



A meeting of the Board of Examinations was held on Tuesday 14 March 2017 in the Student Registry.

Present: Professor G Virgo (Chair); Dr G Burgess; Mr G Chesterman; Ms R Huldisch; Dr P Johnston; Mr T Milner; Dr C Ristuccia; Dr N Rutter; Dr E Silva; Professor H Thompson; Dr R Thornton; Mrs C Fage (Secretary); Mrs J Green (In attendance)

Apologies: Dr W Nolan; Professor C Young

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2016 were approved subject to an amendment to item 4.1 on costs for reprinting to differentiate from costs occurred previously and those arising this financial year.

2. Starred items

The Board agreed to unstar the business under 'Matters arising' relating to 'Instructions to Candidates', but otherwise approve the starred items.

3. Matters arising

The feedback on Instructions to Candidates was discussed and it was agreed that amendments to the instructions suggested by members of the Board would be circulated for approval by the members of the Board. Once resolved, the Proctors would review the Proctorial notice and circulate for information.

4. Principal items of business

3.1 Board of Examinations

The Chair introduced the item by explaining there was a wider review on governance structures of committees that concern students. The particular proposals before the Board offered an opportunity to give greater responsibility to the committee which oversees examinations and to address the concern that the Board of Examinations currently does not report to either the General Board or Council. The Chair advised that the Examination Review and the Applications Committee had recently considered the proposals and that the General Board Education Committee would consider them on 22 March. GBEC would be advised of the feedback from this and other others bodies.

The Board discussed the proposals and:

- a) agreed that the Board of Examinations be dissolved and that a new Examinations and Assessment Committee be established, subject to change to Ordinance;
- b) agreed that an Examination Access and Mitigation Committee be established particularly if the role of the medical experts were strengthened and the links between intermission and conditions on the return of the students were improved.

The Board noted that the name of the Committees is critical as is how it would be defined in Ordinances.

4.2 Examination Review

The Secretary gave a verbal report on the Examination Review noting that the last meeting of the Working Group had been held earlier this Term this term. The Group had met termly since established in the Lent term 2015 and a root and branch review of examinations had been undertaken, covering all aspects of examination from preparation through to marking and appeals. It was found to have been an intensive but productive review with several key outputs, including an end to end examination guide for publication at the start of the next academical year.

The Board noted that the review group was finalising a report for the General Board's Education Committee (GBEC), a copy of which would be circulated to members and added to the agenda for the next meeting.

4.3 Standard provision for Examination Arrangements

The Examination review tasked a sub-group to look at provision for candidates requiring examination arrangements. This subgroup included representatives from Colleges and the Disability Resource Centre as well as the Secretary and proposed a set of standard provisions for certain conditions, including mental health.

The Board agreed that standardisation is a good idea, but to retain the requirement for applications to be considered on a case by case basis, in consultation with the student. It was confirmed that the standard provision should be viewed as possible adjustments only, and that applications should only be made once the relevant College has considered individual student's needs.

The Board approved the standard provision, subject to a stronger text at the start as well as some small changes to the detail, and agreed to keep them under review.

4.4 Examination exuberance

The Chair reported on a meeting held with the Proctors, the Head of OSCCA¹ and Dr Mark Wormald in February to discuss the issue of examination exuberance and how it might be mitigated. The Chair confirmed that it was generally accepted that the issue raises significant concerns across the Collegiate University and that action was required to address these concerns.

The following was noted:

- A communication would be sent out from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Dr Wormald to all undergraduates and postgraduates this week, reminding them to be respectful when celebrating the end of examinations of the submission of dissertations, and that there could be University disciplinary and police implications for anti-social behaviour;
- The review committee for student discipline has reviewed what penalties should be deployed, including on the spot fines and possibly community service;
- The Secretary had spoken with the Head of the Safety Office to consider a risk assessment on crowd control to ensure the health and safety of students, staff and the general public. Additionally, the Secretary will be undertaking discussions with colleagues who have experience in safety management;
- It may be necessary to ban all celebrations at some venues that are at high risk of damage and / or on the public highway – the Proctors will undertake visits to venues to determine these locations;

The Board approved the different approached proposed.

4.5 Moodle provision during examinations

The Board received a request from the Service Owner from Moodle, asking if consideration for out of hours cover should be requested during the exam period. It was noted that Moodle is currently only supported Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm (excluding Bank Holidays).

The Board noted the importance of Moodle in the University's teaching and learning strategy and **agreed that** the Secretary should make a request to UIS², asking for confirmation of out of hours cover throughout the Easter term, and a week before any significant period of examinations. The Board further noted examinations that occur throughout the year, but agreed that initially, it should relate to the Easter term.

¹ Office of Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals

² University Information Services

4.6 EMBA Compulsory module

The Board were alerted to a student on the EMBA programme who had not received a visa to enter the US, where a compulsory module for the programme was being undertaken. Subsequently the student's college and the Judge Business School applied for an 'alternative mode of assessment' for this student for this module. The Secretary approved the request in this instance, however the Board had concerns about compulsory modules that require international travel which were reliant on visa entry into countries, and agreed to raise it as an area of concern with GBEC.

Action: For GBEC to consider if compulsory modules on any programme can include international travel

4.7 Operational Improvements: Exam attendance monitoring

The Head of Records and Exams detailed work that had started with UIS on piloting an electronic recording of students attending examination venues. A pilot to phase 1 would deliver proof of concept which includes creating and developing modules to import candidate data to an interface for tracking attendees via a mobile device, scanning student's university cards.

The pilot phase would cost approximately £3,900 for technical development and additional costs for hardware which is expected to be approximately £300. Developments after the pilot phase would incur additional cost.

The Board recommended proceeding with the pilot phase 1, with a report on the pilot to the Board next March, 2018.