Module Assessment Boards
Policy, Regulation and Procedure

Academic Standards, Quality and Partnerships
Department of Student and Academic Administration

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1. Basic Purpose and Process

1.1. MABs are the “first tier” in the “two tier” assessment board system adopted by the University. The “second tier” is the Board of Examiners.

1.2. They operate for groups of modules (called “cognate groups”).

1.3. Faculties and Departments determine the combinations of modules that form these “cognate groups”.

1.4. There are no “rules” as such for their grouping - the size can range from all the modules offered in a Department to a specialist, subject level grouping that might include only a relatively small number of modules.

1.5. The MAB is the key forum for the setting and maintenance of academic standards, rather than the Board of Examiners.

1.6. MABs confirm, for each module in the relevant “cognate grouping”, the mark awarded to each individual student attempting assessment in that module during the previous semester or year (as appropriate) regardless of which qualification the student is seeking or with which Department that qualification is associated.

1.7. MABs should consider, module by module, the marks presented.

1.8. Boards should not consider marks at significant boundaries. It is the policy of the University that all marks ending in a 9 will be rounded up to the next integer (so 39 become 40, 49 becomes 50 etc)

1.9. Additionally, the Board may moderate marks across the module, as shown at section 5.

1.10. Extenuating Circumstances Panels, through the mark sheet, will inform MABs of cases of valid extenuating circumstances.

1.11. The MAB also makes a module decision against each student, determined by the mark and application of the current “Examination and Assessment Regulations” of the University of Portsmouth. The decision may be one of Pass, Referral(s), Deferral(s), Referral(s) and Deferral(s) Pending or Repeat. It is this decision that the Chair of the MAB must ensure is published to students within three working days of the date of the meeting.

1.12. The MAB considers modules in a sequence determined at the discretion of the Chair. This does not have to be level by level, and the same MAB may consider both postgraduate and undergraduate modules.

1.13. The Examination and Assessment Regulations do not envisage or require discussion of individual students except in relation to valid extenuating circumstances and in cases where marks are close to significant boundaries. Such discussions will only relate to the student’s performance in the assessment artefacts of the module in question and by reference to the module’s approved learning outcomes and marking criteria; they will not consider student performance in other modules.
1.14. The mark sheet will also indicate the “significance” of the student’s attempt at the module, by which is meant whether it is a repeat attempt etc.

2. Quorum

2.1. The quorum for the meeting of the MAB held to confirm marks and publish results is defined, in respect of each individual module considered, as:

- Chair (who is appointed on the authority of the Head of Department);
- the Module Co-ordinator for the module or an appointed nominee, who must have been involved with the assessment of the module;
- the Head of Department/School or an appointed nominee.
- The subject External Examiner

2.2. The subject external examiner is now part of the quorum of the MAB. If exceptionally they are unable to attend the MAB, they should submit their views as detailed at 2.4

2.3. It would be good practice for more than the minimum number of staff required by the definition of the quorum to attend.

2.4. If the Subject External Examiner is unable to attend the meeting she or he has to do two things. Firstly, as far as is possible, make their views known to the MAB before it meets. Secondly, after the Board has met, write to the Chair of the Board stating the extent of their involvement with the modules during the year in question and signifying their degree of satisfaction with the processes of assessment.

2.5. If the quorum cannot be achieved, a decision of pending should be recorded (see 10.6 below).

3. Frequency of Meetings

3.1. MABs will normally meet once each academic year to confirm marks and publish results. Masters courses will normally have two meetings each academic year, one to confirm the taught module marks and the second following the project module.

3.2. MABs for modules that either contribute to programmes with multiple intakes each year or to collaborative programmes may meet more than twice each academic year.

3.3. MABs may also meet to consider Referral(s) results though the MAB may delegate this role to a specially identified “sub-group” of individuals. This delegation is on the authority of the MAB and must be recorded in the minutes of the main MAB meeting.

3.4. There should also be other meetings of the MABs.

3.4.1. There will need to be a meeting of a small sub-committee of the MAB to review statistical information that allows comparison of the cohort with previous cohorts, other modules in the “cognate group”, and between cohorts of students on the same module but from different pathways or programmes. Departments typically convene this meeting after the referral period but before the next academic year begins.

3.4.2. There will need to be a meeting of a small sub-committee of the MAB, convened by the Associate Dean (Academic), before each semester to approve the
assessment artefact(s) intended for use in that semester before students start any assessment in the module.

4. **External Examiners**

4.1. The University refers to External Examiners involved with MABs as “Subject External Examiners”.

4.2. It is important that each module has a Subject External Examiner assigned to it and that the Subject External Examiner is aware of their allocation of duties. The Chair of the MAB will not allow consideration of student performance in a module where this has not occurred.

4.3. Subject External Examiners form part of the quorum requirement for a meeting of the MAB held to confirm marks and publish results (see 2.2 above).

4.4. The document External Examiners Regulations and Procedures published by Academic Registry defines the role and responsibilities of a Subject External Examiner.

4.5. The role of the Subject External Examiner is summarised as follows. They:

4.5.1. Have the key role in relation to academic standards.

4.5.2. Have a responsibility to ensure that the MAB, on behalf of the University, has assessed students fairly.

4.5.3. Have a responsibility to ensure that decisions of the MAB appropriately match demonstrated learning outcomes and marking criteria for the module.

4.5.4. Have a responsibility to ensure that the MAB, on behalf of the University, has maintained standards at a module level that is comparable with such assessments undertaken elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

4.5.5. Have the power to see any assessment to help them to give this confirmation.

4.5.6. Shall receive at the beginning of each teaching period and in respect of each module for which they have responsibility, the module assessment strategy and its relationship to the learning outcome(s) of the module, together with a statement of the way in which the elements of assessment will meet the strategy.

4.5.7. Shall receive, by the end of the Assessment Period or as soon as possible afterwards, a sample of assessment, the content of which is to be the subject of agreement between the Subject External Examiner and the Department/School.

4.5.8. Attend the meeting(s) of the MAB held to confirm marks and publish results. If unable to attend, they should submit their views as detailed at 2.4.

4.5.9. Shall give their approval to any proposed modification of sets of marks following moderation before a MAB can confirm the marks.

4.5.10. Shall complete the University Subject External Examiner report form and submit it to the Academic Registrar within four weeks of the date of the MAB.

4.5.11. Shall sign the mark sheet to signify general satisfaction with the effectiveness and adequacy of the relationship between the assessment strategy and the learning
outcomes of the module, although such signature does not necessarily indicate agreement with every confirmed mark.

4.5.12. Shall report to the Vice-Chancellor if they are unable to sign the mark sheet because they do not have such general satisfaction.

4.5.13. May wish to approve, or comment upon, assessments in advance of their being given to students - the way in which this is done is to be agreed between the Department/School and the Subject External Examiner, and must involve all assessment, i.e. coursework as well as examination.

4.5.14. May indicate in their report that they believe the MAB, on behalf of the University, is not maintaining standards at an appropriate level and comment on what they would wish to see changed.

4.5.15. May report in confidence to the Vice-Chancellor on any serious concern they have on assessment matters that put at risk the standards of the awards of the University.

4.5.16. May meet and discuss with students at any time in order to form an impression of the module and its delivery.

5. **Moderation of Marks**

5.1. The MAB would normally consider moderation, after reviewing the full range of information, in the following circumstances if:

   5.1.1. The pass threshold has been incorrectly applied.

   5.1.2. The marks do not fall within the expected mark distribution.

   5.1.3. The Head of Department confirms that a course management issue has disadvantaged students.

5.2. If there is moderation of marks (which has to be agreed by the Subject External Examiner), such moderation should normally be for all marks in a particular assessment artefact (and such moderation may be downwards as well as upwards).

5.3. Moderation may also take the form of discounting an assessment artefact and extrapolating a module mark from the remaining assessment artefacts, which shall be re-weighted accordingly.

5.4. The minutes of the meeting should record any moderation that has been agreed, together with the reasons it was applied, and the Subject External Examiner’s agreement and the extent of her/his involvement in the decision making process.

6. **Definition of Pass Criteria**

6.1. The definitions used are as follows:

   6.1.1. **Assessment Component** - an aggregated mark of a type of assessment contributing to the overall module mark for a student, for example, coursework or examination. The mark in any assessment component will be calculated from marks earned in assessment artefacts.
6.1.2. **Assessment Artefact** - an individual piece of assessed work. For example, a coursework assignment or an exam paper.

6.1.3. **Overall Mark** - the module mark calculated for a student from the assessment component marks, normally by means of a weighting (e.g. .3 for coursework and .7 for examination).

6.2. The pass criteria is a 40% overall mark, or grade equivalent.

6.3. Variations are possible, such as “thresholds” in assessment components, but the Head of Department must request these through the Academic Registrar for approval by Academic Policy Committee.

6.4. Where a module is assessed entirely by artefacts marked as Pass/Fail and not given a mark, approval must be sought from Academic Policy Committee. This would normally be done through the course approval process for modules on new courses or through the Module Management approval process for modules on existing courses.

6.5. There may be additional conditions (not in terms of marks or grades) set as part of the module details. If such conditions exist, the Module Description must clearly state them and Departments must inform students of the requirement in advance of registration on the module.

6.6. Where a student is presenting Referral(s), the MAB may only pass the student if the student has passed all assessment artefact(s) set as Referral(s). Details of requirements of Referral(s) are given at 10.3.

7. **Input Required**

7.1. The MAB should receive a mark sheet for each module. Where moderation has taken place, it will be indicated. The mark sheet must identify each student’s overall marks (and may include artefact and component marks by means of supplementary sheets). The mark sheet must allow identification of the student’s status in respect of the module (e.g. studying the module for the first time, offering Referral(s), repeating the module). The mark sheet shall indicate which students have had an assessment penalty applied (e.g. for late submission of work).

7.2. If Academic Policy Committee has agreed to a request for “thresholds” in components of assessment, the mark sheet shall indicate these thresholds.

7.3. The mark sheet informs the MAB of cases where students have claimed that extenuating circumstances affected particular assessment artefacts and the Extenuating Circumstances Panel has determined them to be valid.

8. **Extenuating Circumstances**

8.1. **First Sittings**

8.1.1. The MAB may make one of three possible decisions with regard to valid extenuating circumstances.

8.1.2. Where a student has missed an examination type assessment, it will record a decision of Deferral(s), with the exception of those detailed at 8.4 and 8.5, and
offer the student the opportunity to complete a Deferral(s) in the affected assessment artefact(s) during the Referral Period.

8.1.3. Secondly, where a student has missed the due date for a coursework type assessment, waive the assessment penalty and ensure the assessment artefact attracts the full mark it justifies on its merits alone if it has been submitted within twenty working days of the due submission date.

8.1.4. Thirdly, the MAB may extrapolate a mark in cases where, in its academic judgement, the student has demonstrated in at least two other completed and unaffected assessment artefacts contributing to the final mark of the module, that he or she has met the learning outcomes of the module. In such a case, the MAB may extrapolate an overall mark for the module from the completed and unaffected assessment artefacts. Where a mark has been extrapolated and this results in a Pass for the module, it is not expected that the student is offered a Deferral(s) as well. However, it must be remembered that a student has the absolute right to a Deferral(s).

8.1.5. Chairs should make sure members of the MAB understand that, under the University’s extenuating circumstance policy and with the exceptions listed at 8.5, a student with a valid extenuating circumstance has an absolute right, should they wish to exercise it, to another attempt at a missed examination.

8.2. Referral or Deferral

8.2.1. Where a student submits a valid extenuating circumstance for Referral and/or Deferral, they will normally be awarded a Deferred Repeat.

8.2.2. Deferred Repeat confirms that the student has submitted valid extenuating circumstances for their Referral or Deferral (or any subsequent attempts within the same academic year.) The student will be normally eligible to repeat the module at the next available assessment. The Board of Examiners will determine:
   (i) whether it is with or without attendance
   (ii) whether the student has to repeat the whole module or just one of more failed artefacts.

9. Anonymous Marking

9.1. The University operates a policy of anonymous marking for all assessments including coursework, unless it is impracticable.

9.2. Where assessment is subject to anonymous marking, the assessment artefact has to remain anonymous until the point of data entry into the University student record system.

9.3. MABs do not have to consider students anonymously.

9.4. Provisional decisions of MABs, where published, should show marks by student number to fulfil the requirements of the Data Protection Act. Please see section 14 below for further details of how to publish marks.
10. **Decisions Possible**

The possible decisions are as follows:

10.1. **Pass**

10.1.1. The MAB shall PASS students who meet pass criteria, including any approved “thresholds” that apply to the programme on which they are registered. The MAB assigns the credit specified in the approved Module Description to students who have PASSED the module.

10.2. **Referral(s)**

10.2.1. MABs shall give students who do not meet pass criteria the opportunity of Referral(s) depending on their status.

10.2.2. The MAB is responsible for approving the form Referral(s) shall take for a module.

10.2.3. Referral(s) may take the form either of another assessment artefact of the type failed, or of another type of assessment artefact. Alternatively, Referral(s) may take the form of a single assessment artefact undertaken by all students who have failed the module regardless of which, or how many, assessment artefacts they have failed in that module.

10.2.4. The MAB has discretion over the Referral(s) requirements, except that it should treat students in a similar position in a consistent way.

10.2.5. The MAB should set the time for completion or submission of Referral(s) within the parameters defined by the Academic Year dates, as published annually by the Academic Registry on the authority of Academic Council. The current schedule for is Annex A to these guidelines.

10.2.6. The MAB has the additional responsibility of ensuring Departments appropriately record the approved form of Referral(s) on the Student Record System and clearly communicate the details of the decision to students.

10.2.7. The Referrals will be marked with the artefact mark capped at the pass mark of the module. The overall module mark will be recalculated with the capped Referral marks but the overall module mark will not be capped. That mark shall be annotated on the transcript with the legend "Passed after Second Assessment". Where the MAB has prescribed a single re-assessment task that allows the student to demonstrate achievement of the module’s learning outcome, the capped Referral mark will be used for all the failed assessment artefacts.

10.2.8. The MAB cannot consider Referral(s) that have been submitted unless there has been a decision of Referral(s) made at a previous meeting of the Board, and, in the case of full-time and sandwich undergraduate students only, a Board of Examiners has confirmed the decision.
10.3. **Deferral(s)**

10.3.1. If there is a valid extenuating circumstance recorded or determined against any missed examination, the MAB shall normally make a decision of Deferral(s) against the student in that module.

10.3.2. The MAB may delegate authority to the Chair to confirm marks and grades arising from deferred decisions.

10.3.3. A MAB may also defer decisions for whole groups of students, for example, where the MAB awaits the Subject External Examiner’s approval for moderation, or where a course management issue has resulted in marks not being available to the MAB, or where the quorum defined at 2.1 above has not been achieved.

10.4. **Combined Referral Deferral**

10.4.1. If there is a valid extenuating circumstance recorded or determined against any missed examination in the same module where a student has failed another artefact, the MAB shall normally make a decision of Combined Referral Deferral against the student in that module.

10.4.2. The Referral(s) will be undertaken under the provisions at 10.2.

10.4.3. The Deferral(s) will be undertaken under the provisions at 10.3.

10.5. **Deferred Repeat**

10.5.1. Where a student submits a valid extenuating circumstance for Referrals and/or Deferrals shall make a decision of Deferred Repeat.

10.5.2. Deferred Repeat confirms that the student has submitted valid extenuating circumstances for their Second attempt and/or Deferred First Attempt (or any subsequent attempts within the same academic year.) The student will be normally eligible to repeat the module at the next available assessment. The Board of Examiners will determine:
   (i) whether it is with or without attendance
   (ii) whether the student has to repeat the whole module or just one of more failed artefacts.

10.6. **Repeat**

10.6.1. This decision is recorded if the student has failed a Referral(s) or a Deferral(s).

10.6.2. This decision may be overturned should the Board of Examiners opt to exclude the student.

10.7. **Pending**

10.7.1. The MAB may record a decision of Pending for whole groups of students, for example, where the MAB awaits the Subject External Examiner’s approval for moderation, or where a course management issue has resulted in marks not being available to the MAB, or where the quorum defined at 2.1 above has not been achieved.
10.8. **Module Result Pending**

10.8.1. The MAB may record a decision of Module Result Pending where the student has a valid ECF for a piece of coursework and the coursework has not yet been received and marked.

11. **Decisions after Referral(s)**

11.1. If the MAB, or delegated “sub-group”, is considering a student’s performance in Referral(s), the MAB may record a decision of either Pass or Repeat, depending on whether the assessment artefact(s) meet the pass criteria.

11.1.1. The Referrals will be marked with the artefact mark capped at the pass mark of the module. The overall module mark will be recalculated with the capped Referral marks but the overall module mark will not be capped. That mark shall be annotated on the transcript with the legend “Passed after Second Assessment”. Where the Module Assessment Board has prescribed a single reassessment task that allows the student to demonstrate achievement of the module’s learning outcome, the capped Referral mark will be used for all the failed assessment artefacts.

11.2. Students will not be allowed to carry forward Referrals or Deferrals into the next academic year.

11.3. Deferred Repeat confirms that the student has submitted valid extenuating circumstances for their Second attempt and/or Deferred First Attempt (or any subsequent attempts within the same academic year.) The student will be normally eligible to repeat the module at the next available assessment. The Board of Examiners will determine:
   (i) whether it is with or without attendance
   (ii) whether the student has to repeat the whole module or just one of more failed artefacts.

12. **Disabilities**

12.1. It would be good practice to keep a personal record at Departmental level of each student, which records details of any disability and of allowances/entitlements in respect of that disability (e.g. the extra time allowed in examinations), together with confirmation that the allowances have been applied.

12.2. Copies of these records should be available to each MAB covering students from the Department, for the Chair to be able to refer to in the case of any individual student. Any discussion requires a brief Minute for that student under that module.

13. **Sequence of Agenda Items per Module**

13.1. Is Board Quorate for this module? If not quorate, the Department must convene a further meeting as soon as possible and, in any case, in time to provide the Board of Examiners with the necessary information in accordance with the approved University schedule, given at Annex A to these guidelines.

13.2. Are there any exceptional circumstances relating to the assessments in the Module or any course management issues that may have affected student performance? (E.g. disruption of the examination by a fire drill, unavailability of key resources, an unfair assessment that disadvantaged students.) If so, has the Head of Department followed the procedure at 9 of
the Module Assessment Boards section of current Examination and Assessment Regulations and what allowance is she or he proposing to make in respect of this?

13.3. The Board must receive a mark sheet that provides the information detailed at section 7.

13.4. Moderation: if the Subject External Examiner has agreed proposed moderation in advance of the meeting, the mark sheet must make this plain. If the MAB decides to moderate marks, but the Subject External Examiner is unable to attend the meeting, then the Board record decision pending but should delegate authority to the Chair to agree moderation with the Subject External Examiner and subsequently to confirm the marks.

13.5. Confirmation of each student’s mark, following the processes described at 1.7 to 1.10 above. Where the MAB takes decisions in respect of extenuating circumstances (please see section 8 above) and where the student has not yet achieved the pass criteria in the overall module mark and the outcome is anything other than as detailed at 8.1 or 8.2, the minutes must record these decisions.

13.6. Agreement of Referral(s), Deferral(s) and repeat requirements and timings. These would typically be “generic” to the Module rather than decided individually. Any individual exceptions to the “generic” Referral(s) requirements should be agreed and recorded in the minutes (by name of student).

14. Publication of Results

14.1. MABs must publish a list of decisions (i.e. Pass, Referral(s), Deferral(s), Fail Or Pending) within three working days of the meeting. The current “Examination and Assessment Regulations” of the University of Portsmouth prescribe no method for doing this, other than to remind staff that the provisions of the relevant data protection legislation must be followed. If a department publishes decisions in a public place, therefore, they should not be by name but rather by registration number.

14.2. Students have a right to disclosure of marks under the Data Protection Act and should have received indicative marks already. There is no University requirement, however, to publish marks. Departments may choose to publish marks. The University Student Record System has standard reports that allow the publication of marks by name or number. The means of publication may be a notification of personal results to the students by letter or through password protected web-site access, or it may be by a publicly displayed class list of marks that should refer to students by registration number not student name.

14.3. Published marks may take the form of grades but a student has the right to receive marks if they apply for disclosure under the Data Protection Act. Given the inconvenience and expense such requests would inevitably cause to Departments, it may be more sensible simply to release to all students their marks. This remains a departmental decision, however.

14.4. Good practice would require Departments to notify students with Referral(s)s or Deferral(s) individually about what they have to do to pass and when they must do it.

15. Minutes

15.1. The Chair of the MAB is responsible for the production of minutes of the meeting, in accordance with University conventions. The Chair shall appoint a secretary to assist her or him in the exercise of this responsibility.
15.2. Minutes should consist of:
   - an attendance list (showing what items the member was in attendance for);
   - apologies;
   - confirmation of the previous minutes;
   - any matters arising (for example, approval of Chair’s action);
   - for each module considered, a copy of the mark sheet produced for the meeting and of the same mark sheet updated by the decisions of the MAB;
   - for each module considered, a note of the application of any discretion with regard to moderation of assessments, confirmation of student marks, exercise of powers in relation to extenuating circumstances, a note as to whether the module falls outside the expected marks range (an average of between 50% and 70% for the module), the generic Referral(s) requirements and timings, the generic Deferral(s) requirements and timings, any individual departures from these generic requirements and timings for Referral(s) and Deferral(s);
   - for each module, a note to record where dispute has been raised about the application of disability allowances and how (if) that has been resolved;
   - a note of delegation arrangements.

15.3. A template of minutes, in Word format, is available from the Academic Registry. Please contact, by e-mail, george.allison@port.ac.uk for further details.

16. System Support

16.1. The University’s Student Records System, referred to as Student Records, (previously known as Jupiter), is designed to offer support to the MAB processes, primarily through the production of detailed reports for each module. This also enables the publication of results and the notification of detailed outcomes to students via the Student Portal. The update of Student Records following each MAB meeting will allow each Department to produce a comprehensive report for a Board of Examiners, regardless of the student’s distribution of modules across Departments and Faculties. The schedule attached at Annex A exists to allow this to happen.
Annex A YEAR, BREAK, AND ASSESSMENT DATES INCLUDING MABS, BOES, GRADUATION, REFERRAL PERIOD AND EXTINGUISHING CIRCUMSTANCES

Academic Year 2015-2016

1 The approved dates for the academic year 2015-2016 are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Induction Week (all Years)</td>
<td>Monday 14 September 2015 to Friday 18 September 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn Teaching Block</td>
<td>Monday 21 September 2015 to Friday 11 December 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas Break</td>
<td>Monday 14 December 2015 to Friday 1 January 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Teaching Block</td>
<td>Monday 4 January 2016 to Thursday 24 March 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easter Break</td>
<td>Friday 25 March 2016 to Friday 15 April 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidation and Assessment Period</td>
<td>Monday 18 April 2016 to Friday 27 May 2016 (Within this period the formal examination weeks run from Tuesday 3 May 2016 to Friday 27 May 2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Weeks</td>
<td>Monday 11 July 2016 to Friday 22 July 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral Period</td>
<td>Monday 4 July 2016 to Friday 22 July 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Module Assessment Boards (MABs) shall meet in the week Monday 13 June 2016 to Friday 17 June 2016.

3 Boards of Examiners (BOEs) shall meet in the week Monday 27 June 2016 to Friday 1 July 2016.

4 Courses with non-standard academic years and/or exemption from the requirements of the academic year structure may have their Boards or additional Boards at other times and dates, but must advise students and Academic Registry of the dates that will apply.

5 Graduation Week will need to consist of at least 14 ceremonies to accommodate anticipated student numbers. Graduation will occur at specific dates yet to be confirmed in the weeks beginning 11th and 18th July 2016. Exact dates of specific ceremonies will be set in January 2016.

6 The “Examination and Assessment Regulations”, state that Academic Council shall prescribe each year a fixed period or periods in which “Referral” (formerly known as “referral”) must be completed.

7 The schedule contained herein is to apply for the academic year 2015-2016.

8 The “Referral period” does not apply to Collaborative Programmes.

9 For all other students undertaking their assessments within the standard academic year, the “Referral period”, as defined by students submitting or completing “Referrals”, will run between Monday 4 July 2016 and Friday 22 July 2016 inclusive.

10 For courses with non-standard academic years and all postgraduate, the “Referral period”, as defined by students submitting or completing “Referrals”, will run for three weeks from the first Monday following the date of the relevant “main” meeting of the Board of Examiners.
For all students, all “Referral” must be submitted in or completed during the “Referral period”. “Referral” tasks and dates may be communicated to students in advance of the “Referral period” subject to the following caveats:

- Re-sit examinations and tests must be scheduled to take place within the “Referral period”
- “Second attempt” coursework assignments must be submitted at the end of the “Referral period”
- Students must be clearly warned that the decisions of MABs and BOEs may mean that any work undertaken before the “Referral period” proves to be redundant because the volume of individual “Referral” necessary may mean that the student has the opportunity for “Referral” withdrawn. Additionally there is the possibility of compensation in a single module at any level of a course.
- The warning given to students must be approved by the Academic Registrar as conforming to the Academic Regulations of the University of Portsmouth.

For all students, meetings of Module Assessment Boards and Boards of Examiners to consider the result of “Referral”, often known as “Re-sit Boards”, must be completed before Clearing begins in mid-August. Colleagues are reminded that the “Examination and Assessment Regulations” do not prescribe a constitution or quoracy requirement for “re-sit” Boards. It is open to departments or faculties to make all such decisions, for the full range of programmes for which they are responsible, at a meeting of a relatively small group of staff. This is equally true for Module Assessment Boards and Boards of Examiners but any such policy must be given effect in the minutes of the main meetings.

“Referral” may take the form of either another assessment artefact of the type(s) failed, or of another type of assessment artefact. “Referral” may, alternatively, take the form of a single assessment artefact undertaken by all students who have failed the module regardless of which, or how many, assessment artefacts they have failed in that module. The Head of Department has responsibility for approving the form “Referral” shall take for a module. The Head of Department has the additional responsibility of ensuring the approved form of “Referral” is recorded appropriately on the Student Record System and clearly communicated to students.
The “Referral” will have the mark awarded restricted to the pass mark if the student has met or exceeded the pass standard (40% unless an exemption has been agreed). If the student has not met the pass standard the actual mark earned at the “second attempt” will be recorded. Following a “second attempt”, the overall module mark will be calculated using the normal method of calculation for establishing the overall module mark but this calculation will use the “second attempt” mark instead of the “first attempt” mark in any assessment where a “second attempt” is recorded. The mark so calculated will be used as the overall mark for the module to be reported to Module Assessment Boards and Boards of Examiners, and confirmed for classification and transcript purposes. For the avoidance of doubt, this will mean that modules passed as a result of “second attempt” assessment(s) will not have their overall mark capped to the pass standard mark, although the “Referral” itself will be so capped.

Students who miss a re-sit date or submission date during the “Referral period” will be deemed to have failed.

In respect of examination type assessments, Extenuating Circumstance Forms have to be submitted by the end of the Consolidation and Assessment Period. In the academic year 2015-2016 this date is Friday 27 May 2016. In respect of coursework type assessments, Extenuating Circumstance Forms have to be submitted by Friday 24 June 2016. Students are advised to submit their forms however as the circumstances occur and not to store them up for the deadline date.

There will be no facility to submit and consider Extenuating Circumstances in respect of the “Referral period”. This is because it is not possible to have: a deferral of a “Referral”; or a deferral of a “Deferral”; or a “Referral” of a failed “Deferral”. However, further deferred assessment opportunities may be allowed as a reasonable adjustment agreed in response to a student’s disability or a course management issue.

Students must identify specific assessment artefacts affected by the extenuating circumstance. Claims that generalised performance has been affected but which do not specify the assessment artefacts will not be accepted.

Extenuating Circumstance Forms will not be accepted if submitted after the deadlines published above, unless there is a good reason for the late submission that is related to the circumstance itself. The student must have fully explained that reason in an accompanying supporting statement.

Where valid extenuating circumstances are approved for an assessment artefact against which a penalty for late submission has been imposed, the penalty shall be lifted.

Andrew Rees
Academic Registrar, June 2013
Annex B
EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES - Guidelines for Module Assessment Boards

Extenuating Circumstances are circumstances relating to a student’s health and /or personal life which are of a sufficiently serious nature to result in her or his being unable to attend, complete, or submit an assessment on time. The Regulations relating to Extenuating Circumstances and the Criteria by which they will be judged are reproduced in the current Examination and Assessment Regulations.

The University of Portsmouth operates a “fit to sit” policy. If a student attends an examination or hands a piece of coursework in on time, they are claiming that they were fit to do so and can not submit an extenuating circumstances form – all claims where they have attended or submitted the assessment on time will be rejected.

Students cannot submit extenuating circumstances for Deferrals or Referrals. They can only submit extenuating circumstances for the first attempt in an academic year. There should be no cases of extenuating circumstances to consider for the Boards to consider Referral Module Assessment and Deferrals.

Problems with course management that have affected student performance, either individually as part of a group, should be remedied as a result of students following the student complaints procedure. The Department may also anticipate the effect of such problem and through the Head of Department, acting in consultation with the Academic Registrar, regard these as generic extenuating circumstances, which may require some proposed remedy. These processes may result in the Module Assessment Board being asked to endorse or consider proposed remedies.

Module Assessment Boards will be informed by Extenuating Circumstances Officers whether a student has valid extenuating circumstances, and if so, which assessment artefacts have not been completed, attended or submitted on time. Module Assessment Boards will not be informed of what the extenuating circumstances are, nor should they spend time discussing them.

The MAB may make one of four possible decisions with regard to valid extenuating circumstances.

Firstly, where the student has missed an examination, it will record a decision of Deferral and offer the student the opportunity to complete a Deferral in the affected assessment artefact(s). Dates should be set for the completion of Deferral but these should be sensitive to the student’s circumstances bearing in mind students cannot trail modules into the next year. The Chair of the Board shall ensure written communication takes place with the student giving details of the Deferral and its timing.

Secondly, where a student has had an assessment penalty imposed in relation to an assessment artefact by virtue of late submission and also has a valid extenuating circumstance in relation to that assessment artefact, then the penalty will be cancelled and the assessment artefact given the full mark it justifies on its merits alone provided the work was submitted within twenty working days of the due date of submission. Students can not submit a further extenuating circumstances claim within this period to extend the time further. If this has not been done, the Module Assessment Board must do it. The MAB, exceptionally, may lift penalties for late submission in the absence of any student claim or Extenuating Circumstances Officer decision. If it does this, the Chair of the MAB must cause the minutes of the meeting to record clearly the grounds for exercising such discretion. The MAB cannot waive, under any circumstance, an assessment penalty where the Extenuating Circumstances Officer has determined that a student’s claim is invalid. Where the coursework has not been received because the student is still within the time period for submitting it late and attracting the full marks, the Module Assessment Board shall record a decision of PENDING and will
delegate the decision to Chairs Action following the MAB. The MAB cannot waive penalties imposed in accordance with the University Disciplinary Procedures.

Thirdly, the MAB may extrapolate an overall mark in cases where, in its academic judgement, there is sufficient evidence, from at least two other completed and unaffected assessment artefacts contributing to the final mark of the module, that the learning outcomes of the module have been met. An example would be where there are a number of small assessments progressively building on a competence and achievement of the final tested competence demonstrates competence in the earlier assessments. In such a case, the MAB might judge that the student had successfully demonstrated the learning outcomes of the module and would extrapolate a mark by discounting the affected assessment and re-calculating an overall mark by re-weighting the unaffected assessment artefacts accordingly.

Chairs should make sure members of the MAB understand that, under the University’s extenuating circumstance policy, a student with a valid extenuating circumstance, who can achieve a pass by undertaking the affected examinations, has a right to another attempt at the affected examination provided that they can pass the module within the Referral Period.

All decisions taken by a Module Assessment Board in respect of valid extenuating circumstances made known to it must be recorded in the minutes, together with a reason for the decision reached.