Guidance to Partner Institutions on your Examination Board
Information Return – 2017/2018

CONTENTS

Section                                      Page
1   Introduction                             2
2   Prior to the Examination Board          2 - 3
3   Completing the Paperwork                3 - 4
4   The Ratification Process                4
5   Certification                            5
6   Appeal Cases and Withheld Certificates  5
Appendices:
Appendix 1: Completing the F7               6
Appendix 2: Completing the Award Recommendation List 7
Appendix 2: Completing the Exam Board Data Sheet 8
1 Introduction

This document contains guidelines to assist partner institutions in the preparation of paperwork required for the ratification and conferment of validated awards and to provide more information on the steps involved in the process. These steps are summarised below:

Exam Board takes place at partner institution (with OU representation).

↓

Partner institution emails documentation to OUVP usually within two working days of the Board.

↓

OUVP check documentation and refer back any issues or acknowledge a complete return, usually within two working days of receipt.

↓

Once documentation is complete and report has been received from the OU representative who attended the Exam Board (expected within two working days of the Board), submission is sent to the University’s Module Results Approval and Qualifications Classification Panel (MRAQCP) for ratification.

↓

MRAQCP respond within seven working days of receipt and partner institution is informed. If the awards have been ratified, final results can be released to students at this point.

↓

OUVP prepare award lists and arrange for them to proceed through the University Congregation.

↓

Once Congregation have met, certificates are produced and dispatched to partner institutions with copy of corresponding award list (usually within 6 weeks of notification of ratification).

↓

Institutions check certificates for accuracy/completeness and acknowledge receipt

Should you have any questions once you have read through these guidelines or require clarification on any of the aspects covered, please email us at OUVP-EXAMBOARDS@open.ac.uk.

2 Prior to the Examination Board

2.1 Exam Board dates should be provided well in advance and a request for dates is sent out each year in July. We suggest that if you do not already do so, the dates of the next year’s boards are set at the previous board.

2.2 If an External Examiner is unable to be present at the Exam Board in person or virtually, please contact the Senior Quality & Partnerships Manager as a matter of priority (in advance of the
meeting) and provide full details on the circumstances. Guidance will then be given on how you should proceed. *Please see section 3.1 for guidance on virtual attendance.*

2.3 It is the partner institution’s responsibility to provide the required documentation following completion of an Exam Board. The required documentation is:

- Completed and signed **F7** cover sheet for each final/exit award made
- Completed and signed **Award Recommendation List** for each final/exit award made
- Completed and signed **Exam Board Data sheet** for each programme where awards are made

*Please see Appendices 1-3 for detailed guidance on how to complete these documents*

2.4 We strongly advise that the above documents are prepared prior to the Exam Board meeting based on the recommendations being made to the board. We appreciate that changes may need to be made and if this is the case, please do as follows:

- Hand-write the changes on the documentation in clear, legible writing
- Get the External Examiner to initial next to the hand-written amendments

2.5 **Information on the award recommendation paperwork must be accurate** as it will determine the awards which are sent for ratification and certificates which are later produced. Award titles must be correctly entered on the documentation and the date of the Exam Board should be accurate and consistent across the paperwork.

2.6 **We will accept the student names provided on award recommendation lists as the definitive names to be printed on the certificates.** It is therefore important that students ensure that their details are correctly recorded by the partner institution at registration (or well in advance of the final Exam Board). **This should be the student's full legal name.** Students should be aware that certificates cannot be reissued post-conferment, except in the most exceptional of circumstances.

3  **Completing the Paperwork**

*Please see Appendices 1-3 for specific guidance on how to complete the OU templates.*

**Obtaining Signatures**

3.1 It is imperative that the necessary signatures are obtained at the Exam Board as any documentation which is not properly signed will be returned by the University to be amended.

- External Examiners should be fully aware that they are signing to confirm that they were present at the meeting and that they agreed with the recommendations made on the relevant award recommendation list
- Electronic signatures are only permissible where an External Examiner has attended an Exam Board via Skype or teleconference. Please note that:

  - virtual attendance is only allowed if it is unavoidable and must be pre-approved by the Senior Quality and Partnerships Manager for the institution;
  - for each case where an electronic signature has been used, you will need to forward us an email from the External Examiner giving permission for its use for this purpose.
Avoiding delays

3.2 The required documents should be emailed to OUVP-EXAMBOARDS@open.ac.uk as soon as possible after the Board, and ideally within 2 working days.

- If there is going to be a significant delay in sending the paperwork (i.e. more than 5 working days), please inform us by e-mail to the above address, telling us when the paperwork will arrive. Please note that we do not require a hard copy of the submission, provided it has been emailed.
- If you supply the documents late and do not inform us as requested, MRAQCP may not be in a position to ratify the awards within the normal timeframe, which will cause additional delay.
- Delay may also occur if the paperwork is not completed correctly or if the required signatures are not in place and we need to send them back to you for correction or collection of signatures.

The aim is to prevent delays to the approval of the awards recommended at your Exam Board, and the issuing of the final marks to students.

3.3 Once the documentation has been received, it will be thoroughly checked and any errors found will be referred back. We will aim to complete our checks of your Exam Board submission within two working days of receipt, but this process may take longer for particularly large Exam Boards or during busy periods. Assuming all is in order, and we have received the report from the OU staff member who attended the Exam Board, the award paperwork will then be submitted for ratification by MRAQCP.

3.4 Partner institutions must not issue results to students (or send diploma supplements/transcripts) until the awards have been ratified by MRAQCP and formal notice has been received from the University that the results can be released. If for any reason you feel you need to release the results, you must ensure that students are aware that they are provisional and may be subject to change.

4 The Ratification Process

4.1 The University’s Module Results Approval and Qualifications Classification Panel (MRAQCP) is responsible for the ratification of awards both from the University’s direct provision and from Partner institutions’ validated programmes.

4.2 MRAQCP has the authority of the University Senate to ratify the recommendations of all Examination Award Boards after satisfying itself that the recommendations have been made with due regard to the approved regulations, that the correct procedures have been followed and the appropriate academic standards have been met. MRAQCP has the authority of the University Senate to overrule any result recommendation which is contrary to approved regulations. In practice they would normally refer any concern back to us in the first instance so that we can arrange with you for the Exam Board to reconsider the results.

4.3 MRAQCP requires specific quantitative and qualitative information to discharge its duties appropriately. In addition to the paperwork provided by the partner institution, the member of OU staff who attends the Exam Board is required to submit a short report on its conduct (which will be sent on to the partner institution).
4.4 OUVP will arrange for MRAQCP to consider the recommendations (comprising the F7, award recommendation list, Exam Board data and report of the OU member of staff who attended the Board) and respond within seven working days of them being received. We will then send you notification of the ratification of the awards (or otherwise) in the form of an email to the staff member who submitted the Exam Board documentation.

5 Certification

5.1 We prepare formal award lists which have to be sent to OU Congregation prior to us being allowed to print and issue certificates. Currently Congregation meet every other month.

- One award list will be produced for each award recommendation list and will be forwarded to the University’s Congregation
- Following the meeting of Congregation, an award certificate will be prepared for each student appearing on the award list
- Certificates are sent to partner institutions with a copy of the corresponding award list

It is possible that you may have to wait up to 2 months for us to be able to prepare and send out the certificates, but they will normally be dispatched within 6 weeks of us notifying you that the awards have been ratified.

5.2 We ask that you 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. Please ensure that any certificates mailed on to students are well-packed and sent by recorded delivery.

5.3 Corrections to certificates/award lists will be charged at the rate for a replacement certificate. All cases of misreporting of award recommendations will be treated as serious quality assurance issues and will be investigated.

5.4 A certificate cannot be amended or reissued in a different name if a change of name is notified after the date the qualification is conferred.

6 Appeal Cases and Withheld Certificates

6.1 Institutional procedures should provide a limited period after assessment decisions are made available for possible appeal. However, award recommendations for other students should not be withheld pending the outcome of a particular appeal. In such cases, the partner institution should exclude the award recommendation for the appeal case from its Exam Board submission to OUVP until the outcome of the appeal has been determined.

6.2 Where an appeal is lodged after award recommendations have already been submitted, please notify OUVP in writing without delay. Upon receipt, we will exclude the appeal case from further award processing or will withhold the certificate pending the outcome.

6.3 Where the original decision of the Exam Board remains unaltered, please inform OUVP in writing to proceed on the original recommendation. If the previous recommendation is to be changed, submit a new F7 and award recommendation list, referring to the previous recommendation which was appealed. The award date will normally be the original award date. The new F7 must have the appropriate signatures for the new award recommendation to proceed.
Appendix 1: Completing the F7

A copy of the template F7 form can be obtained online at:
http://www.open.ac.uk/cicp/main/validation/resources-partner-institutions/registrations-and-conferments

Remember that for each award made you need to complete a F7 form, e.g. if you are recommending exit awards as well as a degree, you need to prepare separate F7s.

This is to certify that:

1. the entries on this list are the recommendations by the OU Validation Partnerships (OUPs), together with details of failures and withdrawals from the final assessments associated with the above award, made by the Final Examination Board Meeting,
2. all candidates who are recommended for awards have completed the requirements of the course, as approved by or on behalf of OU/P including, where appropriate, satisfactory completion of supervised work experience,
3. all the External Examiners are listed below, all are approved by or on behalf of OUP, and all were present at this meeting,
4. all External Examiners agree with the recommendations on this list. Signatures of all the External Examiners confirming the recommendations must appear on this form or on a separate document prepared for the purpose and submitted with this form. Additionally at least one External Examiner must sign each page of the recommendation list.

Enter the name(s) of the External Examiners attending here

Obtain the signature(s) of the External Examiners attending at the end of the meeting

Enter the name of the OU staff member attending here

Obtain the signature of the OU staff member attending at the end of the meeting

Obtain the signature of the Chair of the Exam Board at the end of the meeting

Obtain the date of the Exam Board here

Obtain the signature of the Academic Registrar at the end of the meeting
Appendix 2: Completing the Award Recommendation List

Enter the name of your institution here

Enter the **exact** course title here

Enter the **exact** name of the award being recommended here

Enter the date of the Exam Board here.

Enter the name of the External Examiner(s) and obtain the signature(s) at the end of the board

Enter the details of all student receiving the award here.

Enter the date of the Exam Board here

A copy of the template Award Recommendation List can be obtained online at: [http://www.open.ac.uk/cicp/main/validation/resources-partner-institutions/registrations-and-conferments](http://www.open.ac.uk/cicp/main/validation/resources-partner-institutions/registrations-and-conferments)

Remember to complete a separate Award Recommendation List for each award made (including exit awards).
**Appendix 3: Completing the Exam Board Data Sheet**

Updated Exam Board Data Sheet templates are personalised for each award type and sent out to partner institutions each academic year. If you require further copies, please email OUVP-EXAMBOARDS@open.ac.uk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Walton College</th>
<th>BA (Hons) Design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 6</td>
<td>Date of Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No of Students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Award Degree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exit Awards</td>
<td>BA Pass DIP HE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cert HE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Degrees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Insert the date of the Exam Board here
Enter the number of students being considered for awards (including exit awards) here
Enter number of degrees being awarded here
Enter the number of exit awards (in the appropriate section) here
Enter the number of awards recommended at each classification level here
Ensure that you obtain the signatures of the people listed at the Exam Board