

Board of Examiners Code of Practice

Formal Review Cycle	Three Yearly		
Latest Formal Review (date)	March 2025	Next Formal Review Due (date)	March 2028
Policy Owner	Associate Principal, Teaching Learning and Quality		
Policy Author	Executive Lead for Higher Education		

Approvals

Board of Corp Y/N	N	Committee		Date Board approved	
ELT Y/N	Y	ELT date approved	03 April 2025	Additional committee	HE Board

Publication

Website Y/N	Y	Unify Y/N	Y	Student VLE Y/N	N	Other	
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Change History

Version	Date Reviewed/ Revised	Description of Change	Reviewed by	Approved by
V1	March 2025	New code of practice	ELT	

Board of Examiners Code of Practice

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This is a code of practice of City of Sunderland College, trading as Education Partnership North East (EPNE - which includes Sunderland College, Hartlepool Sixth Form College and Northumberland College). These colleges will be referred to as “the College” throughout this document.
- 1.2 This code of practice sets out all matters in relation to the scope and conduct of the College’s board of examiners programme boards, applying to all higher education (HE) modules and programmes. It makes clear the College’s expectations regarding administrative conduct and preparation leading up to and upon completion of a board of examiners and has been developed following the College’s review processes and analysis of key sources such as external examiner reports and the UK Quality Code.
- 1.3 It builds on the codes of practice and policies set by an awarding organisation or university collaborative partners that award the actual HE qualification. The awarding organisation and/or university partner include:
 1. Pearson
 2. NCFE
 2. University of Cumbria
 3. University of Hull
 4. University of Sunderland (teach out)

It must be noted that the College must follow the Board of Examiners code for programmes awarded by the relevant university collaborative partner and this code of practice is used as the College’s Board of Examiners board prior to submission of module marks to the awarding organisation or university partner. For university collaborative programmes, only the university’s formal Boards of Examiners can verify marks and programme overall grades.

- 1.4 This code makes explicit the College’s expectations for the conduct of board of examiners, and the staff roles and responsibilities involved. It considers required external regulations including the Office for Students regulatory framework and in particular to the condition of registration B4: Assessment and awards, as noted below. Where the College is not the awarding body for our HE courses, it notes this condition of regulation applies to the HE courses it delivers.
- 1.5 The College must ensure that:
 - 1.5.1 Students are assessed effectively
 - 1.5.2 Each assessment is valid and reliable
 - 1.5.3 Academic regulations through the College’s Board of Examiners ensures relevant awards are credible
 - 1.5.4 Effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner that appropriately reflects the content and level of the course.
 - 1.5.5 Relevant awards granted to students are credible at the point of being granted and when compared to those granted previously.

- 1.6 Everyone must apply and administer the Code fairly and consistently to ensure no discrimination on the grounds protected characteristic.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The Code must be applied to all higher education modules and programmes including university collaborative programmes and those delivered by partners.
- 2.2 As EPNE works in partnership with different awarding organisations and university partners, variable terms may be used to describe a Board of Examiners. The College code of practice must be used in conjunction with any additional codes from university partners.
- 2.3 This code does not apply to examination based professional qualifications such as AAT Level 4.

3. Board of Examiners

- 3.1 The College has two types of boards of examiners:
- Module boards which verify module marks.
 - Programme boards which verify progression between programme stages/levels, awards given and where applicable classification levels.
- Both boards must be held separately, and neither can alter the decision of each other. Before the formal module or programme boards, pre-boards must be held by the faculty in liaison with Quality.
- 3.2 Dates of all board of examiners' activity will be confirmed and circulated annually by Quality.
- 3.3 Chairs are responsible for ensuring the boards are conducted in accordance with this code and for university partner programmes in accordance with their regulations. Chairs and secretaries of the boards must attend a board of examiners briefing session annually, delivered by Quality.
- 3.4 For University of Hull programmes the appointment of chairs must be in liaison between the HE Quality Manager and the University.

4. Board of Examiners - Module Boards (Mid and End of Year)

Membership of the module boards must consist of:

- An appointed Chair (impartial Faculty Director / Associate Principal / Campus Principal)
- Relevant curriculum programme team internal examiners
- Higher Education Quality Manager – act as secretary
- External Examiner (EE) invited to attend / automatically a member.
- University of Hull Quality representative (invited to attend)

Optional attendees

- Northumberland College, Campus Principal Ashington and Berwick.
- Operations Lead Higher Education.

Quorate – At least 50% of the HE Programme Leads responsible for the internal assessment of the programme. The board will still be quorate when the EE is unable to attend but they must

provide relevant comments prior to the board. Any decisions made by the inquorate board will remain provisional until confirmed at the next quorate board.

4.2 Anonymity

- 4.2.1 The Board of Examiners must be conducted keeping student names anonymous. Student enrolment numbers must be used instead. Within the minutes no mention of an individual student name is to be recorded, and no comments should be attributed to individual staff members.

4.3 Agenda

- 4.3.1 The Board must follow the formal agenda as set out in appendix 1 and it must be circulated prior by QTLA administrator at least 10 days in advance of the board.

4.4 Academic Misconduct

- 4.4.1 The Board must be informed of all academic misconduct cases by the Quality office, including those currently ongoing, where the Board must apply any penalty to the relevant module. The Board must not change any academic misconduct outcomes. Where a case is ongoing the Board must defer the marks until the decision for the individual has been concluded.

4.5 Confirmation and recording of marks

- 4.5.1 All marks must be submitted accurately by the Programme Leader to the HE Board Teams site using the relevant module grid at least 5 days prior to a board and after the pre-board. The Programme Leader must have cross referenced the module details against the programme validation document to ensure accuracy against validation. The agreement of all marks and the resolution of any disagreements must happen prior to the board and where appropriate through standardisation and internal verification activity.
- 4.5.2 Programme Leaders must enter on to programme assessment grids (preferably through ProMonitor Markbook) a timely, exact, accurate and complete list of student results for each assessment taken within each module as per their assessment schedule. It must be clear which marks are first attempts or any reassessments. No results are to be submitted to Exams until final verification from the boards. Only completed modules will be confirmed at the board.

The Higher Education Quality Manager and QTLA Administrator must keep clear and appropriate records relating to any board of examiners. Clear and rigorous record keeping permits EPNE to assure itself that:

- It is operating consistently with the framework of relevant codes, policies, regulations and PSRB requirements.
- It is able to recall and inform itself of relevant details in the advent of complaints and/or appeals.

- 4.5.3 The board members will confirm the marks awarded using the relevant module results data, comparisons to previous trends for each module and on other modules at the same level. This will allow the board to reflect on the assessment strategy.
- 4.5.4 The board secretary (Higher Education Quality Manager) is responsible for accurately recording of the module results confirmed by the board and be made available to the relevant programme board.

- 4.5.5 In the event of a Chair's action the board secretary (Higher Education Quality Manager) will ensure an action log is completed within the minutes, with the reason for the amendment(s). The Programme Leader will need to submit a new assessment grid and upload to the Programme Board Teams site ready for the next board. This process will be tracked on the board's action log tracker on Teams by the QTLA Administrator. These chair's actions will then be added to the next module board agenda by the QTLA administrator.
- 4.5.6 For the University of Hull provision, the College is responsible for ensuring that the marks are properly and accurately recorded in the format specified by the University.
- 4.5.7 For the University of Cumbria provision, the College is responsible for ensuring that the marks confirmed later by at the University assessment board are properly and accurately recorded, made available for their module boards, and for purposes of notification of results and official transcripts. The Programme Leader will have this responsibility and overseen by the Higher Education Quality Manager. The consideration of assessment is the responsibility of the University of Cumbria's Module Assessment Board and confirmation of grades the responsibility of the University's Assessment Board. Where practicable the assessment boards shall be conducted in a manner to ensure appropriate representation from the College (eg via video conferencing). College Programme Leaders will be considered members of the assessment board and must attend. The relevant University academic link shall be responsible for advising appropriate staff at the College of the dates and details of the University boards.
- 4.5.8 Electronic records of the results, transcripts and minutes must be kept for 5 years after the completion of the qualification securely, as per the HE assessment policy. These should be saved in the HE Programme Boards folder located on Teams. Where there has been an internal appeal, academic misconduct investigation or other investigation requiring the retention of assessment data, this must be stored securely for 6 years.

5. Board of Examiners - Programme Boards (End of Year)

Membership of the programme boards must consist of:

- An appointed Chair (impartial Faculty Director / Associate Principal / Campus Principal)
- The Higher Education Quality Manager – act as secretary
- The relevant curriculum leader (director, head or curriculum manager)
- The External Examiner (EE) invited to attend / automatically a member.
- University of Hull Quality representative (invited to attend)

Optional attendees

- Northumberland College, Campus Principal Ashington and Berwick (where not the appointed chair).
- Operations Lead Higher Education.

Quorate – The Chair, curriculum leadership and secretary in attendance. The board will still be quorate when the EE is unable to attend but they must provide relevant comments prior to the board. All board decisions must be approved by the EE and approval noted in the minutes. Any decisions made by the inquorate board will remain provisional until confirmed at the next quorate board.

5.2 Anonymity

- 5.2.1 The programme board must be conducted keeping student names anonymous. Student

enrolment numbers must be used instead. Within the minutes no mention of an individual student name is to be recorded, and no comments should be attributed to individual staff members. Note: University of Hull programme boards do allow for the use of student names in programme boards (change for 2025 onwards).

5.3 **Agenda**

The programme board must follow the formal agenda as set out in appendix 2 and it must be circulated prior by QTLA administrator at least 10 days in advance of the board.

5.4 **Academic Misconduct**

The Board must be informed of all academic misconduct cases by the Quality office, including those currently ongoing, where the Board must apply any penalty to the relevant module. The Board must not change any academic misconduct outcomes. Where a case is ongoing the Board must defer the marks until the decision for the individual has been concluded.

6. **Confirmation and recording of marks**

- 6.1 All marks must be submitted accurately by the Programme Leader to the HE Board Teams site using the relevant assessment board grid at least 5 days prior to a board and after an informal pre-board has taken place. The Programme Leader must have cross-referenced the assessment details against the programme validation document to ensure accuracy. The agreement of all marks and the resolution of any disagreements must happen prior to the board.
- 6.2 Programme Leaders must enter on to programme assessment grids (preferably through ProMonitor Markbook) timely, accurate and complete list of student results for each assessment taken within each module as per their assessment schedule. It must be clear which marks are first attempts or any reassessments. No results are to be submitted to Exams until final verification from the boards. Only completed modules will be confirmed at the board.
- 6.3 The board members will confirm the marks awarded using the relevant assessment results data and in comparison to previous trends for the same programme and of the same level. This will allow the board to reflect on the assessment strategy and whether any modifications may be required.
- 6.4 The board secretary (Higher Education Quality Manager) is responsible for accurately recording of the programme results confirmed by the board and be made available to the relevant programme board.
- 6.5 In the event of a Chair's action the board secretary (Higher Education Quality Manager) will ensure an action log is completed within the minutes, with the reason for the amendment(s). The Curriculum Leader/Head of will need to submit a new assessment grid and upload to the Programme Board Teams site ready for the next board. This process will be tracked on the board's action log tracker on Teams by the QTLA Administrator. Any chair's actions will then be added to the next programme board agenda by the QTLA administrator.
- 6.6 For the University of Hull provision, the College is responsible for ensuring that the marks are properly and accurately recorded in the format specified by the University.

- 6.7 For the University of Cumbria provision, the College is responsible for ensuring that the marks confirmed later by the University assessment board are properly and accurately recorded, made available for their module boards, and for purposes of notification of results and official transcripts. The Programme Leader will have this responsibility and overseen by the Higher Education Quality Manager. The consideration of assessment is the responsibility of the University of Cumbria's Module Assessment Board and confirmation of grades the responsibility of the University's Assessment Board. Where practicable the assessment boards shall be conducted in a manner to ensure appropriate representation from the College (e.g. via video conferencing). College Programme Leaders will be considered members of the assessment board and must attend. The relevant University academic link shall be responsible for advising appropriate staff at the College of the dates and details of the University boards.
- 6.8 The decisions of the programme boards must also include compensation, referral and condonement and be recorded in the board minutes and for Hull on the Programme Board report.
- 6.9 Electronic records of the results, transcripts and minutes must be kept for 5 years after the completion of the qualification securely, as per the HE assessment policy. These should be saved in the HE Programme Boards folder located on Teams. Where there has been an internal appeal, academic misconduct investigation or other investigation requiring the retention of assessment data, this must be stored securely for 6 years.

7 Communication of Results and Transcripts

- 7.1 EPNE must ensure that information provided to students across its higher education programmes via results letters and transcripts, is consistent and accurate.
- 7.2 The format and presentation of results letters and transcripts for Pearson and NCFE provision will be approved by the College's Associate Principal, Teaching, Learning and Quality. Exams in liaison with QTLA will be responsible for sending the transcript of the module results to students.
- 7.3 All results letters and transcripts prepared by MIS must be approved by the College's Quality office prior to release. Where anomalies are reported, Quality office will contact MIS and a new transcript produced as appropriate.
- 7.4 Programme Leaders may communicate in-year provisional module results to students, but it must be clear that these module results are provisional only and may be subject to change following External Examination activity and assessment Boards.
- 7.5 In the case of an individual failing a module they must be informed by the Programme Leader regarding resubmission and reassessment as per assessment procedures.
- 7.6 Students must not be contacted about results during the period of College or university Board of Examiners schedules.
- 7.7 For collaborative provision with the University of Hull, the College is responsible for the communication of results, including the production of official transcripts. This is done by the Exams team in liaison with Quality.
- 7.8 For collaborative provision with the University of Cumbria, Certificates and transcripts shall be issued by the University, with the award and title as detailed on the relevant validated

Programme Specification. The name of the College will be recorded on students' certificates and in the graduation programmes.

- 7.9 The College Exam's team sends out direct to the individual student, the official results transcripts and certificates for Pearson provision and NCFE higher education programmes.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

- 8.1 **ELT** is responsible for ensuring oversight of academic leadership oversight of this code of practice and the integrity of Board of Examiners.
- 8.2 **Higher Education Strategic Lead (Northumberland College, Campus Principal, Ashington)** is responsible for ensuring Board of Examiners are carried out across EPNE as per this code of practice.
- 8.3 **Assistant Principal Teaching, Learning and Quality** is responsible for the actual conduct and integrity of the board of Examiners code of conduct and appointment of chairs. They must nominate an administrator to support the administration of the boards of examiners and take into account:
- the number of boards of examiners within their remit of responsibility.
 - the dates relevant boards of examiners are scheduled to convene.
 - the dates pre-boards are scheduled to convene.

They are responsible to ensure all chairs are trained in this code and receive annual updates. The format and presentation of results letters and transcripts must be approved for Pearson provision will be approved by the College's Associate Principal, Teaching, Learning and Quality.

- 8.4 **Faculty Directors / Associate Principals** take up the role of chair of the pre-board chairs and operate these as per the pre-board checklist guidance (appendix 3). They will also be members of the programme boards.
- 8.5 **Programme Leaders** are responsible, along with the Higher Education Quality Manager, for liaising with the partner universities regarding confirmation of Board of Examiners' dates (university collaborative programmes only). They are responsible for uploading module and programme mark grids prior to the College's boards and for presentation and discussion of marks during the module Boards. They have responsibility for attending and adhering to university partner Board of Examiners as per their code. (university collaborative programmes only).

The Programme Leader must ensure that a curriculum report for each programme, including relevant, accurate and reliable information is provided annually and be uploaded to the Programme Board Teams site at least 5 days before the first board. This includes details of the:

- full programme title;
- accurate module titles;
- module credits;
- module levels;
- numbers of assessments per module and type i.e. case study, essay;
- assessment weighing;

- the requirement to pass a specific element in order to pass the module overall; and
- module tutors.

- 8.6 **Higher Education Quality Manager** has responsibility for everything in preparation for the Board including liaising with the external examiners, chairs and EPNE teaching teams, providing Board of Examiners' dates for the academic year. They carry out the role of panel member, supporting the Chair in their duties. They are responsible for overseeing the submission of the Boards' information outcomes to university collaborative partners, with the role as key link contact for relevant programmes only. They are responsible for preparing and/or ensuring the maintenance of appropriate records for a board of examiners respect confidentiality at all times by following GDPR. They must ensure the Board action log trackers are completed and to confirm each stage of the board of examiners code is being met. They must ensure EE analysis and evaluation has taken place prior to the boards.
- 8.7 **Higher Education Operations Lead** has responsibility to write and present an External Examiner report analysis is presented at the HE Board twice a year. They will be an optional member of the module and programme board and must remain impartial at all times and oversee the External Examiner Code of Practice. They are responsible for the appointment of the external examiners and oversee the reporting of external examiners across the College.
- 8.8 **External Examiners (EE)** are automatically members of the board of examiners. They are expected to participate in the boards of examiners at which the final marks for the modules which they are assigned to are considered and report on the individual modules. Invited to participate in the Boards of Examiners at which credit is awarded, progression issues are determined, and degrees are awarded, but attendance is not a requirement. They must submit an EE report for their allocated programme and this must be discussed at the Board, regardless of the EE attendance. Responsibilities of the EE should be read in conjunction with those noted in the Code of Practice for External Examiners
- 8.9 **Associate Principal of Management Information Services** has responsibility for ensuring the accuracy of higher education data recorded within MIS. They have responsibility for ensuring programme teams are clear of the date by which all student results must be entered into the College's recording system with Exams. They have responsibility to oversee along with the Associate Principal, Teaching Learning and Quality the correct method of transcript production for awarding organisations and the University of Hull.
- 8.10 **Head of Exams** have responsibility to ensure results transcripts and certificates are issued in a timely and accurate manner to higher education students. This will be done in liaison with QTLA and where appropriate University partners. It must be noted, with the University of Hull the College has responsibility of sending out official module and programme transcripts.

Additional

8.11 Responsibility of the Chair

The Chair of the programme boards must:

- Ensure meetings are held as per relevant codes and regulations.
- Liaise with the secretary of the board (Higher Education Quality Manager).
- Ensure the EE has seen an appropriate sample of assessed students' work and that their

comments are taken into fully into account.

- Guide the board towards recommendations and decisions.
- Ensure all outcomes are formally and arcuately minuted.
- That students receive appropriate notification of results.

8.12 Responsibility of the Secretary to the Boards (Higher Education Quality Manager)

- Arrange and communicate board dates
- Ensure module samples are available to the External Examiner
- Ensure agendas and relevant paperwork has been circulated to members of each board and /or each member has access to the Teams site.
- Ensure the module and programme marks have been uploaded by curriculum prior to the boards.
- Take and keep accurate records and minutes and ensure approved by the Chair after the boards.

9. Monitoring

9.1 The HE Board will receive twice a year a summary report of the Board of Examiners from the Higher Education Quality Manager. The minutes of the HE Board will be received by ELT.

9.2 The EE report per programme must be analysed and reviewed each year at the Board of Studies by October and summary provided at the HE Board from the Higher Education Operations Lead.

10. Associated Documents

- External Examiners Code of Practice
- HE Assessment Code of Practice
- Mitigating Circumstances Code of Practice
- Academic Appeals Policy
- Academic Misconduct Policy
- University of Cumbria Module Confirmation Boards and University Progression and Award Boards
- University of Hull Board of Examiners Code of Practice

11. Equality Impact Assessment

Have you sought consultation on this Code?

Details: Yes Associate Principal, Teaching, Learning and Quality, Higher Education Operations Lead and wider ELT for feedback. HE Quality Manager AP MIS and Head of Exams HE Board, October 2024 and March 25, with student representative.

Could a particular group be affected (negatively or positively)?	Impact Y/N	Description of Impact	Evidence	Mitigation/ Justification
Protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010				
Age	N			
Disability	N			
Gender Reassignment	N			
Marriage and Civil Partnership	N			
Pregnancy and maternity	N			
Race	N			
Religion or belief	N			
Sex	N			
Sexual Orientation	N			
Additional characteristics to consider				
Young Persons in Care & Care Leavers	N			
Young Carers & Care Givers	N			
Young Parents	N			
Youth Offenders	N			
Those Receiving Free School Meals	N			
If there is no impact, please explain:	<p>No negative impact with this process on particular groups.</p> <p>No student names are used within the Board of Examiners operation to ensure they are ran fairly and accurately.</p>			

Appendix 1



Board of Examiners Agenda - Module Board Agenda (Mid and End of Year).

No	Agenda Items
1.	Attendance and apologies.
2.	Reminder of confidentiality of the Board and declaration of any conflicts of interests.
3.	Confirmation of whether the board is for trimester 1, 2 or 3 and whether first board or re-sit board.
4.	Agreement of previous minutes for accuracy and any matters arising (circulated prior to the board).
5.	Chairs actions (should be circulated before).
6.	Confirmation of the weighting of module components.
7.	Summary of outcomes from any mitigating circumstances meetings (For Hull-Decisions of the additional Consideration Committee).
8.	Report of ongoing academic misconducts and any unresolved cases
9.	Consideration and confirmation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Unit results for individual students.b. Individual student results or referred/deferred units from previous semesters.c. Arrangements and deadlines for any deferred/referred assessments.
10.	Consideration of any trends and confirmation of the module marks.
11.	Feedback and general comments for internal examiners (Programme Leads).
12.	Feedback from the External Examiner(s).
13.	Date of the next Board.

Appendix 2

**Education
Partnership
North East**



Board of Examiners Agenda - Programme Board Agenda (End of Year)

No	Agenda Items
1.	Attendance and apologies.
2.	Reminder of confidentiality of the Board and declaration of any conflicts of interest.
3.	Confirmation of whether the board is a first board or re-sit board.
4.	Agreement of previous minutes for accuracy (circulated prior to the board).
5.	Chairs actions (should be circulated before).
6.	Confirmation of the classification weighting of the programme (where applicable).
7.	Matters arising including consideration of candidates referred at the previous level.
8.	Any decisions for compensation, referral and condonement. Decisions of the Additional Consideration Committee relevant to the programme board (for Hull only).
9.	Progression decisions for each level of the progression.
10.	Progression to the award (for candidates on the final level of an award) and classification (where applicable).
11.	Feedback and general comments for internal examiners (Programme Leads).
12.	Feedback from and confirmation of decisions by the External Examiner(s).
13.	Date of the next Board.

Appendix 3

Pre- Board of Examiners Guidance

The following sets out the principles for the following Board of Examiners code:

- Midyear – Module Boards
- End of year – Module Boards and Programme Boards.

Mid-year (Module) Boards

1. Held in March
2. They will take place by TEAM.
3. Grids –
 - a. All module board grids must be submitted and uploaded to the 'grids' section on the Teams site 5 working days prior to the date of the meeting.
 - b. Any exceptions must be discussed with the Faculty Director and Head of HE Academic Standards and Quality.
 - c. **Grids MUST be anonymised, so no student name/info is present.**
 - d. No personal student information should be discussed at Mid-year boards. Any mitigating circumstances or specific information about students should be shared. Only report on the status of process in which the student is applied for, with clear dates.
 - e. Grids must be complete either on the **correct template** on the teams site. See table below for each awarding body for grids.

Pearson	NCFE	Cumbria	Hull
Pearson specific grid	EPNE Grid or mark book	EPNE Grid or Mark book	Mark book