

Examination Board Policy and Procedures

Version	2.0
Effective date	September 2024
Date for review	August 2025
Policy owner	Head of Quality
Reference points	Quality Assurance Agency External Examining Principles: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/external-examining-principles Advance HE Handbook on External Examining https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/external-examining
Audience/handling notes	Academic, Staff, Internal
Dissemination and implementation plan	This Policy is internal and intended for the recruitment and oversight of External Examiners as part of NHAM's wider Quality Assurance processes. Programme Leaders and the Academy Manager will operate this policy, providing External Examiners with the information they need in a timely fashion, delivered securely and accurately. The Head of Quality will oversee, alongside the Collaborative Partner (Validating Institution) the recruitment and processes relating to Final Exam Boards and External Examiners.
Linked Policies, Procedures and Forms	Assessment (Policy), Quality Assurance Handbook, External Examiners (Policy)
Date approved	August 2024

1 Introduction

This document sets out NHAM's policy on the membership, responsibilities and operation of Examination Board for taught programmes. It includes information about the key roles involved in the operation of the Board, the standard agenda to be followed and issues to be considered by all Examination Boards.

This document is created with NHAM's collaborative partner (validating institution) to ensure that Examination Boards follow and reflect those requirements and standards of that institution.

Examination Board: Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Examination Board is responsible for making recommendations on student awards and progression to NHAM's collaborative provider (validating institution) in order for it to confer and certificate awards to NHAM's students upon successful completion of a programme.

Main Responsibilities

The Examination Board undertakes the following tasks:

- To be responsible for the setting, approval and marking of all items of assessment for the taught programmes of study under its remit, within the relevant NHAM policy and guidance on assessment matters;
- To be responsible for the consideration and final determination of module and year results for the taught programmes of study under its remit;
- To make recommendations on awards and progression in accordance with
- To make recommendations on referrals, repeats and the withdrawal of students as appropriate and in accordance with NHAM's collaborative partner (validating institution) regulations;



- To ensure equity of treatment for students;
- To produce Recommendation for Awards lists for approval by NHAM's collaborative partner (validating institution)
- To make recommendations for prizes as appropriate;
- To consider module and programme data, identify trends over time, and make recommendations for action as appropriate;
- To receive verbal reports from external examiners on the quality and standards of the programmes and student performance in relation to those standards, the consistent and fair application of policies and procedures ensuring the integrity and rigor of academic practices, and areas of good practice and possible enhancements.

Membership

- The Chair of the Examination Board
- The Examinations Manager
- The Programme Lead(s)
- The external examiner(s) for the programme(s)
- At least one member from NHAM's collaborative partner (validating institution) responsible for the agreement and confirmation of awards.

2 Membership/Constitution of Examination Boards

The Chair of the Board is normally the Head of Quality, agreed by NHAM's collaborative partner (validating institution).

Each programme will have one external examiner appointed. The external examiner will be proposed by NHAM and approved by NHAM's Collaborative Partner (validating institution), whereby they will be formally appointed and remunerated by that institution. More information can be found in NHAM's External Examiners Policy, supplied to External Examiners upon appointment.

- Examiner Name: Commercial Music Business
- Examiner Name: Commercial Songwriting
- Examiner Name: Beatmaking and Production
- Examiner Name: Digital Marketing and Promotion

FACULTY REPRESENTATIVE: (non-voting): Mark Clayden (Chief Executive)

PROGRAMME FACULTY REPRESENTATIVE AND EXAMINATIONS MANAGER: Jon Hooker (Academy Manager)

VALIDATING UNIVERSITY REPRESENTATIVE: [Name (job title)]

The meeting of the Examination Board may be held in person or virtually using a NHAM and Collaborative Partner (validating institution) approved platform such as Microsoft Teams. The decision on how to run the Board will be made by the Chair of the Examination Board. All NHAM members should attend in the mode advised by the Chair, unless exceptions are agreed in advance. The external examiner may choose to attend a physical board virtually, by prior arrangement with the Chair and the Academy Manager.

3 Attendance at Examination Board Meetings

To facilitate attendance at Examination Board meetings, the dates of the meetings should be proposed a year in advance and the date communicated to all internal and external examiners through the minutes and actions of the Examination Board. The date of the final Examination board should be confirmed with all attendees and a draft agenda sent at least three months before the board is due to take place.

All Programme Leaders are expected to attend meetings of the Board(s) of Examiners for which they are a member. Any apologies must be communicated to the Chair of the Examination Board. If a programme leader is unable to



attend, they must ensure there is a member of the Board present at the meeting that can discuss and respond to any issues related to that module. It is recognised that one person could be undertaking more than one role at the Examination Board.

Quorum for the Examination Board

The quorum for the Examination Board is:

- the Chair of the Examination Board
- the Academy Manager
- the Programme Lead(s)
- the external examiner(s) in person or virtually (unless, in exceptional circumstances, the Education Committee (with approval of NHAM's collaborative partner) approved alternative arrangements for external examiner contribution to the Board, or an external examiner is not required for that particular Board.

It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Examination Board to confirm the meeting is quorate.

Failure In Technology

If there is a failure in the technology during a virtual Examination Board meeting, attempt should be made to reconnect. In the event of a protracted failure in technology the Examination Board meeting should be halted. The Chair should consult with the Academy Manager, Programme Lead(s) and external examiner(s) and representative of the collaborative partner via an alternative method (e.g. telephone) and they should decide whether there is a need to reconvene at another date or whether sufficient discussion has taken place. If it is agreed that the Board needs to be rescheduled, care should be taken that the rescheduled meeting will be quorate. In making the decision whether or not the Board must reconvene, the Chair should consider whether or not the external examiner feels they have been able to express their view on whether they are satisfied with the conduct of the assessment process and whether overall academic standards have been maintained. If the external examiner is satisfied they have been able to do this, the Chair may judge that the external examiner's input has been sufficient for the Board to make all necessary recommendations with adequate confidence.

4 Key Roles and Responsibilities

Chair of the Examination Board

The main responsibilities of the Chair of the Examination Board are:

- to advise members on the remit and format of the Board;
- to confirm the Board is quorate;
- to ensure all agenda items are covered;
- to ensure that members of the Board have the opportunity to contribute to discussions and that business is conducted collegially;
- to ensure that the Board reaches decisions on student achievement which are fair, consistent, robust and in accordance with relevant NHAM and collaborative partner (validating institution) regulations;
- to ensure the outcome of each decision is clear and accurately recorded;
- to identify and refer actions as appropriate;
- to check and approve the draft minutes of the Examination Board as a true record of proceedings before they are circulated to other members;
- to take Chair's action on behalf of the Examination Board outside the meeting where a matter is urgent or where for some reason the Examination Board does not have sufficient information or is for some other reason unable to take a decision at the meeting.

Examinations Manager

The main responsibilities of the Examinations Officer at the Examination Board are:

- to have a thorough and up to date understanding of relevant regulations regarding progression, referrals, and repeats;
- to ensure consistency of approach to Examination Board practices across the discipline(s) for which they



are responsible;

- to liaise with staff to ensure that the dates and times for Examination Board are communicated to academic staff and external examiners with adequate notice and by appropriate means;
- to liaise with staff to ensure the assessment grids are completed with correct and complete marks, attend relevant Pre- Boards and identify modules and cohorts where student performance is likely to warrant discussion at the Examination Board;
- to present the recommendations of the Pre-Boards to the Examination Board, leading discussion of cohort performance on identified programmes or modules;
- to present the programme/module data to the Examination Board, identifying any trends through time;
- to act as a source of advice to the Examination Board, including external examiners, on regulatory matters; notifying Examination Board and external examiners of changes to regulations;
- to inform academic colleagues of procedures for communication of marks to students, including issues relating to confidentiality and GDPR.

Programme Lead

The expectation is that there must be a person present at the Board with responsibility for the Programme(s) being discussed. This is usually the Academy Manager, following extensive consultation with Programme Leaders and/or lecturers.

External Examiner

The role of the external examiner is set out in the External Examiners Policy Handbook and supplied to all external examiners on their initial appointment.

At the meeting of the Examination Board, the role of the external examiner is:

- to ensure that recommendations accord with the requirements and normal practice of the regulations for that programme of study and NHAM's collaborative partner (validating institution)
- to ensure that decisions made are fair and consistent;
- to comment on the quality and standards of the programme and student performance in relation to those standards; the consistent and fair application of policies and procedures ensuring the integrity and rigor of academic practices; and areas of good practice and possible enhancements;
- to provide best practice, advice and benchmarking of NHAM's modules, programmes, assessment and student success against their experience of the wider HE landscape at similar institutions.

During a visit to NHAM to attend a Examination Board meeting, external examiners should, wherever possible, be given the opportunity to meet with students and members of the programme team. Where Examination Boards are held outside term time or the external examiner attends the meeting of the Examination Board virtually, opportunities to meet students and members of the programme team should be offered to external examiners at other times of the year or can be arranged as a virtual meeting.

5 Academic Integrity Cases

The NHAM Academic Integrity Policy must be followed for suspected breaches of Academic Integrity and Student Code of Conduct.

The decision of an Academic Conduct Panel to impose a penalty will be reported to, and recorded by, the Examination Board.

6 Pre-Board

For each Programme, a Pre-Board is to be convened prior to the Examination Board to scrutinise the marks in the assessment grid and to ensure that marks profiles are complete and there are no errors. The Pre-Board allows for the identification of potential issues affecting individual students which need to be investigated before the Examination Board meeting. A summary note should be kept of any changes to marks and any recommendations to



the Examination Board. The Pre-Board is not intended to duplicate the work of the Examination Board.

The required membership for the Pre-Board is:

- The Chair of the Examination Board
- The Examinations Officer
- The Programme Lead(s) (or Director of Programmes where applicable)

The notes of the Pre-Board should be submitted to the Examination Board and should:

- confirm that moderation has taken place in accordance with NHAM's Assessment Policy and QA of Assessment Decisions guidance and highlight where further action is required;
- confirm that the marks in the assessment grid have been scrutinised and are correct;
- confirm that Special Considerations cases have been considered and mitigation applied where applicable;
- confirm that Academic Integrity cases have been considered and penalties applied where applicable;
- notify to the Examination Board particular modules which may need specific scrutiny or scaling.

7 Examination Board – Roles and Responsibilities

Each Examination Board is responsible for the setting, approval and marking of all items of assessment relevant to the programmes of study or parts thereof under its remit, within the relevant NHAM policy and guidance on assessment matters.

Each Examination Board is responsible for the consideration and final determination of module and year results for all taught programmes of study that are under its remit, for ensuring that the standards of awards are maintained and that all the requirements for assessments that contribute to the gaining of an academic award are fulfilled, as set out in the relevant regulations. All progression and classification decisions must be taken in accordance with the regulations of NHAM's collaborative partner (validating institution).

At the beginning of the meeting members of the Examination Board must declare any personal interest, involvement or relationship with any candidate on any module or programme under consideration. The Chair has the right to ask the member to withdraw from the meeting at any point should this become necessary. The declaration of interest, including a 'null return' where applicable should be recorded in the minutes.

Standard Agenda

All Examination Board will follow a standard agenda. The Examination Board may, where applicable, consider additional items – for example, issues relating to professional competence. During the course of each Examination Board, it will:

- Confirm that the meeting is quorate.
- Declare that the meeting will be confidential.
- Declare Conflicts of Interest.
- Report action taken in response to previous external examiners' reports.
- Review current regulations and any changes to regulations for the current academic year.
- Ratify marks, student progression and awards:
- Receive Assessment Grids setting out marks and results for finalists and continuing students.
- Receive summary report from Special Considerations Board (no individual cases).
- Receive summary report of Academic Integrity cases.
- Receive report on any issues arising from the moderation process.
- Report on outstanding appeals and academic integrity cases.
- Analyse Programme Data
- Summarise statistics of modules, plus report on any scaling undertaken.
- Confirm the award of any Prizes etc.



- Receive comments from external examiners.

Each Examination Board shall ratify the recommended results from the Assessment Grid clearly indicating recommendations for:

- final awards, including any relevant classification
- Repeat/Referral where appropriate
- resubmission where appropriate
- termination of programme where appropriate

The external examiner(s) present at the Examination Board should confirm that they are satisfied with the conduct of the assessment process but are not required to confirm agreement with every individual assessment decision. This confirmation should be recorded explicitly in the minutes of the Examination Board.

Anonymity

All marks, Progression decisions and Awards considered by a Examination Board must be considered on an anonymous basis.

Confidentiality

Members of the Examination Board must not speak to students about their detailed performance or provide students with results before the official date for the release of marks. Decisions are reached by the Examination Board as a whole, and staff should not enter into discussions with students about the details of those decisions. The confidentiality of the meeting should be recorded in the minutes.

If the Examination Board meeting is being held virtually, the record function on Microsoft Teams should not be used and care should be taken using the chat function as comments remain online once the meeting has ended and cannot be deleted. The Chair of the Examination Board should set out protocol at the beginning of the meeting.

Chair's Action

If a Examination Board does not have the appropriate information available to come to a fair and robust decision for a student, the Board may agree that the Chair can make decisions on behalf of the Examination Board outside the meeting using Chair's action. The number of Chair's actions agreed by the Board should be kept to a minimum and should usually only be taken for individual students. The Examination Board should formally empower the Chair to make a decision, or decisions, on its behalf and ensure this is recorded in the minutes.

Situations where a Chair's action may be appropriate include:

- Where an issue has been raised at a Examination Board and it has been agreed that the Chair may take action on behalf of the Board without further consultation;
- Where a student's mark has been incorrectly recorded, Chair's action may be used to rectify this mistake;
- Where a mark was not available at the meeting of the Examination Board (normally where the student has been granted an extension).

Chair's actions must be monitored by the Academy Manager to ensure that any outstanding decisions are not overlooked. The outcome of any Chair's actions must be reported to the collaborative partner (validating institution) for ratification.

If a Chair's action results in a final award being made or changed, the School must seek approval from the external examiner(s) and a new Recommendation for Awards list must be produced by the Academy Manager. If the external examiner has been present at the Examination Board meeting and has agreed that the decision can be taken by Chair's action there is no need to consult the external examiner again.

Minutes of the Examination Board

All Examination Board are required to keep formal minutes of their proceedings. The purpose of the minutes of



Examination Board is to record decisions, to summarise any discussion relevant to those decisions (where this is required to give a context or rationale for the decision, or to establish precedents), and to capture for further consideration any areas of discussion or requirements for future action.

The minutes of the Examination Board are confidential and should be regarded as restricted documents. All due care must be taken to ensure the security of these minutes/records.

Additional Board

Following the main Examination Board meeting it may be necessary to hold an additional Board to ratify any decisions following Chair's action or the outcome of any appeals. These Boards can normally be held virtually and should involve as a minimum the following members:

- The Chair of the Examination Board
- The Examinations Officer
- The Programme Lead(s) (or Director of Programmes where applicable)

8 Approval of Recommendations for Awards

The Examination Board shall make recommendations for the award of certificates and where appropriate recommendations for the re-examination of unsuccessful candidates. The recommendations of the Examination Board shall be communicated to via the Education Committee.

In the case of recommendations for the award of certificates, the relevant Academy Manager will produce the Recommendations for Awards List based on the Assessment Grid.

If any of the decisions reached by the Examination Board are controversial a meeting the Education Committee may be held to approve the recommendations of the Examination Board and the Recommendation for Awards list. Circumstances where this may be appropriate include:

- Where not all members of the Examination Board have agreed with a decision of the Board.
- Where an external examiner is unwilling to provide confirmation that they are satisfied with the conduct of the assessment process.

There must be at least 24 hours between the meeting of an Examination Board taking place and finalising decisions by the Education Committee (or Chair's action).

The signed Recommendations for Awards list should be sent by the relevant team to NHAM's collaborative partner (validating institution) for that institution to follow their policies and procedures for conferring and certificating awards to NHAM students.

This process shall also be followed when decisions regarding Awards are recommended on Chair's action on behalf of the Examination Board

9 Enforcement, monitoring and review

Every two years, the Academy must review this policy to ensure that:

- it remains up to date and continues to meet the expectations of the UK Quality Code and Office for Students, applicable legislation or guidance;
- areas of improvement, or any concerns, raised by students, relevant external colleagues, or professional bodies have been addressed; and
- opportunities to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy have been taken.