

Recording minutes for Boards of Examiners

At Boards of Examiners for Units (BEUs) and for Programmes (BEP), the notes of the meeting (“the minutes”) are the vital, permanent record of what discussions took place, what recommendations were made, and why those particular recommendations were reached.

All formal records of committee meetings should be appropriate and clear. At BEUs and BEPs this is a very necessary requirement because:

- Decisions made by the BEUs and BEPs are only recommendations until they reach the Board of Studies—and sufficient context will help them to determine whether the recommendations should be confirmed as formal decisions.
- The minutes are the permanent record of properly-exercised assessment decision-making processes—good governance means we should be able to see what recommendation was reached, and why.
- Were a mistake to occur, we need to be able to check what was intended.
- Discussions about scaling—and decisions not to scale—need to be fully explained as they are part of a record that may be communicated to both staff and students.
- The minutes help to demonstrate the inputs of external examiners into the decision-making.
- As a permanent record of decision-making, the minutes are a key part of how we as a University affirm the standards of our programmes and the achievements of our students.

So, how do we make sure that we produce excellent BEU and BEP minutes? They should:

- Be effectively structured, demonstrating the logical progression of consideration resulting in a clearly-indicated recommendation.
- Be specific in what is said, rather than making generalised or vague statements.
- Clearly indicate who was present at the meeting, so that it is evident that the quorum was met and that the relevant people contributed to the decision-making.
- Fully explain decisions, should these vary from the recommendations provided in reports.
- Be appropriately sensitive to the particulars of confidential student matters.
- Provide an effective and independent record separate from those who attended—in other words, someone who was not present at the meeting should be able to read them and understand what was discussed and agreed.

Guidance and resources

Central examinations board resource page: <http://www.bath.ac.uk/registry/boardsofexaminers>

This page highlights important resources for those acting as Secretaries. The page also references the Academic Registry session on *Principles & context of assessment decision-making*, which gives an introductory overview of assessment decision-making including the role of Boards of Examiners. Secretaries will find this helpful background to understanding the context behind the academic business undertaken at BEU and BEP meetings.

Assistant Registrars (Faculty/School) will offer guidance on how to service BEUs and BEPs within the Faculty/School.

For a full understanding of the role and purpose of BEUs and BEPs, it is strongly recommended that Secretaries familiarise themselves with *QA35: Assessment Procedures for Taught Programmes of Study* (<http://www.bath.ac.uk/quality/documents/QA35.pdf>).

Templates for BEU and BEP agendas and minutes can be found online as appendices to QA35 at <http://www.bath.ac.uk/quality/cop/statements.html>.

The University Secretariat provides general guidance and training to those staff servicing and taking minutes at formal committees:

<https://www.bath.ac.uk/guides/servicing-committees/>

<https://www.bath.ac.uk/guides/meetings-effective-committee-servicing/>