

# Code of Practice on Monitoring Student Progress and the Conduct of Boards of Examiners

<b>Code of Practice number</b>	LT CoP11
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<b>Superseded Version:</b>	1.2
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<b>Originator</b>	Academic Registrar
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<b>Target Audience</b>	
People who need a detailed knowledge of the Code of Practice	Director of Education; Directors of Studies; Academic Registrar
People who need a broad understanding of the Code of Practice	Students; Administrative staff in the Education and Training Department; MSc Module Convenors; MSc Personal Tutors; External Examiners
People who need to know that the Code of Practice exists	All academic staff

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## 1 Introduction and Context

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- 1.1 The purpose of this Code of Practice is to inform LSTM staff and students, and relevant individuals from outside LSTM (e.g. External Examiners), about the processes for monitoring the progress of students on LSTM taught programmes and the actions that may be taken when progress is unsatisfactory. It also explains the purpose and remits of the various committees and boards involved in formally monitoring student progress and the awarding of degrees.
- 1.2 This Code of Practice complies with all current statutory and legislative requirements including the Equality Act 2010 and the Data Protection Act 1998. It is set within the context of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education Chapter B6 (Assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning, October 2013).
- 1.3 Related documents:
- Code of Practice on Assessment and Feedback.
  - Code of Practice on External Examining of Taught Programmes
  - Code of Practice on Academic Integrity
  - Procedure for Dealing with Academic Appeals (Taught Programmes)
  - Procedure for Consideration of Extenuating Circumstances
  - Procedure for Verification of Examination Papers

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## 2 Scope

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- 2.1 This Code of Practice applies to students on all LSTM taught programmes of study.

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## 3 Roles and Responsibilities

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- 3.1 The Board of Examiners is responsible for ensuring that appropriate mechanisms exist and are operated consistently for monitoring performance of students, for taking remedial action and for dealing with students whose progress is unsatisfactory. In the discharge of these duties, the Board of Examiners can operate as a Module Review Board, as a Progress Board and as a Final Board of Examiners in accordance with the regulations governing the particular programme of study and in line with the *Code of Practice on Assessment and Feedback*.
- 3.2 The MSc Board of Examiners will operate as a Module Review Board to approve module and component marks for each student, incorporating recommendations on any action to be taken relating to breaches of academic integrity in line with the *Code of Practice on Academic Integrity*.

- 3.3 The MSc Board of Examiners will operate as a Progress Board to consider the performance of all students, approve reassessments to be offered and recommend action where appropriate when a student's performance or engagement is giving cause for concern.
- 3.4 The Extenuating Circumstances Committee will consider whether the performance of a student was affected by extenuating circumstances and, in the case of an accepted claim, will make a recommendation to the Final Board of Examiners on the action to be taken.
- 3.5 The Final Board of Examiners will approve final awards and any classification or other mark of differentiation of those awards, incorporating recommendations from the Extenuating Circumstances Committee.
- 3.6 The Director of Education will:
  - 3.6.1 Ensure that all decisions taken in relation to the monitoring of student progress are in accordance with LSTM regulations and that decisions and reasons for decisions are recorded accurately.
  - 3.6.2 Meet with students whose academic performance is giving cause for concern.
- 3.7 The Academic Registrar will:
  - 3.7.1 Act as Secretary to meetings of the Boards / Committees in Sections 3.2 – 3.5 or appoint an appropriate delegate
  - 3.7.2 At the request of the Progress Board or the Director of Studies, convene a Progress Panel to interview any student whose engagement with their programme is giving serious cause for concern and provide students and the Progress Board with a written account of such meetings.
  - 3.7.3 At the request of the Director of Education, act as note-taker for meetings with students whose academic performance is giving cause for concern and provide students with a written account of such meetings.
- 3.8 The Quality Assurance Manager will:
  - 3.8.1 Set a timetable for examination activities in the School
  - 3.8.2 Liaise with external and internal examiners over the preparation, review and modification and approval of examination papers according to the *Procedure for Verification of Examination Papers*
  - 3.8.3 Make suitable arrangements for External Examiners that allow them to discharge their duties effectively as laid out in the *Code of Practice on External Examining of Taught Programmes*

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## 4 Attendance and Progress in Studies

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- 4.1 Students are expected to attend all classes and submit assessments in accordance with published assessment deadlines.
- 4.2 Issues with a student's progress may often come to light in the first instance through informal channels (e.g. unsatisfactory attendance or poor engagement in class work). In such cases, the Director of Studies will meet informally with the student to determine whether there are underlying problems that could be addressed through additional academic or pastoral support. The Director of Studies may refer the student to other sources of support in LSTM (e.g. the Personal Tutor or the Student Experience Officer).
- 4.3 Formal procedures may be instigated if a student does not respond satisfactorily to informal measures or when concerns are highlighted by an MSc Progress Board (Section 6.4)
- 4.4 A student who feels that their progress has been adversely affected by serious personal circumstances should submit a claim for extenuating circumstances with supporting evidence in accordance with the *Procedure for Consideration of Extenuating Circumstances*.

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## 5 Module Review Boards

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- 5.1 The MSc Module Review Board (MRB) will meet at the end of Semesters 1 and 2. The membership will be the Director of Education, the convenors of all modules under consideration and the relevant Directors of Studies. Staff who are unable to attend must ensure that the MRB is made aware of any special circumstances relating to their module(s), either by briefing a deputy to attend the meeting in their place or by writing to the Director of Education.
- 5.2 The MRB will consider the average mark and the mark distribution for each assignment and ensure that any unusual patterns of distribution of marks are brought to the attention of the Board of Examiners.
- 5.3 External Examiners will attend a meeting of the MRB immediately before the Final Board of Examiners at which the marks for all modules will be ratified. Each module should be reviewed in turn using mark lists displaying the marks for all students registered for a particular module irrespective of their programme of study. External Examiners should be invited to comment on the content and assessment of each module and to confirm that the marking and moderation procedures have been followed in accordance with the *Code of Practice on Assessment and Feedback*.
- 5.4 With the approval of the External Examiner(s), the MRB may make such modifications to the marks for all students on the module as are considered appropriate.

- 5.5 The MRB will confirm recommendations from Academic Integrity Panels for offences under the *Code of Practice for Academic Integrity*.
- 5.6 Following final approval of module marks by the MRB, the marks cannot be changed. The External Examiner(s) and the Chair of the MRB will sign off the approved module marks list. If an error is found subsequently in the calculation of a mark, it may be changed following formal approval by the External Examiner.

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## **6 Progress Board**

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- 6.1 The Progress Board will review the performance of all MSc students on the taught modules at the end of Semesters 1 and 2. The membership will be the MSc Directors of Studies and the Director of Education.
- 6.2 The Progress Board will determine which reassessment opportunities will be offered to students who have failed assignments, taking into account recommendations from the Extenuating Circumstances Committee. Students will normally be offered one reassessment opportunity for each failed MSc module or for each component of a non-credit-bearing programme. However, if the student has made no (or a trivial) first attempt at an assignment, a reassessment opportunity may not be offered.
- 6.3 Where there are concerns about a student's academic performance on the programme, the student will be invited to attend a meeting with the Director of Education, the relevant Director of Studies and the Academic Registrar. The purpose of the meeting will be to ensure that the student is aware of the concerns; understands the academic consequences of continued poor performance; and is aware of options available for re-sitting failed assessments and, if applicable, for exiting with an intermediate award. The Academic Registrar will provide the student with a written record of the meeting.
- 6.4 Where there is evidence that a student is failing to engage satisfactorily with the programme (e.g. poor attendance), the Progress Board will request that the student attend a formal Progress Panel with the relevant Director of Studies, a member of academic staff not involved in teaching or assessing the student and the Academic Registrar. The purpose of the Panel will be to advise the student on what is required in order to improve and, if appropriate, to explain to the student the options available to change registration status or to withdraw from the programme.
- 6.5 The Academic Registrar will inform the Progress Board and the student in writing about the outcome of the Progress Panel, including any arrangements for monitoring improvement. Students will normally be allowed to continue their programme of study and to take any required reassessments. However, if a student does not respond satisfactorily to the requirements of the Panel, the Panel may recommend to the Progress Board that the student be required to withdraw from the programme. For an MSc student, withdrawal would normally be at the end of the taught component without proceeding to the dissertation. A student cannot be required to withdraw or suspend studies for health or other personal reasons.

- 6.6 A student may appeal against a requirement to withdraw from the programme. Appeals will be considered only on the following grounds:
- 6.6.1 That assessments were not conducted in accordance with the regulations governing the programme of study
  - 6.6.2 That some other material irregularity has occurred
  - 6.6.3 That performance in assessments was adversely affected by extenuating circumstances that, for valid reasons, the student was unable to divulge before the Progress Board met to consider the student's performance
- 6.7 The appeal will be heard by an Appeals Panel comprising the Chair of the LSTM Board of Trustees and two LSTM academic staff at professorial level who have not been involved in teaching or assessing the student concerned. The Panel will determine the outcome of the appeal based on evidence presented by the Director of Education and any other investigations it deems necessary. The student must be informed that the meeting of the Panel is taking place and be given the opportunity to make representation in person.
- 6.8 The Academic Registrar will inform the student in writing of the outcome of an appeal and will issue a Completion of Procedures letter. A student who is dissatisfied with this outcome may make further appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education. Further details and advice on how to do this are available from the OIA website [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk).

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## **7 Extenuating Circumstances Committee**

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- 7.1 For all taught programmes, a meeting of the ECC will be held prior to the meeting of the Final Board of Examiners. For MSc programmes, the ECC will meet additionally at the ends of Semester 1 and 2. Under exceptional circumstances, a claim for extenuating circumstances may be considered by the ECC outside the normal scheduled meeting if there is a reason why the outcome needs to be decided immediately. The membership of the ECC will be the Director of Education, the Director of Studies and at least one other member of academic staff. The external examiner will be provided with the minutes and may attend in person.
- 7.2 Students will be informed through the virtual learning environment of the date of ECC. Personal tutors and Director of Studies who are made aware of extenuating circumstances should advise students on how to submit a claim.
- 7.3 For accepted claims, the ECC will make recommendations for action to be taken by the Board of Examiners. For MSc programmes, the recommendations of the ECC with respect to taught modules will be considered by the Progress Boards at the ends of Semesters 1 and 2 in order to allow students to undertake reassessments prior to the Final Board of Examiners. Recommendations with respect to the dissertation will be considered at the Final Board of Examiners. For non-credit-bearing programmes, the recommendations of the ECC will be considered at the Final Board of Examiners.

- 7.4 Students will be informed of the outcome of a claim for extenuating circumstances as soon as possible after the meeting has taken place.
- 7.5 Further information on extenuating circumstances can be found in the *Code of Practice on Assessment and Feedback*.

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## **8 Final Boards of Examiners**

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- 8.1 Each taught programme will hold a Final Board of Examiners at the end of the programme. All staff who have made a significant contribution to teaching on the programme are expected to attend.
- 8.2 Consideration will be given to:
- 8.2.1 Overview of assessment marks and comparison with results from previous years
  - 8.2.2 Confirmation by external examiners of the academic quality and standards of the programme
  - 8.2.3 Consideration and confirmation of student marks and awarding of qualifications and grades
  - 8.2.4 Recommendations from the ECC and confirmation of action to be taken
  - 8.2.5 Feedback from external examiners
  - 8.2.6 Feedback from internal examiners
  - 8.2.7 Awarding of prizes

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## **9 Assessment Appeals**

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- 9.1 Students who wish to submit an appeal against a decision of a Final Board of Examiners must do so in accordance with the *Procedure for Dealing with Academic Appeals (Taught Programmes)*.

<b>Annex of Modifications</b>		
<b>Version</b>	<b>Date of issue</b>	<b>Details of modification from previous version</b>
1.1	30.01.15	Minor edits following review by Management Committee 28.01.15
1.2	01.08.15	Edits clarifying role of Progress Panel following University of Liverpool accreditation visit
2.0	17.01.17	Mitigating Circumstances Committee renamed Extenuating Circumstances Committee
2.0	17.01.17	Code of Practice on Complaints and Appeals superseded by Procedure for Dealing with Academic Appeals (Taught Programmes).