

IMPERIAL

Board of Examiners notes – Updates for 2023/24

1 Format of the Board of Examiners

- 1.1 Boards of Examiners may be held as in-person meetings on a University Campus (or other venue as appropriate for the programme under consideration), virtually through a secure video-conferencing platform, or in a hybrid mode. Each Department will confirm with the members the expected mode of attendance when setting the dates for their Boards.
- 1.2 Where Board of Examiners will be held wholly or partly online, when preparing it is important to ensure that best practice for online meetings is followed, including ensuring that principles of data protection are adhered to. Following the UK adequacy decision, the data sharing with the EU may continue, within the bounds set out in GDPR legislation. If any member of the Board is expecting to join online from outside of the EU for any reason, confirmation will be needed if this meets GDPR requirements.
- 1.3 Support and guidance from ICT on secure remote working including distribution of files can be found at <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/ict/self-service/be-secure/>.
- 1.4 Further information on GDPR can be found on the University webpages at <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/secretariat/information-governance/data-protection/gdpr/>.
- 1.5 This document has the following appendices published separately for ease of use:
 - Annex A: Coding for results template
 - Annex B: Explanatory Note: Calculation of Module Marks and Year/ Programme Overall Weighted Averages
 - Annex C: Module consideration flowcharts

2 Academic Regulations

This year, Examination Boards will need to apply the relevant set of Academic regulations to students as below:

2.1 Undergraduate Students:

Undergraduate students who commenced their studies in 2019/20 (or have joined from a cohort from a previous year) will be considered under the *Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study* (Regs A). This would normally cover all students except those in year 6 (for example of the MBBS programme).

[2023-24 Regulations \(A\) | About | Imperial College London](#)

All other undergraduate students will be considered under the *Academic and Examinations* regulations (Regs B). This would normally include:

- year 6 of integrated master programmes with 2 additional years for research or industry placements,
- year 6 of MBBS.

- students that have not moved to the curriculum reviewed version of the programme following their return to the programme after an interruption of study or reassessment year(s)

[2023-24 Regulations \(B\) | About | Imperial College London](#)

2.2 **Postgraduate Students:**

Most Postgraduate student are on programmes which have been through curriculum review and will be considered under the *Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study (Regs A)*. All new entrants from October 2023 are governed by Regs A. A full list of these programmes can be found on the academic regulations webpages.

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/regulations/2023-24-regulations-a/>

All continuing students on the non Curriculum Reviewed versions of postgraduate taught programmes will be considered under the following regulations:

[2023-24 Regulations \(B\) | About | Imperial College London](#)

2.3 **Students that have changed cohort due to a requirement to complete following year resits, after a period(s) of interruption of study or other cause.**

Where a student has changed cohort and is studying the curriculum reviewed version of the programme, it is expected that they will normally have also changed to the *Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study* (Regs A). In some circumstances a student will continue on the previous curriculum in tandem with those on the newer curriculum, these students are expected to remain on the corresponding *Academic and Examination regulations* Regs b).

The Board of Examiners must be clear which regulations are being applied to a student or cohort of students when making their decisions, and record this in the minutes of the meeting.

It is not appropriate or permissible to apply sections of Regs A and B for a student(s) within the same year of the programme. Decisions taken under Regs B prior to the student's transfer to Regs A will stand and cannot be retrospectively amended to be brought in line with Regs A.

3. **Advice for the application of Mitigating Circumstances decisions.**

3.1 Boards of Examiners will need to consider the recommendations made from Mitigating Circumstances Boards for **accepted** claims in accordance with paragraph 8.6 of the [Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedure](#), as follows.

- 1) **Defer:** Where the student has failed the assessment(s), the Board of Examiners can consider offering the student:
 - a) a further opportunity to attempt the assessment(s) at the next available assessment point. If relating to a first attempt at the assessment this will receive an uncapped mark.

- b) to take an uncapped Supplementary Qualifying Test(s) (Faculty of Engineering, Regs B only) to retrieve outstanding modules.
- c) to be permitted to take an SQT(s) (Faculty of Engineering, Regs B only) to enable progression.
- d) to be offered an opportunity to retake the year as a first attempt.

Where the assessment(s) has/have been passed or the module overall is a pass (however see 3.2 below), and therefore a) to d) are not applicable, the Board of Examiners may consider:

- e) extended consideration at the borderline for an uplift in classification in accordance with the regulations.
- f) consideration at the borderline where a qualifying mark is required for continued progression.

Whilst the above options would normally be sufficient the Mitigating Circumstances Board may make a recommendation in the light of the information that it holds for a particular action. However, it is ultimately the decision of the Board of Examiners in the knowledge that the student has an accepted claim for mitigation to consider the appropriate 'mitigation' to be offered, subject to the regulations and any programmes specific requirements.

- 2) **Allow Late.** Where the claim was submitted to mitigate for the late submission of a piece of assessment, (either coursework or a timed remote assessment) it would now be accepted as though 'on time' and receive an uncapped mark.

3.2 Where a student has mitigating circumstances for an assessment and they were unable to take/submit, or have done so and received a fail mark, under the University Academic regulations the module would normally be considered incomplete until such time as the student has been able to complete an assessment, not impacted by mitigating circumstances. In such circumstances the Board should normally offer the student the opportunity to take the assessment as if for the first time at the next available opportunity. This enables the module result to be as close to the student's expected academic 'norm' as possible (paragraph 10.4, regs a).

3.3 **What can't a Board do?**

Boards cannot increase the marks or overall weighted average of a student on the basis of accepted claim for mitigating circumstances. The transcript must show the marks and credits as actually achieved. For further information about considering borderline students, see the relevant section below.

3.4 In very limited circumstances of those students that had commenced their studies prior to 2018/2019, Board of Examiners may need to consider students that have had accepted Mitigating Circumstances claims under the previous policy that are being 'carried' to a subsequent meeting. The Board needs to be clear where this is the case in its decision-making and in the minutes. Support can be sought from the Quality Assurance team (quality@imperial.ac.uk) where necessary.

4 Impact on students of industrial action or COVID pandemic

4.1 During their programme, students may have been impacted by measures taken during the COVID pandemic or industrial action. The Board of Examiners should consider any cumulative impact during the students' programmes of study and in the knowledge of previous decisions. The table shows the academic years in which there was industrial action or specific COVID policies in place that will need to be considered in relation to the Boards of Examiners' decisions this academic year.

Student's Academic year of entry	Industrial action	COVID policies	Notes
2023/2024	None	None	
2022/2023	22/23	None	
2021/2022	22/23	None	
2020/2021	21/22, 22/23	Fair assessment Policy	Final classification to be calculated including and excluding year 1. Best outcome applies (excludes MBBS and iBSc). Cohort analysis of classification outcomes
2019/2020	19/20, 21/22, 22/23	Safety net (19/20), Fair assessment policy (20/21)	Final classification to be calculated including and excluding year 1. Best outcome applies (safety net) Cohort analysis of classification outcomes (fair assessment)
2018/2019	19/20, 21/22, 22/23		Cohort analysis of classification outcomes

4.2 For those students that were impacted prior to 2023, it is likely that the decisions made at the time remain appropriate however, Boards should ensure that its discussion and any agreed actions taken in relation to student results and progression due to is recorded in the minutes.

4.3 In the extremely limited instances of students from part time Postgraduate Taught programmes that have been delayed in their final completion of the programme due to Interruption of Study or other reasons and were actively studying during academic year 2019/2020 or 2020/21, the actions taken by Boards in considering the cohort at their time of study should be taken into account when making any final decisions, for example if it had been agreed to discount the marks from that year in the calculation of the Programme Overall Weighted Average, and therefore classification decision.

5. Classification and Consideration at the Borderline

Classification

5.1 At the Boards of Examiners there may be students that are being considered under the [Academic and Examination Regulations](#) (Regs B) as they are studying the previous curricula and others that will be considered under the [Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study](#) (Regs A) that are on curriculum reviewed programmes (see paras 2.1-2.3). **There are differences in the classification and borderline processes between these regulations. It is important to ensure that students are considered under the correct regulations and that this is accurately recorded in the minutes.**

5.2 Notes for programmes on the *Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study* (Regs A):

- Candidates whose programme overall weighted average (POWA) is 0.50 percentage points or less from the threshold mark (such as 70.00 for Distinction or First Class honours) will be automatically rounded to next whole integer (for example 69.50 will become 70.00).
- For UG programmes, the classification borderline is where the POWA is between n8.00 and n9.49 inclusive (for example 68.00 to 69.49). All students that fall into this are expected to be *considered* for a higher classification in line with the agreed process/criteria for the programme. All decisions should be recorded in the minutes as normal.
- PGT programmes have different classification borderlines depending on the classification algorithm for the programme. See the relevant section below.
- Compensation is applied at module level, to the maximum of 15 credits *per academic level* for undergraduate programmes (or less where specified in the Programme Specification to meet PSRB requirements). For postgraduate programmes, the limits are listed in the regulations para 3.15-3.17.

Classification for PGT students under Regs A

5.3 All Postgraduate Taught Programmes selected one of three classification algorithms to apply to all students entering the programme from 2023/2024 onwards. The algorithms are:

(i) The Programme Overall Weighted Average meets the threshold for the relevant classification band. ("Option 1").

(ii) Programme Overall Weighted Average and the designated dissertation or final major project module (as stated in the programme specification) meets the threshold for the relevant classification band. ("Option 2")

(iii) The weighted average mark in the designated 'taught' and 'research' aspects of the programme each meets the threshold for the relevant classification band. ("Option 3").

Borderline definition – PGT programmes

5.4 The borderline for PGT programmes will depend on the version of the classification algorithm which was selected by the programme team for their programme. The paragraphs below indicate the marks ranges within which a student may be considered

for an uplift, should they meet the requirements that has been set for their programme of study in relation to eligibility for consideration as a borderline student.

- 5.5 Students that commenced prior to 2023/2024 will be classified using the regulation that was in place on entering the University which equates to algorithm 'Option 2'. Exceptionally programmes where there is no designated final major project or dissertation will use Option 1. The borderline considerations that were published to students on commencement will apply. If further detail is required for this, please contact quality@imperial.ac.uk.

5.6 **Classification algorithm 'Option 1' – regulations para 13.14 (i):**

Candidates whose Programme Overall Weighted Average (POWA) is between n8.00 and n9.49 (inclusive) will be considered for an uplift in classification in line with the criteria set by the Board of Examiners.

For example, candidates with a POWA of between 68.00 and 69.49 (inclusive) will be considered for an uplift in classification to Distinction from Merit.

5.7 **Classification algorithm 'Option 2' – regulations para 13.14 (ii):**

Following calculation of the Programme Overall Weighted Average (POWA), the candidate has achieved the relevant threshold mark in either their POWA (including where this has been rounded) or the designated dissertation or final major project, and the lower mark falls no more than 2 percentage points below the threshold mark.

For example, candidates with a POWA of 70.00 or above (noting regulation para 13.16) will be considered for an uplift in classification to Distinction from Merit where the mark for the designated dissertation or final major project module is between 68.00 and 69.99 inclusive.

Alternatively, candidates with a mark of 70.00 or above for the designated final major project will be considered for an uplift in classification to a Distinction from Merit where the calculated POWA is between 68.00 and 69.49 inclusive.

Candidates will not be classed as borderline if the POWA and the mark for the designated dissertation or final major project module falls below the relevant threshold mark (noting para 13.16).

For example, candidates with a calculated POWA of 69.49 and a mark of 69.99 for the designated final major project would not be considered for an uplift in classification to Distinction from Merit.

5.8 **Classification algorithm 'Option 3' – regulations para 13.14 (iii):**

Following calculation of the weighted average mark for the defined 'taught' or 'research' aspects of the programme, a candidate has achieved the relevant threshold mark in one aspect of the programme but has not achieved the threshold mark in the other aspect. Where the calculated mark for the lower aspect falls between n8.00- n9.99 (inclusive), the candidate will be considered for an uplift in classification in line with the criteria set by the Board of Examiners.

For example, candidates with a calculated mark of 70.00 or above in the taught aspect of the programme will be considered for an uplift to Distinction from Merit classification if the mark for research aspect of the programme is between 68.00 and 69.99 inclusive (or vice versa).

Candidates will not be considered borderline when utilising the classification algorithm at para 13.14 (iii) if the 'taught' and 'research' aspect weighted average mark falls below the relevant threshold mark.

For example, candidates with calculated average marks of 69.99 or lower in each aspect would not be considered for an uplift in classification to Distinction from Merit.

Borderline cases – all students

- 5.9 Where a student meets the criteria above for consideration as a borderline candidate, it is important to ensure that the official minutes of the Board of Examiners meeting set out clearly discussions and decisions taken.

These minutes are necessary to ensure:

- The University is able to review individual decisions to ensure that they are made in a clear and rational way, with due consideration of all factors.
- An accurate record of the decision is available in the event of an appeal, complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education, through civil action or in the event of a Subject Access Request under Data Protection legislation.
- Informed advice or guidance is available to students of the deliberation of the Board, if requested
- The University can identify trends and take action as needed.

- 5.10 The requirement to record the decisions does not necessarily mean that each decision will need significant detail. For example, where there is a clear algorithm to consider students in the borderline zone for an uplift in classification (where there is no mitigation to consider) this can simply state:

candidate X was considered in the classification borderline and the decision was to *uplift/not uplift* as the criteria was *met/not met* due to...

- 5.11 Where a student has an approved claim for mitigating circumstances, which has not been taken into consideration because the module was passed at the first attempt, the Mitigating Circumstances Procedure allows the Board of Examiners to give extended consideration at the borderline for an uplift in classification. The *Academic and Examination* regulations (Regs B) state that the borderline can be extended to a 5-percentage point band. The *Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study* (Regs A) do not stipulate a specific band. Where a Board is considering candidates for higher classification under the *Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study* (Regs A), a consistent approach should be taken and each decision should be clearly recorded.

- 5.12 Care should be taken to ensure that the mitigation is taken fully into account, without double counting or providing an undue advantage to the student. When designing any

form of algorithm for consideration at borderline, the Board should carefully consider how the design can or should be adapted in cases of approved mitigation, so as to avoid putting in place impossible requirements or to “double count” mitigation.

5.13 Examples of methods that a Board may use include:

- Recalculating the POWA (or module marks) by excluding those modules (or assessments) that have been impacted by mitigating circumstances. NB this is not suitable if a significant proportion of the final year has been impacted by mitigation.
- Considering the ratio of modules in the higher to lower bands, when those impacted by mitigation have been excluded.
- Considering the overall profile of the student when marks that have been impacted by mitigating circumstances have been excluded.

5.14 Boards are reminded that where an appeals is submitted on the basis of mitigating circumstances that have not previously been declared, this must be dealt with as late mitigating circumstances claims by Boards, rather than as appeals via the Student Casework Team.

6. Academic Misconduct

6.1 The [Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures](#) govern the processes by which any alleged offences should be investigated, and the sanctions that may be given where an allegation is proven. Under the procedures limited cases may be considered locally within the department, with remainder considered by a centralised panel and managed by the Student Casework team.

6.2 Cases considered within the Department of behalf of the Board must be reported to the next Board of Examiners. The outcomes of cases managed by the Student Casework team will be reported back to the Department and should be reported and formally recorded at the Board.

Sanctions in the Academic misconduct process

6.3 When the panel considers a proven case of academic misconduct, they do not have the full details of the student’s programme of study, such as year marks, previous repeated assessment or programme specific regulations. Therefore, there may be occasions in which the given penalty would have an undue impact on the student, such as preventing course completion where this was not intended. This is most likely where sanctions require a mark of zero to be recorded for the referral where passed, if the remainder of the student’s profile means that they fail to achieve a minimum overall percentage mark for completion of the stage or final classification. The intention of the penalty is to reduce the final overall weighted average of the student and potentially lowering the classification. It is not intended to be a *de facto* expulsion. The Board should therefore take this into account and modify the penalty accordingly. Any modifications must be clearly identified, the reasoning and actions recording in the minutes of the Board of Examiners and provided to the Student Casework team for the official record of the offence.

7. Ongoing Impact of Curriculum Review

- 7.1 Due to the introduction of new or revised curricula from 2019/20 following the Curriculum Review process, where relevant Boards of Examiners need to continue to consider the wider implications of any decision to require a student to undertake a retake. Clear guidance will need to be provided to students who may need to transfer over to the new curricula either as a result of going straight to retake year under the new curricula or following unsuccessful resits.

8. Guidance with regards to referral limits and compensation under the Single Set of Taught Academic Regulations

- 8.1 The flowcharts (Annex C) should be used to consider students that are governed by the [Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study \(regs A\)](#). Additional support can be requested from the Quality Assurance team. Please email quality@imperial.ac.uk in the first instance.

Compensation

- 8.2 Under *Academic* and *Examination Regulations* (Regs B), compensation occurs between modules as listed within the programme specification where a pass mark is only required across a number of modules, rather than individually.

For programmes governed by the [Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study \(Regs A\)](#) modules may only be compensated if:

- They are not classified as 'core'
- Are in the relevant mark band (30.00 to 39.99 for levels 4-6, 40.00-49.99 for level 7)
- For progression, the year overall weighted average is at least 40.00% when including the compensated module marks in the calculation.
- The maximum limit for the level/programme has not been exceeded.

- 8.3 The Regs A permit up to 15 ECTS of compensation per academic level for undergraduate programmes, 10 ECTS for a Postgraduate Diploma and 15 ECTS for any full Master programmes (MSc, MRes etc.). This limit may be lower where approved as part of programme specific regulations to meet PSRB requirements.

- 8.4 It would normally be expected that a student is offered the opportunity to complete a resit prior to offering compensation. Where a student has a large number of assessments to redeem, the Board will need to balance the academic load for the student with the consideration of possible outcomes if other modules are failed and compensation has already been fully utilised.

Reassessment: Resits/Retake/Repeat Years

- 8.5 Reassessment is the umbrella term that includes each form of opportunity to redeem a failed module.
- Resit: opportunity to complete an assessment again for a capped mark, without attendance. This would normally be in the summer vacation period for

undergraduate students. For postgraduate taught students this may be in the summer vacation period or in the following year.

- Retake: Taking the module again for a capped mark. This would include all learning and teaching activities and relevant assessment.
- Repeat year: the student is required to repeat a year in full. This would be for capped marks and so student would not normally be expected to repeat the year except where they had failed more than three quarters of the previous year.

N.B SQTs are only used under *Academic* and *Examination* Regulations (Regs B)

- 8.6 In making decisions about reassessment, the Board will need to balance the academic workload required, any known accepted mitigating circumstances, previous repeated assessment opportunities and the academic competence demonstrated by the student during the programme.
- 8.7 Boards are encouraged to offer in year resits where possible, so as to support a student to remain with their cohort if appropriate and to complete their resits closer to the teaching and learning activities.
- 8.8 Boards are reminded that they should not exceed the authority granted to them by the relevant academic regulations. For example, a student has not passed all modules required for the year and has reached the maximum registration period for their programme of study. This student would normally be considered an academic failure and withdrawn; however, the Board of Examiners agree that this student should be *exceptionally* granted reassessment opportunities in the following year. The decision to offer reassessment in the following year should be made provisionally and referred to the Academic Registrar to request an exemption to the regulations.

9. Reporting Board of Examiner Outcomes

- 9.1 The outcomes from the Board of Examiners should be recorded on the results return template received from the Assessment Records team and returned as promptly as possible in order to complete the results process.
- 9.2 Provided at Annex A is the coding for the results template. Any queries regarding coding should be directed to assessment.records@imperial.ac.uk.