

Handbook for External Examiners, 2021-22

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Introduction

The University has, by definition, the power to grant degrees, and as such it is responsible for the standards of awards made in its name. In order to assist it to discharge that responsibility, it appoints external examiners who have professional expertise and experience in designated areas of study which will enable them to offer informed, independent, and impartial judgements about the appropriateness and comparability of the standards of awards.

The purpose of this Handbook is to provide an overview of the purpose, role and duties of external examiners, and outline the expectations on external examiners in the performance of those duties. In doing this, the Handbook draws on a range of University documentation. The most important document is the University's Code of Practice on External Examining/Moderating, which is available at <http://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/section/10/>.

This Handbook also draws on:

- the University's core regulations for undergraduate programmes;
- the University's core regulations for taught postgraduate programmes;
- the University's qualification and level descriptors;
- the University's policies and procedures for assessment.

If there are any other queries in relation to External Examiner activity these should be sent to external.examiners@durham.ac.uk.

The purposes and role of the external examiner

In its Code of Practice on External Examining/Moderation, the University states that the purpose of its external examiner system is to ensure that:

- Degrees awarded by the University meet or exceed the academic standards specified in external points of reference such as the *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications*, subject benchmark statements, the QAA Code of Practice, and (where appropriate) the requirements of professional bodies.
- The academic standards of the University's awards are consistent with those in comparable HEIs.
- The assessment system is fair and is fairly operated in the awarding and classification of degrees. The external examiner may be consulted in the course of any investigation into any suspected irregularity in examination performance or the production of assessed work.

The roles and responsibilities of the external examiner

The roles and responsibilities of external examiners are detailed in full in the University's Code of Practice, and can be found at http://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/section_10/5/

(Again in summary) in its Code of Practice, the University defines the main duties of its external examiners as:

- to review and evaluate examinations and all other forms of assessment which contribute to students' degree results;
- to review and evaluate the assessment process;
- to moderate, as appropriate, summatively assessed work at the level of the module and at the level of the degree programme;
- to ensure consistency in the assessment process;
- to comment on draft examination papers as appropriate;
- where possible and practicable, to meet with groups of students in order to obtain feedback on the student learning experience and the programme(s) as a whole;
- to report on the structure, content, academic standards and teaching of the relevant programmes;
- to comment, if invited to do so by the University, on alleged cases of assessment irregularities.

Expectations of the external examiner

In order to perform these duties, the University expects you to:

1 *Be familiar with the key reference points*

The University has approved qualification descriptors that specify the generic outcomes and academic standards that the University has agreed students should meet to be awarded a particular degree (specific outcomes for each degree programme are detailed in programme specifications). The University's qualification descriptors define such outcomes for each of the taught awards the University makes (Certificate of Higher Education, Diploma of Higher Education, Ordinary Degree, Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and Master's Degree). These qualification descriptors are available online at:

<https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/university.calendar/volumeii/2021.2022/uglevdes.pdf>

and

<https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/university.calendar/volumeii/2021.2022/pglevdes.pdf>

The University's qualification descriptors are aligned to those contained in the QAA's *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)* (available at <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/qualifications-and-credit-frameworks>). Accordingly if the academic standards of a programme are consistent with Durham's qualification descriptors they are consistent with the *FHEQ*. The alignment of Durham's qualification descriptors with the *FHEQ* is as follows:

Award	FHEQ Level	Durham University Level
Certificate of Higher Education	4	1
Diploma of Higher Education	5	2
Ordinary Degree Honours Degree Graduate Certificate Graduate Diploma	6	3
Postgraduate Certificate Postgraduate Diploma Master's Degree	7	4
Doctoral Degree	8	5

You need to be aware of the qualification descriptor(s) relevant to the award(s) that you are examining, so that you can check that the awards are compatible with the University's qualification descriptors (and thereby those in the *FHEQ*).

Secondly, reference points may include national benchmarks in the subject relating to the threshold and modal standards of awards. Such benchmarks are available for virtually all

undergraduate programmes and for a smaller number of taught postgraduate programmes (and can be accessed at <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements>). If you are examining a programme for which a subject benchmark statement is available you need to be aware of the contents of the relevant statement(s) so that you can check whether programme standards are compatible with those in the statement(s). Whereas compatibility with the University's qualification descriptors and thereby the *FHEQ* is required, the subject benchmarks are advisory and differences are acceptable provided that there is a valid reason.

Finally, external reference points may, for some programmes, include the requirements of accrediting bodies. Again, you need to be familiar with these to advise the University about compatibility of awards. The department/school in which you are externally examining will be able to advise you if the programmes you are examining need to be aligned with the requirements of accrediting bodies.

2 *Be familiar with the programme(s) they are examining*

You obviously need to be familiar with all aspects of the programme(s) which you are examining.

In particular, you need to know:

- the purposes of the programme(s) (aim(s));
- what students are expected to know, or do, or think to complete the programme successfully (the intended learning outcomes);
- what learning opportunities and experiences are provided to enable students to attain those outcomes (the curriculum);
- how those learning opportunities and experiences are provided (the learning and teaching strategy);
- how attainment of the intended learning outcomes is evaluated (the assessment strategy);
- where appropriate, how assessment discriminates between levels of attainment of the intended learning outcomes (assessment criteria/marking descriptors).

This information will be outlined in the degree programme specification and the assessment criteria, both of which will be sent to you by the academic department in which you are examining.

You should familiarise yourself with both the programme specification and the assessment criteria so that you have a clear overview of the programme(s) that you are examining. Established external examiners will find it useful to review this documentation in advance, particularly in respect of any changes made since the previous year and their implications for assessment and examination.

In addition to knowing about the programme as a whole, you also need to know about its component parts, i.e. the modules which constitute it, as much of your work in moderating will be undertaken at this level. For each module in the programme, then, you need to know:

- the intended learning outcomes;
- how the curriculum is designed to enable students to achieve those outcomes;
- how those outcomes are assessed;

- how assessment of learning outcomes in modules is linked to the assessment of outcomes in the programme as a whole qualitatively (whether the module is compulsory, core, or optional) and quantitatively (the credit value).

This information is set out in the module outlines. Module information is summarised in the programme specification, and the full module outlines are available under the entry for the relevant academic department in the University's Faculty Handbook (for undergraduate modules – accessible at <http://www.dur.ac.uk/faculty.handbook/>) and Postgraduate Module Handbook (for taught postgraduate modules – accessible at <http://www.dur.ac.uk/postgraduate.modules/>).

3 *Be familiar with requirements for assessment, examination, and award*

As well as being familiar with the programme(s), you also need to be familiar with the relevant requirements for assessment, examination and award. These include requirements set by the University and requirements relating to specific programmes.

The University's requirements are set out in its core regulations, which are available on the University's website:

- Undergraduate programmes (including integrated masters):
<https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/university.calendar/volumeii/2021.2022/coreregsug.pdf>
- Graduate diplomas and graduate certificates:
<https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/university.calendar/volumeii/2021.2022/coreregsgraadipgradcert.pdf>
- Taught masters degrees, postgraduate diplomas and postgraduate certificates:
<https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/university.calendar/volumeii/2021.2022/coreregsmtd.pdf>
- Professional Doctorates:
<https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/university.calendar/volumeii/2021.2022/coreregspd.pdf>
- PhDs with Integrated Studies:
<https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/university.calendar/volumeii/2021.2022/coreregsphd.pdf>

The core regulations cover such issues as:

- the University's preconditions for award of a degree;
- its requirements for progression between levels of study;
- the requirements for the award of each qualification, and for the classification of each qualification.

The requirements detailed in the core regulations apply to all degrees, unless otherwise specified in the programme regulations. Programme regulations include any specific requirements relating to a degree programme. These, of course, reflect the fact that every named degree programme is different in terms of its content and structure and hence there may be specific requirements governing the specific programme. Consequently, the core

regulations and programme regulations must be read in conjunction with each other. On their appointment all external examiners receive a copy of the programme regulations for the programmes for which they are responsible. This information is also available on the University's website at www.dur.ac.uk/faculty.handbook/ (for undergraduate programmes) and www.dur.ac.uk/postgraduate.modules/ (for postgraduate programmes).

Particularly if you are a new external examiner at Durham, you will need to read these through carefully so that you have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the University's requirements for the assessment, examination, and award of undergraduate and/or postgraduate degrees. Even for established examiners, it can be useful to refresh your memory each year before diving into the maelstrom of examining (not least because changes are made to core and programme regulations over time).

If you have any queries about the University's regulations you should contact Curriculum, Learning & Assessment Service (via the External Examiners' Secretary, email: external.examiners@durham.ac.uk), while for those relating to programme regulations you should contact the Chair of the Board of Examiners.

4 Be clear about how they are going to carry out their duties

While both the core and any additional duties of external examiners are prescribed by the University and Boards of Examiners respectively in the Code of Practice on External Examining/Moderating (available on the University's website at http://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/section_10/5/), they can be carried out in different ways.

External examiners have the right to see all student work which is assessed and which counts towards the award.

You may decide that you would wish to see every piece of work or, bearing in mind student numbers and the volume of assessment in the programme(s) that you wish to see only a sub-set.

Where you opt to view a sub-set, the University requires that the principles on which the selection of the sample should take place should be agreed between you and the Chair of the relevant Board of Examiners in advance. The key guiding principle is that where an external examiner looks at a sample, this sample should provide them with sufficient evidence to allow them to determine that internal marking and classifications are of an appropriate standard, and are consistent.

In addition to deciding which scripts you wish to see, you also need to consider whether you wish to know the internal marks before you look at the assessments or whether you would prefer to do this 'blind' and refer to the internal marks later. Examiners vary in their views about these matters. Some take the view that, in order to be completely independent, they should not know the internal marks beforehand and should conduct the whole exercise moderating blind. Others prefer to have a general indication of what internal examiners thought of the assessments to offer at least a starting point, particularly for moderation. Finally, and particularly in subjects where marking is essentially mechanical, examiners may prefer to know precisely what the internal marks are before marking themselves.

5 *Liaise with the Chair of the Board of Examiners*

Once you are clear about the nature of your duties and how you intend to carry them out, you need to liaise with the Chair of the Board of Examiners to make sure that appropriate arrangements will be put into place. So you need to inform the Chair whether you wish to see all assessments and examination papers or a sample, and if the latter agree how the sample should be made up. If you intend to moderate blind, you need to tell the Chair so that the internal marks can be sent under separate cover.

Additionally, you need to sort out the timetable for examination. So, you need to know when you can expect to receive draft examination papers for comment and when they have to be returned by; when assessment materials will be sent to you; when you will be required to attend for the examinations if you are directly involved in examining and/or for the Board of Examiners. This will need to be discussed and agreed with the Chair of the Board of Examiners.

6 *Scrutinise draft assessment and examination questions*

External examiners will be asked to scrutinise draft examination questions, and may be asked to scrutinise draft coursework questions. External examiners will of course develop their own criteria, but some useful pointers are:

- Are the draft topics or questions set at an appropriate level for students on the programme at this stage of their studies?
- Are the topics or questions set in such a way that answers will in principle enable discrimination between levels of attainment as set out in the marking descriptors?
- Are alternative questions of comparable difficulty?
- Are the rubrics and the topics or questions clear and unambiguous?
- Are the marks allocated appropriately between questions?
- Looking at the topic or examination paper overall, does it require students to demonstrate attainment across all of the assessed learning outcomes in the module or can some be avoided by judicious topic or question selection?

Clearly if the answer to any of these questions is 'No', then there is a case for discussing the matter with the Chair of the Board of Examiners and, if appropriate, suggesting that the topic or paper should be revised. If you do have any queries about the draft questions and papers, you should make a note of them for future reference in your report.

7 *Calibrate marking*

Once assessments and examinations have been completed by students and their work marked internally, either all of the scripts or the agreed sample are sent out to the external examiner to calibrate the marking and check the consistency of internal marking.

Essentially, the purpose of calibration is to enable you, as the external examiner, to see whether the marks awarded by internal examiners are in line with the marks that would be awarded for a similar performance in other comparable institutions. So the key question that you have to consider is whether, in relation to subject norms and conventions, the internal marks are about right, too low, or too high.

In many cases, there will be little if any variance between your marks and those of the internal examiners, which suggests that marking is calibrated to the norms and conventions of the subject. But there may be cases where you find a systematic variance between your marks and those of internal examiners, i.e. that the internal marks are consistently lower or high across (or virtually across) the board. This suggests that internal marking is poorly calibrated with subject norms and conventions, and that adjustment may be required.

If you find that on one or more of the modules such variance exists, you should contact the Chair of the Board of Examiners and try to resolve the matter with his or her aid. Proposals can then be developed to address the variance, so that they can be considered by the Board of Examiners before marks are confirmed by the Board. In making such proposals you should be aware that University policy is that, where they feel that marks are poorly calibrated, external examiners may only change the marks for individual pieces of assessment where they have moderated the full run of that assessment task. Where external examiners have moderated a sample of work for an assessment task and are not content with the marks awarded (for example he/she feels that marks are over-harsh, over-generous or inconsistent), they should make recommendations on the systematic steps to be taken to address these concerns. These might include, for example, recommending that work be double marked in full, that work be re-marked, or increasing or reducing the marks awarded to all the candidates concerned in a systematic fashion whose rationale and procedure are recorded).

Again you should keep a record of your views about calibration for purposes of your report.

8 *Check for consistency of marking*

As well as using the sample of assessments and papers for purposes of calibration, you should also use it to check the consistency of marking. What you are looking for here is evidence that internal examiners are using the assessment criteria consistently across the range of assessments and/or scripts. (You will have received the relevant assessment criteria from the department/school in which you are examining at the same time that you received the relevant programme specification(s)).

One way of doing this is by looking at one or two key questions across the range of scripts in your sample, and then reviewing the internal marks. You should find that answers of a similar standard attract similar marks or, conversely, that answers of a different standard attract different marks.

University policy is that, where they do find inconsistencies, external examiners may only change the marks for individual pieces of assessment where they have moderated the full run of that assessment task. Where external examiners have moderated a sample of work for an assessment task and are not content with the marks awarded (for example he/she feels that marks are over-harsh, over-generous or inconsistent), they should make recommendations on the systematic steps to be taken to address these concerns. These might include, for example, recommending that work be double marked in full, that work be re-marked, or increasing or reducing the marks awarded to all the candidates concerned in a systematic fashion whose rationale and procedure are recorded).

You should record whether the marks were consistent and, if not, keep notes of cases where you have altered the marks and your reasons for doing so.

9 *Reconcile Unresolved Differences between Internal Markers*

In programmes where there is more than one internal marker, you may also be asked to reconcile unresolved differences between internal markers. This, of course, arises where internal markers disagree about the mark which should be awarded for a particular piece of work. While such disagreements have been significantly reduced by the introduction of descriptors of attainment which afford a basis for internal resolution, it is not unknown for external examiners to be asked to determine the final mark. However, this should only happen on rare occasions as all departments have established processes and mechanisms for the internal resolution of differences between first and second markers.

You should communicate your decision to the Chair of the Board of Examiners. You should keep a personal record of what you decided and why you felt it was worth a given mark in case this becomes an issue in the Board of Examiners.

10 Advise on Cases Involving Medical and Mitigating Circumstances

At Durham, medical and mitigating circumstances (which the University refers to using the term Serious Adverse Circumstances) which may have affected a candidate's performance are dealt with by a Scrutiny Panel of the Board of Examiners. This must comprise the Chair and Secretary of the Board plus another member of the Board, although departments may include further members if they wish to do so.

Students are informed annually of the procedure and timetable for submitting evidence to the Scrutiny Panel. While such evidence cannot alter the marks, it may influence the way in which the Board of Examiners chooses to treat those marks in determining the final award and classification of the degree. The task of the Panel is to consider any evidence presented in full, to make a judgment on the impact of the Serious Adverse Circumstances on the student's academic performance, and to report this to the Board of Examiners.

In determining an appropriate judgment, the Scrutiny Panel may well decide to consult with the external examiner. If this happens, you need then to form an opinion about the impact of the Serious Adverse Circumstances on the student's academic performance (not on the severity of the Serious Adverse Circumstances per se). While advice from an external examiner is always taken seriously, the Scrutiny Panel is not obliged to follow it.

11 Be a Member of the Board of Examiners

The formal position as set out in the University's Code of Practice is that you are a member by right of the Board of Examiners(s) for the programme(s) that you are examining, and you are expected to attend in person for meetings (see http://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/section_10/5/). If you cannot be present the department in which you are examining must seek permission from the relevant faculty for you to be absent from the Board of Examiners' meeting, and ensure that you have been consulted on the marks and qualifications awarded.

At the Board of Examiners you have the right to speak on any matter, irrespective of whether your opinion has been invited. The Board is required to take your views into account but need not defer to them in reaching a final decision. In practice, you have four main functions in the Board, namely: to assist the Board to arrive at a *prima facie* classification of awards; to advise the Board in the exercise of discretion; to give feedback on the standards of the award, the processes of assessment and examination and, where appropriate, the programme(s); and to certify the outcomes of the Board in terms of progression and recommendations to award degrees.

(i) *Assist the Board to Arrive at a Prima Facie Classification*

The Board will convene and be presented with the array of marks for each candidate. The Board will be asked to confirm these marks. Once they are confirmed they cannot alter these marks other than because of errors of transcription.

The Board will apply the University's core regulations (taking into account any approved variation from these, as detailed in the programme regulations) with a view to arriving at a *prima facie* classification. Usually the Board will, with guidance from the Chair, decide on those cases which seem straightforward in terms of the classification criteria and those which require further consideration.

You should have seen assessments and papers for all cases which require further consideration and, using your notes, you should be able to comment on the marks and explain why they have been given.

By the end of this stage, the Board should have arrived at a *prima facie* class of degree for each candidate on the basis of application of the core and programme regulations.

(ii) *Advise the Board in the Exercise of Discretion*

While the *prima facie* class of degree constitutes a threshold (i.e. students cannot be awarded a lower class of degree) the Board of Examiners may, at its discretion, award a higher class of degree. In doing so, the Board must operate within the University's policy on discretion, which is available at

<http://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/6/3/7/>. Specific guidance on the operation of discretion at undergraduate level and taught postgraduate level is at <https://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/6/3/7/1/> [undergraduate] and <https://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/6/3/7/2/> [taught postgraduate].

In considering such cases, the Board will seek the opinion of the external examiner about whether this is an acceptable exercise of its powers. These cases should have been drawn to your attention earlier so that you have formed an opinion and can advise the Board whether, in your view, the evidence indicates that the candidate would have met the requirements for the higher class or should be permitted to progress notwithstanding a failure to meet all the requirements for progression. The University's position is that the views of an external examiner should be particularly influential in the case of disagreement and that if agreement cannot be reached by the usual means (which includes a vote) the decision of the external examiner shall be final.

Once cases involving the exercise or non-exercise of discretion have been considered and resolved, the final recommendations for progression or award should be agreed and checked by the Board. You should pay particular attention as you will later be asked to certify that you have approved these recommendations.

(iii) *Feedback to the Board*

While it is not a constitutional part of their proceedings many Boards of Examiners ask external examiners to give oral feedback at the end of the Board's proceedings.

It can be helpful here to comment briefly on: the extent to which methods of assessment were appropriate to evaluating achievement of the intended learning outcomes of the programme(s); the standards of assignments and examination questions set; marking standards; the effectiveness and fairness of procedures for examination and assessment; the attainments of students compared to those on similar programmes elsewhere in the sector and, where appropriate, over time. In the light of the above, you may wish to suggest changes for consideration and discuss these with members of the Board.

(iv) *Certify the Processes of Examination and Assessment and the Recommendations of the Board of Examiners*

The outcomes of the Board of Examiners are embodied in a final list of degree results and progression decisions, which must be signed by the external examiner. Your signature certifies that, in your opinion, the processes of assessment and examination have been conducted in a fair and proper way and in accordance with the University's regulations, and that the standards of awards are comparable with those in similar subjects in similar Universities and consistent with the

University's qualification descriptors (and thereby the *FHEQ*). If you consider that there have been irregularities in the processes of assessment and examination and/or that the standards of awards are not comparable, you should not sign the list(s). In this situation, the matter will be referred to the relevant Executive Dean for resolution.

12 *Report to the University on the Standards of the Award*

After the Board of Examiners, external examiners must make a written report to the University on the form provided. The report should:

- comment on the appropriateness of the standards set for the programme(s) relative to norms within the subject(s) and key reference points such as the University's qualification descriptors (and thereby the *FHEQ*) and subject benchmarks;
- comment on the appropriateness of methods of assessing student achievement in relation to those standards;
- comment on the effectiveness of assessment criteria in describing levels of student attainment in relation to the standards of the programme;
- where appropriate, comment on the effectiveness of assessment and examination questions in assessing student achievement of the designated standards and enabling discrimination between levels of achievement;
- comment on the extent to which internal marks were calibrated to standards in the subject(s);
- comment on the consistency of internal marking;
- comment on the effectiveness and fairness of the processes of examination and assessment;
- comment on whether the standards set were achieved by students;
- in the light of the above, summarise the degree of confidence which can be placed in the standards of the award;
- make any recommendations for consideration by the Board of Studies.

The report should be sent to the Curriculum, Learning and Assessment Service (external.examiners@durham.ac.uk). The report will then be considered by the Chair and Secretary of the relevant Faculty Education Committee, who will note its contents and forward it to the Board(s) of Studies responsible for the programme(s). The latter will discuss the report (including discussion with students through its Staff Student Consultative Committee) and respond to you with details of actions to be taken in response to the report if appropriate. The latter, plus the Board's response and, if appropriate, the action plan is considered by the Faculty Education Committee which will consider the Board's response and monitor actions. These reports and responses are then published internally within the University.

If an external examiner is not content with the response received from the Board of Studies they may raise this with the chair of Education Committee (via the [Head of the Curriculum, Learning and Assessment Service](#)), who will respond in writing to the external examiner. External examiners may also make an additional and separate confidential report to the Vice-Chancellor, or make use of the QAA's Concerns Procedure.

Conclusion

The University relies heavily on external examiners to maintain and enhance the standards of its awards. It recognises that external examining requires a considerable commitment of time and effort, and it is grateful to those who are prepared to undertake it. Hopefully, this document will have helped you in:

- understanding the purpose and role of external examiners;
- understanding your duties;
- understanding expectations in the performance of those duties.

Appendix 1 Durham University Code of Practice on External Examining/Moderating – first degree certificate, diploma and taught postgraduate programmes

The Code of Practice on external examining/moderating is available in the University's online Learning and Teaching Handbook at

<https://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/section/10/>.

It provides information and guidance on:

- the purposes of the University's external examiner system
(<https://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/section/10/1/>)
- appointing external examiners
(<https://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/section/10/2/>)
- the induction of external examiners
(https://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/section_10/4/)
- the role and responsibilities of external examiners
(https://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/section_10/5/)
- the monitoring of general information on the assessment process
(<https://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/section/10/6/>)
- the consideration of external examiner reports by staff-student consultative committees
(<https://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/section/10/7/>)

Appendix 2 The Operation of Boards of Examiners

Information and guidance on the operation of boards of examiners is available in Section 6.3 of the Learning and Teaching Handbook (<https://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/6/3/>).

This includes information and guidance on:

- attendance and quoracy requirements for boards of examiners (<https://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/6/3/4/>)
- reporting requirements for boards of examiners (<https://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/6/3/8/>)
- the operation of discretion by boards of examiners (<https://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/6/3/7/>)
- the conditions under which discretion must be considered, and the criteria for considering discretion at undergraduate boards of examiners (<https://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/6/3/7/1/>) and at taught postgraduate boards of examiners (<https://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/6/3/7/2/>)
- the serious adverse circumstances (SACs) process, including the Scrutiny Sub-Committee of the board of examiners (<https://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/6/3/6/>)

Appendix 3 Key University policies relating to assessment

The University's policies in relation to assessment are available in full in the University's online *Learning and Teaching Handbook* at <http://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/6/> . The chair of the board of examiners will be able to provide their external examiner(s) with advice on University assessment policy, but external examiners might wish to note in particular the following policies that can be accessed online:

- **University policy on the quality assurance of examinations and assessment:** <http://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/6/1/1/>
- **Assessment of skills in group working:**
<http://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/6/1/2/>
- **Assessment of skills in oral communication:**
<http://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/6/1/3/>
- **Postgraduates as markers:**
<http://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/6/2/1/>
- **University guidance on procedures in respect of assessment irregularities:**
<http://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/6/2/4/>
- **Penalties for the late submission of work:**
<http://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/6/2/5/>
- **Student absence and illness:**
<http://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/6/2/6/>
- **The approval and monitoring of examination papers:**
<http://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/6/3/5/>
- **Disclosure of marks and feedback to students:**
<https://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/6/4/2/>