



A meeting of the Board of Examinations was held on Wednesday 28 September 2016 in the Syndicate Room in the Old Schools.

Present: Professor G Virgo (Chair); Mr G Chesterman; Mr D Goode; Dr P Johnston; Dr W Nolan; Dr C Ristuccia; Dr N Rutter; Dr E Silva; Mr D Taplin; Dr H Thompson; Dr R Thornton; Mrs C Fage (Secretary); Mrs J Green (In attendance)

Apologies: Ms R Huldisch; Professor C Young

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2016 were approved.

2. Starred items

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

3. Matters arising

The Chair noted the change in membership relating to the CUSU representative, and that the Secretary had passed thanks to Mr Cashman for his contributions in 2015/16.

The Board received the additional paper circulated relating to examination rubric changes and agreed that further work was required to make instructions to candidates clearer. It was agreed that this work would continue in the Michaelmas term and return to the Board for its meeting on 29 November 2016.

The Board noted that no reports were received about the use of 'smart' watches in the Easter terms 2016 examinations, but agreed to keep this under review and mindful of changing practices in other institutions.

4. Chair's Report

The Chair reported that the University report regarding the cessation of posting Class Lists at the Senate-House is now subject to a ballot to be held in the Michaelmas term 2016. Additionally, CUSU had been directed by its members to hold a referendum on the issue.

5. Principal items of business

5.1 Annual Reports to the Board

5.1.1 Senior Proctor's Report

The Senior Proctor spoke to the Report, highlighting the key areas of concern: plagiarism; some venue and operational issues, and the load on the Proctors, including post-examination exuberance. On these points:

- a) the Board agreed that the Proctors should retain the practice of 'examination walking' but there was no requirement to visit every venue for every examination session. There would be a focus on visiting those venues holding 'other location' candidates (i.e. Colleges, extra time venue and the Titan Suite), but not exclusively. Further, it was agreed that this would free up Proctorial time so that they are available to attend any venue as requested by an Invigilator, Supervisor or from the Examination Office;

- b) the Board agreed that the review of examination venues and ongoing search for appropriate space should continue;
- c) the Board agreed that the Student Registry should continue to liaise with Colleges on the guidance issued to ensure that it meets their needs, with all topics covered. This should minimise any operational issues within examinations sitting in College;
- d) the Chair confirmed that work was ongoing by the General Board's Education Committee (GBEC) on plagiarism and the use of Turnitin software;
- e) the Chair confirmed that there would be a review of the fine system which would seek the views of the disciplinary review.

5.1.2 Secretary's Report

The Secretary spoke to the Report, highlighting improvements that have been implemented since 2015/16 and raising key issues such as the ongoing increase in applications for examination arrangements and student discipline and exuberance. Consequently:

- a) the Secretary confirmed the creation of a sub-group from the Examination Review, chaired by Dr Wormald, which would review the provision and culture of examination arrangements across Colleges and the University;
- b) the Board confirmed that the Registry should continue to identify any Faculties and Departments which may have space suitable for examinations following the General Board's resolution that all Departmental and Faculty space must be made available for examinations.

The Board received the Matters for Consideration, with the following points noted.

Matter for the Board's Consideration	Board outcome
<p>Student Discipline and exuberance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) To work with the new Head of the Office of Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals to determine how to address student behaviour in an examination room (b) To review the policy to fine students for post-examination exuberance and to ensure a firm and efficient route of appeal (c) To consider a link between a move to more use of departmental space and impact of post-examination exuberance across the estate and the impact on colleagues 	<p>Agreed, involving the disciplinary review</p>
<p>Medical evidence for examination arrangements</p> <p>To ask the examination review;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) To consider what medical evidence might be acceptable for students where it is not possible to receive letters from medical professionals in time (b) To review the processes for examination arrangement applications for disabled applicants in possession of appropriate medical evidence and those who do not have access to the same level of evidence 	<p>Agreed, with concern expressed if candidates are not providing appropriate evidence for long-standing medical issues</p>
<p>Missing students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Does the Board wish to revisit the policy on missing students and the consequences if a student misses a paper? 	<p>No, and additionally liaise with the Applications Committee, informing them of the Board's change in policy</p>
<p>Continuous Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Is the Board content for areas of continuous improvement within examination operations to be identified and addressed in the Student Registry, under the direction of the Secretary? 	<p>Yes, and to report annually as appropriate</p>

<p>Examination costs and budget</p> <p>a) Does the Board agree to create and maintain an examinations budget, separate to that of Student Operations within the Academic Division, to better monitor and report on the cost of running University Examinations?</p> <p>b) Is the Board content for the Secretary to identify where costs are rising and raise issues with the Chair and Board as necessary?</p>	<p>Agreed, the Board would like greater transparency of entire costs for running University Examinations.</p>

The Secretary thanked the Proctors for their support during the year.

It was agreed that the Secretary's report would be circulated as last year as well as available online (Raven protected) and sent to GBEC for information.

5.2 Examination ranking

The Board received a paper from the Head of Records and Examinations relating to the storing of rank against examination results on each student's record. Due to the lack of university policy on rank and inaccurate data being retained once changes to class are made, the Student Registry stopped collecting rank for the Easter term 2016 which has caused some operational difficulties across the collegiate university.

The Board agreed the recommendation that the paper should pass to GBEC, asking it to consult with stakeholders on the use of rank across the university and to determine, if appropriate, a university policy on rank.

5.3 Instructions to Candidates

The Board received a paper instigated by the University Advocate, to review references to mobile telephones across Proctorial Notices, information to candidates and Invigilator announcements. This was to ensure consistency across those notices and to address the change in culture and use of mobile telephones from when these notices were initially drafted.

The Board agreed that the current references were out of date and a clear statement was required that addressed both the issue of a phone ringing in a bag at the back of a room, and that candidates must not have a phone on their person or on their desk.

5.4 Digital, Learning and Teaching Strategy – online exams

The Board reviewed a paper supplied from the Project Board for the Computer-based Examinations pilot which sought approval from the Board for the pilot during 2016-17.

The Board welcomed the progress being made and approved the pilot for 2016-17, asking for a report including 'lessons learnt' after the examinations in the Easter term 2017.

6. Any other business

The Board expressed their gratitude to the outgoing Proctors, Mr Goode and Mr Taplin, for their hard work and support of the examination processes over the past two years.