GUIDANCE ON THE PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING ERRORS AFTER AN EXAM BOARD HAS MET

Guidance includes

Steps to take when an error is reported
Detailed guidance on handling different types of errors
Explanation of how the link between RPS and ESIS works after backload

Steps to take when an error is reported

1 The general approach is to:

- Gather accurate information
- Be clear about the impact of any error
- Seek the appropriate level of approval for changes
- Update the records
- Inform the student(s)
- Inform relevant colleagues in other teams.

2 Steps to take to get approval for the change (see Appendix for checklist on handling error)

Steps to take to get approval for the change
If the department reports the error, always get full details in writing from the department.
If a student reports an error, investigate the case and liaise directly with the department. Always get full details in writing from the department if an error has occurred.
Always make sure that you are clear whether the error affects only one student or all students on a particular module, course etc. Bear in mind that students from outside the department may be taking the affected module.
Always inform colleagues as soon as possible if an error may affect students at an Exam Board they are servicing. Act very swiftly if the error might affect a Board which has not yet met or results which have not yet been released.
Always report any errors which appear to be due to the Result Processing System not having applied a rule correctly. Alert the

Senior Assessment Manager in these cases immediately.
Always seek advice from your Senior Assessment Manager about cases where a change to the outcome could have serious implications for the student(s) involved. Never reconvene an Exam Board to change a student's degree classification without having the Senior Assessment Manager sign this off first.
Always seek the correct level of approval for a change, and always involve the Academic Registrar/PVC (Education) where it appears that published results may need to be lowered.
When reconvening a virtual Exam Board always double-check that you are sending it to the correct board. This is particularly important for students on joint courses where the error may have been reported by one department, but the results are sent to a different department's Exam Board.
Always ensure that a revised grid (produced from the Test system) is sent to the Reconvened Exam Board along with full details of the case. (see guidance on virtual Boards for more info)

3   Steps to take once the change has been approved. (see Appendix for checklist on handling error)

Steps to take once the change has been approved.
Never make any changes on the Live RPS system when results have already been released. This is because there is still a dynamic link between RPS and ESIS for c/wk, exam and module marks (see section X below). Always use the Test system and then make changes on the Live system once approval has been given. <mark>See guidance on updating the database post-backload.</mark>
Ensure that the students have been informed of the change of outcome. An apology must be issued. The level of detail given about the change will depend on how the error was identified – ie if the student reported it, or if this will come as a surprise. Upload correspondence to ESF.
Inform Graduation Team if the outcome results in a change to the degree result and/or the transcript, as they will need to run new documentation.
If change affects exam resits **AND** the Exams Team has already taken the resit data (normally middle of week after Graduation), you must send Exams an email notifying of the change examsacs@essex.ac.uk
Update the Exam Board file with a note about the error.
Log the error on a spreadsheet so we can keep track of the number of cases. Z:assessment team/exam boards 2016/june error log

4 Details on how to handle different types of errors

	Description of issue	What to do
A	Student informs us of an error in the marks after publication.	1. the department must be asked to confirm what the correct mark should be, in writing. 2. the exam board secretary and chair must review the grid to see what effect the new mark would have on the student's result. To gain a complete picture of the change the new mark should be input on the Test system and a grid run from that system for comparison with the old grid. Double-check that there are no other differences than the change of mark which has been reported. 3. the action taken will depend on the potential impact of the new mark: **a)** in cases where the correction of the error has no major effect, (eg a coursework mark goes from 52% to 53% which has negligible impact overall) the chair should approve the change on behalf of the exam board. **b)** in cases where the correction of the error would have a major effect, but the outcome is automatic (eg the student has now passed a component they had previously appeared to have failed and therefore no longer needs to take a resit, or the student will now receive a higher degree classification as of right) the whole exam board must be informed of the change. This will be done by means of email. The new results will be communicated to the student after 24 hours of the exam board having been informed. The anonymised grid run from the Test system showing the new marks must be attached. In cases where the degree classification would be changed, the secretary <u>must</u> consult the Senior Education Manager or the with full details of the case and a copy of the revised grid <u>before</u> the Exam Board is reconvened. **c)** in cases where the correction of the error could have a major effect and the exam board would need to consider whether to exercise discretion differently in light of extenuating circumstances, the chair would need to prepare a report for a virtual reconvened exam board. The report would be sent electronically. The report should give an outline of the case, include a note of the previous minutes relating to the case, include the new grid, highlight the action taken in comparable cases and make a proposal on what action the board should take. Members should be given a deadline to respond, and a non-response would be taken as consent. It may be that the chair deems that a period of 24 hours would be acceptable. However if the case is likely to be controversial, or is very complicated, the chair may wish to set a longer period of time for responses to be sent or may wish to reconvene a physical meeting of the board. See the guidance on holding virtual boards for more information about the process. .

B	Department/chair/secretary discovers there has been an error after the Board has met but **BEFORE** the results have been released. This might affect only one student or all students on an entire module (eg marks entered incorrectly, or the wrong coursework:exam weighting used)	1. The department must tell the secretary or the Assessment Team what the correct mark/weightings should be, in writing. 2. As the problem has been discovered <u>before</u> the results have been released to students, publication must be delayed until the issue has been resolved. 3. Where the error affects many students on a range of courses, the secretary must inform the Assessment Team who must immediately ensure that all the relevant chairs/exam boards are informed about the error. 4. If the error appears to relate to the way the RPS system has calculated the result, this must be reported immediately to the Senior Assessment Manager and an RPS Issues Report Form submitted to the RPS team. 5. Take the steps outlined in A1-4 above. As the results have not been released, it may be possible to make the changes directly onto the live system and run new grids for checking. However, the Test System can be used to look at the potential effect of changes
C	Department/chair/secretary discovers there has been an error **AFTER** the results have been released. This might affect only one student or all students on an entire module (eg marks entered incorrectly, or the wrong coursework:exam weighting used)	1. The department must tell the secretary or the Assessment Team what the correct mark/weightings should be, in writing. 2. Where the results have already been released it is important to take urgent action as students will be taking actions based on the results they have been given. 3. Where the error affects many students on a range of courses, the secretary must inform the Assessment Team who must immediately must ensure that all the relevant chairs/exam boards are informed about the error. Delay releasing results for any courses on which results have not yet been released. 4. If the error appears to relate to the way the RPS system has calculated the result, this must be reported immediately to the Senior Assessment Manager and an RPS Issues Report Form submitted to the RPS team. 5. The exam board secretary and chair must review the grid to see what effect the new mark would have on the student's result. To gain a complete picture of the change the new mark MUST be input on the Test system and a grid run from that system for comparison with the old grid. Double-check that there are no other differences than the change of mark which has been reported. Do NOT make changes to the Live system as this will automatically be released to students. **T**he action taken will depend on the potential impact of the new mark: **a)** in cases where the correction of the error has no major effect, (eg a coursework mark goes from 52% to 53% which has negligible impact overall) the chair should approve the change on behalf of the exam board but the Exam Board must be

informed.

b) in cases where the correction of the error would have a major effect, but the outcome is automatic (i.e the student has now passed a component they had previously appeared to have failed and therefore no longer needs to take a resit) the whole exam board must be informed of the change. This will be done by means of email. The new results will be communicated to the student after 24 hours of the exam board having been informed. The anonymised grid run from the Test system showing the new marks must be attached.

Where the error means that the student(s) would gain a worse result the PVC (Education) and the Academic Registrar MUST be informed before any action is taken to reconvene the Exam Board. The PVC (Education) will give advice on how to proceed and whether to recommend that the result should not be lowered taking into account all the circumstances of the case.

In cases where the degree classification would be raised, the secretary must consult their Line Manager, the Senior Assessment Manager with full details of the case and a copy of the revised grid before the Exam Board is reconvened.

c) in cases where the correction of the error could have a major effect and the exam board would need to consider whether to exercise discretion differently in light of extenuating circumstances, the chair would need to prepare a report for a virtual reconvened exam board. The report would be sent electronically. The report should give an outline of the case, include a note of the previous minutes relating to the case, include the new grid, highlight the action taken in comparable cases and make a proposal on what action the board should take. Members should be given a deadline to respond, and a non-response would be taken as consent. It may be that the chair deems that a period of 24 hours would be acceptable. However if the case is likely to be controversial, or is very complicated, the chair may wish to set a longer period of time for responses to be sent or may wish to reconvene a physical meeting of the board.

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| D | Department/chair/secretary believes that there has been an inconsistency in the way a student's extenuating circumstances have been treated compared with other students. | If it is discovered after the results have been released that there has been an inconsistency which suggests that a student has been treated unfairly, for example there is prima facie evidence that they should have been considered for a higher class of degree but their extenuating circumstances were not fully considered, then a report should be prepared by the chair for the board of examiners.

The secretary must consult their Line Manager, the Senior Assessment Manager with full details of the case and a copy of the grid before the chair is contacted.

The chair must decide whether the Exam Board must be reconvened and full details of the case (including the grid) put to the board. This action should only be taken in cases where the outcome would benefit the student. |

5 THE MECHANICS OF CHANGING MARKS ONCE APPROVAL HAS BEEN OBTAINED

Remember, if you want to see the impact of changes or want to run grids for a virtual board, you must use the Test system not the live system. You can then amend the live system once results are ready to be released.

See guidance notes on how to make amendments to marks/assessment outcomes after the results have been backloaded.

6 HOW DOES RPS AND THE ESIS RECORD INTERACT AFTER THE BACKLOAD OF MARKS?

After backload students can see their marks on the web. These marks will be available across the summer until RPS is closed on 19 August 2016 and is then set up with reassessment data.

- There is a dynamic link between RPS and ESIS post-backload for the following data. This means that if any of these fields are changed on the live RPS system it will show on the web for the student.

    - Coursework aggregate
    - Exam aggregate
    - Module aggregate
    - Flagging/unflagging of reassessment
    - Decision choices

- There is **NO** link between RPS and ESIS post-backload for the following, so changes to the following fields MUST be made on ESIS. Otherwise they won't show on the web.

    - Stage mark
    - Degree mark
    - Notes for Student/Board and ext circs flags
    - The award (or unaward) of credits for the module
    - Overall updating of SER (Stage Enrolment Record) credits
    - Module class
    - Module reassessment comments
    - Min/max credits
    - Overall assessment outcome
    - Qualifier and prizes (notify Graduation and Studata to get this amended)

Appendix – checklist for handling error

Steps to take to get approval for the change	Record of action taken/notes
If the department reports the error, always get full details in writing from the department.	
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Steps to take once the change has been approved.	Record of action taken/notes
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If change affects exam resits **AND** the Exams Team has already taken the resit data (normally middle of week after Graduation), you must send Exams an email notifying	

of the change examsacs@essex.ac.uk	
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