REPORTING OF AWARD RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TAUGHT COURSES 
LEADING TO OPEN UNIVERSITY VALIDATED AWARDS:

1 Introduction

1.1 These guidelines have been prepared by Open University Validation Partnerships (OUVP) to assist staff in Open University approved institutions who are involved in the preparation of award recommendations in respect of candidates registered for OU(V) awards, and in the overall conferment process.

1.2 All institutions are required to provide;

- for each award, an OUVP award recommendation list showing the award recommended for each student who has been assessed and recommended for an award {see section 3 of these guidelines}
- a cover sheet (Form OUVP F7) which compliments each recommendation list {see section 3.4 of these guidelines}
- Exam Board Data Template {see section 3.4 of these guidelines} in PDF and Excel spreadsheet format

1.3 Institutions are reminded that the OUVP Handbook may be consulted on matters relating to examinations, assessment and awards.
http://www.open.edu/openlearnworks/course/view.php?id=2041

2 Sequence of events for ratification of Validated Awards

2.1 Institutions hold Examination Board/Progression meetings and prepare required documentation as outlined above

2.2 Institutions ensure that the External Examiners, OU Staff member present and the Chair of the Board of Examiners sign the relevant cover sheet (Form OUVP F7, see Annex B).

2.3 Institutions authorise the award recommendations, ensuring that the External Examiners present sign the recommendation lists and the date of the Examination Board has been entered on the cover sheet (Form OUVP F7) and that the cover sheet is signed by the appropriate officer.

2.4 Institutions submit the award recommendation lists to OUVP in the format shown on the spreadsheet together with cover sheets (Form OUVP F7). All documents should be emailed to ouvp-examboards@open.ac.uk within two working days of the board. Lists should ideally not be submitted until any period for submission of student appeals has expired.

2.5 OUVP check the listings against previously submitted registration records, for completeness, accuracy and appropriate authorisation, and check External Examiners appointments against OUVP records. Within 2 working days of the Exam/Progression board OUVP will expect to receive the OU staff attending report.

2.6 OUVP recommend all documentation for consideration by the University’s Module Results Approval and Classification Panel (MRAQCP). The Panel has the authority

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of the University Senate to ratify the recommendations of all Examination Award Boards (EAB).

2.7 MRAQCP will meet and consider the award/progression board documentation and respond within 7 working days of them being received.

2.8 OUVP produce award lists and arrange for them to proceed through the University Congregation. This is the formal procedure for the conferment of awards by the Council and Senate of the University.

2.9 OUVP prepare certificates and forward the confirmed award lists and certificates to institutions.

2.10 Institutions check the certificates and confirmed award lists on arrival for accuracy and completeness, returning any corrections within ten days of receipt.

2.11 Institutions will receive certificates between four and eight weeks after the relevant ratification date, depending upon the time of year.

2.12 Institutions give or send the certificates to the successful candidates.

3 Preparation of Award Recommendation Lists

3.1 General

3.1.1 For each award, institutions are asked to prepare an award recommendation list showing the award recommended in the case of each student who has been assessed for an award.

3.1.2 Award recommendation lists must be in typescript and contain the following information, in the order shown below, for each student:
- OU/OUVP ID
- SURNAME
- FORENAME
- OTHER NAMES
- GENDER (M/F)
- DATE OF BIRTH (DD/MM/YY)
- AWARD TYPE (CertHE, DipHE, BA, BA Hons, etc.)
- CLASSIFICATION (Pass/Distinction/Fail/First Class Honours etc)
- EXIT AWARD (indicate if Yes)

3.1.3 These details are essentially the same as the details which the institution will have provided on registration of the student however, OUVP will accept the names provided on the recommendation list as the definite names which would be printed on certificates. The OUVSID is the unique identifier number assigned to each student when the institution registers the student, and available to the institution via the VALENCIA on-line registration system.

3.2 Student Details

3.2.1 Please ensure that the full legal name of each student is given, that names are in the correct order and include any written accent marks and special characters. Clearly indicate where names have a combination of upper and lower case letters (i.e. McDouglas). This is particularly important because these details will appear on award certificates. Names of students which are not in conventional UK style (e.g. certain students from overseas where there is no differentiation between 'family name' and 'other names') should be entered in full, in the exact order in which they are to appear in the University's awards records, and on the certificate. Only family
and given names should appear. Hereditary or courtesy titles should not be included.

3.2.2 Initials and abbreviations will not be accepted for award documentation except in cases where they have been adopted legally by the student. All such cases submitted will require verification by the institution prior to submitting the award documentation.

3.2.3 When candidates have notified institutions of any name change (e.g. by marriage and gender reassignment) institutions are required to see confirmatory legal evidence before award recommendations are submitted.

3.2.4 Changes of name that take place after the award date (i.e. after the date of the final meeting of the Board of Examiners), including changes of name by marriage, cannot be taken into account. Candidates are not permitted to change, abbreviate or omit names at their own discretion, and should be made aware of these rules. Note post award date gender reassignment cases are treated within the certificate replacement process, please contact OUVP for further guidance if required.

3.2.5 If a candidate requires the certificate in a particular name but will not have legal evidence by the award date, a simple expedient would be for the candidate to make a Statutory Declaration before a Commissioner for Oaths.

3.3 Reporting Intermediate Awards

3.3.1 OUVP may progress award recommendations for intermediate awards on request.

3.3.2 Institutions should report intermediate awards to the University in the same way as final awards.

3.4 Preparation of cover sheets (Form OUVP F7)

3.4.1 A fully completed cover sheet (Form OUVP F7) must accompany each award recommendation list.

3.4.2 Details to appear on cover sheets:

NAME OF INSTITUTION
COURSE/PROGRAMMETITLEAWARD (DipHE, BA, MA etc.)
AWARD DATE [DATE OF MEETING OF EXAMINATION BOARD] (Day, Month and Year)
LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION and LANGUAGE OF ASSESSMENT {where either of these is not English}.
NAMES AND SIGNATURES OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

3.4.3 A copy of the cover sheet (Form OUVP F7) is attached as Annex B. Please copy this, as necessary, and ensure that a completed cover sheet is attached to each list of recommendations.

3.4.4 Lists sent without External Examiners signatures or cover sheets and cover sheets which have not been completed fully and correctly, will have to be returned to institutions for the required information to be provided by them.

3.4.5 Recommendations must be submitted adopting the format of the template spreadsheet provided which should be completed as appropriate.
3.5 External Examiner Signatures

3.5.1 Institutions are asked to enter on the cover sheet of each award recommendation list, in typescript or manually in block capitals, the names of the External Examiners present at the meeting of the final Examination/Progression Board.

3.5.2 Institutions are required to obtain the signatures of the External Examiners present at the meeting. They must sign the cover sheet (Form OUVP F7) itself and the list of recommended students. The External Examiners should be fully aware that they are signing to confirm that they were present at the meeting and that they agree with the recommendations made on the relevant award recommendation list.

3.5.3 If an External Examiner is unable to be present at the final Examination Board meeting, the institution must obtain a letter, signed by the external examiner concerned, giving the following information:

- The date of the letter
- Details of the examination to which it refers
- The reason for absence from the final Examination Board meeting
- Confirmation of involvement in the assessment and concurrence with the final recommendations entered onto the awards recommendation list, of which the examiner has been apprised.

3.5.4 Copies of the letter from the absent examiner should be submitted to OUVP with the cover sheet.

3.6 Other Required Signatures

3.6.1 The Chair of the Board of Examiners must sign at the bottom left hand corner of the cover sheet at the end of the final Examination Board meeting. This signature confirms the certification on behalf of all members of the Board of Examiners.

3.6.2 The member of staff that attends the academic board on behalf of The Open University must sign the cover sheet at the end of the examination board meeting.

3.6.3 The cover sheet must also be signed by the authorised signatory on behalf of the Academic Board of the institution (Academic Registrar for the Institution). This releases and confirms receipt of the list from the Board of Examiners and certifies that the document has been checked to ensure that all the information on it is fully and correctly supplied. Any unsigned cover sheets received from institutions will have to be returned as they cannot be processed.

3.7 Date of Examination Board/Progression Meeting

3.7.1 This should be entered on the cover sheet at the final Examination Board/Progression Board meeting, when the Chair of the Examination Board signs the cover sheet (see Section 6). Any cover sheets received without full details entered for the date of the final Examination Board will have to be returned as they cannot be processed.
3.8 Award Lists, Certificates and Academic Dress

3.8.1 An award list is the summary of the level of attainment of the successful candidates on the recommendation list to which it relates. Award lists are prepared by OUVP.

3.8.2 One award list will be produced for each recommendation list and will be forwarded to the University’s Congregation.

3.8.3 Following the meeting of Congregation an award certificate will be prepared by The Open University for each candidate appearing on an award list. Certificates will be forwarded to institutions for onward transmission to recipients.

3.8.4 Institutions are requested to inform OUVP well in advance of awards ceremony dates. Every effort will be made to complete procedures by the date of the ceremony.

3.8.5 Institutions should notify OUVP well in advance of any urgent cases which need special action and fall outside the normal award-reporting schedule. Please note that the minimum turnaround time for the production of a certificate after the award has been congregated, is between ten and fourteen working days. This varies according to the time of year. Where an institution does not inform OUVP about urgent cases OUVP cannot be held responsible for the non-issue of certificates.

3.8.6 If OUVP is unable to produce certificates in time for an award ceremony, letters of verification will be provided on condition that the award lists have proceeded through Congregation and the institution has given OUVP a minimum of ten days’ notice.

3.8.7 Every effort is made to pack certificates securely and they will be mailed to institutions by recorded delivery. Institutions are advised to ensure that any certificates mailed to students are well packed and sent by recorded delivery.

3.8.8 Institutions are requested to check the contents of each package of certificates on arrival to ensure that they have not been damaged in the post. The certificates should also be checked for accuracy and completeness as soon as possible after receipt.

3.8.9 Certificates for correction or re-issue should be returned within ten days of receipt.

3.8.10 Corrections to certificates and award lists are costly. Corrections to certificates will be charged at the rate for replacement certificates. All cases of misreporting of award recommendations will be treated as serious quality assurance issues and will be investigated by the University.

3.8.11 Where institutions normally distribute certificates at the awards ceremony, it is requested that sympathetic consideration be given to candidates who urgently require their certificates for employment purposes at an earlier date.

3.8.12 Institutions should contact the University’s Awards and Ceremonies Centre on 01908 653003 for advice about the arrangements for hiring University academic dress for awards ceremonies.

3.8.13 In the light of experience, institutions are advised not to roll certificates for distribution or presentation purposes, as treatment of certificates in this way may cause the paper to crack or split where the University arms has been impressed.
3.9 Appeal Cases and Withheld Certificates

3.9.1 Institutional procedures should provide a limited period after assessment decisions are made available, for possible appeal. During this period, award recommendations should preferably not be submitted to OUVP.

3.9.2 It is recognised, however, that it would be inappropriate for the submission of award recommendation lists to be delayed for more than a relatively short time. Where an appeal is still outstanding at the time the award recommendation list is submitted to OUVP, notify the Validation and Awards Coordinator.

3.9.3 Where an appeal is lodged after award recommendations have already been submitted, notify OUVP without delay. On such notification, confirmed in writing, OUVP will exclude the appeal case from further award processing.

3.9.4 OUVP will follow up any pending appeals not discharged within three months. Once the outcome of an appeal is available, proceed as follows:

- Where the original decision of the Examination Board remains unaltered, advise OUVP in writing to proceed on the original recommendation.

- Where the previous recommendation is to be changed, submit a new cover sheet and award recommendation, referring to the previous recommendation which was appealed. The award date will normally be the original award date. The new cover sheet must have the appropriate signatures for the new award recommendation to proceed. In either case, OUVP will incorporate the candidate into the award list, if it has not been processed, or otherwise issue a further award list.