

# Assessment Framework

**September 2023**

Please see the Assessment Framework online at:  
<https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/policy-guidance/assessment/>

## Contents

Title	Page number
<b>Section A: The Principles of Assessment</b>	3
Principles of assessment	4
<b>Section B: The Practice of Assessment</b>	6
Policy on marking	7
Guidance on Moderation, Fairness and Consistency in Marking	10
Policy on submission of work for summative assessment on taught programmes	16
Guidance on late submission	19
Policy on feedback to Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students	23
Framework for the Design and Use of Grade Descriptors	29
Guidance on the retention of teaching and learning material	34
Policy on alternative assessments	37
Guidance on assessment for disabled students	39
Policy on religious observance and guidance for students	40
Guidance for the presentation of Taught Masters Dissertations for UG and PGT Provision	43
Policy on ethical approval of research on taught subjects in taught assessment	50
Guidance on Assessed Student Group Working	52
<b>Section C: Reaching Decisions from Assessment</b>	58
Guidance on Examination Boards	59
Procedures for anonymous handling of marks	82
Policy on mitigating circumstances and coursework extensions	84
Mitigating Circumstances Procedures	89
Procedure for Extensions	105
Student self-certification of absence from learning	109
Guidance on reassessment away from Manchester	110
<b>Section D: The Process of Assessment</b>	111
Policy on examinations	112
Examinations: Guidance for students	114
Guidance on the use of calculators in examinations	118
Guidance on the use of dictionaries in examinations	119
Academic Malpractice	120
Procedures for handling unfair practice in examinations	121

# **Section A: The Principles of Assessment**

## **Principles of Assessment**

1. Assessment is the process of forming a judgement about a student's attainment of knowledge, understanding or skills.
2. Each programme of study should include a series of assessment tasks, which together make up the 'assessment scheme' for the programme. The scheme is summarized in the Programme Specification and should satisfy three sets of principles, described further below.
  - (a) Educational: the processes of assessment should help students learn, or reinforce previous learning, or both.
  - (b) Ethical: the processes of assessment should be fair and transparent, and must not discriminate according to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion or belief, age, class or disability.
  - (c) Regulatory: the processes of assessment should conform to University expectations, as detailed in its regulations, policies, procedures and guidance.

Online assessment should be carefully considered in relation to these principles.

3. Educational principles
  - Assessment tasks should form an integral part of the curriculum and the teaching and learning process.
  - There should be an appropriate mix of formative and summative assessment throughout the programme, with summative assessments being used formatively, where possible.
  - Excessive and unnecessary assessment should be avoided (an intended learning outcome should not normally be assessed repeatedly).
  - The timing and amount of assessment should be organised to facilitate deep learning (too many similar deadlines for submission may produce surface learning for tasks that singly would encourage deep learning).
  - Feedback to students should be rapid, and should contain positive, encouraging comments where possible as well as pointers for future improvement.
  - All staff contact with students is a potential mechanism for feedback to and from students.
  - Peer assessment (assessment of students' work by other students) should be used, especially formatively, to provide rapid feedback and promote understanding of assessment criteria and marking scales.
  - Innovation in online assessment, marking and submission of assessed work is encouraged.
4. Ethical principles
  - Assessment tasks and marking criteria should focus on the intended learning outcomes for the programme or unit.
  - The assessment scheme should allow students to demonstrate their achievement of all the intended learning outcomes by the end of the programme.
  - Students should be informed in advance about the assessment tasks, marking scheme and marking criteria for their programme units.
  - Students should be helped to understand the requirements of assessment, e.g. through guidance, discussion with tutors, model answers or peer assessment.
  - Students should be made aware of the procedure to follow if they wish to query or appeal against an assessment decision.
  - The assessment process should not be biased according to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion or belief, age, class or disability.

- Students and staff should evaluate the effectiveness of the assessment scheme (e.g. during periodic programme reviews).
- Where assessment takes place online, clear protocols and instructions should be given to the students in advance of the assessment taking place.

5. Regulatory principles

- The assessment scheme should provide enough evidence of students' achievement to enable robust decisions to be made about their progression through the programme and the award of the intended academic qualification.
- Assessment tasks should allow students to demonstrate achievement appropriate to the level of the intended award in the *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications*.
- Assessment tasks should be managed across the programme, to achieve appropriate variety in assessment tasks, avoid unnecessary concentrations of assessment at particular times and reflect intellectual progression through the programme.
- Assessment should be conducted in accordance with University regulations, policies, procedures and guidance, as set out in this Assessment Framework and elsewhere.

# **Section B: The Practice of Assessment**

**Policy on Marking**  
**(Revised November 2015)**

**CONTENTS**

1. Introduction and Scope
2. Purpose
3. Definitions
4. The Policy
5. Giving Feedback on Assessment
6. Internal Examining
7. Internal Moderation
8. Marking Online Assessment
9. External Moderation

**1. Introduction and Scope**

This document sets out the University's *Policy on Marking*. It applies to the marking of all work (including dissertations) of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught students that is assessed summatively.

**2. Purpose**

The purpose of the Policy is to ensure equality and fairness in the treatment of students and consistency of practice in relation to marking procedures across the University.

**3. Definitions**

- 3.1 The **Academic Unit Lead** is appointed by the School to oversee the assessment for a unit and ensure that model/expected answers are produced where appropriate.
- 3.2 The **Internal Examiner** is the first marker and is appointed by the Academic Lead or nominee. Their role is to mark in accordance with the model/expected answers, the marking scheme and expected School outcomes.
- 3.3 The **Internal Moderator** is appointed by the School to moderate the marking in accordance with the model answers and the marking scheme. The Internal Moderator is overseen by the Academic Lead.
- 3.4 The **External Examiner** moderates a sample of assessed work in accordance with University regulations, model/expected answers and the marking scheme (see the University's [Guidance on External Examiner Procedures](#)).

**Note:** 3.1 (Academic Unit Lead) and 3.2 (Internal Examiner) can be the same person.

**4. The Policy**

- 4.1 Schools must have a clear and transparent marking scheme, and this must be published in programme/student handbooks.
- 4.2 All assessment, including presentations, must be marked by an Internal Examiner and an agreed sample reviewed by an Internal Moderator and an External Examiner.
- 4.3 Marks awarded for summative assessment must be overseen by the Academic Unit Lead.

- 4.4 All assessment tasks should be designed relative to the Intended Learning Outcomes, and examinations should be accompanied by guidance for the purposes of internal examining and review by an Internal and/or External Examiner.
- 4.5 All formal written assessments must be marked anonymously. However, it is recognised that this may not be possible for all assessments, particularly assessed performances, presentations or Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs).
- 4.6 Schools should adopt procedures to check that all sections of each piece of assessed work have been marked, that partial marks have been totalled correctly, and that total marks have been transferred correctly to Examination Board reports.
- 4.7 Where applicable, Schools should have procedures in place to apply a penalty if the word count exceeds the limit by more than 10%. Penalties should be articulated clearly to students in assessment briefs and programme/student handbooks.

## **5. Giving Feedback on Assessment**

- 5.1 Schools must have procedures for providing clear and useful feedback to indicate how marks have been assigned, in accordance with the [Policy on Feedback to Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students](#).
- 5.2 Markers should be aware that comments on exam scripts are personal data that students have a legal right to see.

## **6. Internal Examining**

- 6.1 Each unit will have an Academic Unit Lead who is appointed by the School to oversee its assessment.

## **7. Internal Moderation**

- 7.1 Once internal examining/first marking has taken place, internal moderation will normally take the form of moderation of a sample of 20% of the work, through the full range of marks awarded. In the case of very small/large numbers, a minimum of 10 scripts and a maximum of 50 scripts are suggested for internal moderation.
- 7.2 On units with a large number of students where the marking is undertaken by multiple markers, the Academic Unit Lead for that unit should compare the mark distribution of all the Internal Examiners to reveal significant inconsistencies in marking or issues with question setting.
- 7.3 Marking disputes should be referred to the Chair of the Examination Board, who has the authority to recommend further interventions or a resolution.
- 7.4 The proposed model of internal moderation is the minimum standard expected. However, Schools or programmes may employ additional marking standards over and above the minimum where they consider this to be appropriate.

## **8. Marking Online Assessment**

- 8.1 In the case of online assessment, the [Policy on Marking](#) and the [Policy on Feedback to Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students](#) apply in full.
- 8.2 Procedures must also be adopted to ensure that work is marked in accordance with a marking scheme and moderated as stated in this Policy.



## 9. External Moderation

9.1 The External Examiner will moderate a sample of work in accordance with the University's [Guidance on External Examiner Procedures](#).

Version 1.1, November 2015 (website links updated November 2017)

## Guidance on Moderation, Fairness and Consistency in Marking (July 2018)

### 1. Introduction/Scope

- 1.1 There are various models of achieving fairness and consistency in marking and assessment in taught undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, with some being more rigorous than others, and more suited to specific types of assessment than others. This document aims to outline the details of some of these models, specifically moderation, in order to provide guidance to staff members in their marking and moderation procedures.
- 1.2 This document sets out the *minimum level of moderation activity* in the assessment process that must be undertaken for taught programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate taught level<sup>1</sup> at The University of Manchester. Any variations in practice should be approved by the relevant Faculty. The document has been produced following consideration of relevant University of Manchester policies and guidance and the Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code: Chapter B6 Assessment of Students.
- 1.3 This document should be read with reference to the following University documents:
- [Policy on Marking](#)
  - [Guidance on External Examiner Procedures](#)
  - [Guidance on Examination Boards](#)
  - [Policy on Feedback to Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students](#)
- 1.4 The University's [Guidance on Examination Boards](#) lists three types of Board and their remits:
- Progression Board
  - Moderation Board
  - Award Board

Where reference is made in this document to a 'Board' or an 'Examination Board' this reflects that the statement could apply to more than one of these types of Board. In such cases this guidance should be used in the contexts both of the activity and of local practice.

### 2. Principles: double marking

#### 2.1 Double Blind Marking

Double marking (either blind or non-blind) may take place for some forms of assessment, most commonly for dissertations or other large projects. In double blind marking, the first marker should make no annotations of any kind on the work being marked so that the work is seen by the second marker with no indication of the first marker's comments or marks. Both markers should record their marks and comments separately and then compare marks and resolve any differences to produce an agreed mark. Agreed marks and comments may then be provided on the students' work.

#### 2.2 Non-Blind Double Marking

In non-blind double marking, the first marker would normally make some annotations on the work, with the second marker receiving the work with this information known. This may involve varying degrees of information being made available to the second

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1. including distance learning, collaborative provision, CPD activity which leads to an award, assessment set for students with a University Support Plan and placement learning.

marker (e.g. annotations to draw attention to noteworthy points in the text, or calculations but with no actual marks disclosed; or marks written on answers or in agreed places on the work). Second markers may be required or advised not to take into account the first marks in determining their own marks or may be required to resolve difference in marks for all cases or within ranges as part of their second marking responsibilities. Where non-mark annotations are allowed or required, their purpose may be to make second marking easier by guiding the second marker or to indicate where a first mark has come from to allow the second marker to evaluate its suitability.

### **3. Principles: Moderation**

Moderation is a quality assurance process required by the University that ensures consistent and appropriate standards of assessment design and informs the marks that are then confirmed by the Examination Board. It assures that the standard of, and therefore student attainment on, units within a programme, and programmes within a School, are consistent.

The University's [Policy on Marking](#) states that marking should be carried out in accordance with the model/expected answers, the marking scheme and expected School outcomes.

- 3.1 Moderation is an integral part of the marking process that takes place after initial marks have been awarded to individual assessment. It is additional to the checking of the marks recorded and should be based upon School 'norms' in terms of the expected 'average performance' for students' attainment.
- 3.2 Moderation refers to a range of processes conducted by an academic member of staff to ensure that assessment tasks and marking are accurate, consistent and appropriate to the level of the assessment and comparable with equivalent assessments. The formal process of assessment is not complete until the relevant Board or Boards have discharged their responsibilities in relation to the relevant assessment tasks.
- 3.3 Moderation applies to all summative first sit assessment at all levels (i.e. 4, 5, 6 and 7), and to CPD activity that leads to an award, distance and blended learning, collaborative provision, and assessment set for students with a University Support Plan and placement learning.
- 3.4 The proposed model of internal moderation is the minimum standard expected. However, Schools or programmes may employ additional marking standards over and above the minimum where they consider this to be appropriate. Faculties must approve any instances where the model is not used or is deviated from.
- 3.5 All outcomes from the moderation process must be documented.

### **3.6 The Process of Moderation Phase 1: Design**

- 3.6 i. Lecturer(s) design and set assessment task(s) on the course unit to assess student learning against Learning Outcomes.

**Assessment Framework:** *Principles of Assessment 4:* The assessment scheme should allow students to demonstrate their achievement of all the learning outcomes by the end of the programme.

- 3.6 ii The Policy on Marking defines the following roles:
- The *Academic Unit Lead* is appointed by the School to oversee the assessment for a unit and ensure that model/expected answers are produced where appropriate.
  - The *Internal Examiner* is the first marker and is appointed by the Academic Lead or nominee. Their role is to mark in accordance with the model/expected answers, the marking scheme and expected School outcomes.
  - The *Internal Moderator* is appointed by the School to moderate the marking in accordance with the model answers and the marking scheme. The Internal Moderator is overseen by the Academic Lead.
  - The *External Examiner* moderates a sample of assessed work in accordance with University regulations, model/expected answers and the marking scheme (see the University's Guidance on External Examiner Procedures).

The Academic Unit Lead and Internal Examiner can be the same person.

- 3.6 iii Internal Moderators should be identified early in the academic year to ensure that the moderation process begins with a review of the assessment tasks prior to the External Examiner's review and suggested changes made in consultation with the Academic Unit Lead. The Internal Moderator should be considering:

*For examinations:*

- Individual questions to ensure that they are clear, unambiguous, grammatically correct and sufficiently challenging.
- Papers as a whole, to ensure that relevant learning outcomes are assessed and that the correct format has been used (number and choice of questions and length of examination).

*For other assessments such as coursework:*

- Assessment tasks, to ensure that they are clear and sufficiently challenging and that relevant learning outcomes are assessed.

- 3.6 iv As stated in Paragraph 52 of the [Guidance on External Examiner Procedures](#) , all assessment tasks that lead to the degree class are then reviewed by the Subject External Examiner. This can normally be done by correspondence.

### **3.7. The Process of Moderation Phase 2: Assessment completed by Students and Internal and External Moderation**

- 3.7 i Students complete the assessment tasks.
- 3.7 ii Once internal examining/first marking has taken place, the Internal Moderator will normally consider a sample of 20% of the work, through the full range of marks awarded, checking the consistency of the marking. In the case of very small/large numbers, a minimum of 10 scripts and a maximum of 50 scripts are suggested. On units with a large number of students where the marking is undertaken by multiple markers the Academic Unit Lead compares the mark distribution (against the School norm) of all the Internal Examiners to reveal any significant inconsistencies in marking or question setting. This may be undertaken at the preliminary Examination Board.
- 3.7 iii The Internal Moderator will look to ensure that the marks and the comments given by the Internal Examiner/First Marker correspond, that the full range of marks has been used, and that feedback given is appropriate and helpful to the student.

- 3.7 iv Following discussion with the Internal Examiner, the Internal Moderator either confirms the marks or makes appropriate recommendations (e.g. all scripts in the cohort be remarked or the marks scaled) to the Chair of the Examination Board. As part of this process, any disagreements between the Internal Examiner and the Internal Moderator are referred to the Chair of the Examination Board for resolution. The Chair of the Examination Board has the authority to recommend further interventions or a resolution and oversees the method of any scaling that is considered necessary.
- 3.7 v For all relevant units in the subject area, the Subject External Examiner then oversees the same samples that were moderated internally to ensure that decisions reached are appropriate and that overall standards are, as a minimum, in line with those of the sector. As a result of the External Examiner's moderation and any subsequent recommendations, the Chair of the Examination Board has the authority to recommend further interventions or a resolution (e.g. all scripts in the cohort be remarked or the marks scaled for a unit or units that are outliers when compared to other cognate or associated units) and oversees the method of any scaling that is considered necessary.

The duties of a Subject External Examiner in relation to moderation are listed in Paragraphs 52 to 62 of the [Guidance on External Examiner Procedures](#) and include:

- Moderate the sample of marked examination scripts that has already been moderated internally in line with the Policy on Marking.
- Moderate the sample of assessed coursework, including any online assessed coursework that has already been moderated internally in line with the Policy on Marking.
- Participate in Moderation Boards that consider unit results and endorse, by signature, the agreed outcomes of the meeting.
- Highlight and encourage good practice.
- Comment on the discipline's relationship to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and any relevant Subject Benchmarks.
- Advise the Examination Boards on dealing with difficult cases.

### **3.8. The Process of Moderation Phase 3: The Role of the Examination Board**

The University's [Guidance on Examination Boards](#) states that it is the responsibility of the Examination Board to:

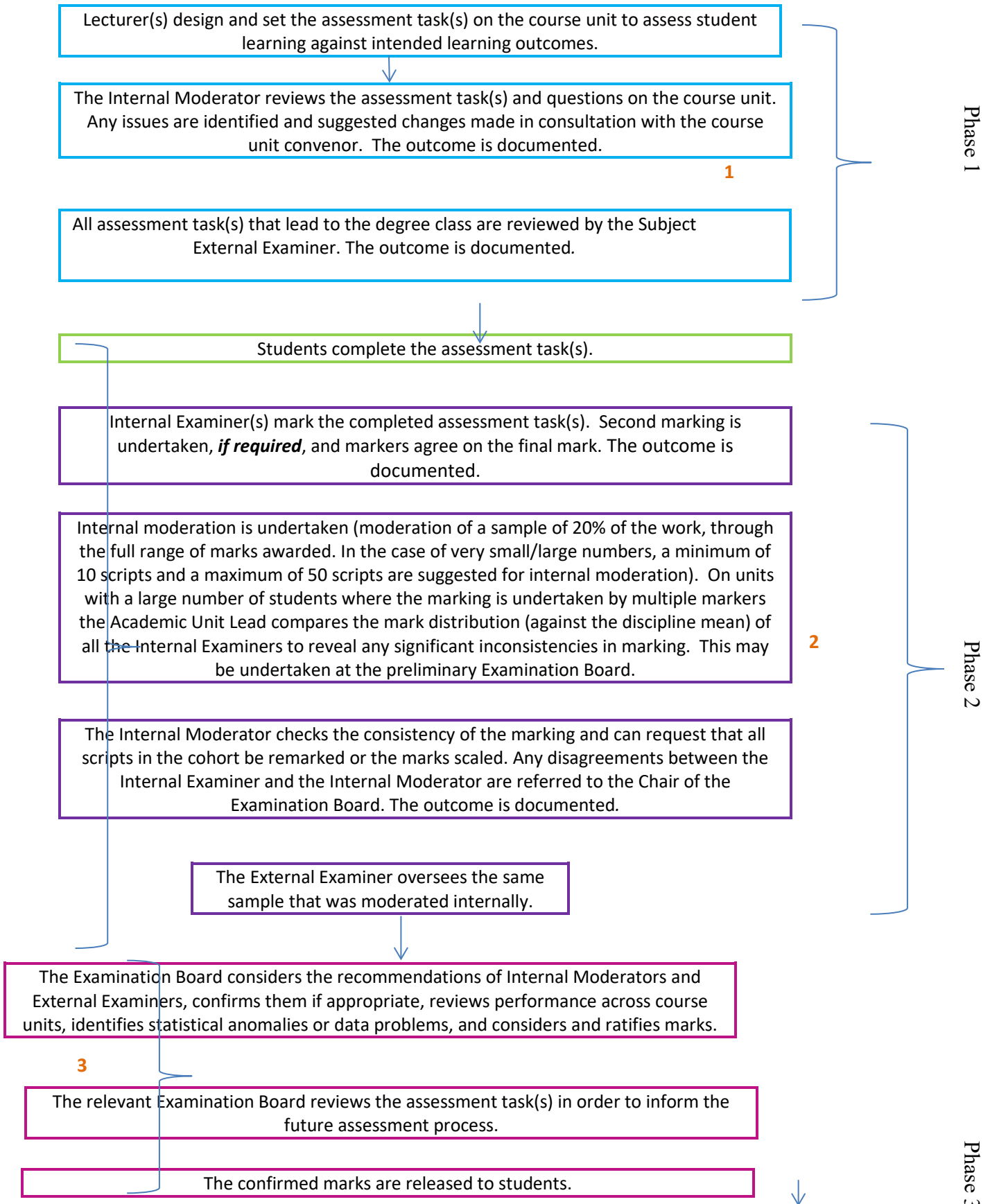
- Ensure it understands why there have been any deviations from the expected School 'norms' and any action that has been taken as a result.
- Confirm any scaling decisions based on the Internal Moderator's and Internal Examiner's comments.
- Review performance across course units (historically and across that academic year).
- Identify statistical anomalies or data problems.
- Confirm moderation has been conducted in accordance with this procedure.
- When appropriate, ratify the marks as agreed by the Internal Examiner(s) and Internal Moderator.

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- 3.8 i The Examination Board discharges its duties according to the [Guidance on Examination Boards](#) and reviews the assessment task(s) in order to inform the future assessment process.
- 3.8 ii The confirmed marks are released to students.

# Appendix A - Moderation Flowchart

Phase



**Policy on Submission of Work for Summative Assessment on Taught Programmes**  
**(September 2019)**

## **CONTENTS**

Introduction

1. Scope
  2. Main Principles
  3. The Policy
- Extending deadlines/Disability Advisory Services (DASS) automatic extensions
  - Penalty for late submission
  - Penalty for going over length
  - Plagiarism detection

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 The purpose of this Policy is to provide transparency in relation to the submission of summative assessment and the way the details are articulated to students. It also sets out the responsibilities of Schools regarding penalties for work that is submitted late or exceeds the prescribed length.

### **2. Scope**

2.1 This Policy refers to all undergraduate and postgraduate coursework submitted for summative assessment on taught programmes. Summative assessment is defined, for the purposes of this policy, as that which contributes to the final unit mark.

2.2 The Policy does not apply to purely formative assessment. The Policy also does not apply to assessment that students must attend to complete, such as practical tests, written examinations or work which is marked in the presence of students as part of a continuous assessment model.

### **3. Main Principles**

3.1 The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that the arrangements and procedures for the submission of work for summative assessment are equitable and transparent.

### **4. The Policy**

4.1 Schools must publish School level procedures for submission of work for summative assessment, and Faculties will be responsible for ensuring that these are appropriate across the Faculty and in accordance with this policy.

4.2 Schools must publish deadlines for the submission of all coursework at the beginning of each semester. Students are responsible for managing their time in order to meet published deadlines; multiple deadlines close together are not grounds for mitigation.

### **Extending deadlines/Disability Advisory and Support Services (DASS) automatic extensions**

4.3 Deadlines may be extended in accordance with the [Policy on Mitigating Circumstances](#).



4.4 Arrangements for automatic extensions for students registered with the Disability Advisory and Support Service (DASS) must be adhered to (please see '[Guidance for Automatic Extensions for Disability Advisory and Support Service \(DASS\) students](#)').

### **Penalty for late submission**

4.5 There is a standard penalty for all work that is submitted late. This must be used by Schools in relation to large pieces of work (e.g. dissertations/projects)<sup>[1]</sup>. It is also the default penalty for all other pieces of work, unless alternative arrangements are agreed by the relevant Faculty. Schools are required to make a case to their Faculty for any exceptions to the standard penalty and, if agreed, any variation must be made clear on each piece of assessment. Faculties should review any variations annually.

4.6 Details about the standard penalties (or any Faculty agreed variations) should be publicised to students at the start of each semester.

4.7 The standard penalty relates to first attempts only. Students who submit referral assignments after the deadline will be automatically subject to a mark of zero. There are no further resit opportunities for referred assignments that are submitted late, unless there is approved mitigation.

4.8 Schools must implement the standard penalty of a sliding scale to penalise late submission; work submitted after the deadline will be marked but the mark awarded will reduce progressively for each day, or part thereof, by which the work is late.

4.9 The mark awarded will reduce by 10% of the maximum amount available per 24 hours (e.g. if the work is marked out of 100, this means a deduction of 10 marks per 24 hours late. If the work is marked out of 20, the deduction would be 2 marks each 24 hours late.) The penalty applies as soon as an assignment is late; a 10% deduction would be issued if an assignment is submitted immediately after the deadline, and the work would continue to attract further penalties for each subsequent 24 hours the work was late, until the assignment is submitted or no marks remain.

4.10 In exceptional circumstances and for sound pedagogic reasons, a Unit Lead may decide not to accept late submission of assessed summative work. These circumstances must be approved by the Faculty and be detailed within Unit Specifications. The rationale and consequences must also be clearly articulated in assignment briefs.

4.11 Further information and guidance about the application of late submission penalties can be found in the [Guidance on Late Submission](#).

### **Penalty for going over length**

4.12 Schools must have appropriate procedures in place for dealing with work exceeding the required length and must publicise it to students at the start of each semester.

4.13 Penalties for going over length should meet the overarching principles of this policy, being equitable and transparent.

### **Plagiarism detection**

4.14 Where appropriate, summative assessed written work, including dissertations and projects, should be submitted online and subjected to plagiarism detection software.

4.15 Schools must ensure students are aware that plagiarism detection software is used and must be directed to information, advice and guidance on academic writing, avoiding plagiarism and the penalties arising from academic misconduct.

4.16 Staff and students can find information on academic malpractice and plagiarism, including procedures for handling cases of suspected plagiarism, on the TLD website at: <http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/policy-guidance/assessment/process-of-assessment/academic-malpractice/>

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[1] Large pieces of work, for this purpose, are defined as being single pieces of assessed work carrying a credit weighting of 30 credits or more.

Version 2.1 February 2019, for implementation from September 2019

## Guidance on late submission (November 2020)

### To accompany the Policy on Submission of Work for Summative Assessment

#### CONTENTS

A. Background

B. Guidance

C. Communications to students

#### A. Background

1. The [Policy on Submission of Work for Summative Assessment](#) was revised and approved in June 2015 for implementation from September 2015. It sets out the University's policy on the process of submission and sets out the penalties associated with late submission. Updates were also made to the Policy in February 2019 for implementation from September 2019.
2. As noted in paragraph 4.5 of the Policy, there is a standard University penalty for all work that is submitted late. This must be used by Schools in relation to large pieces of work (e.g. dissertations/projects)<sup>[1]</sup>. It is also the default penalty for all other pieces of work, unless alternative arrangements are agreed by the relevant Faculty. Schools are required to make a case to their Faculty for any exceptions to the standard penalty and, if agreed, any variation must be made clear on each piece of assessment. Faculties should review any variations annually.
3. For small pieces of work, in exceptional circumstances a Unit Lead may decide not to accept late submission of assessed summative work. These circumstances must be approved by the Faculty and be detailed within Unit Specifications, and the rationale and consequences must also be clearly articulated in Assignment briefs (see paragraph 4.10 in the Policy on Submission of Work for Summative Assessment).
4. The following guidance is provided for Schools to assist in their implementation of these aspects of the Policy. Reference should also be made to the [Undergraduate and Postgraduate Degree Regulations](#), which provide more information in relation to assessment and progression, including compensation and referrals.

#### B. Guidance

##### 5. Definition of late submission

Any work that has been submitted after a deadline has passed is classed as late except in cases where an extension has already been agreed via mitigating circumstances procedures and DASS extensions. There should be no discretionary periods or periods of grace. A student who submits work at 1 minute past a deadline or later will therefore be subject to a penalty for late submission.

***This guidance relates to first attempts/first sits only (including deferrals). Students who submit referral assignments (including carried forward failed credit) after the deadline will be automatically subject to a mark of zero. There should be no sliding scale in operations for resits/referrals and there are no further resit opportunities for referred assignments that are submitted late.***

## 6. Application of penalties for late submission

In cases where a piece of work does not represent an entire assessment or unit, the penalty applies to the *individual piece of work*, not the total assessment or unit.

No calculations should be made for part-days. Any work submitted *at any time* within the first 24 hours following the published submission deadline will receive a penalty of 10% of the maximum amount of marks available. Any work submitted at any time between 24 hours and up to 48 hours late will receive a deduction of 20% of the marks available, and so on, at the rate of an additional 10% of available marks deducted per 24 hours, until the assignment is submitted or no marks remain.

If a piece of work is not marked out of 100, the deduction per day is proportional to that for work marked out of 100. For example, for a piece of work marked out of 60, the deduction would be 6 marks per day/24 hours. The reduction is therefore 10% of the *total assessment value*, rather than 10% of the mark awarded for the piece of work.

The Policy relates to 24 hours/*calendar days*, so includes weekends and weekdays, as well as bank holidays and University closure days. If an assessment deadline is at noon on a Friday and the student submits it just before noon on the following Monday, their penalty would be a 30% mark deduction, based on being late by three days/72 hours. Schools are therefore advised to consider the implications of deadlines (particularly for hard copy submissions) and are encouraged to avoid deadlines on a Friday.

Schools must make it clear to students that submission dates and times are in UK local time and it is the responsibility of students to ensure that they check the relevant time zone. (This may be of particular relevance to distance learning students).

Should Schools require both online and hard copy submission of an assignment, the late submission penalty would apply to the piece of work with the earliest submission date.

## 7. Professionally accredited programmes

The requirements of Professional and Statutory Bodies can take precedence over the requirements of the Policy. Therefore, PSRB accredited programmes which have a deadline/time related Intended Learning Outcome (ILO), for example related to professionalism, are permitted to apply a zero tolerance approach and issue a penalty of zero marks for late submission.

Conversely, in areas where students need a mark/credit for PSRB purposes, they should still be given a mark for work submitted late, if that is a PSRB requirement.

## 8. Procedure for the handling of cases where a student receives a pass mark for an assignment (including dissertations) but then fails the unit due to the deduction of marks as a penalty of late submission

Students whose assignment mark falls ***below a pass*** as a result of a late penalty should ***not*** be routinely\* asked to resubmit the assignment; instead, the original assignment will be used in lieu of a referral, and normal resit/referral procedures will apply, with unit marks receiving a suffix of 'C' or 'R', as described below. If a student's original unit mark before the application of the penalty ***was a pass***, the mark recorded for the unit will not fall below the minimum compensatable pass mark for the programme.

\*However, if the student has *exhausted all their compensation allowance or the unit is a core/compulsory unit which does not permit compensation*, the student would need to take a referral for progression purposes, and would receive an 'R' suffix – see example 8.2 below.

## Example scenarios:

8.1 In cases where a student's *overall unit mark is in the compensation zone* (following application of a late submission penalty) and the student has compensation credit remaining, normal compensation procedures will apply. For example, UG marks after the penalty of between 31 and 39 are recorded as 31-39C. PGT marks after the penalty of between 41 and 49 are recorded as 41-49C.

8.2 In cases where a student's *overall unit mark is in the compensation zone* (following application of a late submission penalty) but the *student has exhausted all their compensation allowance or the unit is a core/compulsory unit which does not permit compensation*, the student would need to take a referral of the unit for progression purposes, and would receive an 'R' suffix.

8.3 In cases where a student's *overall unit mark falls below the compensation zone*, following application of a late submission penalty, the original assignment submission is treated as a referral and the mark is capped, with the final unit mark recorded with a suffix of 'R' to denote its treatment as a referral. For example, UG course unit marks that were pass marks before the penalty but that after the penalty fell to 30 or below are recorded as 30R (i.e. the minimum compensatable pass mark). PGT course unit marks that were pass marks before the penalty but that after the penalty fell to 40 or below are recorded as 40R.

Programmes with minimum compensatable pass marks that are different from the above should adopt an approach that is equivalent but that reflects their pass mark.

## 9. Procedure for the handling of cases where a student's original mark was in the compensation zone before the deduction of marks as a penalty of late submission

Students whose assignment mark was in the compensation zone should **not** be routinely asked to resubmit the assignment\*; instead the student's original mark will be used in lieu of a referral with the students' unit marks being capped at the lowest compensatable mark (normally 30 for UG and 40 for PGT programmes) and the mark receiving a suffix of 'R' to signify that it is being used in lieu of a referral. For example, a UG student whose assignment makes up 100% of the unit and whose original assignment mark was 35, and receives a mark of 5 for the unit as a result of late submission penalties, would have their unit mark recorded as 30R.

\*However, if the student has *exhausted all their compensation allowance or the unit is a core/compulsory unit which does not permit compensation*, the student would need to take a referral of the unit for progression purposes, and would receive an 'R' suffix.

## 10. Shared units/students undertaking units from another School

In the case of shared units/students undertaking units from another School, it would be good practice for the application of any late submission penalties to be clearly communicated to the student's programme owning School.

## 11. Work submitted more than 9 calendar days late

If work is submitted more than 9 but less than 10 calendar days late, this is considered as a late submission and a penalty will be applied that results in the mark being reduced to zero. The work should still be marked and feedback given.

If the work is submitted more than 10 calendar days late, then it is considered as a non-submission and a mark of zero applied.

## 12. **Providing feedback in relation to work submitted late**

Work submitted within 10 calendar days of the deadline should be marked and feedback provided; the feedback should reflect the mark achieved before the penalty was imposed. If a student submits work more than 10 calendar days late, there is not a requirement for the work to be marked or feedback provided. However, Schools may choose to mark and provide feedback.

### **C. Communications to students**

13. Schools should ensure that they make clear to students the deadlines for submission of work and how the students are expected to submit (i.e. the format – online or hard copy, etc.) Students should be advised via the handbook of the penalties that will be applied if they submit late and the implications for feedback.

14. Students should also be advised that if they submit referred assignments late, a mark of zero will automatically be given.

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[1] Large pieces of work, for this purpose, are defined as being single pieces of assessed work carrying a credit weighting of 30 credits or more.

Version 1.4, November 2020

## **Policy on Feedback to Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students** **(December 2020)**

The University of Manchester is committed to providing timely and appropriate feedback to students on their academic progress and achievement, thereby enabling students to reflect on their progress and plan their academic and skills development effectively. Feedback, and acting on feedback, is therefore part of the active learning process throughout a student's course of study.

Methods of feedback will vary according to assessment type, discipline, level of study and the needs of the individual student.

This policy applies to undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision. It sets out the principles under which feedback should be planned and delivered and relates to both formative and summative work. A glossary of terms can be found as Appendix 1 of this document.

### **Principles**

- 1 Feedback must be provided in a timely manner that helps students understand (i) the marks or grades they have received for the work submitted, and (ii) how their performance might be improved in future.
- 2 Feedback must be as personal as possible to the individual student to enable reflection on individual skills and performance.
3. Students have a responsibility to consider feedback given on their work, to seek to understand it, and to act on it.

### **Policies relating to the operational delivery of feedback to students**

#### **Communicating the feedback process**

- 4 Unit teachers are responsible for providing programme directors, or equivalent, with details of how feedback will be provided on their unit. The feedback mechanisms adopted should be capable of review by external examiners, processes for peer review and periodic review.
- 5 At the start of each academic year students should be informed of the feedback opportunities available in that year and the main goals of feedback at that stage in their studies. Information must be provided in programme handbooks, unit outlines and course materials to inform students of the mechanisms by which they will receive feedback and the forms it will take for both formative and, where appropriate, summative work. The Blackboard page for each unit should have a clear section explaining the feedback mechanism that the unit will follow. At the start of each unit, the unit teacher(s) should explain how and when feedback will be provided during the unit.
- 6 An opportunity must exist in all units for formative feedback.
- 7 It is a key duty of Academic Advisors that they reinforce the feedback mechanisms that exist on a programme and allow the opportunity for students to clarify their understanding of the purpose of feedback.

#### **Grading as a part of feedback**

- 8 Students should be given clear information on the assessment process and the grading criteria applied to each assessment. Grade descriptors used should be consistent across the units in a given programme and should be readily accessible to students in unit and programme handbooks or equivalent. Assignment of a grade is an important aspect of feedback and should be provided wherever possible. Schools should also expedite the adoption of a common set of grade descriptors across all programmes in a manner to be informed by the forthcoming review of degree regulations and assessment policies.

### **Timescales for the delivery of feedback to students**

- 9 Feedback must be timely and students must be made aware of the timetable for submission deadlines and dates on which feedback will be returned for each unit.
- 10 For all formative assessments and assessed coursework, feedback will normally be provided within 15 working days after the final submission deadline or exceptionally, and subject to prior approval by the faculty, within 20 working days after the final submission deadline; extensions to 20 working days will be approved on academic grounds only and must be clearly communicated to students in advance.

For single pieces of assessed work carrying a credit weighting of 30 credits or more, the maximum time for feedback to be given is normally 30 working days after the final submission deadline.

In cases where these requirements would extend beyond the end of a taught programme then paragraphs 16 and 17 will apply.

- 11 Schools should have a clear policy to handle feedback on late submissions.

### **Delivery of feedback to students**

- 12 Opportunities must be provided for students to discuss feedback in person or virtually, as appropriate, with the unit teacher/s.
- 13 Pursuant to principle 1, comments should be made on why students were awarded the given mark and how they can improve their work, including any recommendations for further reading where appropriate.
- 14 Constructive criticism should be the overriding feedback style.
- 15 Opportunities for feedback should be comparable in scope and scale between students and between units that are similar in style or structure.

### **Feedback on examinations**

- 16 Schools must facilitate individual student requests to have access to their own exam scripts and/or coursework (or copies of these), apart from multiple choice questions (MCQs). This applies to both exams/coursework submitted online or as hard copy, and access must be provided without charge. This could be achieved by a variety of methods including providing physical access for students to see their marked exam script on campus, if practicable; making a scanned copy of paper exam scripts available by electronic means; or by allowing students to access their grades and feedback through Blackboard. Students are not permitted to remove original exam scripts from campus.
- 17 Markers/course unit leads are encouraged to ensure that general feedback on performance in assessments (particularly MCQs) is made available to students.



- 18 Staff should inform students that copyright of all exam questions/papers is owned by the University and that, in accordance with the University's copyright policy, any sharing of the materials without permission is prohibited and, if students are found to be in breach, they may be subject to disciplinary action
- 19 Written comments should be provided for all exam scripts and coursework and must be clear and legible. These comments may be provided in a separate document but should enable students to understand to which part of their work comments refer. Students should have the opportunity, within reason, to seek clarification and further feedback; however, students are reminded that there can be no appeals concerning matters of academic judgement.

Further guidance on how these principles might be implemented by Schools can be found in Appendix 2 of this document. It is recommended that the provision of feedback opportunities should form part of both vertical and horizontal curriculum and assessment planning to ensure that there is consistency of approach across the programme.

Revisions to paragraphs 12, and 16-19, approved by Senate on 4 December 2020

## Appendix 1 of the Policy on Feedback to Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students: Glossary of terms used in the Policy on Feedback to Students

- **Formative assessment:** Assessment that does not contribute to the final mark of a unit. Formative assessment focuses on measuring progress to date and feedback on formative assessments should enable the recipient to develop and improve before completing summative assessments.
- **Formative Feedback:** Feedback that enables the recipient to develop and improve with the unit and/ or programme of study
- **Summative assessment:** Assessment that contributes to the final mark of a unit. Summative assessment can include both coursework and examinations. The completion of all required elements of summative assessments normally indicates the end of a unit of study.
- **Coursework:** Assignments completed and marked outside of examination conditions which may or may not contribute to the final mark of a unit. Types of coursework include essays, report, in-class tests, laboratory work, projects, dissertations, practical work, and presentations.
- **Assessed Coursework:** Coursework which contributes to the final mark of a unit.
- **Academic Advisor:** The member of academic staff who has responsibility for providing academic development guidance to a specific student or group of students. Each student should be informed of the named individual who is their academic advisor
- **Grade Descriptor:** Description of the learning processes and outcomes demonstrated by a student in order to attain a particular grade.
- **Constructive criticism:** Feedback designed to enable an individual to understand and learn from their mistakes and to build on demonstrated strengths.
- **Working day:** Monday to Friday excluding student vacation periods and University examination periods.
- **Vertical curriculum planning:** Structuring the curriculum to ensure that units at higher levels build on the skills and knowledge acquired at the lower levels. Clear and transparent vertical planning can help students to make informed choices about their curriculum pathway.
- **Horizontal curriculum planning:** Planning the curriculum to ensure that there is minimal duplication between units at the same level and that connections are made between content and skills acquisition in different units within the same broad programme of study to enable students to have a clear understanding of the structure of their programme of study. This includes planning important dates with the academic year to avoid unnecessary clashes in the submission of assessed coursework.

## **Appendix 2 of the Policy on Feedback to Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students: Guidance to support the implementation of the Policy on Feedback to Students**

### **Communicating the feedback process**

It is important to manage student expectations with regard to feedback. There are three main points that should be communicated to students by programme and unit leaders:

- What form/s feedback will take on that specific unit/programme.
- The timescale for the return of feedback on submitted work and/or the process by which continuous feedback will be delivered (for example, on technical skills in laboratories).
- How the feedback ought to be used by the recipient.

As a fundamental part of the learning experience for students, it is essential that the process of providing feedback is monitored for both effectiveness and overall quality. Feedback based on work electronically submitted and returned by Blackboard can be monitored easily, but this will only account for a portion of all feedback.

Particular care needs to be taken in programmes such as Joint Honours programmes, where units are drawn from multiple disciplines/Schools or Faculties. A common concern voiced by students on such programmes is the perception that they are treated differently by different parts of their programme. Therefore the effective use of vertical and horizontal curriculum planning is particularly important to ensure that students understand how the different elements of the programme fit together, to avoid assessment clashes, and to make sure that the assigned academic adviser is able to effectively advise students on their academic development and attainment in all components of the programme.

### **Grading as a component of feedback**

The provision of a grade is important for students. It helps them to position themselves within their cohort and to plan their academic development with reference to attainment in particular modes of assessment and to judge their general progress. However any grades provided must be meaningful to the student and standards of grading should be consistently applied across a programme of study. The consistent use of grading descriptors is strongly encouraged. Feedback on assessments, whether formative or summative, should indicate areas for improvement that relate to the grade given so that students can make use of the feedback to improve their attainment level in other units.

### **Timescales for providing feedback**

The timing of feedback must be such that the feedback can be used by the student to respond and improve performance in a unit and throughout their programme. One of the key themes raised by students when asked about the quality of their feedback is that they would like feedback on coursework to be returned in a timeframe that allows them to better prepare for further assessment. Schools should give consideration to submission dates for coursework to ensure that where appropriate the schedule for submission and feedback fits with the relevant dates for future assessment.

It should be accepted that appropriate timing for feedback depends on the nature of the unit. The following points may be useful when considering when feedback would be most appropriately delivered:

- If feedback will be helpful in further assessed work set within the timeframe of the unit then clearly feedback will need to be delivered earlier.

- If feedback will be most useful to inform performance in end of unit examinations that take place a number of weeks after teaching has ended, then it may be more appropriate to collect work for feedback nearer the end of the unit.
- Nothing in this policy prohibits multiple feedback points within a unit. However, care should be taken to ensure a balance between the time needed to deliver the unit and students' ability to assimilate knowledge, against the time needed to undertake the work to be submitted for feedback.

### **Delivery of feedback to students**

It is crucial for students that the feedback they receive is meaningful and useful. Therefore, any comments made should be clear, directly related to areas of assessed performance, and sufficiently detailed to be useful for the student in their personal and academic planning. Where brief comments such as "good" or "satisfactory" are used they should be used consistently across the programme and if possible the discipline area or School. It may be appropriate to align this type of comment to grading descriptors. Students should be given advice on how to interpret feedback comments and be able to ask questions if the feedback given is not clear to them.

Each student must feel that appropriate consideration has been given to their piece of work and their personal development as a learner. Students are very clear that feedback must be personal to them. Generic feedback is only acceptable as additional feedback, and substantive feedback must be given to each and every student in a unit.

It is recommended that a common programme-based or School-based feedback process is followed by each unit on a programme. It is important to recognise that such processes will vary across levels of a programme as, for example, the feedback needs of students in Year 1 of an undergraduate programme are very different from the needs of students in the final year. However, within a given programme level, consistency of feedback must be maintained.

### **Feedback on examinations**

There is still a lot that students can reflect upon about their performance in end of unit examinations in order to improve their results for future units, such as learning from their examination performance therefore feedback on this type of assessment is still important even though it tends to take place at the end of a unit of study.

Examiners will be aware that comments they write on scripts may be viewed by students and should therefore ensure that such comments are provided in the same manner as comments on course work and other related material. Such comments should be made to provide constructive criticism where appropriate, to provide assistance to the external examining process, and, where appropriate, internal moderation of the marking process.

## **Framework for the Design and Use of Grade Descriptors (June 2016)**

### **Background**

Well-written grade descriptors are an essential tool in helping students to understand the marks that they have been awarded and why they have been awarded them. They also help inform what students need to do in order to achieve higher marks in future assessment. The language used in grade descriptors therefore needs to be clear, consistent, helpful and unambiguous.

Grade descriptors, along with intended learning outcomes and formal and informal feedback, are cornerstones in helping to articulate students' learning and progression and are also helpful to external stakeholders such as potential employers. An assessment and its intended learning outcomes should therefore be designed and written with grade descriptors in mind and, in turn, the language and terminology used in grade descriptors should be consistent with that used in any feedback given to a student on their performance.

This document sets out the principles for designing and using grade descriptors in order to facilitate the award of appropriate and consistent marks. It is not a guide on how to give feedback and should not be used for that purpose. These principles should be used flexibly to accommodate, fairly and transparently, the diverse nature of the programmes that the University offers and should complement tailored individual feedback that is designed to help students improve and progress academically. For example, when feeding back on a piece of work that contains elements that are of a higher standard than the overall mark would merit, those particular elements might be described using a language that would normally relate to the higher overall mark.

One of the most common problems with assessment and feedback is that the correspondence between a numerical grade and the language used to describe that grade is often inconsistent. In their simplest form, grade descriptors can be seen as a series of adjectives that map onto, or verbalise, points on the numeric 0-100 marking scale, logically and consistently. Just as 70 is a 'higher' mark than 55, 'excellent' is a 'higher' adjective than 'good' and their usage should always reflect that in a consistent manner. Colleagues are encouraged to use the following spine of key terms to promote the consistent use of language in grade descriptors throughout the marking range.

<b>Range</b>	<b>Key Term</b>
0-9	Profoundly inadequate
10-19	Severely inadequate
20-29	Inadequate
30-39	Insufficient
40-49	Sufficient
50-59	Good
60-69	Very Good
70-79	Excellent
80-89	Outstanding
90-100	Exceptional

### **Principles**

The principles presented in this guidance are intended to ensure that practice across the University in designing and using grade descriptors is consistent and equitable for all students. However, the principles should be tailored to reflect the nature of the assessment, e.g. its level, whether it is written or practical, and so on.

### ***Scope and purpose***

Grade descriptors should:

- be developed for each 10-mark band throughout the full marking range (see Appendix 1 for examples)
- cover all aspects of performance, both areas of strength and of development
- indicate, where relevant, how performance and achievement in subsequent assessments might be improved
- reflect relevant intended learning outcomes
- cover skills and capabilities, both generic and professional
- cover content knowledge
- cover both academic and logistical areas (e.g. answering the wrong question in an exam)
- be broken down, either by reference to skills sets (either generic or specialist) and/or by the type of activity being assessed
- help students to understand and contextualise any feedback received
- reflect the [QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#).

### ***Language***

The language of grade descriptors should:

- be unambiguous and easy to understand: the adjectives and phrases in them should be meaningful and useful (see Appendix 2 for examples of phrases both to use and to avoid depending on the mark range)
- be consistent, particularly across assessment types and within cognate disciplines, and non-contradictory<sup>2</sup>
- not include absolute terms at either end of the scale. For example, a 'perfect' or 'flawless' piece of work would imply that it would be impossible for any other to improve upon any aspect of it in any way<sup>3</sup>
- be linked to the relevant intended learning outcomes
- be consistent with that used in any feedback given to students on their performance/output
- normally be linked to the level of study in order to ensure consistency and reflect relative expectation and realistic achievement (i.e. a mark of 100 should theoretically be possible at all levels in all subjects, however work produced at Level 1 would not normally be 'publishable').

### ***Dissemination and review***

Grade descriptors should:

- be publicised widely and made available to students through inclusion in handbooks and by other appropriate means, including online
- be supplemented as appropriate by subject or discipline-specific glossaries that define commonly used terminology
- be discussed in the peer review of teaching.

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<sup>2</sup> Discipline areas may wish to liaise to ensure that all students experience broadly the same language.

<sup>3</sup> The exception to this may be in assessments when there can only be one correct answer, normally in scientific or mathematical disciplines.

## Appendix 1 of the Framework for the Design and Use of Grade Descriptors: Examples of good practice 'long form' statements

The following are examples of 'long form' statements that relate to their respective grading bands. They are intended to provide examples of good practice that might help structure feedback or could be used, where relevant, as a template that could then be customised. They are not intended to be reproduced in their entirety.

### 0-9

Your work is **profoundly inadequate** and does not merit a pass mark. You have misrepresented or misunderstood thinking in the discipline and your use of sources is either non-existent or inappropriate. You have not demonstrated any significant awareness of the subject matter. Your work is confused and incoherent and does not address the question posed. To improve future marks you should seek to understand thinking in the discipline and engage critically with it. You should present and structure your arguments better and make sure that they are substantiated. You should seek to undertake, or demonstrate that you have undertaken, independent research.

### 10-19

Your work is **severely inadequate** and does not merit a pass mark. You show little or confused awareness of the appropriate principles, theories, evidence and techniques, and little evidence of critical engagement. Your arguments are poorly presented and misrepresent or fail to demonstrate an understanding of the subject. Your use of sources is inappropriate and your arguments are unsubstantiated and unstructured. To improve future marks you should improve your awareness of the appropriate principles, theories, evidence and techniques and engage more critically with them. You should present and structure your arguments better and make sure that they are substantiated. You should seek to undertake, or demonstrate that you have undertaken, independent research.

### 20-29

Your work is **inadequate** and does not merit a pass mark. It demonstrates only a basic awareness of the subject matter. Your awareness of principles, theories, evidence and techniques is insufficient, and you show little evidence of critical engagement with the material. You have not paid sufficient attention to the quality, range and appropriateness of sources used, and your arguments are partial and unsubstantiated. To improve future marks you should improve your awareness of the appropriate principles, theories, evidence and techniques and engage more critically with them. You should present and structure your arguments better and make sure that they are substantiated. You should seek to undertake, or demonstrate that you have undertaken, independent research.

### 30-39

Your work demonstrates **insufficient** knowledge and skills in the specific topic area and does not merit a pass mark. Your work does not demonstrate adequately the study skills required at this level. Although you show some awareness of the area, you have missed many important facts and concepts and made major errors. You have made no attempt to critically evaluate evidence and shown no evidence of independent research. Your work has minimal underlying structure and is frequently confused and incoherent. To improve future marks you should improve your awareness of the appropriate principles, theories, evidence and techniques and engage more critically with them. You should present and structure your arguments better and make sure that they are substantiated. You should seek to undertake, or demonstrate that you have undertaken, independent research.

### 40-49

Your work has **sufficient** knowledge, coherence, use of appropriate resources and quality of presentation to warrant a basic pass. You have provided an answer that lacks detail and depth. It is very descriptive and does not fully address the issues raised by the question. Your arguments are often simplistic. To achieve a higher mark you need to make sure that all your

points are fully supported with data or evidence from the literature. You also need to achieve greater analytical depth and take fuller account of opposing viewpoints or evidence in order to provide more substantial, comprehensive and nuanced support for your argument.

#### **50-59**

Your work is **good**, and of sufficient quality to be awarded a lower-range second class mark. You have demonstrated an understanding of the relevant principles, theories, evidence and techniques, and you have gone some way to meeting your aims through presenting a coherent argument in a competent manner. To improve future marks you should increase your level of critical appraisal and independent enquiry, and seek to demonstrate a deeper, and more fully researched, understanding of the subject.

#### **60-69**

Your work is **very good**, and of sufficient quality to be awarded an upper-range second class mark. It addresses the specific topic area very well, with a sound demonstration of knowledge and skills. You provide evidence of appropriate independent reading and thinking and draw upon the literature coherently to substantiate your claims. Your work is comprehensive and well-considered. To improve future marks you should consult a wider range of sources and deepen your analysis.

#### **70-79**

Your work is **excellent** and of sufficient quality to be awarded a lower-range first class mark. It has clear aims and largely achieves them. It draws upon an appropriately wide range of sources, displays considerable analytical depth with substantial evidence of genuinely independent thought, and is written and presented to a very high standard. To improve future marks you should attempt to identify any weaker parts of your argument and/or its presentation, ensure you have addressed opposing viewpoints or evidence decisively, and consider extending the range and use of supporting resources even further.

#### **80-89**

Your work is **outstanding** and of sufficient quality to be awarded a mid-range first class mark. Your response to the question is ambitious and perceptive. Your argument is very well structured. It is logical and convincing. You use extensive data and/or literature to support that argument and give very pertinent examples. You demonstrate a very high level of understanding of this topic. To improve future marks you should attempt to refine your analysis and arguments even further.

#### **90-100**

Your work is **exceptional** and of sufficient quality to be awarded an upper-range first class mark. It attains all learning objectives for the unit and adheres to all guidelines. The essential material is presented thoroughly and accurately and weighed appropriately. Moreover, the work is authoritative and amply demonstrates very advanced knowledge and a very advanced ability to integrate the full range of principles, theories, evidence and techniques. The clarity and originality of thought and the way that it is expressed is very impressive for this level of work.



**Appendix 2 of the Framework for the Design and Use of Grade Descriptors:  
Examples of words and phrases to be used, or avoided, according to marking range**

<b>Range</b>	<b>Use</b>	<b>Avoid</b>
<b>0-9</b>	<b>Profoundly inadequate</b> Highly Deficient	Wrong Rubbish Weak Poor <sup>4</sup>
<b>10-19</b>	<b>Severely inadequate</b> Very Deficient Incomplete	Wrong Rubbish Weak Poor
<b>20-29</b>	<b>Inadequate</b> Deficient Some attempt Confused	Wrong Rubbish Weak Poor
<b>30-39</b>	<b>Insufficient</b> Partial Some awareness	Wrong Rubbish Weak Poor
<b>40-49</b>	<b>Sufficient</b> Adequate Basic	Weak Poor
<b>50-59</b>	<b>Good</b> Clear Fair Competent Reasonable Coherent	Very Good Excellent Adequate Moderate Descriptive Basic
<b>60-69</b>	<b>Very Good</b> Sound Effective	Good Excellent Outstanding Authoritative
<b>70-79</b>	<b>Excellent</b> Detailed Compelling Lucid	Accurate Good Very Good Outstanding Authoritative
<b>80-89</b>	<b>Outstanding</b> Sophisticated Innovative Insightful Ambitious Perceptive Advanced	Good Very Good Excellent Comprehensive
<b>90-100</b>	<b>Exceptional</b> Authoritative Very Advanced	Good Very Good Excellent Perfect Flawless Publishable Complete

**Version 1, June 2016**

<sup>4</sup> Note, however, that when qualifying comments on structure, phrasing, vocabulary, etc., the word 'poor' can be a descriptive and helpful tool. However, the word 'poor' should not be used in isolation.

## **Guidance on the Retention of Teaching and Learning Materials (August 2021)**

This guidance sets out the Teaching and Learning Delivery team (TLD)'s expected retention schedule for teaching and learning materials in the institution. The document incorporates relevant entries from the University Retention Schedule in order to provide a comprehensive teaching and learning resource. If a type of document is not included here it should be retained as per the [University Retention Schedule](#), which this resource complements. The document reflects the move, both institutionally and across the sector, to a six-yearly schedule for review engagements.

Reference should also be made to the [Academic Appeals process and timescales](#).

The guidance in this document contains recommended minimum requirements which Schools can adapt and supplement with their own more detailed procedures. The guidance relates to the retaining of both paper and online assessed work.

With respect to the retention of student assessed work, Schools must ensure that:

- (a) an adequate proportion of submitted work, including assessment that has taken place online, is retained so that Examination Boards can reach secure and defensible judgements about awards and progression of students. As with paper-based assessments, Schools are responsible for keeping local copies of any online work;
- (b) students are informed in advance whether submitted work will be retained or returned. This information should also set out those cases where work is retained for longer than the twelve month minimum period;
- (c) beyond the requirements stated above, Schools should only retain assessed work according to their own identified needs e.g. to meet professional body requirements;
- (d) all assessed work that is retained should be kept in a secure location and organised, to enable effective management. At the end of the retention period, all retained work should be disposed of as confidential waste, unless the department wishes to provide students with a reasonably brief window of opportunity to collect it. Guidance on the disposal of confidential material can be found [here](#);
- (e) Schools should record their policy and procedures for retention and disposal of assessment material and ensure it is published to all staff and students, in accordance with the [University Retention Schedule](#).

<b>Type of Record</b>	<b>University Retention Schedule definition (if different from 'Type of Record')</b>	<b>Retention Period</b>	<b>Review before destruction (refer to Archive of JRUL Special Collections)</b>
<b>Policy and Procedure</b>			
Teaching strategy and policy		Superseded + 10 years	Y
Teaching procedure		Superseded + 5 years	Y
Examination rules and procedures		Superseded + 10 years	Y

<b>Quality Assurance and Review Material</b>			
Development of internal quality assurance processes		Retain whilst current	Y
Internal or external engagement (e.g. Periodic Review, accreditation) final reports	Conduct and results of internal and external Quality reviews	Current academic year + 5 years	N/A
Curriculum reviews		Superseded + 10 years	Y
Supporting documentation for internal or external engagements (whether prepared specifically or copies of other documentation)	Reviews, reports and feedback on taught programmes	Current academic year + 6 years	Y (formal documents only)
Statistics (student numbers etc).		Current academic year + 5 years	Y
Student feedback (e.g. surveys)	Reviews, reports and feedback on taught programmes	Current academic year + 5 years	Y
<b>Teaching Materials</b>			
Curriculum development		Superseded + 10 years	Y
Taught programme development		Life of programme + 10 years	Y
Taught course development and teaching materials		Life of course	N
Course handbooks		Life of course + 6 years	N
Taught course assessments, developments and final versions		Life of course	Y
<b>External Examiners</b>			
Selection and engagement of External Examiners		Termination of engagement + 10 years	N
External Examiner reports	Reviews, reports and feedback on taught courses, including external examiner reports	Current academic year + 6 years	Y (formal documents only)
<b>Student Information</b>			
Detailed information on student files, including that related to appeals*		Current academic year + 6 years*	N

Basic information on student files, including name, dates of relationship with institution, final classification details, and a full record of course units taken and marks awarded (for the purposes of constructing retrospective transcripts*		50 years after the student's relationship with the University has ended	N
*Most student data should be kept for 6 years after the student's relationship with the University has ended. This is to comply with the Limitation Act 1980 and is in line with the principles set out in data protection law. Only basic records of students should be kept for longer periods: Name, dates of relationship with institution and final classification. Also, a full record of course units taken and the marks for these should be kept for at least 50 years for each student for the purposes of constructing student transcripts.			
<b>Assessed Student Work [refer to notes at top of the page]</b>			
Summative retained work, e.g. examination scripts, online exams and other substantial pieces for summative assessment, including Masters dissertations.	Summative retained Examination Scripts and Assessed Work	Students may have sight of the original work with marks and comments, but originals are retained.  Date of relevant final exam board + 1 year, unless examples need to be kept for audit purposes (5 years)	N
Summative returned work, i.e. work submitted for summative assessment that needs to be returned to students as part of the continuous teaching and learning process (e.g. laboratory notebooks).	Summative and formative returned work	Returned to student only when the mark has been determined, including any internal and external moderation. The University retains neither the originals nor copies in this category and once returned it cannot be recalled for subsequent review of further scrutiny.	N
Formative returned work, i.e. work submitted solely for formative assessment, which is returned to students with comments.	Summative and formative returned work	Not retained. Once returned to students it cannot be recalled for subsequent review of further scrutiny.	N

August 2021

## **Policy on Alternative Assessments**

1. Various categories of students may experience difficulties with the University's normal assessment procedures through circumstances beyond their control. In order to overcome these difficulties, the normal place, time or form of assessment or re-assessment may need to be changed. Such changes yield an alternative assessment.
2. Alternative assessments are available only for students in approved categories where the need is foreseeable.\* Disabled students will be treated according to the separate [Guidance on Assessment for Disabled Students](#). Individual students who experience unforeseen difficulties will normally be treated according to the separate [Policy on Mitigating Circumstances](#), which include provision for alternative assessments.
3. A designated University office will have oversight of each approved category of students.\*\*It will mediate arrangements for such students, confirm their status and the need for alternative assessments, and provide advice and support on alternative assessments.
4. Schools that systematically admit students in approved categories will devise their policy on alternative assessments, and will publicize the arrangements well in advance so that students and staff can prepare accordingly. Faculties will be responsible for ensuring that the policies of their Schools are appropriate across the Faculty.
5. Schools will recognise in their work-load allocations the staff effort resulting from setting and marking alternative forms of assessment.
6. Alternative forms of assessment must assess the same intended learning outcomes as the normal ones and be of the same standard. They must be approved through the normal examination procedures of the School that provides them.
7. Alternative assessments will be conducted under conditions that are as far as possible equivalent to those of normal assessments, including appropriate supervision.
8. When an assessment is conducted in the same form as the normal assessment but in a different place, it should be conducted at the same time. If that is not practicable (for example, because of a difference in time zones), then to avoid the risk of compromising the security of the normal assessment, the alternative assessment should be conducted as soon as possible after the normal one.

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\* At present the categories so approved are students on recognised exchange or collaborative programmes including Erasmus; and students who hold an approved sports scholarship.

\*\* The office designated for students on recognised exchange or collaborative programmes is the International Programmes Office; and the office designated for students who hold an approved sports scholarship is UoM Sport. The office designated for disabled students is the Disability Advisory and Support Service (DASS.)

## **Alternative Assessments for Study Abroad, Exchange and Erasmus Students**

For a guidance document on alternative assessments for Study Abroad, Exchange and Erasmus students (produced by the University's International Programmes Office), please see below:

- [Guidance on alternative assessments for Study Abroad, Exchange and Erasmus students](#)

## **Guidance on Assessment for Disabled Students**

The University has responsibilities under the Equality Act to make reasonable adjustments to its provision, including methods of assessment, and is keen to support disabled students appropriately:

1. Adjustments to assessment for a disabled student may take one of two general forms:
  - (a) Modifying the circumstances under which the existing assessment is taken
  - (b) Providing an alternative form of assessment.
2. Most adjustments will consist of modifying the circumstances under which the existing assessment is taken.

The need for any disability-related exam adjustments (including but not exclusive to written, oral, aural and practical) must be assessed by and agreed with the Disability Advisory and Support Service (DASS). Examples of this type of adjustment are additional time, rest breaks or an amanuensis.

3. The Examinations team will implement these adjustments in the main examination periods. Outside of these periods arrangements must be made by the School.
4. In a very small number of cases the effects of the student's disability are such that an alternative form of assessment is required. As above, the need for this type of adjustment must be assessed by and agreed with DASS. DASS will then liaise with School staff to determine whether an alternative assessment can meet the competence standards of the course.

Devising an alternative assessment is an academic matter which must assess the same intended learning outcomes as the standard assessment and meet the same academic standards, whilst giving students the opportunity to demonstrate their academic achievement.

5. Once appropriate adjustments have been made the work should normally be marked in the same way as any other work. The DASS can advise on any rare cases where the adjustment does include the marking and will provide guidance on how this should be done.
6. When appropriate adjustments have been made, the marks should be treated in the same way as those of other students; no further compensation should be made unless there is additional documented mitigating evidence.

### **E-Assessment/online assessment of disabled students**

7. If online assessment is considered inappropriate for a particular student's needs, DASS should be consulted to discuss.
8. However, many online assessment methods can support the specific needs of many disabled students. These methods are encouraged and more information is available from Faculty eLearning teams.

**Updated by DASS, August 2019**

## **Policy on religious observance for students (UG/PGT and PGR students)** **(September 2019)**

### **Principles**

1. The University of Manchester is committed to equality and diversity. The University's Equality and Diversity Policy can be found at: <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=8361>.

2. The University will make every effort to avoid timetabling assessments or other compulsory activities on religious days or festivals for those students whose commitment to the observance of their faith would otherwise cause them to miss the assessment or other activity. However, we are able to consider the needs of students only if their requirement for particular religious observance is mandatory, as agreed with the relevant faith chaplains\*; it is not possible to take account of casual preferences or of social or domestic reasons.

3. The University has fixed examination period dates for taught units which are published in advance and tie in with other significant events in the academic calendar. Some Schools organise and set their own exams and assessment periods, in addition to the University examination period. It is not possible to change the set examination period in order to accommodate the full variety of religious observance practices.

4. This policy\* covers only aspects of religious observance that occur at times known in advance. Other aspects that are unforeseeable or unpreventable (such as the death of a close relative when specified forms of mourning are required) should be handled under the arrangements for considering [mitigating circumstances](#). The Policy on Mitigating Circumstances can also be used in cases where the *effects* of strict religious observance (e.g. fainting during an examination, as a result of fasting) have a detrimental effect on a student's performance at an examination. Postgraduate Research students should consult the [Changes of Circumstances for Postgraduate Research Students Policy \(September 2018\)](#) for further guidance.

5. The University's policy is that it will consider applications for amendments to the taught examination timetable with regards to religious observance that usually occurs over a restricted period of time, such as Eid ul Fitr, Shavuot, Vaisakhi and Shivaratri. It is not able to consider applications where religious observance extends over a significant period of time (e.g. Ramadan), or where the normal expectation is that daily activities (including examinations) will continue as usual. It is also unable to consider applications for amendments to the examination timetable in relation to students making holy visits.

6. Schools should inform students at the start of their programme whether there are any specific learning/assessment attendance requirements which take place outside of normal core weekday hours of 9am to 6pm (as described in the Policy on Timetabling Teaching Activities), such as over weekends. It is good practice to avoid scheduling teaching sessions at times when students are likely to have mandatory religious activities.

### **Taught Examinations or assessments organised centrally by the University**

7. If students have mandatory religious requirements (confirmed by the relevant faith chaplains, as outlined in paragraph 2) that may affect their attendance at taught examinations arranged centrally, they must complete the Examination and Religious Observance form obtainable from the Student Services Centre in person or [online](#). (Note that the major Christian festivals occur during vacations and hence are avoided automatically by examination periods.) Students should then return the form to the Student Services Centre by dates that are published annually for each examination period (and which are listed on the form). If students fail to submit a completed form to the Student Services Centre by the published date, the



University cannot accept responsibility if students are timetabled for an examination at a time when their religious requirements overlap with the date of an exam.

8. The University will give consideration to applications from students whose mandatory religious observance would otherwise cause them to miss an examination, in cases where religious observance occurs over a restricted period. This may include discussing with the student's School whether it could make an alternative arrangement for the examination if the student gives adequate notice. However, if no reasonable alternative can be found, adjustments will not be possible. If that means that students have to miss the examination, they will be offered the opportunity to take it when the examination is next held and this would be classed as a resit/referral. This may involve an interruption of a student's programme and an extension to their period of study.

### **Assessments organised by the School**

9. Similar principles apply if religious observance is likely to affect a student's attendance at assessments organised by their School (e.g. presentations or practical tests). Students should discuss the issue with their School well in advance of the assessment date, and the School will use reasonable efforts to reschedule the assessment to accommodate the student's needs (e.g. by changing the scheduled slot in a programme of assessed presentations). However, it is not guaranteed that Schools will be able to permit rescheduling/adjustments.

10. Deadlines for handing in assessed work will not normally be extended to allow for religious observance, and students must therefore schedule their work accordingly.

11. Postgraduate Research students must consult the [Examination of Doctoral Degrees Policy](#) if they wish to make any adjustment to their oral examination due to religious observance. Candidates may only delay their oral examination in exceptional circumstances and must apply to the appropriate School or Graduate Office for permission.

### **Teaching and learning activities**

12. If students have mandatory religious requirements (confirmed by the relevant faith chaplains, as outlined in paragraph 2) that may affect their attendance at normal teaching and learning activities, they should discuss the issue with their School.

13. The School will give consideration to cases from students whose mandatory religious observance would otherwise cause them to miss scheduled teaching or learning activities in circumstances where religious observance occurs over a restricted period and will try to make reasonable adjustments/alternative arrangements, if at all possible. However, adjustments can only be made provided they maintain the standard of the student's degree (e.g. students will not simply be excused from parts of the programme affected by religious observance or from satisfying overall attendance requirements where stipulated).

14. If no reasonable alternative can be found, adjustments to scheduled teaching or learning activities will not be possible.

Version 1.1, September 2019

## Supporting guidance documents/websites regarding religious observance

### Examinations Office

- [Exams microsite information about exam timetables and religious observance](#). This includes a link to the Examination and Religious Observance form, in relation to centrally timetabled exams which may clash with periods of religious observance, and states deadlines dates for return of the form.

### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Office

- [Ramadan FAQ](#) (produced by the Equality and Diversity Team)
- [Religion or belief \(including no belief\)](#) - information on the Equality and Diversity Team website
- [Observing Ramadan during exams: information paper](#) - The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) has worked with Islamic scholars, imams, chaplains and leaders to produce an information paper for schools and colleges about the observance of Ramadan during exams (external webpage)
- [Fasting and caring - looking after yourself and your patients during Ramadan: Guidance for healthcare students](#) (in conjunction with the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health). Guidance prepared with help of Muslim Chaplains University of Manchester and 18 other University Chaplains in the UK, Hospital Chaplains in Manchester, ISOC and consultations with Muslim Students.

### PGR Students

Postgraduate Research (PGR) students should consult with their School if they require adjustment to their examination due to religious observance reasons.

**Guidance for the Presentation of Taught Dissertations for UG and  
PGT Provision (January 2016)**

**CONTENTS**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>General Information</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Formatting</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Required Pages</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Sample Title Page</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Dissertation Submission Checklist</b>	<b>7</b>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This document gives guidance on the presentation of UG and PGT dissertations. The University's '[Policy on Submission of Work for Summative Assessment on Taught Programmes](#)' states that "all typed summative assessment, including dissertations, should be submitted online and subjected to plagiarism detection software, where appropriate" and that "Schools may specify instances where the use of online submission and/or plagiarism detection software is inappropriate. Details of the alternative arrangements in these specific instances must be published to students". **The expectation across the University is therefore that dissertations are produced and submitted electronically.** However, should a School consider online submission inappropriate and require the hard copy binding of dissertations, the costs of doing so must be borne by the School concerned and students must be made aware of the requirement.

## 2. GENERAL INFORMATION

- 2.1. All dissertations must be written in English. Quotations, however, may be given in the language in which they were written. In exceptional circumstances, a candidate may apply to the University for approval to submit a dissertation predominantly in a language other than English. Any such request must be fully justified on academic grounds and will only be considered where the language is directly linked to the dissertation, i.e. if the language itself is the object of study, if the literature or material studied is produced in that language, or if the language is spoken in the region being studied.
- 2.2. A short (no more than 300 words) abstract of a dissertation must be provided. For dissertations written predominantly in another language this must be presented in English as well as the other language.
- 2.3. A dissertation, normally at PGT level, may include reprints of material published by the candidate as sole or joint author. If reprints are to form part of the dissertation, they must be included in the dissertation pagination according to the instructions in this document.
- 2.4. Students must ensure that material in dissertations that is taken from another source is appropriately referenced and not, intentionally or otherwise, presented as their own original work. Material that is taken from other sources and not correctly referenced will be investigated by the University to make sure that it is not the result of cheating or other academic malpractice. Information on academic malpractice and its consideration by the University, including guidance for students, is available at: <http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/policy-guidance/assessment/process-of-assessment/academic-malpractice/>
- 2.5. Students must ensure that material in dissertations is free of any copyright restrictions. Guidance on copyright is available here: <http://subjects.library.manchester.ac.uk/copyright/students>
- 2.6. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the dissertation is checked for typographical errors. Anybody involved with proofreading a dissertation should be checking solely for grammatical/spelling errors. The University statement on proofreading is available at:

<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=23469>.

- 2.7. Students must ensure that they are familiar with any local regulations on word count and be aware of the penalties that will be subject to if they do not adhere to them.

### **3.     FORMATTING**

- 3.1. For the main text, double or 1.5 spacing with a minimum font size of 12 must be used; single-spacing may be used for quotations, footnotes and references.
- 3.2. General guidance on bibliographic citations and references can be obtained from the programme director and must be consistent throughout the dissertation. However, there is no set format stipulated.
- 3.3. Page numbering must consist of one single sequence of Arabic numerals (i.e. 1, 2, 3 ...) throughout the dissertation. Page numbers must be displayed on all pages EXCEPT the title page, though this is counted as page one. The pagination sequence will include not only the text of the dissertation but also the preliminary pages, diagrams, tables, figures, illustrations, appendices, references etc, and will extend to cover all volumes in a multi-volume dissertation. Roman numerals must not be used for page numbering.
- 3.4. The main text of the dissertation should normally be left-justified to aid accessibility and readability.
- 3.5. Figures or images used in the dissertation must be of sufficient size and clarity.

### **4.     REQUIRED PAGES**

- 4.1. The following items (a-f) **must** be included as preliminary pages of the dissertation **in the order given**.

#### **a.     TITLE PAGE**

A title page giving:

- i.** the full title of the dissertation;
- ii.** a statement as follows: 'A dissertation submitted to The University of Manchester for the degree of xxx (Title of the degree, e.g. Master of Arts)<sup>5</sup> in the Faculty of xxx (Name of the Faculty)' <sup>6</sup>;
- iii.** the year of submission (*not including the month*);
- iv.** the candidate's student ID number; and
- v.** the name of the candidate's School.

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<sup>5</sup> Details of the titles of degrees can be found within the University's General Regulations: [General Regulations](#) (page 17: Regulation XI – Titles of Degrees and other Distinctions)

<sup>6</sup> Details of the University's Faculty and School titles can be found on the website: [University structure](#)

*Please refer to Section 5 for a sample title page.*

Where a dissertation consists of more than one volume each volume must contain a title page in the form set out above but including also the appropriate volume number and the total number of volumes e.g. Volume I of III.

PGT dissertations which were referred for re-examination must bear the year of **resubmission** on the title-page and not the year of the original submission.

**b. LIST OF CONTENTS**

A list of contents, giving all relevant sub-divisions of the dissertation and a page number for each item.

In a multi-volume dissertation the contents page in the first volume must show the complete contents of the dissertation, volume-by-volume, and each subsequent volume must have a contents page giving the contents of that volume.

***The final word count, including footnotes and endnotes, MUST be inserted at the bottom of the contents page.***

**c. OTHER LISTS**

Lists of tables, figures, diagrams, photographs, abbreviations etc. If a dissertation contains tables, it is recommended that a separate list of each item, as appropriate, is provided **immediately after the contents page(s)**. Such lists **must** give the page number of each item on the list.

**d. ABSTRACT**

**i. All programmes EXCEPT MRes:**

A short abstract describing the contents of the dissertation. This must be short (not more than 300 words), with emphasis on major observations and deductions rather than on methods. It must be designed to be read independently of the rest of the dissertation and references to the dissertation and other literature will not normally be included.

**ii. MRes:**

This must be a short summary of the research presented in the dissertation (not more than 300 words), including a brief rationale for the study, details of the methods employed, a summary of the results, and an indication of the wider implications of the research.

**e. DECLARATION**

A declaration stating that the dissertation is the student's original work unless referenced clearly to the contrary, and:

**EITHER:** that no portion of the work referred to in the dissertation has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning;

**OR:** what portion of the work referred to in the dissertation has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

## **f. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY STATEMENT**

All **four** of the following notes on copyright and the ownership of intellectual property rights must be included as written below:

- i.** The author of this dissertation (including any appendices and/or schedules to this dissertation) owns certain copyright or related rights in it (the “Copyright”) and s/he has given The University of Manchester certain rights to use such Copyright, including for administrative purposes.
- ii.** Copies of this dissertation, either in full or in extracts and whether in hard or electronic copy, may be made **only** in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (as amended) and regulations issued under it or, where appropriate, in accordance with licensing agreements which the University has entered into. This page must form part of any such copies made.
- iii.** The ownership of certain Copyright, patents, designs, trademarks and other intellectual property (the “Intellectual Property”) and any reproductions of copyright works in the dissertation, for example graphs and tables (“Reproductions”), which may be described in this dissertation, may not be owned by the author and may be owned by third parties. Such Intellectual Property and Reproductions cannot and must not be made available for use without the prior written permission of the owner(s) of the relevant Intellectual Property and/or Reproductions.
- iv.** Further information on the conditions under which disclosure, publication and commercialisation of this dissertation, the Copyright and any Intellectual Property and/or Reproductions described in it may take place is available in the [University IP Policy](#), in any relevant Dissertation restriction declarations deposited in the University Library, and The [University Library’s regulations](#).

### **4.2 OTHER PAGES (not compulsory)**

The preliminary pages may also include dedications, acknowledgements and similar. These must appear after the compulsory pages. Short items may be combined on the same page.

It is helpful if a brief statement is included giving the candidate’s degree(s) and relevant experience, even if the latter consists only of the work done for this dissertation. This may be untitled or it may be headed ‘Preface’ or ‘The Author’ or similar.

**5. SAMPLE TITLE PAGE**

**TITLE OF DISSERTATION**

A dissertation submitted to The University of Manchester for the degree of ..... in the Faculty of xxx

**YEAR OF SUBMISSION  
(OR YEAR OF RESUBMISSION)**

**STUDENT ID NUMBER**

**CANDIDATE'S SCHOOL**



## 6. DISSERTATION SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

### PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

The staff in the School Office may use the following checklist to ensure all instructions detailed in these Guidance Notes have been adhered to when accepting dissertations.

If any section is missing, out of order or not correct the dissertation may be rejected. (The School may accept the incorrect version for examination but inform the student that no result will be released until a properly completed version has been submitted after the examination process has been finalised).

*It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that the instructions are followed exactly.*

If a candidate is unsure about any aspect of the presentation of the dissertation, he or she must contact the relevant School Office for advice.

**Preface pages should be in the following order:**

**Title Page** – see Section 5

All of these should be included:

- Title of dissertation
- Official Wording – see section 4 (a)
- Correct Faculty
- Year of Submission (or Resubmission)
- Candidate's Student ID number
- School

**Contents Page**  
(including any list of tables/figures etc)

Page numbers given for each listing

**Abstract**

**Declaration**

**Copyright**  
(this may go on the same page as the Declaration)

**Pagination**

All pages must be numbered; page numbers must be displayed on all pages, except the title page

## **Policy on Ethical Approval of Research in Taught Assessment** (June 2017)

1. Introduction
2. Purpose
3. Scope
4. The Policy

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This document defines the University's policy on the ethical approval of research on human subjects that is carried out by students as part of assessments on taught programmes.

### **2. Purpose**

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that a consistent approach is applied when dealing with ethical approval of research on human subjects as part of assessments on taught programmes.

### **3. Scope**

- 3.1 This policy applies to research on human subjects that is undertaken independently by undergraduate or postgraduate taught students, outside of a laboratory, lecture or seminar, and that is not directly supervised in person by a member of staff.
- 3.2 This policy covers reports, projects and dissertations that may require ethical approval for an element of research on human subjects within the assessed work of a taught programme.

### **4. The Policy**

- 4.1 Responsibility for approving risk assessment and working in an ethical manner with human subjects is the responsibility of a unit teacher or dissertation supervisor.
- 4.2 Schools must have a procedure for ethical approval of research in taught assessments, which includes the completion of a risk assessment where appropriate.
- 4.3 The procedure must be explained to students within the course unit documentation.
- 4.5 Appeals with regards to a decision relating to Ethical Approval are permitted under [Regulation XIX \(Academic Appeals Procedure\)](#).
- 4.6 The School procedure must ensure that students receive instructions on how to work in a safe, ethical manner and be made aware of why this is important.
- 4.7 Students must be made aware that when they conduct independent research on human subjects, they have a responsibility to:

- ensure a risk assessment is completed when appropriate and that necessary measures are taken to mitigate significant risks;
  - comply with instructions for working in a safe and ethical manner when engaging in an investigation involving human subjects;
  - ensure that the independent research work completed does not deviate from that which has been approved;
  - contact the relevant member(s) of staff, in advance, if the focus of the independent study is likely to change, to ensure that they will continue to work in a safe and ethical manner.
- 4.8 Students must not commence their independent research work until they have been given permission to proceed by their course unit teacher/supervisor. The course unit teacher/supervisor will only do this once they are satisfied that the risk assessment and/or ethics procedures have been satisfactorily completed. This aspect of the policy also applies to amendments to projects.
- 4.9 Should students fail to comply with the instruction from a unit teacher/supervisor with regards completing risk assessment and/or working in an ethical manner, they are liable to receive a fail mark for their work.
- 4.10 In extremely serious cases students may be referred to the University under [Regulation XVII](#) (Conduct and Discipline of Students). We do not want to see any student receive a fail mark or be referred under Regulation XVII and urge all students to take seriously risk assessments and ethical approval, and to follow the instructions of their unit teacher/supervisor. 4.11 General information about research ethics can also be sought from Research and Business Engagement Support Services at:  
<http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/services/rbess/governance/ethics/>

Version 1.1, June 2017

## Guidance for Assessed Student Group Working

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University of Manchester acknowledges the importance of group work activities as an important part of a student's learning experience. Some of the benefits gained from group working are reflected in the attributes of graduates as set out in the ['Manchester Matrix – the Purposes of a Manchester Undergraduate Education'](#).
- 1.2 This guidance document aims to provide advice regarding group work activities, whilst allowing the flexibility for Schools and Faculties to set standards consistent with best practice within their own areas. The main consideration should be to ensure that students are treated equitably in group working activities and that these activities do not overburden students at the expense of other methods of teaching, learning and assessment. The assessment process "should not be biased according to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion or belief, age, class or disability", (see the [Assessment Principles in the University's Assessment Framework](#)).
- 1.3 Students and staff members should also take note of the University's [Dignity at Work and Study policy](#), which promotes all members of the University community treating each other "in a friendly, courteous and dignified manner".

### 2. Purposes of group working

- 2.1 Teaching and learning in small groups serves a number of educational purposes including:
  - a. Studying collaboratively has been shown to directly enhance learning as it enables a variety of ideas and resources to be discussed/used, and encourages deep learning and consequently better retention of knowledge;
  - b. Developing the growth of students' inter-personal skills, and skills of reasoning, problem solving and leadership;
  - c. Employers value the particular skills which group work may help develop, such as teamwork, negotiation and communication skills.

### 3. General guidance

- 3.1 The following points of general guidance are provided, along with more specific details in the appendices which follow.
- 3.2 Schools should ensure that students have the opportunity to take part in group work within their programmes of study where appropriate, to satisfy the requirements of the relevant Programme Specifications and Subject Benchmarks, the Manchester Matrix and any other conditions stated by relevant Professional/Statutory bodies.
- 3.3 Students should be made aware of the educational reasons for assessed group work and how such activities contribute to the intended learning outcomes of a particular unit or programme.
- 3.4 Each student should be aware of their particular task or role within the group, whether assigned by the course tutor or by the group. It should be made clear to students the extent of their responsibilities regarding group working, including what they are

expected to do and how they are expected to work with other members of the group.

- 3.5 Preparation is important. It is recommended that time is allocated within classes for group members to get to know each other prior to group work commencing. This could be through, for example, an icebreaker that explores the background and expertise of group members. Enough time should be given to ensure everyone understands the purpose of the group activity.
- 3.6 Students should be made aware of how their work should be submitted or presented; for example, whether a single submission should be made by the group as a whole or whether each student should submit their work individually.
- 3.7 Students less familiar with university group work (for example, some international students or first year students), may appreciate more detailed guidelines about the possible roles and expected contributions of group members to help guide their<sup>7</sup> participation.
- 3.8 Basic ground rules for the conduct of an assessed group work activity should be established at the start of the activity, including the means of any conflict resolution (what students should do if there are disagreements within the group) and what is expected of the group members in terms of treating others with dignity and respect. Minimum levels of collaboration should be identified as part of the group work assessment guidelines.
- 3.9 If a piece of assessed group work is new to a unit or programme, it would be good practice to consult with the External Examiner about the nature and content of the group work activity prior to it going ahead.
- 4.0 The University's Anonymous Mark Handling principles state that work should be marked anonymously wherever possible. However, in cases of group working, it is acknowledged that anonymous marking is not always practical or possible. A group work presentation is one part of a range of assessment types and methods by which students' work is assessed and anonymous marking would normally take place in the majority of other types of assessments.
- 4.1 If one or more of the learning outcomes of a unit is to be assessed by group work activities, it should be identified how the group work component will be assessed if a student has a re-sit opportunity/referral. Reassessment must enable a student to demonstrate the same intended learning outcomes as the first assessment, but may not necessarily be in the same format as the original assessment.
- 4.2 Feedback for summative and formative group work should be made available to all group members, rather than a single group representative.

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<sup>7</sup> University's Dignity at Work and Study Policy [www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/services/equality-and-diversity/policies-and-guidance/dignity-at-work-and-study](http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/services/equality-and-diversity/policies-and-guidance/dignity-at-work-and-study)

**Guidance for Assessed Student Group Working:  
Appendix 1 - The Assessment Scheme**

- 1 The assessment scheme for a group working activity must be designed to ensure that each individual's performance can be assessed and reflected in an individual mark. As with every course unit, it should be clearly identified to students how marks will be allocated at an early stage of the course unit.
- 2 Depending on the intended learning outcomes of the unit, the assessment scheme should assess "product" (e.g. a presentation, poster or, web page), "process" (e.g. how well the team collaborated, organised themselves or resolved any disputes), or a mixture of both.
- 3 It should be made clear what criteria will be used to assess the particular aspect(s) of group work being assessed (and who will determine this criteria, e.g. the lecturer, students or both).
- 4 It should be made clear to students who will apply the assessment criteria and determine marks (e.g. lecturer, students – peer and/or self-assessment or a combination).
- 5 Students should also be made aware how will marks be distributed (e.g. a shared group mark, an average group mark, individual marks or a combination).

## **Guidance for Assessed Student Group Working**

### **Appendix 2 – Inclusivity**

- 1 All students should be able to take full part in the group activity for their unit and the following considerations should be taken into account to ensure that group work is accessible to all students.
- 2 Staff members should be aware that students with certain disabilities may find some aspects of group work challenging or even impossible; in particular, blind, visually impaired, hard of hearing or deaf students, those with severe anxiety or some other mental health difficulties, those with Asperger's syndrome and some students with specific learning difficulties. Staff members are encouraged to contact the [Disability Advisory and Support Service \(DASS\)](#) for strategies and suggestions if they need some tips on setting up group work activities for students with disabilities or if they require advice on alternative forms of assessment.
- 3 In cases where a member of a group has a disability, Schools or programme teams should ensure reasonable adjustments (as previously notified to the School Disability Co-ordinator by the DASS) are made to ensure that the student can actively participate in the group activity. It should be noted, however, that staff members should not reveal details of the disability to other members of the group, unless the student specifically requests it. Information to support disabled students can be requested from the [Disability Advisory and Support Service \(DASS\)](#).
- 4 Consideration may need to be given to whether verbal communication in group work activities has the potential to unfairly disadvantage international students and advantage home students. If English is a second language, group members may have trouble with non-standard English, i.e. accents and local references. Where students have had little or no experience of working in groups, it is good practice to provide support mechanisms such as trained mentors who work with the group or a series of reporting stages between the group members and the tutor in order to pick up any issues or lack of progress (also see Appendix 4, point 4).
- 5 Advance HE (formerly the Higher Education Academy) has [useful resources on group work and international student issues](#) as part of an international student project. The information centres on creating inclusive group work environments for all students and may be a useful resource for Schools/Programmes to refer to when considering group work activities.
- 6 Consideration may need to be given to the timing of meetings. Students with caring responsibilities or religious observance commitments might be restricted to what times they are available to meet outside of timetabled hours.
- 7 Similarly, it is good practice to consider the venues of meetings for group work, as some students' religion may prevent them from meeting at a location that serves alcohol or some buildings may be inaccessible for a student with a disability.
- 8 When setting a task, consideration should be given to possible sensitivities of different members of the group, particularly in relation to culturally sensitive topics. These may include issues such as adoption, sexuality, drug misuse, etc.

### **Guidance for Assessed Student Group Working Appendix 3 - How students will be grouped**

- 1 The course unit outline should make clear how groups will be formed in group work activities; for instance, by students self-selecting the members or by staff members arranging the groups. If groups are selected from among the students themselves, it should be made clear what the minimum and maximum size of the group should be and if there would be any penalties given to groups that fall outside these boundaries. If there are any mechanisms for changing groups, students should be informed about the details and any time deadlines.
- 2 It should be made clear to students what actions will be taken if members drop out of groups or withdraw from the course unit.
- 3 Information should be provided to students regarding how groups will be managed; for instance, whether the group will be student led or led by a tutor or other staff member, etc.

### **Guidance for Assessed Student Group Working Appendix 4 - Consideration of what to do if things go wrong**

- 1 It is important that there are mechanisms in place within the Programme to address potential difficulties which may arise in group work assessment.
- 2 Students should be given guidance at the outset on what to do if things start to go wrong within their group work activity. For example, if a member of the group does not participate, it should be made clear to students what they should do, including the need to keep the tutor informed of any concerns as early as possible.
- 3 Students should be made aware of the consequences of non-participation or non-engagement with the group work activity. The marking scheme should take account of both where a student does not engage fully with the activity and where a student is prevented from fully engaging in cases of mitigating circumstances, for example, long term sickness.
- 4 Ensure that arrangements are made for the group to have regular contact with the tutor, in order to prevent issues building up or so that any problems and lack of progress can be identified at an early stage.

### **Guidance for Assessed Student Group Working Appendix 5 - Collusion**

- 1 The University defines collusion as being when “a student or students permit or condone another student or students, to share a piece of work subject to assessment in order to gain a mark or grade to which they are not entitled. Students who allow another student to copy their work are also committing collusion and both the copier and the provider of the work are liable to be penalised. The methods of collusion may include, but are not limited to, sharing of work, ideas or plans by social media or other electronic communication means, and/or physical sharing of work, ideas or plans. Collusion may happen asynchronously outside of an assessment and/or synchronously within an assessment.” Group working undertaken in accordance with these guidelines does not fall under the heading of collusion.



- 2 It is important to ensure that students understand which aspects of a group work activity require working together and represent joint effort and which aspects (if any) must represent individual effort. Consideration must be given to these issues particularly in groups where students are from diverse learning backgrounds and may not be aware of the notions of collaborative working and collusion. It may be helpful to provide guidance with regards to the ways in which individual contributions and ideas are acknowledged and recognised.

Version 1.1, September 2021

# **Section C:**

## **Reaching Decisions from Assessment**

## **Guidance on Examination Boards (March 2022)**

### **Contents**

1. Introduction
2. Authority of Examination Boards
3. Terminology
4. Principles of the Conduct of Examination Boards
5. Guidance on Examination Board Conduct
6. Structure of Examination Boards
7. Mitigating Circumstances
8. Joint Honours and Combined Studies Programmes
9. Rescinding awards
10. Membership and Quoracy
11. Chairing and Secretarial Support of the Board
12. Key responsibilities of the Chair
13. Key responsibilities of the Secretary
14. Agendas and Minutes
15. Annual Monitoring and the Assessment Process
16. The Record of the Examination Board
17. The Issuing of Results

Appendix 1 – Examination Board Agenda and Minutes Template

Appendix 2 – Examination Board Example Terms of Reference (including Membership)

Appendix 3 – Examination Board Types and Responsibilities

Appendix 4 – Principles for Rescinding Awards

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The meeting of an Examination Board to agree degree awards is an important occasion. For students it represents the culmination of their period of study that is important for their future. For staff it represents the output from their teaching and support of the students and their learning. For the University it represents the opportunity to verify that academic standards are appropriate in the relevant subject, with the help of External Examiners.
- 1.2 This document details the principles and guidance that help to recognise the importance of the occasion and extract the maximum benefit from it efficiently. These principles and guidance should be used with reference to the following:
  - [Policy on Mitigating Circumstances](#)
  - [Guidance on External Examiner Procedures](#)
  - [Records Retention Schedule](#)
  - [The Assessment Framework](#)
  - [Taught Degree Regulations](#)

### **2. Authority of Examination Boards**

- 2.1 An Examination Board operates on the authority of Senate but responsibilities are delegated to Schools and Faculties: [The University's General Regulations](#) state that:

“Internal examiners shall be appointed by the Senate in such manner and for such duration as it may determine in accordance with a scheme for making such appointments that the Senate shall devise, and from time to time review... External examiners for each programme shall be appointed by the Board on the recommendation of the Senate... For each programme, the form and content of examination papers and statements of other requirements to be assessed, and the determination of the results, shall be the joint responsibility of the examiners (sitting as a Board of Examiners).”

- 2.2 Senate's Schedule of Delegations confirms, however, that internal examiners are appointed by School Examination Boards, and that External Examiners are appointed by Faculties in accordance with a University procedure overseen by the Teaching and Learning Group for UG and PGT provision.

### **3. Terminology**

- 3.1 The table in Appendix 3 provides details of the different types of Examination Boards and their respective responsibilities. The following types of Boards are in existence within the University, but some smaller Programmes or Schools may combine Boards or they may be referred to by slightly different names:

- 3.2 Pre-Boards – these are optional but considered good practice. A Chair and member of PSS support staff meet to review marks prior to a formal Board meeting taking place, in order to identify any potential problem cases.

- 3.3 Moderation Boards – these deal with marks by unit, rather than by individual students. They would normally take place after every assessment period (for example, February and May for Semester 1 and 2; August for re-sits; and October for Postgraduate Taught dissertations).

- 3.4 Award Boards – these decide upon and issue final awards. They would normally meet in June for Undergraduate awards and October/November for Postgraduate Taught awards. In cases of Foundation Studies, Award Boards would decide upon whether a student has met the progression criteria for their chosen degree programme. If this is not the case, the Award Board would offer possible alternatives if this is deemed appropriate.

- 3.5 Progression Boards – these consider marks of individual students for the purposes of deciding upon progression (from Years 1 to 2 or 2 to 3 (UG) or 3 to 4 (Integrated Masters) and from Diploma to Dissertation stage for PGT students). These would normally take place in the summer for UG years 1 and 2 or PGT, and in August for re-sits (referrals and deferrals).

### **4. Principles of the conduct of Examination Boards**

- 4.1 An Examination Board is normally constituted from the teaching staff in the relevant discipline (see Appendix 2: Examples Examination Terms of Reference) and must include as full members the duly appointed External Examiner(s) for the programme or group of programmes under consideration. No student may be a member, except that a member of teaching staff who is registered for a research degree may be a member of a Board for taught programmes. Further details of expected members, including

membership of Subject or Programme External Examiners at the different types of Boards, can be found in Section 9 - Membership and Quoracy.

- 4.2 The Examination Board's decision-making process can be conducted online, on campus or with some members online (e.g. External Examiners) and some on campus,
- 4.3 All meetings of Examination Boards should be chaired by the designated member of academic staff. The Chair would normally be appointed by the Head of School, on the delegation of Senate. The Chair is responsible for ensuring that the meeting is properly conducted and that appropriate decisions are reached. They are also responsible for ensuring that the Board's Terms of Reference and membership are appropriate.
- 4.4 All meetings of Examination Boards should be serviced by School administrative staff. They are responsible for advising on procedures, recording proceedings and transmitting decisions.
- 4.5 Adequate notice of meetings should be given. A schedule of meetings should be published and the External Examiner(s) notified at the beginning of the academic year.
- 4.6 Minutes of meetings must be kept. These should record the names of those present (distinguishing full members of the Board from others in attendance). They should also record the decisions in summary form by candidate number on the marks list (e.g. candidates 1 - 7: first class, etc). Points relevant to the decisions made should be summarised within the minutes. It is important to record clearly in the minutes the candidates for whom supplementary information was considered and the reason for the Board's decision. (See paragraph 12.2).
- 4.7 Students will not be referenced by name during the course of any Examination Board and subsequent minutes of the meeting. All official documents presented to the Board should be anonymous, referencing only student ID numbers. No student names should be used during the decision-making process, at any type of Examination Board. The purpose of this is remove any opportunity for bias in the decision-making process.
- 4.8 Detailed results by candidate will be part of the separate official record of the examination results and the student transcripts.
- 4.9 Meetings should always include general discussion with the External Examiners of their reflections on that year's examination process, on the standards set in the examination and achieved by the students, and on the degree programme itself. These discussions may serve to summarise less formal conversations from the whole period of contact with the External Examiners and must be recorded in the minutes of the Examination Board.
- 4.10 Members of the School may wish to clarify what the External Examiners mean by their comments and should indicate where action has already been taken or will be taken in response to those comments. These should be clearly recorded in the minutes of the Examination Board meeting and/ or a Secretary's note attached to the minutes.
- 4.11 The minutes of the meeting should be written up promptly and circulated for approval by all members present, including the External Examiners. Once the minutes have been duly approved, the University will regard them as part of the process by which the External Examiners report. The External Examiners are also asked to complete a report form but need not repeat there anything that they believe is adequately covered in the minutes.

- 4.12 External Examiners may of course amplify or modify their comments made at the Examination Board if they so choose. Capturing the dialogue between the School and the External Examiners in the minutes allows the School to reflect and respond sooner than waiting for the formal report. It can also save the External Examiners some effort, which it is hoped they will regard as making more appropriate use of their time.
- 4.13 Boards must compile and promulgate their own clear working procedures in accordance with the guidance contained within this document. In the interests of consistency, these should be the same for all Boards within a School.
- 4.14 Consistency can also be helped by grouping programmes together to form larger Boards and by having an over-arching School Examination Board, if practical.

## 5. **Guidance on Examination Board Conduct**

### 5.1 ***Examination board structures must perform the following functions:***

- a. a chaired and minuted forum for anonymous discussion of marks by unit, with External Examiner input (i.e. Moderation Board).
- b. a chaired and minuted forum for the anonymous discussion of marks, leading to awards, with External Examiner input (i.e. Award Board).
- c. a chaired and minuted forum for the anonymous discussion of progression and reassessment, with External Examiner input where applicable (i.e. Progression Board / Resit Board). (External Examiners need not be involved in reassessment for Level 1 units which do not count towards a student's final degree marks).

#### ***and in addition, provide:***

- d. a chaired and minuted forum for the anonymous discussion of mitigating circumstances and the means to apply the recommendations of a School's Mitigating Circumstances Panel (See paragraphs 7.1 and 8.2 of this guidance and the University's [Policy on Mitigating Circumstances](#)).

### 5.2 ***In preparation for the Board, the Chair and Secretary must ensure:***

- a. that the membership is agreed and published prior to the examination board taking place and that each member's contribution to the examination board process is clearly defined in the Terms of Reference. The board must contain no students, except staff registered for a research degree.
- b. that quoracy rules are set and adhered to (see Section 9 – Membership and Quoracy).
- c. that agendas are produced in an appropriate format and available to all members.
- d. that the Board has the appropriate membership in accordance with the Terms of Reference, in order to perform the key functions of the Board.
- e. that new External Examiners have been fully briefed by the Chair (or his/her nominee) and referred to the University of Manchester's Guidance on External Examiner Procedures.

### 5.3 ***In the conduct of the Board, the Chair and Secretary must ensure:***

- a. that if assessment is confirmed at the end of the semester in which it was taught, that this is subject to ratification from an External Examiner and the effects of any compensation or mitigation at the main Board.
- b. that reassessment is considered and takes place at the next appropriate opportunity.

- c. that appropriate minutes are produced, made available to all members and include adequate comment from the External Examiner.
- d. that Boards are chaired by a senior academic member of staff and supported by a Secretary from administrative staff.
- e. that the Chair is an impartial adjudicator and not *normally* a programme director (or similar).
- f. that a member of University staff is present when awards are agreed at a collaborative partner's Examination Boards.
- g. that Boards are confidential and run in accordance with the Assessment Framework of the University of Manchester.

**5.4 After the Examination Board, the Chair and Secretary must ensure:**

- a. that minutes are produced promptly, normally within one working week and circulated for approval
- b. that results are published using Campus Solutions, sent by post (using an agreed postal address) or email (using the student's University email address) and are not divulged over the telephone.
- c. that any results displayed on notice boards are anonymous.
- d. that individuals do not normally keep any unratified assessment data or marks after the Examination Board.

**6. Structure of Examination Boards**

- 6.1 There is a variety of practice across the Schools and partners in relation to Examination Board structures. Some areas consider the units, progression and awards all in one meeting, while others split the boards into Moderation Boards, Progression Boards and Award Boards. The chosen structure is dependent on the size of the programme and can remain flexible as long as the principles found in Section 3 (above) are addressed.
- 6.2 The important elements of any Board should be the anonymous consideration of marks, the consideration of the assessment and marking process and the involvement of the External Examiner at every stage. Examination Boards should be conducted anonymously (i.e. students should not be mentioned by name) where at all possible, to avoid any possible bias.
- 6.3 It is important that Subject External Examiner comments are formally recorded in order to collate valuable information on achievement and performance at unit level to inform future development. The Examination Board is the most appropriate forum for this feedback to be recorded.

**7. Mitigating Circumstances**

- 7.1 Mitigating circumstances should be considered anonymously in line with University's [Policy on Mitigating Circumstances](#). Good practice in this area includes the use of an examinations officer who anonymises the paperwork and is the only person aware of the student's identity in each case.

**8. Conduct of Examination Boards in relation to Joint Honours and Combined Studies programmes**

- 8.1 The awarding Examination Board for Joint Honours Programmes is located within the admitting School, where the student is registered onto a programme. A representative from the contributing School, where additional units have been studied, should be available or contactable during the Board meeting. The responsibility for decisions

relating to progression and degree classification rests with the admitting School's Examination Board, so that School has the final authority to make final award and progression decisions, but not to change marks.

- 8.2 In order to ensure consistency, decisions relating to mitigating circumstances pertaining to specific units will normally be taken by the mitigating circumstances committee of the admitting School. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the admitting School to collate all relevant mitigating circumstances. However, the communication of information should be both ways with both parties taking responsibility for effective exchange of data that may affect the outcome of the unit or student assessment.

Note: the admitting School **cannot** alter marks of units studied and confirmed by an Examination Board within another School.

## **9. Rescinding awards**

- 9.1 As per paragraph J54 of the Undergraduate Degree Regulations, Examination Boards may receive requests from students who wish to rescind an Integrated Masters award and be awarded the associated Bachelors degree. This should be done in accordance with the University's *Principles on Rescinding* (see Appendix 4).

## **10. Membership and Quoracy – see also Appendix 2: Example Examination Board Terms of Reference (including membership)**

- 10.1 As stated in paragraph 2.1, an Examination Board operates on the authority of Senate. However, individual Boards are organised and administered by Schools, under the direction of the Head of School / Head of School Administration.
- 10.2 Membership of the Examination Board should be decided at School level (approved by the Head of School) and defined within the Terms of Reference for that Board. Therefore each member can be sure of their contribution to the process and the role they are playing within that Examination Board. Terms of reference should also refer to the role of External Examiners. In addition, the terms of reference of the Examination Board should state the level of attendance at which quoracy is achieved and it is the responsibility of the Chairs to ensure that Boards are quorate and able to perform the business with appropriate representation. It is recommended that a Board be considered quorate when 80% of its membership is present. If quoracy is not achieved, a meeting of the Examination Board should not go ahead. Achieving quoracy can be helped by ensuring that a Board's membership is appropriate (see paragraph 9.3, below).
- 10.3 As a guide, Moderation Examination Board membership should include a Chair, Secretary, Subject External Examiners, teaching staff from the relevant discipline, including Programme Directors and unit leaders when appropriate, and a representative of the Mitigating Circumstances Panel, if applicable. (Please refer to the table in Appendix 3 – Examination Board Types and Responsibilities for more information regarding the recommended attendance of External Examiners at Examination Boards). No student may be a member, except members of teaching staff who are registered for a research degree. It is not advisable to list each academic staff member as a member of the Examination Board, as this could lead to difficulties in achieving quoracy.
- 10.4 As a guide, Progression and Awards (or Final) Board membership should include a Chair, Secretary, the Programme Director, the Undergraduate or Postgraduate Taught Director (or their appointed deputy or equivalent) and Programme External Examiners.



No student may be a member, except members of teaching staff who are registered on a research degree. It is not advisable to list each academic staff member as a member of the Examination Board, as this could lead to difficulties in achieving quoracy.

- 10.5 Details of membership, attendance and quoracy should be recorded within the minutes of Examination Boards. It is important that all members should stay till the end of Boards to make sure that all students are ensured a comparable experience within the assessment process. Members are not only present to represent their own students or unit, but to ensure an equality of decision making across every student and unit. If a member is aware that they may have to leave the Examination Board early, they should inform the Secretary beforehand. If members leave Board meetings in exceptional circumstances, it is good practice to record this in the minutes of the meeting.
- 10.6 External Examiners are members of all Examination Boards and it is good practice for their input to be considered at every stage of the assessment process. The University requires Programme External Examiners to be in attendance at all Awards Examination Boards. Where in exceptional circumstances an External Examiner is unable to attend, he/ she must be asked to provide written confirmation of his/ her concurrence with the recommendations of the Board. Programme External Examiners must ratify decisions at Progression Boards but they are permitted to do this remotely and it is not essential for them to attend the meetings in person. (Please see the table in Appendix 3 – Examination Board Types and Responsibilities).
- 10.7 It is recommended that Subject External Examiners attend Moderation Examination Boards. Where Subject External Examiners are unable to attend these Boards, they must be asked to provide a report to the Board. It is considered good practice for them to receive all the Examination Board minutes for that academic year, leading up to the awarding Board for information.
- 10.8 Where awards are agreed at a collaborative partner, a member of University staff must be in attendance.

## **11. Chairing and Secretarial Support of the Board**

- 11.1 The Chair and Secretary must work together to ensure a successful outcome of the assessment process. The Chair is considered the guardian of the relevant regulations and policies (i.e. the University's Degree Regulations and Assessment Framework), ensuring an equality of experience for each student, while the Secretary is considered the guardian of the official record of the assessment process. The Secretary should also have a good knowledge of the Degree Regulations and Assessment Framework in order to act as an adviser to the Chair if required.
- 11.2 In order to ensure impartiality, the Chair should normally not be involved in the delivery of the programme. However, it is recognised that in some areas, Schools/partners may struggle to find a Chair who was not involved in some part of the programme delivery.
- 11.3 Chairs should be members of academic staff with a detailed knowledge of the Degree Regulations and Assessment Framework, while the Secretary should be an experienced administrator with knowledge of the Degree Regulations and Assessment Framework, as well as report writing skills. The key responsibilities of the Chair and Secretary to the Board are listed below:

## **12. Key responsibilities of the Chair**

12.1 The main responsibilities of the Chair of an Examination Board are:

- to appoint in consultation with the appropriate Heads of School, the internal members of the Examination Board.
- to ensure all members of the Board are properly briefed.
- to liaise closely with the Secretary to the Board to ensure that the marks presented are full and correct.
- to ensure that the External Examiner/s have seen an appropriate sample of the assessed work of the students.
- to ensure full and open discussion about the performance of students takes place, taking into account the views of the External Examiner, recommendations of the mitigating circumstances panel (where relevant) and to guide the Board towards clear recommendations/decisions.
- to consider and initiate such actions as he/she thinks necessary on advice given by the External Examiners.
- in close collaboration with the Secretary, ensure that marks and award recommendations as confirmed by the Board are prepared and checked.
- following the Board, to check and approve the minutes as a true record of the proceedings.
- to ensure that the students receive appropriate notification of the results.
- the Chair can decide to remove anonymity at the end of an Examination Board in order to give staff an opportunity to celebrate the achievement of their students. This can only be done once all discussions have taken place and the decisions of the Board have been completed.
- To ensure that Programme External Examiners are involved in any decision taken by Chair's Action following an Examination Board that could affect a student's progression and/or classification. This includes actions taken as a result of the consideration of student appeals and complaints cases.

### **13. Key responsibilities of the Secretary**

13.1 The main responsibilities of the Secretary are:

- to establish the dates of meetings in advance at the start of each academic year, arrange the meetings and inform the members.
- to make all administrative arrangements for the Boards they are responsible for; this includes liaison with the External Examiner.
- draft agendas for approval by the Chair, to be disseminated to all members prior to the Board.
- prepare and provide the Board documentation.
- to provide advice on examination and assessment practice within the Assessment Framework during the meeting.
- to produce full and accurate minutes.
- ensure the marks presented to the Board are correct and any amendments are actioned on Campus Solutions.
- to record the conditions of re-assessment.
- to prepare pass lists and arrange for them to be checked by the Chair of the Board, if required.
- to ensure results / pass lists are communicated to students via the appropriate means.
- to ensure unit results that have been taken by students from other Schools are communicated to the student's home School in a timely and appropriate manner.

13.2 The Chair and Secretary have an opportunity to minimise the occurrences of appeals

which are taken forward by ensuring appropriate application of the relevant policy and regulations (i.e. the University's Degree Regulations and the Assessment Framework) through the Examination Board structures. It is important that a clear, accurate paper trail is in place, recording the reasons for decisions made at Examination Board meetings and summaries of any relevant discussion. This would help minimise possible complaints and appeals which are escalated to the Faculty, University or the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) and make it easier to reveal a clear audit trail of the decisions made and the reasons for them.

## **14. Agendas and Minutes**

- 14.1 Agendas and minutes are important to guide and record the business of the Examination Board. The attached template (appendix 1) can be adapted and used by Schools and collaborative partners. Minutes should clearly record the decisions in summary form by candidate number on the marks list (e.g. candidates 1 - 7: first class, etc.).
- 14.2 It is important to record clearly in the minutes the candidates for whom supplementary information was considered (e.g. mitigating circumstances or viva voce examination by an External Examiner) and note the reason for the Board's decision. If a student subsequently submits an academic appeal, the person dealing with the appeal may request to see the minutes of the Board to clarify whether and how any mitigating circumstances were considered.
- 14.3 Each member of the Board (including External Examiners) should receive notice of the meeting, well in advance, an agenda and, following the meeting of the Examination Board, they should receive minutes, approved by the Chair as an accurate record. Non-members of the Board may be included in the distribution of agendas and minutes, for information. However non-members must be University of Manchester or partner staff and must treat the minutes as confidential.
- 14.4 The University's report template for External Examiner reports relies on the External Examiners having the opportunity to comment on the individual units and process during the Examination Board process. The report template has a 'tick box' style with voluntary free text which means the agenda and minutes of Examination Boards must allow for and record comments from the External Examiner. This will ensure that adequate feedback is received and recorded from External Examiners on all aspects of the assessment process.
- 14.5 The report of the External Examiner and the Examination Board minutes can then be considered together as the assessment record of external input.

## **15. Annual Monitoring and the assessment process**

- 15.1 It is good practice for Schools to consider Examination Board minutes as part of the Annual Monitoring process. This allows discipline level comments from External Examiners and results to be considered, even when the final External Examiner's report has not been received and processed through the Teaching and Learning Delivery team. This is especially relevant as Annual Monitoring/continual quality assurance monitoring follows a continual cycle of monitoring and review which allows feedback on assessment to be received and considered at any time throughout the year. The use of detailed Examination Board minutes will allow you to consider the discipline issues at the next point in the year where monitoring activity occurs. The final report can then be considered retrospectively at the next, convenient monitoring

opportunity.

## 16. The Record of the Examination Board

- 16.1 The records of the Examination Board include the following: the agenda, minutes, pass lists, student transcripts and Campus Solutions records (or equivalent in Partner Institutions). The Chair and Secretary must ensure that these records are full, accurate and complete within a short period of time after the Board Examination scripts and assessed work must be stored in accordance with the [Records Retention Schedule](#) issued by the Records Management Office. In line with this Schedule, Schools should retain them for at least one year after the final Examination Board meeting of the academic year in which the work was considered. If a School wishes to, it can opt to keep examination scripts and assessed work for one year after a student's *final classification* is awarded.
- 16.2 It is important, for reasons of version control, that there is only one record of the assessment process and that individuals delete assessment records from their own PCs after an Examination Board has taken place.
- 16.3 It is the responsibility of the Chair and Secretary to ensure that all actions as a result of the Board are followed up and completed. Care should be taken not to advise students using unratified marks.
- 15.4 Schools should receive signed evidence that the External Examiner was present and happy to endorse the decisions of the Board.

## 17. The Issuing of Results

- 17.1 Results should be made available to students on-line via Campus Solutions. If students are notified individually, results should only be given to individuals in person, by anonymous notification on a notice board, by letter (to the address recorded on Campus Solutions) or by email (to the University email registered to the student which is recorded on Campus Solutions). **Results should not be divulged over the telephone.**

**Appendix 1 of Guidance on Examination Boards:  
Examination Board Agenda and Minutes template**

**The University of Manchester**

**Teaching and Learning Delivery, Division of Student and Academic Services**

**House style for agendas and minutes**

Attached are outlines for Examination Board notification, agendas and minutes. The outlines are based on the format used for University groups and committees.

We thought that you might find this guidance useful for developing Examination Board agendas and minutes.

Please contact the Teaching and Learning Delivery team (TLD) if you have any queries regarding the use of these templates.



The University of Manchester

## Notification of Examination Board

**[Insert name of School/Partner and Programme]**

A meeting of the Examination Board will be held on *[insert date]* at *[insert time]* in *[insert location]*.

*[Insert name of Secretary to the Board]*  
*[Insert job title of Secretary]*

*[Insert date when agenda issued]*

### **Further information**

Any enquiries concerning this meeting should be directed to *[insert name]* *[insert telephone number and e-mail address]*

## AGENDA

### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

### 2 CONFIRMATION OF QUORACY AND MEMBERSHIP

### 3 CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

Members of the Board are reminded that:

- (i) the proceedings of the Board are confidential;
- (ii) results should be provided online to students via Campus Solutions; any other feedback to students on their performance will be by individual letter, and/or by discussion with the Chair or nominee. In particular, results should not be divulged over the telephone;
- (iii) all papers, mark sheets, etc. should be returned to the Secretary after the final meeting, with the exception of the Chair and nominee as specified in paragraph (ii) above;
- (iv) all marks and grades, other than those on Campus Solutions must be removed from all other computer systems immediately after the final meeting.

### 4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON [insert date]

- (i) to note that the minutes of that meeting were confirmed by the Chair
- (ii) to ratify any action taken by the Chair since the previous meeting
- (iii) to consider any other matters arising

### 5 CONSIDERATION OF UNIT RESULTS AND ALLOCATION OF GRADES

[list all units, identifying codes, name of lecturer/s and individual External Examiners comments for each unit].

### 6 STUDENT PERFORMANCE BY PROGRAMME

To consider the progression and award of each student by level or cohort (delete as applicable).

### 7 CHAIR'S ACTION

To agree items to be dealt with by Chair's action outside the meeting.

### 8 FURTHER EXTERNAL EXAMINERS COMMENTS

To report any issues that are programme related or deal with a procedural issue, rather than specific to a unit or subject area.

### 9 PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS FOR ANY REASSESSED COURSEWORK OR EXAMINATIONS.

To confirm the dates for submission of reassessed assignments and to confirm arrangements for reassessed examinations and date of the Examination Board to

consider reassessed work.

**10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**



**Minutes of the Examination Board for [insert name of the Partner/programme/s]**

**Date of meeting**

**Present:** Insert other names in alphabetical order

**Apologies:** Insert names in alphabetical order

**In attendance:** Insert names in alphabetical order

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Minutes of the meeting held on [*insert date*] (**enclosed**).

**2 CONFIRMATION OF QUORACY AND MEMBERSHIP**

**3 CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT**

Members of the Board were reminded that:

(i) the proceedings of the Board are confidential;

(ii) results should be provided online to students via Campus Solutions; any other feedback to students on their performance will be by individual letter, and/or by discussion with the Chair or nominee. In particular, results should not be divulged over the telephone.

(iii) all papers, mark sheets, etc. should be returned to the Secretary after the final meeting, with the exception of the Chair and nominee as specified in paragraph (ii) above

(iv) all marks and grades, other than those on Campus Solutions must be removed from all other computer systems immediately after the final meeting.

**4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON [insert date]**

(i) Noted: the minutes of the last meeting were confirmed by the Chair

(ii) Noted: the following matters arising had been addressed since the last meeting:

(iii) Noted: there were no other matters arising

**5 CONSIDERATION OF UNIT RESULTS AND ALLOCATION OF GRADES**

[list all units, identifying codes, name of lecturer/s and individual External Examiners comments for each unit].

***For example: Marketing Practice MPCT01234***

***Unit leaders' comment (John Smith):***

***External Examiner Comments (Prof Fred Blogs):***

**6 STUDENT PERFORMANCE BY PROGRAMME**

To consider the progression and award of each student by level or cohort (delete as applicable).

**7 CHAIR'S ACTION**

To agree items to be dealt with by Chair's action outside the meeting.

**8 FURTHER EXTERNAL EXAMINERS COMMENTS**

To raise any issues that are programme related or deal with a procedural issue, rather than specific to a unit or subject area.

**10 PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS FOR ANY REASSESSED COURSEWORK OR EXAMINATIONS.**

To confirm the dates for submission of reassessed assignments and to confirm arrangements for reassessed examinations and date of the Examination Board to consider reassessed work.

**11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

## **Appendix 2 of Guidance on Examination Boards: Examination Board Example Terms of Reference (including Membership)**

### **Membership - Progression/Award Boards**

**(To be decided at School level and specified within the relevant Terms of Reference)**

- Chair (appointed by Head of School in which the discipline/programme/unit is based)
- PS Secretary to the Examination Board
- The programme director
- The Undergraduate or Postgraduate Taught Director (or equivalent)
- External Examiner(s) for the programme or group of programmes under consideration (Award Boards only)
- A representative from the Mitigating Circumstances panel, if appropriate
- No student may be a member, except members of teaching staff who are registered for a research degree

### **Membership – Moderation Boards**

**(To be decided at School level and specified within the relevant Terms of Reference)**

- Chair (appointed by Head of School in which the discipline/programme/unit is based)
- PS Secretary to the Examination Board
- Teaching staff from the relevant discipline; these must include:
  - Staff members responsible for co-ordinating the teaching and assessment of the units of the programme or discipline under consideration (e.g. programme directors)
- External Examiner(s) for the subject/s under consideration
- No student may be a member, except members of teaching staff who are registered for a research degree

**Note:** The structure of Examination Boards is dependent on size; smaller programmes may decide to merge Moderation and Progression / Award Boards.

### **Terms of Reference for Progression Boards**

- To determine progression and/or outcomes of student assessment.
- To ensure that all appropriate University and relevant programme regulations are met.
- To make decisions regarding students permitted to be reassessed for any element of assessment in any unit within its remit and make arrangements for the reassessments/referrals.
- To make decisions regarding students eligible for compensation of marks.
- To make recommendations for the conferment of an exit award in the case of eligible students who have withdrawn from the University, or who have transferred to another course within the University, if they have achieved sufficient credits.
- To apply the penalty and confirm the impact from any finding of academic malpractice made in relation to student assessment.
- To determine how to apply mitigation following the recommendation of the School's Mitigating Circumstances Panel.

### **Terms of Reference for Award Boards**

- To determine progression and/or outcomes of student assessment and to make awards on behalf of Senate.
- To ensure that all appropriate University and relevant programme regulations are met.

- To make decisions regarding students permitted to be reassessed for any element of assessment in any unit within its remit and make arrangements for the reassessments/referrals.
- To make decisions regarding students eligible for compensation of marks.
- To make recommendations for the conferment of an exit award in the case of eligible students who have withdrawn from the University, or who have transferred to another course within the University, if they have achieved sufficient credits.
- To apply the penalty and confirm the impact from any finding of academic malpractice made in relation to student assessment.
- To determine how to apply mitigation following the recommendation of the School's Mitigating Circumstances Panel.

### **Terms of Reference for Moderation Boards**

- To consider/moderate marks by unit, rather than by individual students.
- To determine outcomes of student assessment and to make recommendations on behalf of Senate.
- To ensure that all appropriate University and relevant programme regulations are met.
- To apply the penalty and confirm the impact from any finding of academic malpractice made in relation to student assessment.

Name of Board	Responsibilities	External Examiner presence required	When they meet (may be subject to local variation)
<b>Pre-Boards</b>	Optional but considered good practice for a Chair and PS support staff member to review marks before the Board to identify any potential problem cases.	No	Prior to other Boards
<b>Moderation Board</b>	Moderate marks, by unit (rather than by individual student)	It is <i>recommended</i> that <b>Subject External Examiners</b> attend meetings but submission of a report is an acceptable alternative.  <b>Programme External Examiners</b> are not required to attend.	After every assessment period: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feb – Semester 1;</li> <li>• May – Semester 2;</li> <li>• August – resits;</li> <li>• October – PGT dissertations</li> </ul>
<b>Progression Board</b>	Considers marks by individual student for purposes of deciding on progression: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Years 1 to 2;</li> <li>• Years 2 to 3 (UG);</li> <li>• Years 3 to 4 (integrated Masters);</li> <li>• Diploma to Dissertation (PGT).</li> </ul> Ratifies Moderation Board decisions.	<b>Programme or Chief External Examiners</b> must ratify the decisions where students have not been allowed to progress.  <b>Programme or Chief External Examiners</b> are <i>not</i> required to attend in person.  <b>Subject External Examiners</b> are <i>not</i> required to attend.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summer – UG Years 1 and 2 and PGT;</li> <li>• August - resits</li> </ul>
<b>Award Board</b>	Decides upon and issue final awards.  Ratifies Moderation Board decisions.	Attendance is <i>required</i> by <b>Programme External Examiners</b> to ratify all award decisions.  If a Programme Examiner is unable to attend for unforeseen and exceptional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• June – UG;</li> <li>• October/November- PGT</li> </ul>

		circumstances, the School/Programme can make alternative arrangements in consultation with TLD.  <b>Subject External Examiners</b> are <i>not</i> required to attend.	
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The University of Manchester

## Appendix 4 of Guidance on Examination Boards: Principles for Rescinding Awards

### Definition

1. When an award that a student has gained from the University is rescinded it is withdrawn by the institution and invalidated.

### Principles

#### *Rescinding as the result of discipline and academic malpractice*

2. In accordance with Statute XX paragraph 7, the University has the authority to rescind an award after graduation as the result of disciplinary measures against a student. In such cases the student will be given a reasonable opportunity to appear before and state his or her case to a committee appointed by the Board of Examiners, and the report of this committee will be considered by the Board before any decision is reached. The decision to rescind an award under these circumstances will be taken as part of the formal business of a Board of Examiners.
3. A student is not permitted to rescind a higher award in order to negate the impact of a penalty applied due to Academic Misconduct. For example, a student whose final year work in an Integrated Masters programme is the subject of proven academic malpractice cannot ask for the final year to be discounted and receive a Bachelors award in its place.

#### *Rescinding in order to continue or recommence study at a higher level*

4. A student is permitted to request that an award gained following the successful completion of a programme of study be rescinded in order to continue or recommence their academic studies at a higher level. The rescinding of an award in these circumstances is not an automatic right and cannot be guaranteed since it will be subject to factors including:
  - a. teaching capacity;
  - b. the currency of the award to be rescinded (that is, the date when it was conferred, which must be no more than five years before the request to rescind to ensure the student's knowledge is up to date);
  - c. the higher award still being available;
  - d. the student having achieved an overall pass on the lower award at the appropriate standard to allow progression onto the higher award, including any capped or compensated marks.
5. In cases under paragraph 4 where rescinding has been approved, this will be recorded at the Board of Examiners meeting at which the request was considered (or by Chair's action if earlier) and the lower award only awarded if the higher one is not successfully achieved.
6. A student is not permitted to rescind an exit award that they have received as the result of academic failure in order to continue onto or recommence study on a higher award as they have exhausted all assessment opportunities on the higher award previously. In such cases students must reapply to the higher award from the beginning of the applications process alongside all other applicants and, regardless of their previous enrolment status, will be subject to normal admission requirements.

### *Partial Rescinding*

7. A student must rescind an exit award in cases where they have been permitted to use some of the credits gained from one programme of study in order to transfer onto another. They may, should they request it, be considered for an alternative exit award at the conclusion of their study on the second programme, as in the example below, in order to recognise the 'unused' credit. This is not, however, standard practice.

A student completes the first two years of an undergraduate programme and is then permitted to transfer into the second year of another programme using 120 credits from the first programme in order to do so. The student is awarded a DipHE for the 240 credits obtained on the first programme but then rescinds it since they are using 120 credits of it in order to transfer. If they gain the second award the original exam board can, on request, consider them for a CertHE to recognise the 120 'unused' credits from the first programme.

### *Rescinding in order to receive an award at a lower level*

8. A student is permitted to request that an award gained following the successful completion of a programme of study be rescinded in order to be considered for an award at a lower level, as defined as the exit award in the Programme Specification for the programme on which the student is registered. For example, a student who has gained an Integrated Master's award may ask to rescind it in order to receive a Bachelor's degree that reflects their academic achievement over the first three years and that might be classified at a higher level.
9. Such applications must be made in writing to the Chair of the Examination Board within 20 working days of the conferment of the higher award and will be recorded by the Examination Board, who will consider applications and make appropriate decisions on the outcome. Such applications will only be disallowed under exceptional circumstances, such as students who have had penalties applied due to academic misconduct in the final year (see paragraph 3).
10. Students whose request to downgrade an award has been accepted should be made aware that the higher award cannot be reinstated at a later date.
11. Any credit that had been awarded but does not count towards the lower award's classification will remain on the student's transcript. A student can only receive one exit award for each period of registration and therefore, such credit cannot count towards the award of a second exit award. Where permitted, for example through AP(E)L, such credit may contribute towards another award on a different programme of study, either at Manchester or elsewhere.

### **Recording on Campus Solutions**

12. For guidance on how a rescinded award is reflected on Campus Solutions please see: [http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/planningsupportoffice/SSO/ssusersguide/06\\_rra\\_index.html](http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/planningsupportoffice/SSO/ssusersguide/06_rra_index.html)



## **Tuition Fees**

13. There are no circumstances under which tuition fees may be refunded as the result of the rescinding of an award.

## **Procedures for Anonymous Handling of Marks**

### **Principles**

1. The Policy on Marking specifies that work should be marked anonymously wherever possible, in order to provide reassurance that marking is fair. Similarly, decisions on progression and awards must be made anonymously.
2. Once marks have been awarded, it is of paramount importance to assign the right mark to the right student. This is facilitated by associating the marks with student names as well as registration numbers for subsequent processing.

### **Procedures**

3. Examination scripts must always be marked anonymously using the special answer books provided. Once the marks have been transferred to the front of the answer books by the marker, they can be transferred to mark lists (with a back-up copy of the mark list kept until the examination procedures are complete). At this stage the marks from different assessments can be combined within and across units to prepare lists where candidates are identified by name as well as by student number and checks can be performed (for example, that marks for different options taken by candidates with the same surname have been correctly assigned). These lists should go forward to Examination Boards with names suppressed and candidates identified only by rank order.
4. For other forms of assessment, suitable variants of these procedures should be adopted. Even when candidates' names are necessarily revealed in assessments such as presentations, the marks must be compiled into anonymous lists.
5. Procedures at Final Examination Boards will depend on the procedures adopted before that stage.
  - (a) Some disciplines engage in a process with their External Examiners by which the marks for individual assessments are developed by moderation and discussion, after which the subsequent decisions on progression or awards are regarded as algorithmic and anonymity at the Final Examination Board is unproblematic.
  - (b) Other disciplines and their External Examiners regard the marks for individual assessments more as givens but then engage in a process to determine what those marks should mean for decisions on progression or awards. This process may involve a preliminary meeting of the internal examiners to recommend candidates for *viva voce* examination by the External Examiners, who then report on their findings to the Final Examination Board. Where this is the practice, both the meeting of the internal examiners and the Final Examination Board must make their decisions from an anonymous mark list.
6. The Policy and Procedures on Mitigating Circumstances distinguish between a stage to determine whether a student has established sufficient grounds for mitigation and a subsequent stage to determine what mitigation should be applied to the outcomes of the student's assessments. The first stage is carried out by the Mitigating Circumstances Panel, to which the student's identity will normally need to be disclosed. For the second stage, the Chair of the Mitigating Circumstances Panel reports anonymously on the Panel's view of the severity of the impairment suffered by the student and makes a recommendation on mitigation.

7. Examination Boards that determine progression must make their decisions from an anonymous mark list.
8. If relevant additional information regarding a candidate comes to light at any stage, it should be made available to the examiners even if that may compromise anonymity.
9. External Examiners should be made aware of these procedures.

## Policy on Mitigating Circumstances and Coursework Extensions

# Policy on Mitigating Circumstances and Coursework Extensions

If you are reading a printed version of this document, you should check the online version (<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=4271>) to ensure you have the most up to date version.

Effective from the start of the 2023/24 academic year

## 1.0 Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1 During their studies, students may experience significant events which negatively affect their ability to submit work, attend an assessment or perform to their usual standard in an assessment of any type.
- 1.2 If significant events, usually related to students' health, individual circumstances or personal issues, are unforeseeable and unpreventable, they can apply for mitigating circumstances.
- 1.3 The aim of accepting and applying mitigation aims to reduce the negative effects on a students' academic outcomes.
- 1.4 This Policy sets out the University's arrangements for considering requests for mitigation in such circumstances. It includes requests for extensions to pieces of coursework/assessments, as well as requests for mitigation for other forms of assessment, such as exams.
- 1.5 The Policy intends to provide inclusive support to all students regardless of programme, level or mode of study; and recognises the diversity of our students and their responsibilities with an aim to respond in a respectful and inclusive manner.

## 2.0 Scope and Definitions

- 2.1 This Policy applies to Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught students. It will only apply to Postgraduate Research students when they are studying the taught elements of a doctoral programme of study. The policy which deals with mitigating circumstances affecting Postgraduate Research students is the [Policy](#)

[on the Circumstances Leading to Changes to Postgraduate Research Study](#). Students on Degree Apprenticeships, including higher apprenticeships, should refer to the [Procedure on Break in Learning for Degree Apprentices](#).

- .2 This Policy should be read alongside the [Mitigating Circumstances Procedures](#) and the [Procedure for Extensions](#).
- 2.3 The University defines mitigating circumstances as 'unforeseeable or unpreventable circumstances that could have, or did have, a significant negative effect on the academic performance of a student'. Accepting and applying mitigation aims at reducing the negative effects on a student's academic outcome.
- 2.4 The assessment period is defined as the set time during which students' exams and coursework usually take place.

### 3.0 General Principles

- 3.1 Students are responsible for submitting their own requests for mitigation or extensions, unless a significant event prevents them from doing so, and on those occasions a third party may submit on their behalf.
- 3.2 Students must inform their School as soon as they are aware of any possible issues that may affect their progress or assessments. A range of support resources for students are available within the University (please see 'Sources of support and advice' below). Please see 4.4-6 regarding longstanding and chronic health conditions.
- 3.3 Schools must publicise their deadlines for submission of requests for mitigation and extensions. There will be a number of deadlines set across the academic year; and deadlines may vary within a School due to the nature of delivery of our programmes.
- 3.4 Schools must ensure students are aware of how to submit such requests and that students have a realistic understanding of the different options available to deal with a request for mitigation.
- 3.5 Retrospective mitigating circumstances can be submitted, following attendance at an assessment, or submission of coursework on time, up to five working days following the date of assessment or deadline where there is a good reason for the student to have engaged with the assessment, rather than following the normal mitigating circumstances procedure which would involve submission in advance of the deadline.

- 3.6 Requests for mitigation must be processed formally and considered impartially. Schools must develop processes that properly document each case. The procedures need to be applied consistently and in line with this Policy, but with enough flexibility to apply equally to undergraduate and taught postgraduate students, and to allow Schools to meet any discipline-specific or professional requirements. Arrangements must also be proportionate, so that requests for mitigation can be dealt with in a timely manner. The [Mitigating Circumstances Procedures](#) provide further guidance on this.
- 3.7 Schools must inform students of the progress and outcome, as appropriate, of their request for mitigation, in good time, and as soon as possible after a decision has been made.

## 4.0 Grounds for Mitigation

- 4.1 Possible mitigating circumstances include (but are not limited to):
- *Health Issues;*
    - significant illness or injury; or worsening of an ongoing illness or disability, including mental health conditions; (please see the [Disability Advisory and Support Service \(DASS\) website](#) for examples of disabilities;
  - *Personal Issues;*
    - the death or critical/significant illness of a close family member/dependant;
    - significant family or personal crises, unpredictable changes relating to caring responsibilities, or major financial problems leading to acute stress;
  - *IT related issues:*
    - Some IT issues such as a network or hardware fault at the point of submission (please see [Guidance for Schools on mitigating circumstances related to IT Issues](#) and information for students on [help with assessment issues \(including IT matters\)](#)); and
  - *Public service;*
    - absence from the University for public service, for example, jury service.
- 4.2 Events that will **not** normally be regarded as grounds for mitigation include (but are not limited to):
- *Personal Issues;*
    - holidays, moving house and events that were planned or could reasonably have been expected;

- loss or theft of a computer or printer that prevents submission of work on time. Students should back up work regularly and not leave completion so late that they cannot find another computer or printer; ([Guidance for Schools on mitigating circumstances related to IT Issues](#) is available. Information is provided for students on [help with assessment issues \(including IT matters\)](#));
  - the act of religious observance (please see the University's [Policy on Religious Observance](#) for more information on religious observance);
  - consequences of paid employment (except in some special cases for part-time students);
  - *Time management or organisation/administrative Issues;*
    - assessments that are scheduled close together;
    - misreading the timetable or misunderstanding the requirements for assessments;
    - inadequate planning and time management;
    - students who commence their studies later than the expected start date who have missed a portion of teaching/learning.
  - *Issues during exams;*
    - exam stress or panic attacks not diagnosed as illness or supported by medical evidence;
    - disruption in an examination room during the course of an assessment which has not been brought to the attention of, or recorded by, the invigilators (including instances such as fire alarms or other noise disruption);
- 4.3 Events may happen during **pregnancy** that may be viewed as mitigating circumstances, and these need to be judged on a case-by-case basis. **Pregnancy** itself does not normally come under mitigating circumstances, but if a student's circumstances (or those of a partner of a pregnant student) result in negative effects on the student's progress or assessment, they are advised to discuss the issue with their School as soon as possible. (A new University Policy on supporting student parents is currently being developed).
- 4.4 Students with longstanding and chronic health conditions that they can foresee will affect their assessments, should already be receiving support from the University, such as through the Disability Advisory and Support Service. These conditions, therefore, usually fall outside the scope of Mitigating Circumstances as any effects are not usually unexpected.
- 4.5 If a student with longstanding and chronic health conditions requires adjustments to their assessments, these adjustments can be agreed with their School in advance, which the student can use as and when required, making

such arrangements is advised to avoid the need to submit repeated mitigating circumstances.

- 4.6 At the start of each academic year, and following the generation of the student's support plan, or as soon as possible after any changes to a student's needs or diagnosis, the student should contact their School and arrange to discuss any assessment changes that they may require.

## 5.0 Sources of Support and Advice

5.1 The following areas of the University can be contacted for support and advice relating to mitigating circumstances:

- i. The University Counselling and Mental Health Service - <http://www.counsellingservice.manchester.ac.uk/>
- ii. Student Support and Advice - <http://www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/> (Student Support Hubs are available on campus; for details of these, students should contact their specific School or Faculty).
- iii. Disability Advisory and Support Service - <http://www.dso.manchester.ac.uk/>
- iv. Occupational Health Service - <http://www.occhealth.manchester.ac.uk/>
- v. Students' Union Advice Service - <http://manchesterstudentsunion.com/advice>
- vi. Students' own programme or School office – please see the following for a list of School contacts - <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/structure/faculties-schools/> and <https://www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/uni-services-az/school-support/> for a list of School Support Offices.

## 6.0 Monitoring Compliance

6.1 Schools must submit reports to the Teaching and Learning Delivery Operational Group on a quarterly basis, to enable consideration of patterns and trends.

Version: 2.0 June 2023; applicable from 2023/24



## Mitigating Circumstances Procedures

# Mitigating Circumstances Procedures

If you are reading a printed version of this document, you should check the online version (<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=23163>) to ensure you have the most up to date version.

Effective from the start of the 2023/24 academic year

## 1.0 Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1 This document sets out the procedures for considering students' requests for mitigation. This includes how Mitigating Circumstances Panels operate, within agreed School parameters, and the application of their recommendations.
- 1.2 The document should be read alongside the [\*Policy on Mitigating Circumstances and Coursework Extensions\*](#) and, where appropriate, the [\*Guidance for Dealing with Disability-Related requests for Mitigation \(produced by the Disability Advisory and Support Service \(DASS\)\)\*](#). DASS also produce [\*Guidance for Disability Advisory and Support Service \(DASS\) Related Automatic Extensions\*](#), and [\*Student guidance on DASS-related Automatic Extensions\*](#).
- 1.3 Requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) or the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) which affect how requests for mitigation are considered, will take precedence over the details within this document. In this case, Schools must publish the specific arrangements within programme handbooks and any other relevant locations/formats.

## 2.0 Scope and Definitions

- 2.1 These Procedures apply to Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught students. They will only apply to Postgraduate Research students when they are studying the taught elements of a doctoral programme of study. The policy which deals with mitigating circumstances affecting Postgraduate Research students is the [\*Policy on the Circumstances Leading to Changes to Postgraduate Research Study\*](#). Students on Degree Apprenticeships, including higher apprenticeships, should refer to the [\*Procedure on Break in Learning for Degree Apprentices\*](#).

2.2 For definitions relating to mitigating circumstances, please see section 2.0 of the Policy on Mitigating Circumstances and Coursework Extensions.

### 3.0 Submission of Requests for Mitigation

- 3.1 Students are responsible for submitting a request for mitigation to their School according to the procedures and deadlines published by the School. Students may wish to consult the [Basic Guide to Mitigating Circumstances](#), the [Student Support page on mitigating circumstances](#) or the [Students' Union Advice Service](#) for further advice about the process. Students are encouraged to tell their School as soon as they are aware of any possible issues that may affect their progress or assessments. Early submission of requests makes it easier, for example, to offer flexibility in the arrangements for assessment.
- 3.2 If students are experiencing specific circumstances which mean they are physically unable to submit their own request for mitigation (for example, being in hospital or otherwise incapacitated), a member of School or Programme staff or a family member or friend can be asked to help submit a request.
- 3.3 Schools must tell students the deadline dates for requests for mitigation for individual course units or programmes. They must also give details to students of the location/format of the School's Request for Mitigation form or online submission system. Students should check (for example, in programme handbooks or their School intranet) the version and format of the form that needs to be completed. (As part of current work on the Student Experience Programme, SEP, a new institutional online submission system is being developed for students to request mitigation, but in the interim period, Schools are using their own forms/submission methods).
- 3.4 Requests for mitigation submitted after the School's published deadline date will not be considered without strong evidence for why the circumstances were not, or could not, have been notified before the deadline date. To allow students to submit a case for circumstances that have arisen *during the course of that assessment period*, Schools should ensure mitigation submission deadlines are set one week after the end of the assessment period. (If Schools have different arrangements for deadlines for circumstances which occurred during an assessment period, these should be clearly communicated to students).
- 3.5 Personal feelings such as embarrassment, pride or cultural concerns, or having concerns about the confidential treatment of requests for mitigation, will not be accepted as strong explanations for why students failed to submit a request for mitigation. Circumstances that could not have been made known to the School

before the deadline date for requests for mitigation, will also not be accepted unless this is proven by sufficient evidence, as described in paragraph 3.6.

- 3.6 Requests should be accompanied by appropriate, independent supporting documents or evidence, which will be checked to ensure there are no doubts regarding their authenticity. In order to confirm the accuracy and effect of the circumstances described by the student, colleagues considering the requests for mitigation should be satisfied that the evidence provided is suitably independent, accurate, and from the time that the request refers to. It would be expected, for example, that evidence is provided on letter headed paper, written in English (or certifiably translated), clearly states the name and signature of the author of the material, includes relevant dates, and has the student's name visible<sup>8</sup>. Colleagues considering requests must respect the confidentiality of any application or evidence they receive.
- 3.7 Students registered with DASS who have stated a disability-related reason for their mitigation should not repeatedly be asked to provide medical evidence to support their application, provided that this relates to the same disability for which they are registered with DASS. However, if students have stated external factors that have e.g. exacerbated their disability, evidence of these external factors should still be provided. DASS will advise the School if they consider that further disability-related evidence is required. DASS registered students applying for the reasons above must provide a detailed explanation of how their disability is affecting their studies.
- 3.8 In instances where a student has disclosed a disability or a possible health concern, then the student must be directed to appropriate University support service(s) in the same communication.
- [Referral to DASS form](#) (and [accompanying guidance](#))
  - [Referral to Occupational Health form](#) (and [accompanying guidance](#))
  - Information about access to the Counselling and Mental Health Service for routine appointments can be found on the [Counselling and Mental Health Service website](#). If colleagues have more significant concerns about a student, they should email [counselling.service@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:counselling.service@manchester.ac.uk) with their concerns and the duty staff will contact the student directly.
- 3.9 A student cannot submit the same standalone, individual circumstance as a request for mitigation more than once, unless they can show that the situation has become worse in some way, the circumstances are ongoing and unpreventable (for

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<sup>8</sup> For further information about evidence, please see the [Basic Guide to Mitigating Circumstances](#), seek advice from the relevant School, or see paragraph 3.6 of this document, which provides indicators of what would show that evidence is authentic.

example, they are disability-related) or the effects on the student have lasted longer than expected.<sup>9</sup>

3.10 Where a student wishes to apply for mitigation, and they confirm that they have already submitted information and/or evidence for an ongoing case under the procedures listed in a-d below, the University appointed case handler may provide a statement, to be used as evidence, summarising the details of the case for consideration. The colleague considering the student's request for mitigation should contact the relevant service/colleague, e.g. Advice & Response, to confirm details of the ongoing case and/or the impact on the student:

- a. [Academic Appeals Procedure \(Regulation XIX\)](#)
- b. [Student Complaints Procedure \(Regulation XVIII\)](#)
- c. [Dignity at Work and Study Policy](#)
- d. [Conduct and Discipline of Students \(Regulation XVII\)](#)

3.11 Requests for mitigation should be submitted by a student to their Programme owning School only, even if the student is submitting a request for mitigation for a unit managed by another School. All cases will be considered and decided upon by the Programme owning School, although other Schools may be consulted at the discretion of the Mitigating Circumstances Panel. For incoming Study Abroad/Exchange students, the Placements and International Programmes Office (PIP) has a specific policy so students should contact the IPO for information of how to submit a request for mitigation.

## 4.0 Stages for considering requests for mitigation

4.1 Mitigating circumstances are considered in three stages:

- *Preliminary Stage: Identifying cases (responsibility of PS colleagues in Schools).*  
This stage identifies all the cases that were received:
  - a. *by the School's published deadline date for requests for mitigation.* If this is the case, these requests would move onto Stage 1.
  - b. *after the published deadline date.* If there is no acceptable and strong explanation for why requests for mitigation were submitted after the School's published deadline date\*, students must be advised that their claims cannot be considered and should be referred to the Policy on Mitigating Circumstances and Coursework Extensions, and the section in

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<sup>9</sup> Schools have their own processes in place for recording relevant information. This will in future be incorporated in the University wide system.

their programme handbook or other sources which refer to the submission of requests for mitigation.

\* Possible examples of students providing strong evidence of why they were unable to submit a request for mitigation by the published deadline date include the hospitalisation or incapacitation of the student, backed up by evidence.

- ***Stage 1: Consideration of Requests/Accepting mitigation*** (responsibility initially of PS colleagues with academic consideration at regular meetings/via regular communications as required). This stage establishes whether those cases received, and which have passed the preliminary stage, have sufficient grounds for mitigation (see Paragraph 6.1). If they have, the case will proceed to the next stage.

**Schools will determine their own clear parameters for each course unit or programme as appropriate against which requests for mitigation will be considered, based on the following model:**

- *Requests for extensions to coursework/assessment* received by the School's set deadline should be routinely considered for approval by PS staff, *within the parameters agreed by the academic programme leads*. Where a request falls outside of these parameters, individual cases will be considered with the appropriate academic lead. (Please also see [Procedure for Extensions](#)).
  - *For all other requests for mitigation*, these will be initially considered by PS staff to make a suggested decision to *accept* or *reject* the request. These would be subject to academic agreement at regular meetings (normally weekly, when required) or other communications. Records will need to be taken of these meetings/communications.
  - Where there is disagreement between colleagues regarding a specific request, the final decision will sit with an appropriate Senior Teaching and Learning Lead (e.g. Director of Teaching and Learning, Head of Education) within the School.
  - Students will be given a provisional mitigation outcome at the earliest opportunity.
  - All mitigating circumstances outcomes will be communicated to the Examination Board <sup>10</sup>for final endorsement (see Stage 3 Page 16 below).
- ***Stage 2: Applying mitigation*** (responsibility of the Examination Board). This stage determines what specific mitigation should be applied to the outcomes

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<sup>10</sup> Examination Boards may delegate this to a regular subgroup to ensure timely communications within agreed parameters,

of the students' assessments, based on a holistic view of the students' performance (see section 7.0).

4.2 For a flow chart demonstrating these stages, please see **Appendix A: Mitigating Circumstances process flow chart**.

## 5.0 Handling requests for mitigation

- 5.1 Initial consideration of requests for coursework extensions or other requests for mitigation will be undertaken by the relevant PS colleague/s within a School. Those cases which do not fall within the agreed parameters will be discussed with the nominated academic colleagues to determine an outcome. Only in exceptional circumstances would a Mitigating Circumstances Panel be convened.
- 5.2 Colleagues considering students' requests for mitigation determine whether there is sufficient evidence of circumstances eligible for mitigation and, if so, decide if the circumstances had, or were likely to have had, an adverse effect on the student's performance. If so, they will make a recommendation on how to apply mitigation. It is then the role of an Examination Board to consider the effects of this and apply or adjust the recommendations.
- 5.3 Review meetings (if required) may meet in person, by Teams/Zoom or other online format, or endorsement of decisions can take place via email. They should be convened regularly, according to the parameters set by the School and with sufficient timeliness to be able to report to relevant Examination Boards (for Semester One, Semester Two and Resit Periods, as well as prior to the Final Award Boards for PGT students graduating in December).
- 5.4 If in exceptional circumstances a Mitigating Circumstances Panel needs to be convened, the membership will be taken from and approved by the Examination Board; it will be chaired by a member of the Examination Board and serviced by a member of PS staff, with other members as necessary. In the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health, Progress Committees may act in this way and fulfil the same role as a Mitigating Circumstances Panel.
- 5.5 Consideration of requests for mitigation by colleagues will include considering documentary evidence and students are not normally required to attend meetings. Colleagues may at their discretion consult with relevant University support services where a student has indicated that they are receiving support. Please see paragraph 5.6 for information about cases which mention disability/DASS.
- 5.6 Where colleagues are considering rejecting a request for mitigation that mentions disability support, lack of disability support, the impact of a disability or where a

student has disclosed a possible disability, they must refer the case to the Disability Advisory and Support Service (DASS). DASS will, where possible, confirm the individual circumstances, verify the information provided, and provide specialist advice on disability-related applications before the School colleague reaches a final decision. This should be the case regardless of whether or not the student is registered with the DASS, as legislative duties may still apply. Colleagues can also seek further information about potential types of disability from the DASS (<http://www.dso.manchester.ac.uk/who-do-we-support/current-students/>).

5.7 Schools must maintain a written record of all decisions made, which they are able to report on and which are held in accordance with the University's Records Retention Schedule. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) recommends that "A written record should be kept of any meeting held to decide the case, setting out who attended, a brief outline of the proceedings and the reasons for the decisions taken, including the outcome for the student". It is good practice to keep full notes of decisions, especially in cases where requests for mitigation are declined. The OIA may require copies of meeting notes as part of appeals cases."

5.8 Arrangements for dealing with mitigating circumstances should be coordinated with procedures for related student matters including disability support, attendance/engagement monitoring and wellbeing, for example, under [Regulation XX, Monitoring Attendance and Wellbeing of Students](#) (for which specific procedures should be outlined locally in programme handbooks). Students who submit multiple requests for mitigation should be highlighted by PS colleagues, so that any necessary considerations and arrangements for support can be put in place.

## 6.0 Accepting mitigation

6.1 Initial consideration will decide whether there is sufficient strong evidence of students' circumstances that are eligible for mitigation. It will then be decided whether the circumstances will have had, or could have had, an adverse effect on the student's performance. If so, it will then be decided how significant the effect was likely to have been. If it is decided that the effect was (or would have been), significant, the mitigation request will be accepted. Mitigation requests may be accepted for a specific assessment, or in relation to more general effects on a number of assessments, or for both.

## 7.0 Applying mitigation

7.1 If a mitigation request is accepted, a recommendation will be made as to how that should be applied, according to the alpha numeric codes listed in this document

(see section 8.0) and based on a view of the severity of the circumstances that affected the student. It is envisaged that these recommendations will be adopted by Examination Boards in the majority of cases. However, the remit of the review of the mitigating circumstances is to establish the severity of mitigating circumstances and to determine whether such circumstances have had a significant effect on the outcomes of an assessment. The Examination Board will have a more holistic view of the student's performance across their whole programme. It is the role of the Examination Board to determine how to apply the mitigation, given the student's assessment results as a whole. The application of mitigation is considered to be an academic judgement; therefore, the final decision on what action or code to be applied rests with an Examination Board, though it will be considering a recommendation from others in the School.

- 7.2 Only one recommendation/code should be made by the School and applied by the Examination Board (for example, students should not be offered *both* an extension to coursework and a first sit in the event of the student not submitting their coursework by the extended deadline).
- 7.3 In accordance with the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Degree Regulations, as reassessment cannot be undertaken by final year undergraduate or penultimate year Integrated Masters students, the recommendations available take into account distinct year groups alongside the types of assessment. The exception to this is Schools which have alternative progression and assessment regulations where these are required by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).
- 7.4 In some programmes of study, discipline-specific or professional requirements may mean that the options available to the Examination Board for dealing with mitigation are very restricted, for example, permission to re-sit an examination or to re-submit a piece of assessed coursework. In such instances, students must be informed clearly in the relevant programme handbook and Schools should ensure these details are regularly checked and kept up to date. Members of the Examination Board need to be aware of any specific requirements relating to the programme of study which deviate from the usual range of mitigation codes or actions available.
- 7.5 Where a preliminary internal meeting of the Examination Board is held to review the results before they are sent to External Examiners, that meeting may conveniently be used for applying mitigation. Otherwise, the whole Board may meet, with or without External Examiners, or it may delegate the task to a sub-group of the Board. Whatever arrangements are adopted, they must be clearly defined in advance and acceptable to the External Examiners.



7.6 The Examination Board may agree to apply general mitigation to the overall performance of the student. In such cases, the Board will decide, according to the severity of the circumstances and of other available evidence such as prior performance, whether the student is likely to have achieved higher overall marks sufficient to demonstrate appropriate learning outcomes, if they had not experienced the specific circumstances. The Board will then determine, in the light of the available results, whether the student satisfies the published requirements for progression, for a specific degree award or classification, or for treatment under its usual procedures for a borderline candidate. The Examination Board will not adjust the mark of the student in individual units or overall but will flag marks which have had mitigation applied so that this can be taken into account by the Examination Board in a subsequent year. (For example, when using that year's marks in computing the overall average for the programme in a subsequent year, the Examination Board will need to allow for the consequent reduction in the overall average if it falls close to a borderline.)

(NOTE: Work currently taking place as part of the SEP tech and process strand aims to produce a system that would be better able to flag up details of mitigation carried forward to subsequent years. In the meantime, Schools should ensure that any action to consider mitigating in a subsequent year is followed up.)

7.7 Where a request for mitigation covers a significant number of units which the Examination Board feel unable to fully mitigate, rather than a specific component of assessment, it may be more appropriate for the Examination Board to consider the student repeating the year or re-sitting with/without attendance (subject also to the student's agreement). It should be noted, however, that payment of fees may be applicable in these circumstances. Alternatively, the Board may consider the appropriateness of advising the student to consider applying to take an interruption (as per the [Policy on Interruptions to an Undergraduate or Postgraduate Taught Programme of Study](#)); although retrospective interruptions would only normally be approved under exceptional circumstances.

7.8 When a student who is registered with DASS misses the first sit of an assessment citing disability reasons, but the level of assessment means resit opportunities are not available, (e.g. level 6 or 7 for Integrated Masters), Schools should enquire with DASS to see if the reasons can be validated. If so, the DASS's likely recommendation would be to allow the student an opportunity to take the assessment as a first sit in a subsequent assessment period, but NOT to discount the assessment altogether without the student having the opportunity to sit it as a first sit. This is also the case when a student is not registered with the DASS but has disclosed a disability, or possible disability, through the mitigating circumstances process.

7.9 As soon as possible after the meeting of the Examination Board, the final decisions made should be conveyed by the School to students who have applied for mitigation.

## 8.0 Recommendation codes

**Please note:** *The codes below will continue to be used during 2023/24, with work being carried out as part of the SEP Tech & Process stream, aiming to condense the codes for 2024/25 onwards.*

8.1 The table below outlines potential outcomes from the review of Mitigating Circumstances that should normally be applied to each individual student case following appropriate consideration.

### Accepting mitigation: Code Outcome

A	Accepted – circumstances meet the grounds for mitigation and the School is satisfied with the supporting evidence. A recommendation based on the severity of the impairment suffered by the student is indicated by the alphanumeric codes described under Applying Mitigation.	
PA	Provisionally accepted – student has referred to difficulties in obtaining evidence or DASS has recommended that further evidence should be obtained, but based on the description of the circumstances, the request is approved pending the evidence being provided (submission date must be before the Examination Board in which the mitigation is considered). A recommendation based on the severity of the impairment suffered by the student is indicated by the alphanumeric codes described under Applying Mitigation below, but it would not be applied if the requested evidence is not presented to support the case.	
N codes	The following codes indicate when mitigating circumstances are not accepted, with the codes being helpful as part of the process of providing feedback to students.	
	N	Not accepted – circumstances provided by the student are not regarded as grounds for mitigation under the Policy on Mitigating Circumstances and Coursework Extensions.
	N1	Not accepted - supporting evidence does not cover the relevant period.
	N2	Not accepted - supporting evidence not supplied by an appropriate source.
	N3	Not accepted - evidence is deemed insufficient to support the student's claim of seriousness of impact on their assessment performance.
	N4	Not accepted - the evidence supplied does not confirm the student's claim of the circumstance adversely affecting them.

N5	Not accepted – no evidence is provided, and the student has not given any explanation as to the reasons why nor indicated when evidence could be available.
N6	Not accepted - the evidence relates to a chronic condition for and which the student is already in receipt of appropriate support from the DASS. This decision must always be confirmed by the DASS, as there are occasions when the support available will not be able to fully mitigate the student's need.
N7	Not accepted - evidence relates to a condition or circumstance previously used to claim mitigation, when on the earlier occasion the School, instructed the student that this mitigation could not be used again and may have instructed the student to obtain support from the DASS. This decision must always be confirmed by the DASS as some conditions will inevitably recur, sometimes without warning and mitigation may still be relevant.
N8	Not accepted – the request for mitigation was submitted after the School's published deadline and the student has not provided any strong reason for the delayed submission.
N9	Not accepted - other stated reason. [ <b>Note:</b> Must be recorded.]

**Note:** Examination Boards need only be informed of accepted, or provisionally accepted, requests for mitigation. The above codes must be used to provide an outcome of the decision to the student, where mitigation is not accepted. The minutes and communication with the student may detail further explanation as to why a code is allocated.

### Applying Mitigation

(Schools should recommend one of the listed codes relating to each type of work which was identified by the student as being affected by mitigating circumstances.)

- i. Coursework (including dissertations), which can be subject to reassessment

### **Code Recommendation**

- C1. Coursework to be submitted as a first attempt (deferral) in the next possible reassessment period appropriate to the programme.
- C2. Coursework to be submitted as a reassessment (referral) in the next possible reassessment period appropriate to the programme.
- C3. A reasonable extension to coursework to be granted within an assessment period (new deadline will need to be stated). This would include the removal of any late submission penalties imposed.
- C4. Exclude the coursework assessment mark(s) from the calculation of the unit average if the coursework constitutes 30% or less of the unit assessment and the ILOs have been met.

Regarding C1 to C3, if feedback for coursework has been provided to a programme cohort, Schools may request that the Programme Lead sets a new coursework question.

ii. Coursework (including dissertations), where reassessment is not practicable

Students may be unable to access or undertake some assessments once the deadline for the assessment has passed (e.g., an eLearning assessment in Blackboard or carrying out some laboratory work). In such cases, where there is no opportunity to recommend codes C1 - C3 (above), Schools should consider recommendations C5 – C7 (below).

**Code Recommendation**

- C5. Student to sit paper copy version of the eLearning assessment at a date set by the School.
  - C6. Student to sit using an alternative assessment method, to be agreed with the unit co-ordinator, either as a referral or deferral, but the assessment must meet the same intended learning outcomes (ILOs) as the original.
  - C7. Exclude the coursework assessment mark(s) from the calculation of the unit average if the coursework constitutes 30% or less of the unit assessment.
- iii. Assessments where resit opportunities exist (e.g. years 1 or 2 of a 3-year programme or programmes with PSRB requirements which allow final year resits)

**Code Recommendation**

- A1. If affected assessment(s) have been passed at first attempt, but the student has significantly underperformed in relation to other assessments, the assessment(s) may be taken as a first attempt (deferral) in the next possible assessment period.
- A2. If affected reassessment(s) have been passed, but the student has significantly underperformed in relation to other assessments, the assessment(s) may be taken as a reassessment (referral) in the next possible assessment period.
- A3. If affected assessment(s) or reassessment(s) have been passed, the results of the affected assessments may be excluded from the degree classification calculation if there is evidence of underperformance compared to unaffected assessments/units.
- A4. If assessment(s) have been failed or missed, they may be taken as a first attempt (deferral) in the next possible reassessment period.
- A5. If reassessment(s) have been failed or missed, they may be taken as a reassessment (referral) in the next possible reassessment period. (When

making this recommendation, the Board should consider the required workload.)

- A6. In exceptional circumstances, only if it is determined that more evidence (e.g., other assessment results) is required to conduct a result comparison, it could be recommended that the mitigation is carried forward to be evaluated in a future year/Examination Board.
- iv. Assessments (including coursework) where resit opportunities cannot be offered as an option (e.g. in the final year of a programme)

### **Code Recommendation**

- A7. Where there is sufficient evidence of attainment, exclude the assessment mark(s) from the calculation of the unit average if the assessment(s) for which mitigation applies does not exceed 50% of the unit assessment.
- A8. If there is evidence of underperformance compared to unaffected units, disregard the affected *unit(s)* from the degree classification calculation (to a limit of 45 credits for the academic year).
- A9. Extend the limit of the boundary zone for students falling between degree classifications at final classification stage by a maximum of 2%. The School will determine the extent of this depending on their assessment of evidence relating to severity, duration, timing and impact of the mitigating circumstances.
- A10. In exceptional circumstances for scenarios not addressed in a recommendation above, a School may make an alternative recommendation considered to be reasonable; however, an explanation of the reasons must be fully documented.

## **9.0 Right of Appeal**

- 9.1 Since colleagues reviewing mitigation operate under delegated powers from the Examination Board (as defined in the Procedure for Mitigating Circumstances Panels), students would not normally be able to appeal their decisions unless some procedural irregularity has occurred. In the event that students believe that a procedural irregularity did occur (for example, the School failed to consider a piece of evidence the student submitted to accompany their request for mitigation), they should raise concerns with their School as soon as they are aware of the potential procedural irregularity. Schools should then look into this concern as soon as possible. If a student is subsequently not satisfied with the way their School has handled their concern, they can submit an appeal under [Regulation XIX: Academic Appeals Procedure](#) once the final decision of an Examination Board, or equivalent body, has been published.

- 9.2 Students can appeal against the final decision of an Examination Board, or equivalent body, under [Regulation XIX: Academic Appeals Procedure](#), if appropriate and in line with the grounds for appeal set out in Regulation XIX.
- 9.3 In cases where students did not request mitigation before the School's published deadline but believe that they have a strong explanation for this, requests for an appeal can be made following the publication of confirmed results by following [Regulation XIX: Academic Appeals Procedure](#).

## 10.0 Sources of Support and Advice

- 10.1 Please see details listed in section 5.0 of the [Policy on Mitigating Circumstances and Coursework Extensions](#).

## Appendix A: Mitigating Circumstances process flow chart

### Preliminary Stage: Identifying Cases

Student submits Request for Mitigation to their School.\*

\*For 2023/24, local submission processes are in place. Going forwards, a new institutional online process is planned through the SEP tech & process strand.

PS staff identify all requests that were received by the specific School deadline for the assessment. If received by the deadline, the request moves to Stage 1.

In cases where a request was received after the deadline, if there is no acceptable and strong explanation for why the request was submitted late, students must be advised that their claims cannot be considered. They should be referred to the Policy on Mitigating Circumstances and Coursework Extensions and the section in their programme handbook or other sources which refer to the submission of requests for mitigation. They should also be signposted to relevant sources of support.

### Stage 1: Consideration of Requests/Accepting Mitigation

Consideration of requests to be more streamlined and informal; it is suggested Schools could have a shared mailbox where one or two PS colleagues receive and consider requests and make initial 'agree' or 'reject' decisions, with any problematic cases referred to the appropriate academics (identified by the School).

Request is processed by PS staff under locally agreed parameters. PS staff agree to approve or reject, or refer specific cases to the appropriate academics.

Approved requests are emailed to academic colleagues/ weekly for reference.

Regular (weekly, at relevant times of the year) meeting\* or email comms between PS staff & academic colleagues to consider any requests that fall outside the responsibility of PS staff, according to School agreed parameters.

\* Meetings will not have a set institutional list of members or quoracy requirements; details will be determined locally. However, it is envisaged that there would be an academic chair

and at least one PS colleague, with other relevant academic colleagues as necessary (e.g. Programme Directors, Heads of School, Teaching, Learning and Student Experience).

During the first year, while the process is being introduced, the Academic Lead may wish to look at samples of the rejected or approved requests made by PS staff. During this year, colleagues can learn from cases to determine whether anything needs to change in relation to the School level parameters.

Students will be permitted to appeal a rejected request for mitigation, only if there are procedural irregularities (e.g. if a request is rejected with the reason that the student did not submit any evidence, yet the student can prove they did submit the required evidence.)

If a student is subsequently not satisfied with the way their School has handled their concern, they can submit an appeal under Regulation XIX: Academic Appeals Procedure once the final decision of an Examination Board, or equivalent body, has been published.

Students can appeal against the final decision of an Examination Board, or equivalent body, under Regulation XIX: Academic Appeals Procedure, if appropriate and in line with the grounds for appeal set out in Regulation XIX.

A Community of Practice/Mitigating Circumstances Network to be set up, comprising of staff members responsible for making mitigating circumstances decisions in Schools, to share experiences and contribute to operational guidance. TLD to provide support during the first year, after which it is envisaged that the Network would be run by School colleagues.

### **Stage 2: Recommendation of outcomes**

For requests agreed by PS staff/academic colleagues, decisions to be made on the specific recommendation for each case, based on the recommendation codes in the Mitigating Circumstances Procedures.

### **Stage 3: Final consideration and decision by Examination Board**

Examination Boards consider the recommendations by Schools and make final decision on the mitigation outcome. (This could be the same as the recommendation from the panel, or different, based on the Board's holistic view of the student's performance and outcomes).

Version: 2.0 June 2023; applicable from 2023/24



# Procedure for Extensions

If you are reading a printed version of this document, you should check <https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=68792> to ensure you have the most up to date version.

Effective from the start of the 2023/24 academic year

## 1.0 Introduction and purpose

- 1.1 This document sets out the procedures for considering students' requests for extensions to their coursework or other written assessments.
- 1.2 The document should be read in conjunction with the [\*Policy on Mitigating Circumstances\*](#) and, where appropriate, the [\*Guidance for Dealing with Disability-Related requests for Mitigation\*](#) (produced by the Disability Advisory and Support Service (DASS)). DASS also produce [\*Guidance for Disability Advisory and Support Service \(DASS\) Related Automatic Extensions\*](#), and [\*Student guidance on DASS-related Automatic Extensions\*](#).
- 1.3 Requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) or the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) which affect the consideration of requests for mitigation will take precedence over the details within this document. In this case, Schools must publish the specific arrangements within programme handbooks and any other relevant locations/formats.

## 2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This document covers the procedure for students requesting extensions to pieces of coursework/written assessment which are set with a specific deadline. It does not apply to examinations which students sit at a specific time.<sup>11</sup>
- 2.2 The procedure applies to all Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught students studying at the University of Manchester.

## 3.0 General Principles

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<sup>11</sup> Open-book examinations with a specific submission window are regarded as examinations and not course work and are not covered by this procedure.

- 3.1 If personal circumstances affect a student's ability to submit a specific piece of written assessment, they are eligible to request a short extension to their submission date.
- 3.2 Extension requests may be submitted in the case where a student is experiencing a one-off/isolated incident relating to health or other personal circumstances (please see paragraph 3.6 for examples) or an exacerbation of an existing medical or health condition. If a student is experiencing any issues which are likely to have an ongoing impact on their assessments and progression, they should be encouraged to notify their School at the earliest opportunity, and to submit a request for mitigation in addition (See the [Policy on Mitigating Circumstances](#) and the [Procedures on Mitigating Circumstances](#)).
- 3.3 Extension requests should be submitted via a separate form<sup>12</sup> and no supporting evidence is required to be submitted (unless the student wishes to provide this).
- 3.4 Extension requests will only apply to assessed written work, for example, dissertations, and do not apply to the following:
- Group/teamwork
  - Presentations
  - Formative coursework
  - Assessments limited by logistical constraints e.g. assessments to be completed whilst on a field trip; short recurring deadlines e.g., where assessments are to be submitted weekly for a particular unit; continuous ongoing course work e.g., portfolios; or where feedback needs to be provided to students before the extension end date
  - Practice elements of professional practice modules
  - Work which is required to be completed within a set timescale because to do so is a professional competency standard
  - Practical/skills-based work
  - First submission for PhD/MPhil submissions and any subsequent resubmissions
  - Take home timed, written examinations.
- Please note: this is not an exhaustive list.
- 3.5 As students are not required to provide supporting evidence, when reviewing an extension request staff may wish to consider whether a student has fully

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<sup>12</sup> A standard form for Requests for Extensions is being produced as part of the SEP Tech & Process stream, in consultation with School PS staff. This is likely to come on stream in September 2024. Until this is available, Schools should use their own version of a Request for Extensions form.

demonstrated the impact of the incident/issue on their ability to submit the written piece of work within the original deadline.

3.6 Reasons for requesting and granting an extension may include (but not limited to):

- Technology/IT Issues – broken laptop, Wi-Fi issues etc. (please see [Guidance for Schools on mitigating circumstances related to IT Issues](#) and information for students on [help with assessment issues \(including IT matters\)](#));
- Physical Ill Health – Covid, sickness, injury etc.
- Mental Ill Health – anxiety, stress etc.
- Disability (whether the student is registered with DASS or not)
- Domestic/Family Crisis - bereavement, illness, relationship breakdown, caring responsibilities, Maternity/Paternity/Adoption leave
- Personal crisis – accommodation issues, theft, assault, financial difficulties, Jury Service.

3.7 Extension requests that fall within the following categories would **not** normally be granted:

- Planned/anticipated events - moving house, holidays etc. (anything that could be reasonably expected)
- Assessments that are scheduled close together – unless impacting on health/wellbeing
- Misreading assessment timetable
- Inadequate planning or time management
- Act of religious observance
- Consequences of paid employment (except in exceptional circumstances, i.e. if related to family/financial crises).

3.8 Requests for extensions should be considered initially by PS staff under the School's agreed parameters. In the event of any specific requests that require academic input/decisions, PS colleagues should refer the requests to the relevant academic colleagues. Schools are responsible for confirming both the agreed parameters and the academic colleagues who would be involved in the decision-making process.

3.9 Students will normally be granted a maximum of 5 additional working days (in addition to any DASS automatic extensions that a student may be entitled to). However, the agreed length of extension will be made by the relevant programme team and will be appropriate to the student's needs and mode of study (e.g. full-time or part-time), mode of assessments and programme requirements, etc.

- 3.10 Where these extensions may impact on marking deadlines, staff should refer this to the relevant School's Assessment and Progression team to confirm.
- 3.11 Staff should, where possible, ensure extension deadlines do not fall on a University closure day or bank holiday; however, if that is unavoidable, students should normally be expected to submit their assignments electronically where this facility is available.

## 4.0 Sources of support

- 4.1 Please see details listed in section 5.0 of the Policy on Mitigating Circumstances.

Version: 1.0 June 2023; applicable from 2023/24

## **Student self-certification of absence from learning**

The University has introduced a Procedure for Student Self-Certification of Absence from Learning which sets out arrangements for students to notify the University if they are ill or unable to study for a period up to and including seven days.

The procedure was initially introduced in March 2020 relating to absence due to illness, but has now been extended for the 2021/22 academic year and also includes cases where students miss learning opportunities due to situations such as loss of IT connection or care responsibilities. The procedure applies to all undergraduate and postgraduate taught students undertaking programmes of study at the University of Manchester. It covers teaching and learning activities, but does not extend to exams or assessment.

Student self-certification forms will not be accepted to cover absence from exams or other forms of assessment; in these cases, students should apply for mitigation under the [Policy on Mitigating Circumstances](#). However, submitted student self-certification forms could be used as a form of evidence towards a claim for mitigation under the Policy on Mitigating Circumstances; in such cases, however, the student's claim for mitigation would be stronger if they also provided appropriate, independent, third-party supporting or collaborative documentation.

The Procedure and the associated Self-Certification of Absence Form can be found below:

- [Procedure for Student Self-Certification of Absence from Learning](#) (updated November 2021)
- [Student Self-Certification of Absence Form](#)

List of School contacts for students to submit their forms to:

- [School contact details](#)

### **Guidance on reassessment away from Manchester**

1. Re-sit examinations are held in Manchester, typically three or four weeks before the next session starts. This can mean extra costs for accommodation and travel, and loss of income if students have to curtail vacation employment. We appreciate that you may want to re-sit examinations abroad/ near to your home and although such a request appears reasonable, our experience shows that arrangements overseas or outside the University may not be sufficiently reliable.
2. Students may be able to suggest locations where examinations can be sat in sufficiently secure conditions, but problems with invigilation, differences of time zones and safe return of scripts are very difficult to resolve, and are not sufficiently offset by charging the student a higher fee to cover the extra costs.
3. Therefore the University does not allow re-sit examinations to be held away from Manchester.
4. This policy does not apply to collaborative programmes, where re-sit examinations are normally held at the partner institution, or to recognized exchange programmes, where, in some circumstances, arrangements may be approved for international or home students to re-sit examinations at the partner institution.

# **Section D: The Process of Assessment**

## **Policy on Examinations (November 2015)**

1. Introduction
2. Purpose
3. Scope
4. The Policy
5. Supporting documents

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This document sets out the University's Policy on Examinations.

### **2. Purpose**

- 2.1 The policy applies to undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes.

### **3. Scope**

3.1 This policy refers to all formal examinations which take place as part of a student's programme of study.

3.2 The policy sets out the practical arrangements for students' participation in examinations.

### **4. The Policy**

#### **Fairness**

4.1 In support of the principle that the processes of assessment should be fair, the University has a policy on examinations designed to ensure that students do not obtain unfair advantage for themselves or cause unfair disadvantage to other students.

4.2 Examinations will be supervised by trained invigilators.

#### **Admission to examinations**

4.3 Students must pay all appropriate fees in order to be admitted to an examination.

4.4 Students must satisfy the appropriate Work and Attendance regulations in order to be admitted to an examination.

#### **Admission to the examination room**

4.5 Students will not be admitted to an examination room more than 30 minutes after the scheduled start.

4.6 Students must sit in specified seats if so required by the invigilator.

1.7 Students must not impersonate another candidate, or allow themselves to be impersonated.



## **Material not permitted in an examination**

4.8 Students must not bring food or drink into an examination room, except for a small packet of sweets (or similar) and a small bottle of water or other soft drink.

4.9 Students must not take to their examination desk any learning material or aids not specifically authorized for use in that examination. A student found in possession of any unauthorized and/or undisclosed material once the exam has started will be subject to disciplinary action, regardless of whether there was intent to use the material.

4.10 The University has a separate [guidance on the use of dictionaries in examinations](#). Except as allowed under that guidance, students must not bring into the examination room any language translation dictionary or other dictionary.

4.11 The University has separate [guidance on the use of calculators in examinations](#). Except as allowed under that guidance, students must not take to their examination desk any equipment capable of receiving, inputting, storing, processing or transmitting information, including mobile phones.

4.12 Any personal property such as coats or bags brought into an examination room must be left in a designated area.

## **Conduct in the examination room**

4.13 Students must leave their University Registration Card visible for inspection for the duration of the examination.

4.14 Students must not copy from the work of another candidate or allow copying from their own work, and must not obtain assistance from another candidate or provide assistance to them.

4.15 Students must maintain silence and remain seated while in the examination room. Students must not cause any kind of disturbance or distraction or attempt to communicate with other candidates.

## **Leaving the examination room**

4.16 A student who wishes to leave the examination room temporarily may do so only if accompanied by an invigilator.

4.17 Normally, students may not leave the examination room during the first 30 minutes or the last 15 minutes of the examination. If the exam is one hour duration or less students cannot normally leave until the end of the exam. Outside of these times, a student may leave the examination room before the allotted finishing time under the direction of an invigilator. Students must leave the examination room silently.

4.18 Students may take question papers away from the examination unless specifically told verbally or in writing not to do so. Students must not remove from the examination room any other materials provided for the examination including answer books (used or unused).

## **5. Supporting documents**

- [Examinations: Guidance for Students](#)

Version 1.1, November 2015

## **Examinations: Guidance for students (September 2023)**

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 This document sets out guidance for students with regards to examinations.

### **2. Purpose**

2.1 The document applies to students on undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes of study.

### **3. Scope**

3.1 This document refers to all formal examinations which take place as part of a student's programme of study.

3.2 The document sets out the practical arrangements for students' participation in and conduct during examinations, including arrangements for what students can or cannot take into examinations.

### **4. Guidance**

#### **Attendance**

4.1 If you have not fulfilled the Work and Attendance regulations prescribed for your programme of study, and you have been formally notified of this, you will not be allowed to sit University examinations.

4.2. You should arrive at the examination room in good time for the start of the examination; at least 15 minutes beforehand is recommended. If you arrive late, you will be admitted up to 30 minutes after the pre-scheduled timed start, but you will not be given any extra time. If you are more than 30 minutes late you will not be admitted, and you should then report immediately to your School.

4.3 If you are absent from an examination without a valid excuse, you will be deemed to have failed that examination. Misreading the timetable is not a valid excuse.

4.4 If you have been given a particular seat number for an examination you must sit in the seat that has been assigned to you, unless an invigilator tells you to move to another seat. Seat numbers are given on your individual student examination timetable.

#### **What to bring to Examinations**

4.5 You must bring your University Student ID card and leave it visible for inspection on your desk for the duration of the examination.

4.6 Since different people are comfortable in different room temperatures, you may find it advisable to wear extra warm clothing when attending January examinations.

4.7 The University takes no responsibility for the loss of students' belongings from examination rooms. You are therefore strongly advised to take with you into the examination room only those items you need to complete the examination (pens, ruler, etc). If you need to keep your pens and pencils together at the examination desk, they must be in a transparent pencil case or small transparent plastic bag. Any personal property that you do choose to bring into an examination room (coats, bags, other valuables etc.) must be left in the area designated by the invigilators (usually at the front or back of the room).

4.8 As a general rule you are not allowed to bring food or drink into an examination room, except for a small packet of sweets (or similar) and a small bottle of water or other soft drink.

## **What not to bring to Examinations**

### **Electronic Equipment**

4.9 The University has separate guidance on the use of [calculators](#) and [dictionaries](#) in examinations. These are available online and are displayed outside all examination rooms. It is your responsibility to consult these and observe what they say.

4.10 Electronic calculators are not permitted unless the exam rubric states otherwise. If calculators are permitted, your School can advise you as to what models can be used.

4.11 Mobile phones, smart watches and other wearable technology must be turned off and placed in the clear plastic bag provided at your desk. This bag must be sealed and placed on the floor under your desk.

4.12 Any other electronic devices (e.g. computers or personal music players) are not permitted in the examination room.

4.13 Any student found with unauthorised devices or equipment during an exam will have them confiscated, and the student will be subject to disciplinary action.

### **Other non-authorised materials**

4.14 It is a serious offence to take to your examination desk any books, notes, blank paper, other materials or aids that have not been specifically authorized for use in that examination. If you are found in possession of any unauthorized material, whether or not you intended to use it, you will be subject to disciplinary action and will normally find that, as a minimum penalty, your examination paper will be cancelled (that is, given a mark of zero). More severe penalties are available, depending on the circumstances of individual cases.

4.15 Ensure that your hands and person are clean of any writing or symbols. If you are found with any writing or symbols on your hands or person, you will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **Cheating**

4.16 It is an offence: to copy from the work of another candidate or allow copying from your own work; to obtain assistance from another candidate, or provide assistance to them, by whatever means; and to impersonate another candidate, or allow yourself to be impersonated.

## **Conduct during Examinations**

4.17 You must write your registration number (the 7 or 8 figure number on the front of your Student ID Card) on every examination answer-book you use. Remember to fill in all the other information asked for.

4.18 You must write all your answers legibly. If your work is deemed illegible by the examiners, you will normally be required to pay for it to be converted to typescript. You must write in blue or black ink. Pencil is not allowed, except for graphs and diagrams.

4.19 Examinations are marked anonymously. At the end of the examination make sure you fold over and seal the gummed edge of the panel on the top corner of each of your answer-books, before they are collected from you.

4.20 You must write only in the examination answer-books provided (including any rough work). Do not tear pages out of answer books. Any work that you do not wish to submit for marking must be clearly crossed out but must not be removed from the answer book. You must not remove answer books (used or unused) from examination rooms. Any other materials that have been provided for the examination must not be removed. Students found doing any of these things will be subject to disciplinary action. Question papers may be taken away unless you are specifically told verbally or in writing not to do so.

4.21 You must maintain silence throughout the time you are in the examination room. You must not cause any kind of disturbance or distraction, or attempt to communicate with other candidates, by any means.

4.22 You must remain seated at all times. You must raise your hand to summon the attention of an invigilator for whatever purpose. If you wish to leave the examination room temporarily you may only do so if accompanied by an invigilator. If you wish to leave the examination before the allotted finishing time you must remain seated and raise your hand: an invigilator will come to collect your answer book, after which you may leave, silently. You are not permitted to leave during the first 30 minutes or the last 15 minutes of the examination. At the end of the examination you must stop writing immediately you are told to do so and remain seated and silent until all answer books have been collected.

4.23. If a fire alarm should sound during an examination, follow the instructions given by the invigilator. These will be the standard procedures for evacuating the building. You should leave the room in an orderly way, without talking and without taking anything from your desk, or from the room. Leave the building and assemble in the designated area. You must not leave this designated area. You should return to the

examination room immediately when you are instructed to do so. Candidates who are still absent once the examination has re-started will not be re-admitted.

### **And finally**

4.24. If you are at an examination and you realise that you have failed to comply with any of these rules, or have any questions, you should contact an invigilator immediately. Students failing to do this, when knowingly breaking examination regulations, may face disciplinary action.

## **5. Supporting documents**

The [Assessment Framework](#) contains other relevant guidance to students relating to examination practice, including the Policy on Examinations, Guidance on the use of calculators and Guidance on the use of dictionaries.

Updated September 2023

## **Guidance on the Use of Calculators in Examinations**

The use of electronic calculators is not permitted in University examinations unless explicitly specified by the exam paper rubric.

If calculators are permitted, the rubric must clearly specify any restrictions on the model or type of calculator allowed. Schools must provide students with guidance in advance of the exam period on what types of calculators are permitted.

Any calculators which do not match the rubric's specifications will be confiscated by the exam invigilators. Invigilators will not provide replacement or spare calculators.

[The Disability Advisory and Support Service \(DASS\)](#) may override these rules for individual students if appropriate.

(Updated July 2023)

### **Guidance on the Use of Dictionaries in Examinations**

The use of dictionaries is not permitted in University examinations unless explicitly specified by the exam paper rubric.

If dictionaries are permitted, the rubric must clearly state what type of dictionary is allowed. Schools must provide students with guidance in advance of the exam period on what types of dictionaries are permitted.

Any dictionaries which do not match the rubric's specifications will be confiscated by the exam invigilators. Invigilators will not provide replacement or spare dictionaries.

These rules may be over-ridden for individual students who have been provided with a supporting letter by their School, or by [the Disability Advisory and Support Service \(DASS\)](#) if appropriate.

(Updated July 2023)

## **Academic Malpractice**

The Academic Malpractice Procedure (owned by the Division of Campus Life) contains the University's definitions of malpractice, general points on helping to prevent malpractice, what might indicate malpractice, and process information around the handling of suspected cases of malpractice:

- [Academic Malpractice Procedure](#) (owned by the Division of Campus Life)

The following guidance documents are also available to accompany the Academic Malpractice Procedure:

- [Guidance to students on plagiarism and other forms of academic malpractice](#)
- [Academic malpractice flowchart for staff](#) (new October 2020)
- [Plagiarism or Poor Practice](#) - guidance for staff when trying to determine whether a piece of work contains plagiarism or poor academic practice (new October 2020)

Staff members are also advised to refer to the [Contract Cheating Toolkit](#) on the [Institute of Teaching and Learning \(ITL\) website](#).

Any queries relating to the updated Academic Malpractice Procedure should be addressed to Matt Valentine (Student Conduct and Discipline Manager) ([Matthew.Valentine@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Matthew.Valentine@manchester.ac.uk)).

### **Turnitin**

The default setting is that students cannot routinely submit their own work to Turnitin, the plagiarism detection system, which is integrated with Blackboard. However, if academic staff wish to carry out a trial session of submitting students' work to the University's plagiarism detection systems in order to demonstrate to students how work can be checked for originality, staff should contact their eLearning teams who will be able to assist with this.

### **Resources to refer students to**

- There are various plagiarism, academic malpractice and referencing resources and information available through the [University of Manchester Library My Learning Essentials](#), including workshops and online resources such as '[Getting started with referencing](#)' and '[Avoiding plagiarism](#)'
- [The University of Manchester referencing guide](#)
- [An Introduction to Referencing and Avoiding Plagiarism](#) (Student Guidance Service)
- [Student Support Website – Good Study Skills](#)
- [Avoiding academic malpractice - page on the Student Support website](#)
- The Students' Union has produced [a video for students about academic malpractice](#)
- [Guidance for Assessed Student Group Working](#)



## **Procedures for Handling Unfair Practice in Examinations**

1. Information on handling cases of suspected academic malpractice can be found in the document ['Academic Malpractice: Guidance on the Handling of Cases'](#).
2. [Regulation XVII 'Conduct and Discipline of Students'](#) makes it clear that cheating ("the possession of unauthorised material or the use or attempted use of unauthorised or unfair means (including academic malpractice such as plagiarism or collusion with other students or fabrication or falsification of results) in connection with any examination or assessment") renders a student liable to disciplinary proceedings.
3. For further information about the procedure for handling unfair practice in examinations, please see [Regulation XVII 'Conduct and Discipline of Students'](#).

Version amendment history: Assessment Framework		
Version	Date	Reason for change
1.0	June 2010	Approved by TLG
4.4	March 2011	Revised to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student guidance on Plagiarism and other forms of Academic Malpractice, and</li> <li>• Full Examination Board Guidance</li> </ul>
4.5	October 2011	Revised to update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedures for handling unfair practice in examinations and to update internal web links</li> </ul>
4.6	February 2012	Revised to add the Examination Scheduling section
4.7	August 2013	Revised to amend figure for marks capped after resubmission following failure in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy on Submission of Work for Summative Assessment on Taught Programmes</li> </ul>
4.8	February and April 2014	Amended to add additional lines to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy on the use of Calculators</li> </ul>
4.9	May 2014	Updated to remove: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy on Reassessment in undergraduate programmes, relating to Undergraduate Degree Regulations prior to September 2012</li> </ul>
4.10	November 2014	Updated to replace the wording: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Code of Practice on External Examiners</i> with <i>Guidance on External Examiner Procedures</i></li> <li>• and to replace the <i>Policy and Procedure on Mitigating Circumstances</i> with the updated <i>Policy on Mitigating Circumstances</i> (approved June 2014)</li> </ul>
	May 2015	Updated to reflect revised version of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance on the Use of Calculators in Examinations, and to remove: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance for Students on Mitigating Circumstances (replaced with link to A Basic Guide to Mitigating Circumstances)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
4.11	February 2016	Updated to add new/revised policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy on Marking;</li> <li>• Policy on Submission of Work for Summative Assessment;</li> <li>• Guidance on the Retention of Teaching and Learning Materials;</li> <li>• Guidance for the Presentation of Taught Dissertations for UG and PGT provision;</li> <li>• Policy on Ethical Approval of Research in Taught Assessment;</li> <li>• Guidance on Examination Boards;</li> <li>• Policy on Mitigating Circumstances;</li> <li>• Policy on Examinations;</li> <li>• Guidance on the use of Calculators in Examinations;</li> <li>• Examinations: Guidance for Students.</li> </ul>
4.12	September 2016	Updated to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance on Late Submission</li> </ul>
4.13	June 2018	Updated to reflect revised versions of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy on Ethical Approval of Research on Human Subjects (June 2017),</li> <li>• Policy on Mitigating Circumstance and Mitigating Circumstances Procedures (June 2017) &amp; website links</li> </ul>
4.14	July 2018	Updated to reflect new document: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance on Moderation, Fairness and Consistency in Marking</li> </ul>

4.15	September 2019	Updated to reflect revised versions of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy on Submission of Work for Summative Assessment</li> <li>• Guidance on Late Submission</li> <li>• Policy on Religious Observance</li> <li>• Removal of Guidance to students on plagiarism and other forms of academic malpractice, and Plagiarism and other forms of academic malpractice – guidance for academic staff (which have been encompassed in the revised Academic Malpractice Procedure)</li> </ul>
4.16	February 2023	Updates to policy owner and lead contact details in document control box, to reflect changes of team names. Updates to some of the individual policies/guidance within the Framework, to reflect current versions <a href="#">on the TLD website</a> .
4.17	July 2023	Updates made by the Scheduling Team to the Guidance on the Use of Calculators in Exams and the Guidance on the Use of Dictionaries in Exams
4.18	September 2023	Updates made to the Policy on Mitigating Circumstances and Coursework Extensions, the Mitigating Circumstances Procedures, and inclusion of the new Procedure for Extensions, for 2023/24

Document control box	
Policy / Procedure title:	Assessment Framework
Date approved:	July 2023
Approving body:	TLSG
Implementation date:	February 2023
Version:	v 4.18
Supersedes:	v4.17 July 2023
Previous review dates:	2008, 2009, 2010, 2018, 2019
Next review date:	Review of full Assessment Framework to take place during 2022/23 and 2023/24
Related Statutes, Ordinances, General Regulations	Regulation XII - Arrangements for the award of degrees and other distinctions Regulation XVII - Conduct and Discipline of Students Regulation XX - Work and Attendance of Students (all part of the University's <a href="#">General Regulations</a> ).
Related Procedures and Guidance:	TLD Policies and Procedures <a href="http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/policy-guidance/">http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/policy-guidance/</a>
Policy owner:	Head of Student and Academic Services (SAS)
Lead contact:	Teaching and Learning Manager (Policies and Degree Apprenticeships), Teaching and Learning Delivery, Division of SAS  <a href="mailto:teaching-policy@manchester.ac.uk">For any queries or questions relating to this document, please direct your email to teaching-policy@manchester.ac.uk</a>