Confirming Student Outcomes Procedure

Summary

This is the Procedure for staff that sets out how student outcomes are confirmed.

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Owners	Deputy Director of Education Quality and Policy, and Head of Assessment
Responsible team/service	Academic Quality and Policy Office
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Keywords	
Related information	Regulations for confirming student outcomes

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1.   The University of Bristol operates a School-based model of exam boards, for making decisions about student assessment, progression or award. This is supported by a risk-based approach to quality assurance of those outcomes and for confirming complex outcomes.

2. Scope

2.1.   The Confirming Student Outcomes Procedure ("Student Outcomes Procedure") applies to the confirmation of assessment, unit and programme outcomes for students on all taught programmes that lead to the award of credit. It sets out how the University uses its regulations to confirm the academic standards of its awards, that marking has been fair and robust, and to make decisions about the award of credit, progression through a programme of study and award of a qualification.

3. Related regulations and procedures

3.1.   [Regulations and code of practice for taught programmes](#)

4. Confidentiality

4.1.   All information will be processed in accordance with the [Student Fair Processing Notice](#) and requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

4.2.   Student outcomes will be determined with an appropriate level of confidentiality, the parameters for which are set out in [regulation](#).

5. Individual Student Circumstances

5.1.   Under the Equality Act 2010, reasonable adjustments are applied to support students during their learning and assessment experience to prevent any student from being at a substantial disadvantage because of a disability.

5.2.   The University operates multiple procedures to support students whose study are affected by unexpected and unforeseen circumstances, including coursework extensions, examination deferrals and consideration of exceptional circumstances.

5.3.   The University makes provision for the consideration of students who are unable to complete all assessment for their award due to the impact of serious/severe circumstances.

6. Overview of Confirming Student Outcomes Procedure ('the Procedure')

6.1.   The Procedure adopts a risk-based approach to decision-making and assurance. This approach takes into account the following factors:

- **Impact**: The potential effect of outcomes on an individual student's academic progress, ensuring decisions are made at a level that is proportionate to the impact.

- **Regulatory Complexity**: The complexity involved in applying the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes, including any approved programme-specific requirements detailed in regulations, programme specifications, or unit specifications.

- **Data Availability**: The accessibility and adequacy of data within exam board profiles to support decision-making, including the feasibility of generating system-based predicted outcomes.

- **Individual Circumstances**: The extent to which individual student outcomes may be influenced by individual circumstances requiring mitigation or further action, such as cases involving exceptional circumstances or academic misconduct.

6.2.   The Procedure is structured into four sequenced stages to ensure assessment, unit and programme outcomes are agreed in a fair, transparent and timely manner:

- **Pre School Exam Board Assurance:** this stage ensures all the required actions are complete for the marking of assessment and consideration of relevant mitigations.

     a. **Unit Marking:** academic marking and moderation

     b. **Unit Mitigations:** resolving any issues that arise in the delivery of teaching or assessment for a unit

     c. **Student Mitigations:** implementing relevant recommendations from Exceptional Circumstances Committees

- **School Exam Board:** this stage represents a formal decision-making body, resulting in confirmed student outcomes or recommendations to a Complex Outcomes Exam Board.

- **Post School Exam Board Assurance:** this stage ensures decisions taken by a School Exam Board have been made accurately, where there are decisions that have a significant impact on a student's progress through their programme, or where the data required to make the decision is manually derived.

- **Complex Outcomes Exam Board:** this stage represents a formal decision-making body, resulting in confirmed student outcomes for cases referred by the School Exam Board for its consideration.

6.3.   Confirmed outcomes are communicated to students through the **Results Release** process.

6.4.   All staff who are responsible for activities within the four stages of confirming student outcomes will have received training for their role and how to apply the procedures outlined in this document.

7. Student Outcomes

7.1.   **For undergraduate modular programmes**, the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes permit the following student outcomes:

UG modular non-final year:	UG modular final year
o Progress o Conditionally progress (where available) o Reassessment in reassessment period o Reassessment in supplementary year o Required to withdraw (with exit award if applicable) o Transfer programme	o Award qualification with classification o Award alternative qualification with classification o Award lower exit award o Reassessment in reassessment period o Reassessment in supplementary year

7.2.   **For undergraduate non-modular programmes**, the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes permit the following student outcomes:

UG non-modular non-final year:	UG non-modular final year
o Progress o Reassessment in reassessment period o Full repeat year o Required to withdraw (with exit award if applicable)	o Award qualification with classification where applicable o Award exit award qualification o Reassessment in reassessment period where applicable o Full repeat year

7.3.   **For postgraduate taught programmes**, the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes permit the following student outcomes:

PGT taught units	PGT finalist
o Reassessment in reassessment period o Reassessment in supplementary year o Continue for a lower award	o Award qualification with classification where applicable o Award exit award qualification with classification where applicable;

o Required to withdraw (with exit award if applicable) – NOTE: Only in line with 33.15 of the Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes	o Reassessment in reassessment period o Reassessment in supplementary year o Resubmission in supplementary year

8. Timing

8.1. The process of confirming student outcomes starts at the delivery of a teaching unit, and concludes with the release of confirmed outcomes to students. Core activities are scheduled in line with the assessment periods set out in the University Dates, and coordinated by the Education & Student Success division in advance of the academic year.

8.2. A School Exam Board, Complex Outcomes Exam Board, and Results Release are scheduled following:

- the TB-2 summer assessment period for undergraduate and taught postgraduate outcomes

- the reassessment period for undergraduate and taught postgraduate outcomes

- the final assessment submission for taught postgraduate outcomes

8.3. A School Exam Board, and Complex Outcomes Exam Board, may additionally be convened:

- following the TB-1 winter assessment period where the academic outcome of a student is required;

- at suitable junctures for non-modular/non-standard programmes;

- on an ad-hoc basis where the confirmation of an academic outcome for a student cannot wait until the next set meeting.

Boards convened on an ad-hoc basis, may be convened virtually by correspondence, and some decisions may be taken by Chairs Action. The decisions take via these Boards must be reported to the next meeting of the Board. Results Release will also take place once outcomes are confirmed.

9. Roles and responsibilities

9.1. The **Faculty Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor** (Education and Students) and **Head of Faculty Education & Student Success** are accountable for the fair, transparent and timely

confirmation of student outcomes, including that the exam boards in their faculty operate in line with Regulation and this Procedure.

9.2. At the start of the academic year, the Faculty Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education and Students) approves the Chair, membership and scheduling of **Complex Outcomes Exam Boards** for the Faculty, and reports to Faculty Board or other faculty committee, and University Academic Quality Committee. The membership may be revised during the year, as required.

9.3. Typical membership of the Complex Outcomes Exam Boards is:

- The Faculty Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) or delegate (Chair),

- Chairs of the School Examination Boards (School Education Directors or other nominees) who have cases to present, and

- A professional services representative from the faculty to advise on the application of regulations and procedure for confirming student outcomes.

- Whilst it is not expected that all Chairs of the School Exam Boards attend all Complex Outcomes Board meetings, a suitable number of SEB Chairs (at least 50% is suggested) should attend a Complex Outcomes Exam Board meeting, even where they do not have any cases to present themselves, to ensure there is an appropriate representation of views from the faculty when considering cases.

9.4. The following role-holder should attend the Complex Outcomes Exam Board, but not as a member:

- A professional services representative from the faculty to act as secretary.

9.5. At the start of the academic year, the Faculty Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education and Students) approves the Chair, membership and scheduling of School Exam Boards for the Faculty, and reports to Faculty Board or other faculty committee, and University Academic Quality Committee. The membership may be revised during the year, as required.

9.6. Typical membership of the School Exam Boards is:

- The School Education Director (Chair), or other nominee,

- Programme Directors (or equivalent) in the school as role-holders who are responsible for a programme/s (or other equivalent role-holders such as year

leads or exam officers). A Faculty may also nominate role-holders who are responsible for oversight of student academic support such as Senior Tutors to be members where that would benefit the operation of the Board.

- A professional services representative (Student / Graduate Administration Manager or delegate) from the school to advise on the application of regulations and process.

- The following role-holders attend the Board, but are not members:

  - A professional services representative from the school to act as secretary.

9.7.   Whilst external examiners are not required to attend an exam board, any PSRB requirements on accreditation regarding the involvement of externals to confirming student academic outcomes should be taken into account.

9.8.   The Faculty Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education and Students) (or delegate) may nominate members of staff to attend the school exam board to aid in its deliberations such as advising on the application of regulations and where necessary providing independent oversight of the outcomes. The nomination of such additional attendees may take place at the start of the academic year, or in the lead up to the School Exam Boards. Nominated individuals may be particularly beneficial when:

- There are new regulations or procedures in place;

- There is a new Chair;

- There are complex cohort-level issues that have arisen during the programme delivery;

- There are other complex regulatory matters to be considered.

9.9.   Within each Faculty, a schedule of delegated responsibilities associated with confirming student outcomes is maintained. This identifies the relevant academic or professional services role-holders responsible for core activities, including responsibility for pre exam board and post exam board assurance activities. Typically, the following responsibilities apply to nominated role-holders:

- **School Education Director:** normally Chair of the School Exam Board, and a member of relevant Complex Outcomes Exam Boards.

- **Programme Director:** normally a member of the relevant School Exam Board, ensuring Pre Exam Board Assurance is carried out effectively.

- **Unit Director:** ensuring Pre Exam Board Assurance is completed effectively for their Units and reported to the School Exam Board.

- **Student Administration Manager:** normally a member of the relevant School Exam Board, ensuring the processes for confirming student outcomes operate effectively.

- **Senior Tutor (or equivalent):** normally responsible for the convening of Exceptional Circumstances Committees (ECC), and determining ECC classifications in advance of exam boards, and may be a member or attendee of School Exam Boards.

9.10. The Faculty, in collaboration with the Education & Student Success division, designs and delivers appropriate training and guidance for academic and professional services staff involved in the process of confirming student outcomes.

10. Pre Exam Board Assurance

10.1. Pre Exam Board Assurance commences at the start of the delivery of a teaching unit, and concludes when a unit outcome is ready for ratification by the Exam Board.

10.2. Unit Directors/Programme Directors will report to the School Exam Board that the unit marks presented are complete, providing assurance that unit or student mitigations have been approved and applied, as set out below.

10.3. The views of the relevant external examiner/s on the conduct of the assessment, marking and moderation processes should be sought, taken into account and made available to the School Exam Board.

10.4. In advance of the School Exam Board, the Chair and Secretary will review draft student profiles to identify potentially complex outcomes, and discuss queries with relevant colleagues.

Unit Marking

10.5. This stage allows for an academic judgement to be applied to a student's performance on their assessment, and includes first marking, internal moderation and external examiner input. [See section 22 of the Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes]

Unit Mitigations

10.6. This stage allows for issues that arise during the delivery of the unit or the operation of the assessment process, including during the marking process, to be resolved prior to the School Exam Board.

10.7.   Unit level mitigations, to remedy any issues in the performance of assessment, should be considered and approved in line with agreed University or Faculty protocols [**NOTE**: Protocols will be published during 2025/26]. Issues that require mitigation prior to a School Exam Board:

- Assessment incidents or errors;

- Unusual mark distribution;

- Concerns raised by external examiners.

10.8.   Any issues with the delivery of a unit including assessment and the approved mitigations in response should be reported to the School Exam Board.

10.9.   Any significant incidents that require cohort-level intervention should be raised and discussed with the Faculty Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) or delegate prior to the School exam board.

Student Mitigations

10.10.   This stage allows for the implementation of decisions arising from Exceptional Circumstances Committees (ECC) prior to the School Exam Board. Specifically, the following ECC recommendations should be implemented prior to the School Exam Board:

- Removal of late penalties where approved by the ECC

10.11.   Assurance should be provided to the School Exam Board that late penalties have been removed in line with ECC recommendations.

10.12.   At this stage, agreed exam deferrals should also be implemented, if not already.

11. School Exam Board

11.1.   The School Exam Board is responsible for confirming unit outcomes and the award of credit for the units presented to it, following confirmation that Pre Exam Board Assurance is complete.

11.2.   The School Exam Board is a formal decision-making body and is responsible for determining an academic outcome or recommended outcome for all students presented to it on the basis of:

- A student's mark profile

- A student's impact classification provided by the Exceptional Circumstances Committees, if any

- Any recommendations from the relevant panel with regard to cases of academic misconduct, if any.

11.3. For each student, the School Exam Board will either:

- Approve an academic outcome

- Approve an academic outcome, subject to Post Exam Board Assurance

- Recommend an academic outcome to the Complex Outcomes Exam Board

12. Post Exam Board Assurance

12.1. Post Exam Board Assurance commences after the meeting of the School Exam Board, and must be concluded before the meeting of the Complex Outcomes Board. This stage allows for additional data quality checks of the decisions made by the school exam board, either through exception reporting, reviewing specific outcomes, or sample-reviewing of outcomes.

12.2. The following outcomes are reviewed through exception reporting:

- Application of primary and secondary rule

- Application of compensation

12.3. The following outcomes are reviewed through a full or sampling approach:

- Outcome of reassessment

- Conditional progression

- Required to transfer

- Continue for lower award outcomes

- Supplementary year

- Repeat year

- Required to withdraw

   NOTE: Protocols for these approaches will be published during 2025/26.

12.4. Anomalies identified through Post Exam Board Assurance will be referred back to the Chair of the School Exam Board for Chair's Action, and noted in the minutes of the School Exam Board as a post-meeting note.

12.5.   Anomalies which result in a new complex case, will be presented to the Complex Outcomes Board.

12.6.   Student Outcomes reviewed through Post-Board Assurance Process are deemed confirmed unless anomalies or complex cases are identified.

13. Complex Outcomes Exam Board

13.1.   The Complex Outcomes Exam Board is a formal decision-making body and is responsible for determining an academic outcome for all students presented to it, taking into account the recommendation made by the School Exam Board.

14. Communicating Confirmed Student Outcomes (Results Release)

14.1.   The processing of confirmed (approved) student outcomes (in preparation for results release) commences after the School Exam Board. For outcomes recommended to the Complex Outcomes Exam Board, processing commences after the Complex Outcomes Exam Board.

14.2.   Confirmed student outcomes are communicated through the **Results Release** process on agreed publication dates, and only after the Complex Outcomes Board has taken place.

15. Monitoring & review

15.1.   The Faculty will coordinate feedback and review of the delivery of the Confirming Student Outcomes procedure on an annual basis, that will inform a report to the University Academic Quality Committee. This report will reflect on the operation of Exam Boards and the application of regulations, reviewing overview data where available, and will inform continuous improvement activities in the confirmation of student outcomes, and identify areas for regulatory enhancement.

Appendix 1: Overview of tasks for confirming student outcomes

Student Outcomes Oversight

- Faculty-determined membership and scheduling of School Exam Boards and Complex Outcomes Boards
- Training delivered to academic and professional services staff involved in confirming student outcomes
- Evaluation of the operation of the student outcomes procedure (annually)

Essential preliminary procedures

- Academic integrity panels
- Exceptional circumstances committees
- Exam Deferrals

Pre Exam Board Assurance

- Unit marking
- Unit mitigations
- Student mitigations

School Exam Board

- Confirm unit marks on the basis of assurance that pre exam board assurance has taken place
- Approve or recommend a programme outcome for each student
- Approve unit outcomes for students not registered for a programme

Post Exam Board Assurance

- Review and take action on exception reporting
- Review outcomes using the appropriate quality assurance mechanism

Complex Outcomes Exam Board

- Approve a programme outcome for each student presented to it

Activities following the confirmation of student outcomes

- Results release of confirmed student outcomes
- Appeals procedure

Additional related activities

- Consideration and determination of the award of student prizes
- Identify and implement academic and pastoral follow ups with individual students (e.g. Require to Withdraw decisions, Support to Study)

Trends

- Review unit and programme statistics and trends (programme review)
- Consider external examiner report (programme review)

- Review academic integrity trends
- Review Exceptional Circumstances and self-cert trends
- Review and address causes of exam incidents

Appendix 2: Indicative timings for an academic cycle

Confirming Student Outcomes Activity	Month
Membership of School Exam Boards and Complex Outcomes Boards for a Faculty approved by the Faculty Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education and Students) for all UG and PGT delivery	September/ October
Schedule of School Exam Boards and Complex Outcomes Boards for a Faculty approved by the Faculty Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education and Students)	September/ October
Training schedule for the academic year agreed	September/October
Faculty Board receives notification of exam board membership and schedule for the academic cycle	October/ November
Academic Quality & Standards Committee (AQSC) receives notification of exam board membership and schedule for the academic cycle	October/ November
TB-1 School Exam Board held (if required) TB-1 Complex Outcomes Board held (if required)	January / February
External Examiner review of TB-1 student work	January-May
Pre Exam Board Assurance (Summer)	March-May
School Exam Boards (Summer)	May
Post Exam Board Assurance (Summer)	May
Complex Outcomes Board (Summer)	May/ June
Pre Exam Board Assurance (Reassessment)	July
School Exam Boards (Reassessment)	July
Post Exam Board Assurance (Reassessment)	July
Complex Outcomes Board (Reassessment)	July/August
Pre Exam Board Assurance (PGT)	October
School Exam Boards (PGT)	October/ November
Post Exam Board Assurance (PGT)	November
Complex Outcomes Board (PGT)	November