1. Panel and Board update 2015-16 – Donna Strickland

We are now entering that busy time of Subject Assessment Panels and Award Assessment Boards. You should have received confirmation from AP as to who will be attending your various Partner Institution meetings as the Plymouth University representative, if you have not received this information please don’t hesitate to contact me.

★★Please also note as has been the practice for the last few academic years, there is no need for the Academic Liaison Person (ALP) to be invited to the meetings by either the Partner Institution or the Programme Team.★★

As a quick reminder please note the following;

- Partners need to ensure that they agree the date for next year’s Subject Assessment Panels and Partner Institution Award Assessment Board with the relevant External Examiner at this year’s meeting.

- Subject Assessment Panel meetings will be chaired by the subject leader/Programme Manager or equivalent and the Partner Award Assessment Board will be chaired by the AP representative.

- As was the case last academic year, point 7 on the Subject Assessment Panel agenda asks the Subject External Examiner, to confirm whether there are any matters that require discussion with the Award External Examiner prior to the Award Assessment Board. Point 6 on the Award Assessment Board agenda then asks the Award External Examiner to report any issues which have been raised by Subject External Examiner(s) and discussed with Award External Examiner prior to Board. Please be reminded of the expectation that Partners facilitate communication between Subject External Examiners and the Award External Examiner prior to the Award Assessment Board. The University’s preferred means of achieving this is through a face to face meeting but if for logistical reasons (e.g. the relative timing of Panels and Boards or the number of Subject External Examiners who report into a Board) this is not practicable, then alternative means by which Subject External Examiner issues are drawn to the attention of the Award External Examiner prior to the Board must be put in place (e.g. direct communication between externals via email).
Please ensure that any prizes awarded to students must be confirmed at the Partner Award Assessment Board and listed within the minutes along with confirmation of who is to be awarded the AP prize.

At the Partner Award Assessment Board, “hard” copies of documents please need to be made available for the Chair and External Examiner- all other attendees at the Award Assessment Board can view the documents electronically.

Can I please ask that on a daily basis following the meetings (as once the meetings have concluded the marks cannot be changed), your marks are e-mailed to approgrammes@plymouth.ac.uk so that we can begin uploading data in preparation for the HESA return?

Please note that all other Subject Assessment Panel and Award Assessment Board documentation can also be e-mailed to us including signed results lists and External Examiner Subject Assessment Panel and Award Assessment Board declarations which can also be scanned and e-mailed within 10 working days of the meetings to approgrammes@plymouth.ac.uk.

Please don’t forget to check if there are any students who withdrew from the programme either at the start of this academic year and therefore, may not have returned to study or have withdrawn part the way through the academic year to see if they should be awarded an exit award at this summer’s Award Assessment Board meeting.

If a student has interrupted their studies part the way through the academic year, the Award Assessment Board will need to make a decision as to what modules the student will be studying and the relevant attempt number when they resume their studies.

2. Regulation updates – Donna Strickland

New for 2015-2016

Exceptional Referrals
Following a change to PU regulations for 2015/2016, if after the referral period, and after consideration of compensation, a student has not achieved the requisite number of credits to complete the level, the Referred Award Assessment Board will, allow the student to progress and offer a further referral opportunity during the next session based on a judgement of the student’s overall performance and potential. This decision will normally be applied in the case of failure in up to 20 credits (or one 30 credit module)

If a Student is permitted an Exceptional Referral….

− Any student permitted an exceptional or extended referral will be required to submit their work for a deadline at the end of November.
− The student should be enrolled on this module again when completing enrolment in September, clearly noting on the enrolment cover sheet that the student is undertaking the module as an exceptional referral.
− This work is marked and the student is given a provisional mark. Please note that there is no need to hold an exceptional award assessment board.
Feedback should be given to students by the end of the Autumn Term (with academic staff consulting with External Examiners over any borderline marks). This would enable students who had failed at their final attempt to be advised of their options and, in particular, to have the opportunity of withdrawing by the end of the first week of the following term and thereby avoiding liability for the full year’s fees.

The mark is then presented at the following summer subject assessment panel and award assessment board meeting.

Reminder of recent updates

Capping of Marks at Element Level

Capping of marks at element level should be introduced for all taught programmes except those for which there are existing exceptions to Regulations with effect from September 2013. Therefore, due to this change in PU regulations, marks will now no longer be capped at module level, they will instead be capped at element level.

For example:

At the summer award assessment board a student has the following profile for a module:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coursework</th>
<th>Exam</th>
<th>Module Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The decision of the award board would be that the student would be referred in the coursework element of the module as a second attempt. Therefore, if the student is successful in their referred work at the referred award board under the new regulations the student’s profile would be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coursework</th>
<th>Exam</th>
<th>Module Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please also note:

- A part time student may be awarded a compensated pass only at the point when the student has attempted 120 credits of a level
- All undergraduate students have three attempts at passing a module which also included final stage honours degree students
- HNCs from 2011-12 onwards can now be awarded with distinction if students achieve 70% or above.

Compensation

As a reminder there was an important change in the regulations from 2014-15 with regards to compensation which may affect final stage students studying a Foundation Degree, HND, HNC or Honours Degree awards. PU regulations now state:
9.6 The Award Assessment Board should make its decision on whether to compensate or refer at the final stage based on the student’s potential to achieve a higher classification on referral

In previous years, Award Assessment Boards have not had discretion regarding compensation and if a student could be compensated, this was automatically applied, therefore, following this change in PU regulations and in-line with practice of main campus Faculties this process should be operated as follows:

- Any final stage students who can be compensated for a module should be compensated at the Award Assessment Board.

- Included in the template letters for students being awarded a Foundation Degree, HNC, HND, Honours Degree or Ordinary Degree is a paragraph regarding compensation. If a student feels that by opting to undertake a referral in the failed element(s) rather than accepting the compensated pass this will improve their award i.e. they will be awarded with distinction or improve their degree classification if studying an honours degree, then they can opt to undertake a referral in the module rather than accepting the compensated pass.

- Students wishing to take this option should notify the relevant point of contact within your institution by the date of your appeal deadline. Please note individual appeal deadline dates have been forwarded to each Partner by Kelly Dinham. Please let me know if you are unsure of the date.

- To help in mitigating confusion, AP should then be sent copies of your signed results lists following this deadline which encompass any students wishing to take this option, therefore, the signed results list should clearly indicate the award in the case of students who have opted to take the compensated pass or the module(s) that a student will be referred in if they choose to undertake a referral.

- At the September Referred Award Assessment Board, you will need to formally record under item 4 Decisions made on progression and awards following the last meeting of the Board any students who have opted to undertake a referral rather than the compensated pass.

The results letter template advises students that if they have any queries regarding this offer that they should contact yourselves for advice. Please be aware that if a student opts to undertake a referral in the failed element(s) any elements taken at the second or third attempt will be capped at the pass mark, normally 40% and any marks obtained by undertaking the referral will be used when calculating the student’s final award even if they are subsequently lower than the original marks gained.

All other regulations regarding compensation remain as follows:

- The majority of AP modules are compensatable. This can be clarified by checking the MR.
Compensation can only be permitted provided the Student has:

- Failed up to 20 credits per stage (provided the modules are not designated as non-compensatable).
- Module aggregate mark(s) between 30-39%.
- Stage aggregate of at least 40%.
- If the original mark was below 40% it will stand (i.e. if a module is compensated it must not be rounded up to 40%), if above 40% the mark will be reduced to 40%.

For Example:

Coursework 28%, exam 65%, module aggregate mark 35% - 35% stands

Coursework 25%, exam 70%, module aggregate mark 46.50% - mark reduced to 40%

Please note: A part time student may be awarded a compensated pass only at the point when the student has attempted 120 credits of a level

3. HESA 2015-16 reminder – Donna Strickland

Similar to last year, staff here at Academic Partnerships will be loading your students’ marks over the summer into our UNIT-e system in preparation for the annual HESA return. As you are aware AP comprises of approx. 7,000 students who each study around 6-8 modules and therefore this isn’t a small task but is a vital one as it is the HESA return which ultimately drives the University’s and in turn Partner Institution funding. Therefore, can I please ask that on a daily basis following the panel and board meetings (as once the meetings have concluded the marks cannot be changed), your marks are e-mailed to AP so that we can begin the upload? Please send these to our generic e-mail address: approgrammes@plymouth.ac.uk

Please note that your panel and board minutes, results lists and External Examiner panel and board declarations can also either be scanned and e-mailed or posted as a “hard” copy to my address below within 10 working days of the panel and board meeting.

Fundamentally we have now had communication from our Corporate Information and Business Improvement department that the final deadline for Plymouth University to
enter data into the file for this year’s HESA return is **Friday 16th September 2016**. All of your summer panel and board marks will have been received following the summer panel and board meetings however, as you can appreciate, this is an extremely tight deadline for us to adhere to in order to upload the marks following the September referral boards. Therefore, in order for us to ensure that all of your students’ marks are entered in time for this deadline, can you please ensure that all paperwork relating to referred students is received by AP by “close of play” on **Thursday 8th September 2016**. You will note that this deadline has been moved forward by a couple of days from previous years primarily to help enable a smooth transition for students progressing from a Partner College to the Faculties here on the main PU campus. Feedback has been reported from progressing students that they have experienced difficulties in receiving induction information if copies of their referred board marks are not received until “close of play” on the Friday with induction commencing on the Monday of the following week. It is the student’s referred board marks which enable the receiving Faculty to confirm the student’s place. Please be aware that I am unable to guarantee that any student marks received after this deadline will be entered into UNIT-e which may ultimately affect our funding received and any potential claw-back of funds from HEFCE, as they may be shown as non-completers.

If you have any queries regarding any of the above please don’t hesitate to contact Donna Strickland.

4. Enrolment Team...Data Team

You may notice that we have started calling Kim’s Enrolment Team the Data Team. We think this will more correctly identify the tasks that Kim’s team deal with because, as you know, the vast majority of the enrolments appear only at one part of the Academic Year (although, with new partners joining AP we now have enrolments that arrive throughout the academic year). You may therefore be forgiven for wondering what the team do for the rest of the year! However, it’s a bit of a misnomer as they have tasks that are ongoing throughout the year. For instance, they took on admissions tasks a few years ago; they are constantly updating records, providing reports and cross-checking data quality. We therefore think that the Data Team might make it a little clearer in the future. However, if you do still call them the enrolment team – we’ll still know who you mean!

5. Data Protection

You will probably have received an email regarding an issue that has occurred with students not knowing how their information is used by Plymouth University. This information this link leads to, will hopefully clarify concerns they might have. Please incorporate this into the information you provide your students
with. If you use hard copy enrolment forms it could be added to this.  
https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/essential-information/data-protection

6. LOST STUDENT CARDS

If your students mislay their PU students cards they can re-order and pay for a replacement card using the link below. We can however, still receive paper card applications forms if received with £5 payment.  
http://estore.plymouth.ac.uk/browse/product.asp?catid=423&modid=1&compid=1

7. AP Graduation Date

The Academic Partnerships Graduation Ceremony will be held on Thursday 22nd September at 4.00pm on Plymouth Hoe.

This newsletter is also available online (under the heading General information and admin newsletters) at the following address: https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/business-partners/partnerships/academic-partnerships/academic-partnerships-processes-and-templates

Carol McAllister  
Partnership Administration Manager  
Email: carol.mcallister@plymouth.ac.uk  
Tel: 01752 587500  
Address: Room 302 Hepworth House, Plymouth University, PL4 8AA