

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

GUIDANCE ON JANUARY BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

Guidance on January Boards of Examiners

1. This Guidance has been produced following a query raised by the Guild of Students about the timing of Boards of Examiners meetings, particularly in relation to PGT students who have been given a January deadline for resubmission of a dissertation/project. Some students in this situation have reportedly been advised by Schools that their final marks cannot be confirmed before the Boards of Examiners meetings that take place in June.

University policy on Boards of Examiners timing

2. University legislation indicates that the timing of Boards of Examiners meetings should be decided locally, as appropriate to the programme in question. The Code of Practice on Taught Programme and Module Assessment and Feedback states that:

6.1.1(g): "PAUs [Principal Academic Units, i.e. Schools] should give consideration to the timing of the Board of Examiners meetings on a programme-by-programme basis, ensuring that they are held on a timely basis."

3. In practice, most Board meetings take place during the summer (when the majority of taught modules conclude) and autumn (following supplementary assessments and PGT dissertation submissions).
4. However, there is no policy that Boards should only take place at these 'standard' times.

Implementing Board of Examiners meetings at other times of year

5. In some cases it will be appropriate to arrange a Board of Examiners decision outside the normal calendar of summer/autumn meetings, particularly where a longer wait would have a direct adverse impact on the student.
6. This is most likely to be the case where a student has been required to resubmit assessed work at a time when there is no Board meeting scheduled for several months (such as the PGT dissertation example given in paragraph 1) and where the student may be disadvantaged by waiting for confirmation of their final marks (e.g. if they are applying for jobs or further study).
7. This may also apply to courses which start in January or at other points of the year (such as Dubai programmes, DL programmes, apprenticeships and microcredentials).
8. It should be noted there is no provision to routinely award degrees outside the July/December graduation periods, so degree certificates and complete transcripts would not be available at an earlier point. However, confirmation of final marks and classifications following Boards of Examiners can be provided to students as an interim measure.
9. As these cases are likely to be exceptional and relatively low in number, Board of Examiners consideration by email circulation or Chair's action is acceptable as long as the external examiner is also able to input and is in agreement with the decision.
10. This is intended to help with keeping administrative burden to a minimum, while ensuring that there is the flexibility to consider individual cases outside the normal summer/autumn Board of Examiners meetings where it is reasonable to do so.