

Once an external examiner has agreed on the marks after verification, no change in the marks may be made without the approval of the external examiner.

1. Annual Monitoring

Academic Services review and retain the external examiners' reports and distribute the reports to relevant schools of study for review and action, with issues of note escalated to the Pro Vice - Chancellor. External Examiner reports are summarised into an overview report by Academic Services; which is submitted annually to the Exam Senate for consideration.

The Medical School is required to give full consideration to comments and recommendations contained in the external examiner's report. The Head of School (or their nominee) must within a month, provide the external examiner with written feedback and planned actions in response to comments and recommendations made on the external examiner's report.

Actions in response to comments and recommendations made by the external examiners will be incorporated into the Medical Schools Quality Management processes and will support the request for annual programme review and change. External examiners may be requested to review the changes proposed in line with their recommendations, before seeking University approval.

When an external examiner is requested to complete a review, the external examiner is required to complete the external review form. This form is available on the University website under section 4 of the quality handbook, please use the following link: <https://www.buckingham.ac.uk/about/handbooks/quality-handbook/>

The Head of School (or their nominee) must give full consideration to comments and recommendations contained in the external review report and provide a response to the external examiner before seeking University approval. The annual monitoring process map is available on the University website under

section 4 of the quality handbook, please use the following link for more information:
<https://www.buckingham.ac.uk/about/handbooks/quality-handbook/>

Addendum