

Examination Board Policy

POLICY DETAILS:

Date of approval	May 2017
Approving body	Academic Council
Supersedes	Examination Board Policy, 2013
Date of EIA	June 2017
Date of next review	<i>See departmental schedule</i>
Author	Policy and Governance
Responsible Executive Group area	Registrar and Secretary
Related policies and documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• External Examiners Policy• Code of Assessment• Handbook for External Examiners
Benchmarking	UK Quality Code for Higher Education University of Glasgow

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

EXAMINATION BOARD POLICY

This policy sets out the principles that govern the function and operation of GSA's Examination Boards. As such, it outlines the roles and responsibilities that inform assessment practices. The policy aligns with the GSA Code of Assessment but it does not supersede or replace any of the Code's content. The Examination Board Policy should be read in conjunction with GSA's Code of Assessment, and the External Examiners Policy.

The Quality Code, which GSA embraces, promotes an inclusive approach by embedding consideration of equality and diversity matters throughout. GSA demonstrates its commitment to diversity and promoting equality by ensuring that due regard is given to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 in the implementation and application of this policy. In line with this, the Examination Board should be satisfied that the assessment process has been conducted taking into consideration issues relating to equality and diversity.

1. EXAMINATION BOARDS – GENERAL INFORMATION

Definitions

- 1.1 **School** – In terms of academic policy, the term "School" shall be taken to refer to Design, Fine Art, the Mackintosh School of Architecture, and Simulation and Visualisation. Clarification can be sought from Policy and Governance.

School Examination Board – These are preliminary Boards which operate within Schools post moderation. The remit of the School Examination Board is to permit initial discussion of the pattern of results. This helps expedite decisions at the GSA Final Examination Board and allows discussions to focus on exceptional cases.

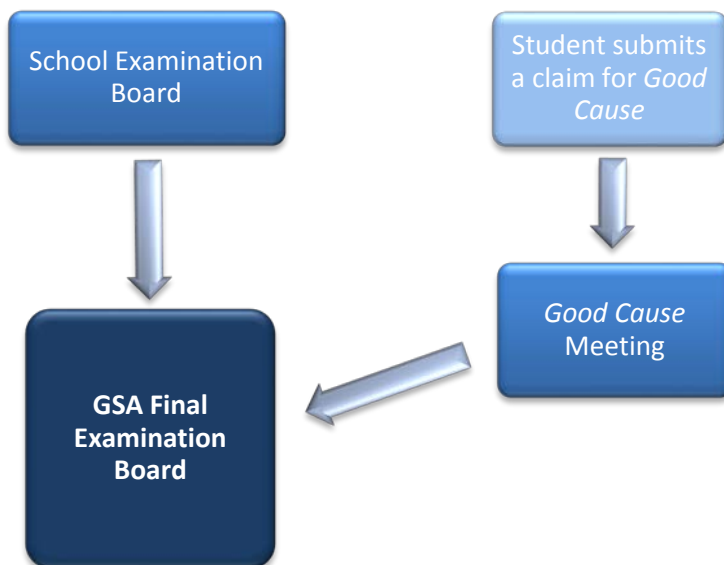
GSA Final Examination Board - These are final Examination Boards to determine decisions regarding progress students and final year students.

Good Cause meeting – This is a meeting prior to the GSA Final Examination Board to discuss applications submitted for student *good cause*.

Overview

- 1.2 All programme formal summative assessment within GSA must be approved by a GSA Final Examination Board.
- 1.3 GSA Final Examination Boards are established under the authority of Academic Council. Decisions on student progress and on final degree awards are made by a GSA Final Examination Board. GSA's degree programmes are validated by the University of Glasgow.
- 1.4 Meetings of the GSA Final Examination Board in respect of a particular programme or course will be formally called and constituted, separately from other meetings such as departmental meetings.

- 1.5 A meeting of a School Examination Board normally precedes the GSA Final Examination Board. In the case of degree awards, the results agreed at the School Examination Board are provided to the External Examiners. The examination process is subsequently moderated by the External Examiners and results ratified at the GSA Final Examination Board.
- 1.6 The frequency of Examination Board meetings is determined by the assessment patterns of individual programmes in consultation with Academic Registry.
- 1.7 GSA Final Examination Boards are held in January, June and September. An overall assessment calendar is produced by Academic Registry and circulated at the start of the session. Detailed assessment timetables are produced by individual Schools.
- 1.8 All relevant GSA Final Examination Board members, including External Examiners, and supporting staff must comply with the Examination Board Policy. Any exceptional practices must be approved in advance by the Registrar and Secretary or the Deputy Director (Academic).
- 1.9 Procedures for considering claims relating to incomplete assessment resulting from *good cause* are set out in §9 of the GSA Code of Assessment.
- 1.10 The flow chart below sets out the relationship between the School and GSA Final Examination Boards and the *Good Cause* meeting:



2. MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Membership

- 2.1 The membership of a School Examination Board normally consists of the following: Convenor (normally the Head of School); Programme Leaders; and Heads of Department or Stage Leaders/Subject Head (as appropriate). The Academic Support Manager (or equivalent) is an attendee.

- 2.2 The School Examination Boards will normally be convened by the Head of School. The Academic Support Manager, or equivalent, will act as School Board Secretary.
- 2.3 The membership of a GSA Final Examination Board normally consists of the following: Convenor; Heads of Schools; Programme Leaders; Heads of Department or Stage Leaders/Subject Head (as appropriate); External Examiners; and the Head of Academic Registry, or nominee.
- 2.4 All GSA Final Examination Boards will be convened by the Deputy Director (Academic) or a Head of School from outwith the cognate School. The Head of Academic Registry, or nominee, will act as GSA Examination Board Secretary.
- 2.5 The Convenor of all GSA Final Examination Boards shall be impartial, specifically the Convenor will not have been directly involved in the assessment of the students under consideration.
- 2.6 In order for the GSA Final Examination Board to be quorate, the following must attend, unless by specific agreement from the Deputy Director (Academic) or the Registrar and Secretary: Convenor; Heads of Schools (as appropriate); Programme Leaders (as appropriate) and External Examiners (for final awards).
- 2.7 If a Programme Leader is unable to attend the GSA Final Examination Board, on the agreement of the Deputy Director (Academic) or the Registrar and Secretary, or nominee, a substitute can be offered on the condition that they are fully briefed in advance on all students being presented to the Examination Board.
- 2.8 No person other than External Examiners and those with direct responsibilities for assessment and related administrative matters shall attend or observe meetings of the GSA Final Examination Board.

School Examination Board Responsibilities

- 2.9 The School Examination Board is responsible for:
- Receiving and confirming the provisional marks for any and all courses and programmes under its jurisdiction;
 - Considering reports on any irregularities in assessment processes, relating to either potential academic misconduct or the conduct of the assessment process.
- 2.10 The School Examination Board permits initial discussion of the pattern of results. This helps expedite decisions at the GSA Final Examination Board and allows discussions to focus on exceptional cases.
- 2.11 If a School Examination Board suspects, on the basis of evidence before it, that a disciplinary offence has been committed by a candidate in respect of the assessment, the Board will invoke the provisions of the GSA's Academic Misconduct Policy.
- 2.12 Claims relating to incomplete assessment resulting from *good cause* are not considered at the School Examination Board. They will only be considered if deemed appropriate, at the *Good Cause* meeting prior to the GSA Final Examination Board.

Good Cause Meeting Responsibilities

2.13 The *Good Cause* meeting is responsible, on behalf of and to the GSA Final Examination Board, for:

- Considering claims of *good cause* submitted by students and making recommendations, as appropriate, on student progression, award and classification to the Examination Board.

GSA Final Examination Board Responsibilities

2.14 The role of the GSA Final Examination Board shall be to ratify results on the basis of recommendations on progress or final degree awards by the School Examination Board.

2.15 The GSA Final Examination Board is responsible, on behalf of and to Academic Council, for:

- Receiving and confirming the final marks for any and all programmes under its jurisdiction;
- Where the programmes under the Examination Board's authority include courses under the jurisdiction of another Examination Board, receiving the confirmed marks for these courses;
- Considering and determining, in accordance with the relevant GSA regulations and programme regulations, the progression, award and classification of all students registered on the programme(s) for which the Examination Board is responsible;
- Taking into account in its decisions on student progression, award and classification any claims of *good cause* submitted by students under consideration by the Examination Board;
- Considering reports on any irregularities in assessment processes, relating to either potential academic misconduct or the conduct of the assessment process;
- Considering any reports from Academic Misconduct panels established in relation to courses or programmes that are the responsibility of the Examination Board.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF EXAMINATION BOARDS

3.1 Each School is responsible for recording the results of any School Examination Board as well as any other interim assessment meetings such as the progress meetings (where applicable). Schools will keep a record of all relevant discussions.

3.2 Academic Registry is responsible for the administration of GSA Final Examination Boards. The administration of GSA Final Examination Boards shall include but not be limited to the following: organisation of the meeting; preparation and circulation of all relevant paperwork; accurately recording the decisions agreed; arranging for the Examination Schedules to be endorsed by the appropriate Examination Board members; and ensuring that the final assessment dates for next session are provided to the External Examiners.

3.3 Schools are responsible for entering course marks directly into the student records system. Academic Registry are responsible for the maintenance of the student records system, including maintaining accurate programme structure details and ensuring that relevant members of staff have appropriate access. Guidance and training will be provided to Schools each session regarding the entering of marks in the student record system.

- 3.4 In Semester 1, Academic Registry shall issue a timetable for the return of Assessment Results which will provide instructions regarding the system setup, entering marks and provide notification of the final deadline for when results should be uploaded to the student records system.
- 3.5 Results shall be locked within the student record system on the date specified in the timetable for returning results. Results will subsequently be calculated to indicate overall progression or final award status (where appropriate). After this point, results shall not be amended unless agreed by the GSA Final Examination Board.
- 3.6 Once the results have been calculated and prior to the GSA Final Examination Board, Academic Registry shall circulate mark sheets to members of the Board for cross checking against local records. Schools are responsible for highlighting any discrepancies to Registry within a reasonable time period in advance of the GSA Final Examination Board.
- 3.7 The Head of Academic Registry or nominee shall act as GSA Examination Board Secretary for all GSA Final Examination Boards.
- 3.8 The business of the GSA Final Examination Board will be minuted and particular records kept of the External Examiner's adjudications, comments and recommendations, as well as particular decisions made by the Board in respect of incomplete assessment, good cause and disciplinary matters.
- 3.9 In the event that the External Examiner is unwilling to endorse the Examination Schedule, the Secretary to the GSA Final Examination Board shall record this as appropriate and ensure that the relevant students are informed as soon as possible if there is any delay in finalising and communicating their results.

4. EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

Role at the GSA Final Examination Board

- 4.1 The External Examiner's role at the GSA Final Examination Board is to:
 - (a) Provide comments on the spread of degree results and performance of students;
 - (b) Comment briefly on the degree programme as a whole;
 - (c) Comment briefly on the assessment outcomes and procedures and on wider issues of quality assurance and enhancement including the considerations of issues of equality and diversity;
 - (d) Offer comparison of academic standards at GSA with those in other institutions, identifying models of best practice.
 - (e) Endorse the outcomes of the assessment processes they have been appointed to scrutinise.

Attendance of External Examiners at the GSA Final Examination Board

- 4.2 A minimum of one External Examiner per programme is expected to attend the GSA Final Examination Board where awards are being made.

- 4.3 Attendance at the GSA Final Examination Board is one of the terms and conditions of appointment of all External Examiners. If an External Examiner is unavoidably and exceptionally absent from an Examination Board where their presence is formally required, written comments should be provided for consideration at the meeting. By exception, remote communication may be arranged.
- 4.4 In the absence of the External Examiner, the Convenor of the Examination Board will confirm that the External Examiner not in attendance has participated fully in the assessment process. This is the sole responsibility of the Convenor of the Examination Board. The Programme Leader or Head of School has responsibility for ensuring that the Convenor of the Examination Board is appropriately informed in advance of the meeting, and ensuring that the written comments are submitted.

Endorsement of the Examination Schedule

- 4.5 The External Examiner shall be presented with the final award Examination Schedule for consideration and endorsement. Such endorsement provides confirmation that the External Examiner is satisfied with the conduct of the assessment process.
- 4.6 In the event that the External Examiner is unwilling to endorse the final award Examination Schedule, this is recorded by the Secretary to the GSA Final Examination Board and the External Examiner will be asked to submit a written report outlining their reasons for the immediate consideration of the Registrar and Secretary. Students are informed by Academic Registry as soon as possible if there is any delay in finalising and communicating their results.
- 4.7 Where there is a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies requirement, External Examiners may be invited to sign the final award Examination Schedule.

Attendance at August Diet (including Resubmissions)

- 4.8 External Examiner input may be required at the GSA Final Examination Board in August/September. In each case, however, there may be agreement between the Programme Leader and the External Examiner that their attendance at the GSA Final Examination Boards for resubmissions is not required.

5. CONDUCT OF GSA FINAL EXAMINATION BOARDS

General

- 5.1 All discussions which take place at GSA Final Examination Boards should be treated as confidential. All Examination Schedules will be retained by Academic Registry both before and after the meeting.
- 5.2 Any discussions should be restricted to issues of assessment and progression and should not stray into issues which do not have a direct relevance.
- 5.3 Programme Leaders are responsible for ensuring that the correct amount of credits are appropriately undertaken for each programme and course. Any discrepancy must be highlighted to the Head of Academic Registry at the earliest opportunity.

- 5.4 All members of the GSA Final Examination Board shall declare any personal interest, involvement or relationship with a student being assessed to the Convenor in advance of the meeting. The Convenor has the right to ask the member to withdraw from the meeting when the student in question is discussed.

Examination Board Consensus

- 5.5 Individual members of the GSA Final Examination Boards are not entitled to change grades unless rectifying a transcription or communication error. Decisions on final awards however, are at the discretion of the Examination Board.
- 5.6 The GSA Final Examination Board shall seek to achieve consensus in all matters. The explicit views of an External Examiner may be sought regarding a specific case to allow the Examination Board to make a final decision.

Convenor's Action on behalf of the GSA Final Examination Board

- 5.7 Student marks and awards shall normally be considered at a quorate GSA Final Examination Board and GSA discourages the use of Convenor's action as a routine method of making awards. However it is recognised that in particular limited circumstances it might be necessary from time to time to confirm marks or progression outside these meetings (e.g. to avoid delays that prevent a student progressing to the next year).
- 5.8 Sections 5.9 – 5.10 indicate the scope and normal limits to the exercise of Convenor's action on behalf of the GSA Final Examination Board.
- 5.9 Convenor's action should normally only be used if the next GSA Final Examination Board is more than 6 weeks away, to:
- (a) Fulfil an explicit and minuted Examination Board decision, following completion of an action in respect an individual student (e.g. outcome of an Academic Misconduct panel);
 - (b) Following resolution of an academic appeal;
 - (c) Confirm an individual student's marks for an assessment or course (e.g. for a student returning from an exchange);
 - (d) Correct an error or delay caused by administration processes;
 - (e) To make an exit award following a withdrawal from a programme for medical or other serious adverse circumstances outside the control of the student (except where the student falls or, as a result of *good cause* may fall, within the discretionary zone requiring consideration of discretion by the Board).
- 5.10 Convenor's Action should not normally be taken to make changes to marks or progression or award decisions for a cohort of students; this includes consideration of resubmissions.
- 5.11 The minutes of the Examination Board should record where it has granted authority to the Convenor to act on its behalf. Actions taken by the Convenor must be reported to the next meeting of the Examination Board by means of an update to the previous meeting's minute.

5.12 In the event of a final award, when considering the input of the External Examiner, the following should be noted:

- If an External Examiner attended an Examination Board where a student was considered, and Convenor's Action was agreed for a later date, the view of the External Examiner need not be sought again unless the decision has changed radically;
- Appropriate email correspondence from the External Examiner will be accepted as supporting evidence;
- The student's mark profile should be provided to the external examiner(s) where he/she has been asked to confirm an award.

6. PROCEDURE FOLLOWING GSA FINAL EXAMINATION BOARD

Publication of Results

6.1 Responsibility for releasing the results on behalf of GSA shall rest solely with the Head of Academic Registry who will determine and administer, subject to the approval of Academic Council, appropriate procedures for processing the overall assessment results to enable:

- (a) The electronic publication of results;
- (b) the recording of results on the candidates' central records maintained by Academic Registry.

6.2 Students are responsible for informing themselves of the results.

6.3 In the case of programmes taught jointly with the University of Glasgow, agreement will be reached between the institutions regarding responsibility for releasing results.

6.4 It will be stated that all released results are subject to correction in the event of detection of an error.

6.5 If an error is detected in the return made to the Academic Registry or in the published result then:

- (a) where the erroneous result is less advantageous than the result to which the candidate is entitled, the Registrar and Secretary will be informed and will authorise the Head of Academic Registry to correct the result.
- (b) where the erroneous result is more advantageous than the result to which the candidate is entitled, the Head of Academic Registry will immediately notify the Registrar and Secretary and inform the candidate that the result is suspended; the Deputy Director will initiate a reconsideration of the result in conjunction with the relevant Head of School, Programme Leader and the Head of Academic Registry; they may decide to sustain or correct the result in the light of all the factors known to them and will communicate their decision forthwith to the Head of Academic Registry.

6.6 In either case the Head of Academic Registry will communicate the outcome to the candidate in writing, advising, if appropriate, of the right to appeal, and will correct if necessary the candidate's record in held in Academic Registry. Any decisions regarding further progression

or award dependent on the incorrect result will be null and void, and the candidate reconsidered on the basis of the correct result. Every such instance will be reported to the next full meeting of the Academic Council.

7. PROVISION FOR REASSESSMENT

7.1 Provision for Reassessment is set out in §3 of the GSA Code of Assessment.

8. SCOPE

8.1 This policy applies to all taught programmes of study and shall take effect from September 2017.