



# **ASSESSMENT HANDBOOK**

**September 2021**

## FOREWORD

This Handbook has been compiled as a practical guide to assist academic and other staff engaged in the assessment of students of the University or of its partner institutions. It is intended to promote best practice. The first edition of the Handbook was produced in June 2001. It is updated on a regular basis.

The Handbook covers many aspects of assessment practice and is intended to offer an introduction to topics and to act as a key reference document for University policies relating to assessment. It is written at a general University level and therefore does not stand in isolation from faculty or subject-level policies and strategies which it complements nor, for partner institutions, their own specific policies and regulations. The Handbook does not deal with the assessment of research degrees.

The Handbook draws on the regulatory framework of the University and the work assessment which has been undertaken in the University, both centrally and in the Faculties, and also the work of authoritative bodies and individual practitioners in the sector. The Handbook does not explore assessment practices in depth. Staff wishing to consider these matters in more detail are encouraged to consult the texts listed in the References and Further Reading section of the Handbook, and engage with the Centre for Higher Education Research and Practice which provides support and leadership in pedagogic development, including assessment practice.

Details of policies and regulations may be found on the Academic Office's website. If a policy or a regulation is unworkable for your practice or you believe that the policy is no longer fit for purpose, then we need to hear from you so that it can be reviewed. If you work in a faculty, please raise your concern with your Associate Dean (Education) or if you work in a professional service, please raise your concern with the Academic Office or the Centre for Higher Education in Research and Practice.

G KENDALL

Acting Head of Academic Office

## USEFUL WEBSITES

### University

(also available through the Staff Portal)

Academic Office

[ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice](http://ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice)

Centre for Higher Education  
Research and Practice

[ulster.ac.uk/cherp](http://ulster.ac.uk/cherp)

### External

AdvanceHE

[advance-he.ac.uk/](http://advance-he.ac.uk/)

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

[qaa.ac.uk/](http://qaa.ac.uk/)

QAA for Scotland: Enhancement Theme on Assessment [enhancementthemes.ac.uk/en/home](http://enhancementthemes.ac.uk/en/home)

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# 1 ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES

## 1.1 Learning and Teaching in Higher Education

Assessment of student learning is a key issue for students, those who teach and those who are responsible for the design, accreditation, quality assurance and review of courses.

It is well recognised by writers and teachers in higher education alike (Newble and Jaegar, 1983; Brown and Knight, 1994) that students are preoccupied with what constitutes the assessment in their chosen course of study. Brown, Bull and Pendlebury (1997) assert that “*Assessment defines what students regard as important, how they spend their time and how they come to see themselves as students and then as graduates*”.

Student learning styles (**how** students learn) and the actual subject material (**what** students learn) are often driven by the assessment required for a course of study. Many writers have commented on the fact that student learning styles and depth and clarity of understanding may be shaped by changing the methods of assessment.

Research in learning and teaching in higher education has demonstrated the profound impact of assessment method upon depth of study. For example, Watkins and Hattie (1985) showed how the use of tests and multiple-choice questions promoted reproductive styles of learning, whereas projects and open-ended assessment promoted independence and deeper strategies of understanding. There is evidence that the use of problem-based approaches can promote deeper styles of learning (Vernon and Blake 1994). However, many students reject deeper approaches on the grounds that the assessment methods in their courses involve so much reproduction of material that developing deeper approaches in study methods is not worth the investment required<sup>1</sup>.

Furthermore, much of the literature on learning shows that undergraduate courses with a heavy load of subject content and a narrow range of topics are more likely to foster superficial learning methods and outcomes in students. Choice of assessment methods by teachers in higher education is of paramount importance in fostering, in students, a deep approach to learning.

## 1.2 Trends in Assessment

In the recent past, there has been a dramatic shift in the procedures and methods of assessment in higher education.

One of the driving forces behind the shift has been the renewed emphasis on and the current interest in the professional preparation, development and accreditation of university teachers. Indeed, it has been argued that this area of professional activity has undergone the most striking transformation of any staff development activity in higher education in recent years (Griffiths, 1996; Pennington, 1999).

The establishment of the Institute for Learning and Teaching (ILT) in 1999 (then the Higher Education Academy, now AdvanceHE) saw the implementation of Dearing Recommendation 14, which acknowledged the importance of effective teaching in higher education. Assessment is one of the broad areas of professional activity covered by the Academy’s work, the national framework for professional standards in teaching and supported learning, and the professional recognition scheme. However, the significance of assessment is driven not only by the demands of the national framework, but also by the desire of higher education teachers to do a good job. There is a growing recognition

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<sup>1</sup> For a full discussion of these ideas see Brown, Bull, Pendlebury (1997).

of the potential harm that can be done, often unintentionally, through negligence in assessment procedures and processes.

The change in attitude and practice in assessment in higher education has also been driven by a recognition that the kind of knowledge and skills which graduates now need, cannot be properly served by only one or two types of assessment methods. Hence, the current trend has been to provide a wider and more flexible repertoire of assessment methods to match and underpin the wider range of knowledge, understanding and skills required in undergraduate courses.

Another shift in assessment in recent times is the result of designing courses, utilising a learning outcomes approach. This approach recognises the need to design and plan assessment as part of the whole curriculum experience, so that it is congruent with the statements of outcome and with the teaching/learning methods adopted. Until very recently, this approach was rarely undertaken. For example, Otter (1992) found:

*“The relationship between the course objectives and what was currently assessed was not always clear, and assessment was often not treated as an integral part of the course. There was little evidence of an assessment strategy in many courses, and little sharing of information about this between staff”.*

In the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education* published by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA): *Advice and Guidance on Assessment* and in the framing of its guidelines for Programme Specifications emphasis is given to defining clear and unambiguous learning outcomes, which can be more readily assessed. When assessing learning outcomes, consideration has to be given to both defining the specific assessment criteria and the explicitness of the actual assessment methods to be used. In practice, part of the planning will be to determine what counts as satisfactory achievement for each of the learning outcomes identified and whether some are so important that students cannot compensate for a failed performance in them.

The QAA in Scotland, in partnership with the funding council and institutions, has facilitated an enhancement-led approach to quality assurance. The first theme during 2003-4 was assessment. A series of workshops was organised to facilitate the development and sharing of good practice and a report *Reflections on Assessment, Volumes I and II* on a range of topics has been published (Quality Assurance Agency, 2005).

In *Assessment 2020* (Australian Learning and Teaching Council, 2010) Boud presents seven propositions to guide assessment thinking in light of the increased focus on standards, and to address criticisms of current practice. They set directions for change designed to enhance learning achievements for all students and improve the quality of their experience. The document states that assessment has most effect when:

1. assessment is used to engage students in learning that is proactive
2. assessment is used to actively improve student learning
3. student and teachers become responsible partners in learning and assessment
4. students are inducted into the assessment practices and cultures of higher education
5. assessment for learning is placed at the centre of subject and programme design
6. assessment for learning is a focus for staff and institutional development
7. assessment provides inclusive and trustworthy representation of student achievement.

The document is given in full at Appendix A1.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (NI) 2005 (SENDO) (SENDO (NI), 2005) and the Disability Equality Duty (2007) emphasise the need for mainstreaming inclusive practice. SENDO requires that the university environment be free from



discrimination; that, wherever possible, policies and practices are developed to meet the needs of disabled students, and wherever necessary and practicable, 'reasonable adjustments' are made to accommodate individual needs. In seeking alternative teaching and assessment methods, the law does not require that academic standards are compromised. The aim of alternative assessment strategies is to minimise the impact of a student's disability on his/her performance in assessment. The University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Unit has produced a staff *Guidance Booklet* (2008) on SENDO; the booklet and access to other resources are available from its website.

In addition, Chapter B4 of the *UK Quality Code, Enabling student development and achievement* (Quality Assurance Agency, 2013) considers the merits of an inclusive environment. When reflecting on current teaching styles, course materials and the assessment of learning outcomes, planned consideration must be given to the needs of disabled students. The emphasis should be on meeting needs through embedded teaching, learning and assessment practice and on parity of experience rather than 'bolt on' or *ad hoc* provision. 'Levelling the playing field' for disabled students has traditionally been achieved through 'special' arrangements. Whilst such measures will always be needed, they do not fully encompass the social model of disability and inclusion to which the legislation leads. In contrast, anticipating needs by reviewing and deploying more imaginative assessment methods with the needs of disabled students in mind will produce a more coherent and inclusive approach, accommodating functional differences arising from disability. Such methods, recognising alternative learning styles, may also better serve other students. The 2018 edition of the Code includes a section on inclusive assessment within its *Advice and Guidance on Assessment*.

### 1.3 Purposes

Assessment is a generic term for a set of processes that measure the outcome of students' learning, in terms of knowledge acquired, understanding developed and skills or abilities gained. Assessment serves several purposes.

- It provides the means by which students are graded, passed or failed. The performance being judged relates to the achievement of the aims and intended learning outcomes of the module and course on which the student is enrolled.
- It provides the basis for decisions on whether a student is ready to proceed, to qualify for an award or has demonstrated competence to practise.
- It enables students to obtain feedback on their learning, their strengths and weaknesses, and helps them improve their performance.
- It enables staff to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching.

The University's views assessment as a means of promoting student learning as well as providing evidence of that learning. In 2011 the University adopted Principles of Assessment and Feedback for Learning (Appendix A2).

Assessment is usually construed as being *diagnostic*, *formative* or *summative*. Commonly held understandings of these terms are that:

- *Diagnostic assessment* provides an indicator of a student's aptitude and preparedness for a programme of study and identifies possible learning problems.
- *Formative assessment* is designed to provide students with feedback on progress and inform development.

(The University's transition policy emphasises the value of early formative assessment to promote both the development of skills and engagement with course material.)

- *Summative assessment* provides a measure of achievement made in respect of a student's performance in relation to the intended learning outcomes of the module and/or programme of study.

Any assessment instrument can, and often does, involve more than one of these elements. So, for example, much coursework is formative in that it provides an opportunity for students to be given feedback on their level of attainment, but also often counts towards a summative statement of achievement. An end-of-module or end-of-course examination is designed primarily to result in a summative judgement on the level of attainment which the student has reached. Both formative and summative assessment can have a diagnostic function. Assessment primarily aimed at diagnosis is intrinsically formative, although it might, rarely, contribute towards a summative judgement.

*Reflections on Assessment* (Quality Assurance Agency, 2005) considers in detail the role of formative assessment and ways to address the balance between formative and summative assessment.

Assessment methods chosen at programme and module level should enable students to demonstrate their achievement of learning outcomes, and enable them to be judged against relevant assessment criteria. These links should also be made clear to students. The assessment should focus on the principal learning outcomes and recognise in an explicit manner where learning outcomes are being assessed formatively rather than summatively.

#### 1.4 Principles

Assessment practices contribute to the maintenance of academic standards. To achieve this adequately, they must meet principles of:

<b>Validity</b>	They should measure the intended learning outcomes of the module or course and there should be a clear and obvious link in this regard.
<b>Fairness</b>	They should be reasonable in the expectations placed on students and be demonstrably conducted in an equitable and consistent manner. The assessment result should be dependent only on measures of the intended learning outcomes of the module or course, and should be free from bias caused by the individual or group background, either of the assessors or the students. Thus questions should be intelligible to all those being assessed, and in large modules, with students from a range of courses, should not favour any particular group. Assessment strategies should allow for an accommodation of functional differences arising from disability, learning styles and physical issues. Assessment and examination practices should provide disabled students with the same opportunity as their peers to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes.
<b>Reliability</b>	They should deliver repeatable and accurate judgements. Consistent results should be obtainable for different assessors on each assessment decision.
<b>Rigour</b>	They should measure performance at the level of the module or course and defined procedures, processes and standards should be adhered to strictly.
<b>Discrimination</b>	They should enable assessors to distinguish between candidates who meet and those who fail to meet the intended learning outcomes. Where performance is to be graded, they should

ensure that students who perform better are appropriately rewarded in the marks given.

A process of **moderation**, review and, if appropriate, adjustment of assessment contributes to the fulfilment of these principles. This applies both to the setting of assignments and their marking. (See also Section 15: Moderation.)

**Explicitness** Information and guidance on assessment arrangements should be clear and accurate, be made known and be easily accessible to staff, placement and practice assessors, External Examiners and students. It should be clear to students what they are expected to do, the circumstances in which they are asked to do it and how marks will be awarded (see Section 1.9: Assessment Principles and Strategies - Information Provision).

**Practicality** As well as being fair in the overall workload placed upon students and staff, the assessment should aim to achieve the maximum valid information for the minimum cost and effort.

In summary, effective assessment:

- Links directly to the learning outcomes of the programme.
- Assesses the central aspects of what is taught and learnt.
- Emphasises the development of deep, active, reflective learning.
- Focuses upon skills and their transfer.
- Is efficient for lecturers.
- Ensures a reasonable workload for students.
- Ensures, where reasonable, that the learning styles of all students, including those with disabilities, are accommodated.

These principles are addressed in University and Faculty policies and procedures and course and module arrangements. University policies and procedures include the University's regulations for awards and its regulations and procedures for the conduct of examinations (see Section 19: University Regulations and Examination Procedures). Faculty policies and procedures relate to actual assessment practice, which is the focus of this Handbook. The University has adopted new curriculum design principles (2017), which include guidance on assessment loads.

## 1.5 Assessment Strategies and Assessment Schemes

The University encourages diversity in assessment practices.

For each **course**, the University requires a statement of the overall assessment strategy. (This is considered as part of the initial course evaluation and subsequent revalidation processes.) It describes and explains in general terms:

- The forms of assessment which are used and gives general statements of the standards of performance required at each level and mark/grade bands.
- Why they have been chosen and how they assist in demonstrating achievement of the learning outcomes of the course.
- The overall assessment load and its timing.
- The process of moderation which operates.

- How the principles in Section 1.4 above are met.

The strategy should ensure that subject-specific and generic knowledge and skills are tested.

In accordance with the expectations of the Special Education Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005 and supporting regulations, the competence standards must be necessary to the qualification and apply to all students, in order to ensure competency and proficiency and must not otherwise discriminate for a reason relating to disability.

For each **module**, a statement of the assessment methods to be used is given. In addition, module-specific assessment criteria relating to the award of marks or grades should be articulated. This is the assessment scheme for the module.

An **assessment scheme** for a module should grow out of the intended learning outcomes. While all learning outcomes should be assessable, the tradition in universities is to design assessment schemes that only sample these learning outcomes. This is particularly true of the knowledge base associated with a module but should be less so of its skill base. It is important to select assessment techniques that will most directly assess the intended learning outcomes. For example, an assessment scheme associated with the presentation of relevant information might include *the presentation of a bibliography*.

Where coursework and a written examination are used, the module description gives the weighting between these two elements in determining the overall module result. The reason for this balance should be given in the course or module assessment strategy.

Subject to University regulations, course regulations set out the contribution of each module and level of the course to the overall award result. Standard regulations templates exist to support the drafting of course regulations.

Account should also be taken of overarching strategy, policy and procedural statements at Faculty, School and subject levels which guide course teams in these matters.

## 1.6 Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

There is a strong and deliberate relationship between what teaching staff intend students to learn and be able to do, the assessments set to gather information concerning whether they have learned what is intended and the way in which those assessments are marked and the assessment results graded.

Module outlines state clearly what it is a student should be able to do as a result of completing the module. According to Walker (1994) learning outcomes should:

- Be written in the future tense.
- Identify important learning requirements.
- Be such as to be achievable and assessable.
- Use language that students can understand.
- Relate to explicit statements of achievement.

Key or principal outcomes should be identified for assessment. There may also be desirable skills or qualities which may be developed through the course experience. These optional or enhanced outcomes need not be assessed. The University's curriculum design principles (2017) expect typically four learning outcomes in a module. A strong rationale should support more.

A learning outcome will normally consist of an action verb (e.g. *to present*) and an indication of content or context (e.g. *information relevant to marking schemes*). They are often written in fairly generic terms for the purposes of module descriptions. They will need further definition when applied to individual assignments.

At the level of an individual module, learning outcomes are written to make explicit the achievements expected of students for successful completion of the module. Their achievement is facilitated by the chosen approach(es) to learning and teaching. Opportunities for students to demonstrate the achievement of the learning outcomes, and to have this validated through assessment, are given through the chosen approach(es) to assessment - hence the need to carefully link the coursework to these outcomes. Assessment criteria, based on the intended learning outcomes, identify the knowledge, understanding and skills markers expect a student to display in the assessment task. These are taken into account in marking the work.

The learning outcomes should make transparent the level of the achievement expected of the student. For example, a course will normally provide opportunities for a student to move from knowledge of a subject and essential skills, through analysis and application to evaluation, integration and synthesis of knowledge and skills. This progression will be expected to take place across the whole programme, as well as within particular elements of the programme.

### 1.7 Assessment Methods

Assessment methods specify the assessment instruments which are used. The University groups these into two distinct categories, or assessment elements, within a module for the purposes of reviewing student performance.

- *Examinations* - a form of assessment which relies upon candidates producing written or oral answers to seen or unseen questions under formal examination conditions (normally at the end of a semester). The University operates a policy to ensure the anonymity of examination scripts during the marking process. Partner institutions are required to adopt similar arrangements.
- *Coursework* - a form of assessment which relies upon performance in one or more of practical work, submission of essays, exercises, seminar papers, reports, presentations, class tests, project or production of artefacts, design, etc. Where more than one piece of assessment is used in an assessment element, these are termed 'coursework components'. Anonymous marking of coursework is encouraged where practicable and appropriate. (It should end after the marking process to allow for student feedback.)

Oral assessments may be in either category depending on the subject and its assessment strategy.

These methods are considered in detail in Sections 2 - 13 of the Handbook.

As part of the development of the curriculum design framework (2017), the University expects typically no more than two items of assessment in a module. An item may include more than one component in the semester or year, but the overall item would result in a single mark. As a general rule of thumb, a single module learning outcome should not be 'double assessed', but this may be appropriate if they are both cognitive and practical aspects to one outcome.

### 1.8 Assessment Criteria and Marking Schemes

Assessment criteria define, for each assessment instrument, the knowledge, skills and other qualities being assessed and the standard of achievement which must be met to receive a particular grade or mark. While judgements may be made on a pass/fail basis, it is most common in University courses for performance to be graded, and consequently

there should be appropriate criteria to guide students and markers on the standards expected for different levels of performance. These criteria should reflect the particular Higher Education level of the course and module.

Assessment criteria can be considered as learning outcomes that have been further elaborated by the addition of a performance qualifier, i.e. they detail not only what is to be done, but how well it is to be done. It is within the assessment criteria that is established the standard of work required at each level of a course. Standards need to be specified with respect to the level of the course, the subject being assessed and the style of assessment being deployed.

A threshold assessment criterion would specify what the expectation would be of a bare pass; differentiated assessment criteria would specify the qualities expected of the various grades. For example, an assessment criterion at a pass level might be *to show evidence of the collection of information about a specified topic from a range of primary sources*.

Learning outcomes and assessment criteria should be made known to students in advance of their attempting an assessment task. This is essential information that allows students to make decisions about what they need to do and the standards to which they are expected to conform.

Differentiated assessment criteria cannot be dictated centrally since they will vary with subject and style of assessment. The Centre for Higher Education Research and Practice (CHERP) has developed guidance on assessment briefs and marking rubrics.

Guidance on levels and associated standards are to be found in the University's *Programme Approval, Management and Review* and *Partnership* handbooks, in the relevant Subject Benchmarks and in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (Quality Assurance Agency, 2014). The handbooks include a summary of generic credit level descriptors drawn from the Northern Ireland Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (NICATS, 1999). These have now also been adopted within the higher education credit framework descriptors for England (2008), and are known as EwNI (England, Wales, and Northern Ireland) descriptors (also available on the Academic Office website).

Marking schemes are elaborated in relation to the specific work which is being assessed and include attribution of marks to elements of performance. These matters are considered in more detail in Section 14: Marking Schemes.

Students with disabilities may require an adjustment to examination and class test marking. Following a needs assessment and using an educational psychologist's report, a Disability Adviser in Student Support may recommend that a student with dyslexia be given sympathetic consideration for spelling and grammar. Guidance on marking for students with dyslexia is available from Student Support.

## 1.9 Information Provision

The Quality Assurance Agency in the 2001 edition of Section 6 of the *Code of Practice* (Quality Assurance Agency, 2001) (now *UK Quality Code*) provided the following list as illustrative of the type of assessment information which institutions should consider including in their published documentation:

- The purpose, methods and schedule of assessment tasks during, and at the end of, a module or course.
- Any role played by Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning and the processes involved.

- The criteria for assessment including, where appropriate, descriptors of expected standards of student attainment: what is expected in order to pass or to gain a particular grade or classification.
- Which elements will, and which will not, count towards interim or final assessment and with what weighting or exemption procedures.
- The marking and grading conventions that will be used.
- The consequences of assessment, such as decisions about progression to the next level, final awards and the right of appeal.
- How and when assessment judgements are published.
- Any opportunities for re-assessment.

The 2011 edition of the Assessment chapter of the *UK Quality Code* (Quality Assurance Agency, 2011) stated that, in deciding which assessment methods to use, institutions, faculties, schools and departments may find it helpful to consider how to make information and guidance on assessment clear, accurate and accessible to all staff, students, placement or practice providers, assessors and external examiners, thereby minimising the potential for inconsistency of marking practice or perceived lack of fairness. The 2013 edition includes an Indicator of sound practice, that 'assessment policies, regulation and process are explicit, transparent and accessible to all intended audiences'. This is continued in the 2018 edition with reference to inclusive education.

The Centre for Higher Education Research and Practice has developed guidelines for writing assessment briefs (2018). See [www.ulster.ac.uk/cherp/academic-development](http://www.ulster.ac.uk/cherp/academic-development) under Resources.

Information is provided to students through relevant University regulations, the specific course regulations and course/subject and module handbooks. Staff receive it through the same resources, the course/subject document, this Assessment Handbook, and specific guidance drawn up by Faculties and Schools.

## 2 WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS

### 2.1 Unseen Written Examinations

Unseen written examinations are the most frequently used end-of-module assessment. The University's assessment workload equivalence guidelines (Appendix B1) offers advice on the expectations for the duration of examinations and class tests related to notional work hours and credits.

#### **Tips on setting examination questions** (adapted from Race and Brown, 1998)

- Determine the learning outcomes being assessed by the examination.
- Formulate the question to indicate clearly the level of intellectual performance required by the candidate. This is related to module level (e.g. *describe, apply a model, critically evaluate*).
- Keep the question short. (*There is less likelihood that the question can be interpreted in more than one way.*)
- Make the question layout easy to follow. (*A question with bullet points or several short parts may be easier to understand and interpret correctly than several lines of continuous prose.*)
- Where a question has several parts indicate how marks are to be allocated to each part.
- Set questions which can be answered in sufficient depth in the time available.
- Set questions which will allow the excellent student to excel.
- Do not use the same questions year after year, nor in supplementary (resit) examinations.
- Write the question to indicate clearly what the candidate is expected to do (e.g. *write a report, discuss an issue, apply a theory to practice, give illustrations from industry*).
- Give accurate references for direct quotations. (*Using quotations from recommended texts is an excellent technique to form a question.*)
- Ensure that each question examines a separate and distinct area of the syllabus.
- The questions set should represent a fair and reasonable spread of topics drawn from the entire syllabus specified in the approved course document.
- Where students are given a choice of questions (*say four questions from six*), ensure that sufficient breadth of the syllabus is examined.
- In certain areas, it may be appropriate to include data or information in the question to reduce the emphasis on memory recall.
- Decide on the criteria to be used to mark each question and how marks are to be allocated (e.g. *structure, content, reading/research, analysis, understanding, grammar*). When there is a choice of questions, (*say four from six*), be clear to candidates (and markers) about whether all answers are marked, and the best four marks taken (or an average from all), or whether the first four only are marked and therefore whether candidates should cross through answers which are not to be marked.
- Determine the areas to be addressed in the answer. (*Many External Examiners require this information before approving the examination paper.*)



- Test out the wording of questions on colleagues. (*They may interpret the question in a way you had not thought of, or indicate to you if it is at an appropriate level.*)

As a form of assessment, unseen written examinations have many advantages and disadvantages. Race and Brown (1998) have identified the following advantages and disadvantages *inter alia*.

### **Advantages**

- Relatively economical. (*Examinations can be more cost effective than many of the alternatives.*)
- Equality of opportunity. (*Examinations are demonstrably fair in that students have all the same tasks to do in the same way and within the same timescale.*)
- We know whose work it is. (*It is easier to be sure that the work being assessed was done by the candidates, and not by other people.*)
- Teaching staff are familiar with examinations. (*Familiarity does not always equate with validity, but the base of experience that teaching staff already have with traditional, unseen examinations means that at least some of the problems arising from them are well known.*)
- Examinations encourage students to get down to learning. (*Students engage with the subject matter being covered by examinations.*)

### **Disadvantages**

- Students may get little or no feedback about the detail of their performance (especially if used as a summative assessment method).
- Technique is too important. (*Examinations tend to measure how good students are at answering examination questions, rather than how well they have learned.*)
- Examinations represent a snapshot of student performance, rather than a realistic indicator of it. (*How students perform in traditional examinations depends on so many other factors than their grasp of the subject being tested, e.g. students' state of mind on the day, their luck or otherwise in tackling a good question first and their state of health.*)

## **2.2 Open-Book Examinations**

Race and Brown (1998) state that in many ways open-book examinations are similar to traditional examinations, but with the major difference that students are allowed to take in with them sources of reference material. Sometimes, in addition, the 'timed' element is relaxed or abandoned, allowing students to answer questions with the aid of their chosen materials and at their own pace.

### **Tips on setting open-book examination questions**

Race and Brown (1998) give the following tips, advantages and disadvantages *inter alia*.

All of the suggestions regarding traditional examination questions still apply.

In addition:

- Tell the students what you expect them to do. (*Many will not understand the difference between this kind of examination and traditional ones. This may result in students just trying to write out material, rather than do things with it as a resource.*)

## Written Examinations

- Decide whether to prescribe the books students may employ.
- Decide if you wish to provide photocopies of extracts from relevant set-texts.
- Set questions which require students to do things with the information available to them (rather than merely summarising it and giving it back).
- Make the actual questions particularly clear and straightforward to understand. (*The fact that students will be reading a lot during the examination means that care has to be taken that they do not read the actual instructions too rapidly.*)
- Focus the performance criteria on what students have done with the information (and not just on them having located 'the correct information').
- Expect shorter answers. (*Students doing open book examinations will be spending quite a lot of their time searching for, and making sense of, information and data. They will, therefore, write less per hour than students who are answering traditional examination questions 'out of their heads'.*)

### Advantages

These have many of the advantages of traditional examinations, with the addition of:

- Less stress on memories. (*The emphasis is taken away from students being required to remember facts, figures and other such information.*)
- Measuring retrieval skills. (*It is possible to set questions which measure how well students can use and apply information and how well they can find their way round the contents of books and even databases.*)
- Slower writers helped (if coupled with a relaxation in the 'timed' dimension).

### Disadvantages

- Not enough books. (*It is hard to ensure that all students are equally equipped regarding the books they bring into the examination; some students may be disadvantaged.*)
- Need bigger desks. (*Students necessarily require more desk space for open-book examinations if they are to be able to use several sources of reference.*)
- Shorter answers.

## 2.3 Seen Examinations

An alternative to the unseen written examination is the seen examination where students know the examination questions some time prior to writing the answers under traditional examination conditions. There are a number of variations.

### a) Seen Examination Paper

Students are given the examination questions some time before the examination period. Students may be required to answer only some or all of the questions.

### Advantages

- Where all of the questions are to be answered, the student is unable to select out parts of the syllabus.

- Where the questions are known the student can carry out in depth research to be able to write a more analytical answer.
- The student is less reliant on memory recall and able to practice drafting and redrafting answers which is more realistic of job and life demands.
- Eliminates the element of luck in spotting examination questions.
- Improves the performance of students who are 'bad' examination candidates by being anxious or stressed, allowing them to give higher quality answers.

### **Disadvantages**

- Students may memorise the answers, which results in testing only memory recall.
- Students may copy answers or prepare answers with others, therefore it is not an assessment of individual ability.
- Where all of the questions are seen and only a selected few are required to be answered the selecting out process is not eliminated.
- Unless the examination paper covers all topics, students will not learn peripheral issues.

#### b) Case Study

A case study is a descriptive account of an occurrence used to illustrate and test application of theory to practice. It is used as an examination tool in many disciplines for example: management, law, psychology, sociology and medical studies.

A frequently practised technique when using case studies is to give the students the case some time in advance and issue the unseen questions under examination conditions.

#### c) Journal Article

A variation on the case study is the use of a journal article where students are asked a series of questions concerned with the theoretical perspectives of the author and comparison with other authors.

## 2.4 Structured Examinations

According to Race and Brown (1998) these include multiple-choice examinations and several other types of format where students are not required to write 'full' answers, but are involved in making true/false decisions, or identifying reasons to support assertions, or fill in blanks or complete statements, and so on. It is possible to design 'mixed' examinations, combining free response, traditional questions with structured ones. The following points concentrate on the benefits and drawbacks of multiple-choice questions, which also apply, at least in part, to other types of structured examination questions.

Race and Brown (1998) include the following tips, advantages and disadvantages.

### **Tips for designing multiple-choice examinations**

- Make sure that distracters are plausible. *(If no one is selecting a given distracter, it is serving no useful purpose. Distracters need to represent anticipated errors in students' knowledge or understanding.)*
- Try to avoid overlap between questions. *(If one question helps students successfully to answer further questions, the possibility increases of students picking the right options for the wrong reasons.)*
- Pilot questions in practice tests before using them in formal examinations. *(Make sure that people are, on the whole, selecting correct options for the right reasons - and not because in one way or another the question gives away which is the correct option. Ideally, multiple-choice questions that appear in formal examinations should be tried and tested ones.)*
- Remember that students can still guess. *(The marking scheme needs to take into account the fact that students will score some marks by pure luck.)*
- Write feedback responses to each option. *(Where possible, it is useful to be able to explain to students selecting the correct (or best) option exactly why their selection is right. It is even more useful to be able to explain to students selecting the wrong (or less good) options exactly what may be wrong with their understanding.)*
- Ensure that students are well practised at handling multiple-choice questions. *(Answering such questions well is a skill in its own right, just as is writing open answers well.)*
- Gradually build up a large bank of questions. *(This is best done by collaborating with colleagues, and pooling questions which are found to be working well.)*

### **Advantages**

- Greater syllabus coverage. *(It is possible, in a limited time, to test students' understanding of a much greater cross-section of a syllabus than could be done in the same time by getting students to write in detail about a few parts of the syllabus.)*
- Multiple-choice examinations test how fast students think, rather than how fast they write. *(The level of student should be considered when setting the questions.)*
- Saving staff time and energy in marking. *(With optical mark readers, it is possible to mark multiple-choice examinations very cost effectively, and avoid the tedium and subjectivity which can affect the marking of traditional examinations.)*
- Computer-delivered assessments can help make it quicker and easier to analyse results. *(Online computer-marked multiple-choice examinations can be analysed statistically to assess which questions are really useful to test students well.)*
- Testing higher-level skills. *(A debate currently exists whether multiple-choice examinations can move the emphasis away from memory, and towards the ability to interpret information and make good decisions. However, the accusation is often made that such examinations seem only to test lower cognitive skills.)*

### **Disadvantages**

- The guess factor. *(Students can often gain marks by lucky guesses rather than correct decisions; this can be remedied to some extent in computer-based*

*assessment methods where the software is programmed to give better scores for the best answers.)*

- Designing structured questions takes time and skill. *(It is considered to be more difficult to design good multiple-choice questions than it is to write traditional open-ended questions.)*
- Black and white or shades of grey? *(While it is straightforward enough to reward students with marks for 'correct' choices, and with zero marks for choosing 'distracters' (deliberately wrong options), it is more difficult to handle subjects where there is a 'best' option, and a 'next-best' one, and so on.)*
- The danger of impersonators. *(The fact that examinations composed entirely of multiple-choice questions do not require students to give any evidence of their handwriting increases the risk of substitution of candidates, if not completed under supervision.)*

## 2.5 Preparation and Approval of Examination Papers

A timetable for the processing of examination papers is received by the Course/Subject Director at the beginning of each academic year. The deadlines are set out below.

### **DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSION OF EXAMINATION PAPERS**

<b>Autumn/Spring Semester</b>	<u>Week</u>
Submission to External Examiners of examination papers for approval	3
Submission to Examinations Office of approved examinations papers for printing	8
<b>August/September Supplementary Examinations</b>	
Submission to Examinations Office of approved examination papers for printing	Last Friday in June
<b>Intensive Summer Semester</b>	
Submission to Examinations Office of approved examination papers for printing	Last Friday in July

Examination questions are written by the module lecturer(s) and the papers compiled by module co-ordinators. Where there is collaborative provision, the module assessment should be prepared jointly.

All Faculties have procedures in place for the internal moderation of examination papers. Draft examination papers may be presented to the Course/Subject Committee or small sub-group of colleagues for comment and feedback (as suggested in Section 2.1 above). (Some Schools have nominated moderators.) Examination papers for courses offered by partner institutions may be reviewed by the Faculty Partnership Manager and/or a Faculty subject expert.

The following matters should be checked:

- Appropriateness of formulation and clarity of questions.
- Coverage of module content.

## Written Examinations

- Appropriateness of level of difficulty of questions.
- Use of discriminating questions.
- Non-repetition from previous papers.
- Is the length of the paper appropriate for the time allocated?
- Weighting of questions and a clear indication to students of the marks available for each.
- Accuracy of rubric.

It is important to proof-read draft papers and to ensure that they are presented consistently before being sent to the External Examiner. It is not his/her role to correct minor errors of this type.

Examination papers should be drafted early to allow sufficient time for the External Examiner to scrutinise and approve them. It is worth considering preparing the supplementary examination at the same time as the main paper, as this saves time for both the paper setter and the External Examiner.

Draft examination papers with accompanying marking schemes and, where appropriate, indicative points for content of answers are sent to the External Examiner for approval. The External Examiner may choose not to be involved in the approval of examination papers for modules at Level 3 or 4 in undergraduate degrees, unless they contribute to the final results for an (exit) award. However their involvement is welcome. Examination papers are normally sent to the External Examiner by the Course/Subject Director or nominee. The External Examiner should be advised that, if comments are not received within three weeks, the University will assume that the draft is approved.

Communication from the External Examiner to review and implement any required changes may be made directly with the Course/Subject Director or nominee. Approval of the draft paper should be received from the External Examiner before it is given to the Examinations Office.

### 2.6 Presentation of Examination Papers

Examination papers should follow the prescribed format and the template available from the Examinations website – [ulster.ac.uk/studentadministration/staff/examinations-office](http://ulster.ac.uk/studentadministration/staff/examinations-office)

The maximum image area to be typed in should not exceed 10½ in x 6½ in (267 mm x 165 mm) and the image should be square with the paper. Examination papers should be prepared on word processor and good quality paper used. Arial 12 should be used where possible, with the exception of headings (Arial 14).

Each examination paper is titled as follows:

ULSTER UNIVERSITY  
UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS [month, year]

The rubric is set out separately from the questions and includes the following details:

- a) the module code(s) and title(s);
- b) the time allowed;
- c) information relating to the use of dictionaries;
- d) information on examination aids provided such as graph paper or text books or other materials permitted;

- e) special instructions to candidates, if appropriate, e.g. a statement that no calculators are permitted or details of prohibited calculators. (N.B. In the absence of such details regulations permit the use of electronic calculators provided that they are operationally quiet, hand held, contain their own power source, and cannot communicate with other devices);
- f) name of module co-ordinator.

There is no provision within the University's anonymous marking system for the inclusion of non-standard question papers, e.g. multiple-choice papers, which require answers to be recorded on the original question paper. These papers should allow candidates to record their names, registration numbers and desk numbers. Sections of the paper which are to be completed and detached should be at the back of the paper and provide space to record student ID and desk numbers. Examinations Office should be informed.

All pages including diagram sheets must include the page number in relation to the total number of pages comprising the paper; for example, the sheets of a three-page paper should be numbered consecutively 1/3, 2/3, 3/3. Instructions to turn overleaf should, where applicable, be included at the bottom of the pages.

This information on the typing of papers should be conveyed to staff responsible for typing.

With regard to the use of translation or other dictionaries (paper or electronic), the then Teaching and Learning Committee has confirmed that dictionaries are not permitted in the examination room, except in accordance with the assessment objectives for the module, and their use, if permitted, should be explicitly stated in the rubric. (In setting examination questions, examiners should be aware of the cultural backgrounds of all students and ensure that questions are as clear and unambiguous as possible.)

Teaching and Learning Committee has agreed that students whose first language is not English and who are studying for a University award should be treated in the same way as home students. Students whose first language is not English may only be permitted the use of dictionaries or additional time, if they are not enrolled for a University award, in accordance with the assessment requirements of their home institution.

## 2.7 Security

Security of examination papers is very important. Staff should ensure confidentiality at all times. Papers should be stored in a secure place prior to and after approval.

Examination papers approved by External Examiners should be submitted through the Head of School to the appropriate campus Examinations Office and a signature of receipt received from a member of staff. **The internal mail service must not be used for the delivery of examination papers. Examination papers must be presented, already checked and typed in their final form, ready for printing.** The original and not a photocopy must be submitted.

In any instance where a module is taught at more than one campus, the examination paper must be submitted to **each** campus Examinations Office.

Where a particular examination paper is to be taken by more than one group of students, for example a module shared by more than one course or with a course in a network offered at a number of locations, the examination for that specific module should be timetabled to coincide.

If an examination paper is not to be provided to the Library, the Examinations Office should be informed.

2.8 Special Arrangements

In accordance with SENDO (NI) 2005 and the University's ethos of inclusion, the University operates a policy of facilitating special arrangements for students with disabilities such as extra time in examinations, use of a scribe, use of an audio-typist. Guidance may be obtained from the Examinations Office and/or Student Support.

2.9 Retention of Examination Scripts

University regulations, state that examination scripts are retained for six months following the relevant Board of Examiners. For the purposes of archiving and review, sample assessment may be retained for longer periods (see Section 17: Reviewing the Effectiveness of Academic Standards of Assessment). See also section 16.5, Giving Feedback.

2.10 Past Examination Papers

Past examination papers (from January 2001 for Coleraine and Magee campuses and from January 2002 for Jordanstown) are available on the web in pdf format. See [ulster.ac.uk/library/electronic-resources](http://ulster.ac.uk/library/electronic-resources).



### 3 COURSEWORK

#### 3.1 Types of Coursework

Assessment can take many forms and it can be argued that the greater the diversity in methods of assessment used, the fairer the assessment is to students. Assessment should provide for students a range of processes through which to demonstrate their relative strengths and weaknesses (Race and Brown, 1998). It is important to ask three questions when selecting the type of coursework assessment:

- a) What is the assessment for?
- b) Who is it for?
- c) What is the context?

When considering the types of coursework and methods of assessment to use, some practical steps identified by Brown and Pendlebury (1992) include:

- a) Check that you are assessing the skills, knowledge and understanding that you want to assess (the assessment method and corresponding assessment criteria must relate to the learning outcomes of the module).
- b) Explore ways of modifying existing assessment tasks so that students are encouraged to apply their expertise to problems in different contexts and to communicate to different audiences. Such an approach encourages students to think and develop flexibility. It increases the probability of transfer and raises awareness of different approaches and perspectives.
- c) Extend the range and content of your assessments. The test of what you value in student learning is revealed in what and how you assess.
- d) Look at the programme and Faculty regulations to see what is permissible and discuss ideas within the Course/Subject Committee.
- e) Outline and discuss your approach to assessment with the Course/Subject Committee. Conduct a review of what students think of the existing assessment procedures and how they might be improved. This should come through module evaluation and can often provide useful, practical suggestions for future development.

As a lecturer, it is important to think carefully about what you want the students to gain from the coursework assessment in your module. Clearly, this again relates to the learning outcomes and will influence the type of coursework chosen. For example, your coursework might be designed to measure:

- How much students remember.
- How much students know.
- How well students can write (or speak) about what they know.
- How well students can apply what they remember.
- How well students can handle things they don't yet know.

The following two tables summarise the main approaches to assessment and offer some suggestions for further modifying existing assessments (adapted from Brown, Bull and Pendlebury (1997)). This can be a useful starting point, having clarified the above questions.

In each case it is important for academic staff to know and understand the learning implications for students with disabilities and to plan and employ learning strategies which are as inclusive as is reasonably possible.

Table 1: Approaches to Coursework Assessment

<b>Task</b>	<b>Brief Rationale</b>
Essays	A standard method, essentially concerned with trying out ideas and arguments, supported by evidence. Has potential for measuring understanding, synthesis and evaluative skills. In most essays, there are no absolutely right or wrong answers and marking for feedback can be time consuming. Variations between markers can be high.
Dissertations	Good all-round ability testing. Wider application of knowledge, understanding and skills, with a measure of project and time management. Motivation can be high although students who are good at examinations are not always good at dissertations. They present greater potential for providing feedback and can test methods as well as results. Use of marking criteria reduces variability between markers.
Case studies and open problems	Case studies have potential for measuring application of knowledge, analysis, problem-solving and evaluative skills. This method allows students to apply theory to practical situations. Marking criteria help re-grading and feedback.
Projects and group projects	Good all-round ability testing. Potential for sampling wide range of practical, analytical and interpretative skills. Develops tutor/student and student/student relationships. Wider application of knowledge and skills to real/simulated situations. Motivation tends to be high. Feedback potential (especially in incorporating self or peer assessment). Tests methods as well as end results and use of criteria reduces variability. May include seminars and tutorials, case studies, simulation, role-plays, problem solving exercises, team-building and experiential ('live' project) learning.
Seminar presentations	Feedback potential from tutor, self and/or peers; tests preparation, understanding, knowledge, capacity to structure information and oral communication skills. Can broaden possible topic and approaches. Marking based on simple criteria is fast and potentially reliable.
Laboratory/Practical work	Feedback potential; with potential for measuring knowledge of experimental procedures, analysis and interpretation of results. Can also test preparation and practical skills and can help broaden topic and approaches, particularly in terms of application of knowledge.
Plans and drafts	Threats reduced by discussion of essay plans and drafts with tutor/other students; built-in feedback.
Peer assessment	Feedback potential. Develops reflective skills. Helps clarify criteria. Potential for developing teamwork, central to professional competence. Helps clarify criteria for assessment. Develops reflective skills, important for effective lifelong learning.
Self assessment	Both self and peer assessment can offer a supplement and/or alternative to tutor assessment. Adequate training needed though, and the learning task should be clearly defined.
Portfolios/Records of Achievement	Typically, portfolios are compilations of evidence of students' achievements, including major pieces of their work, feedback comments from tutors, and reflective analyses by the students themselves. Multi-dimensional assessment of student using a range of different methods but can be time consuming to prepare and mark.
Posters	Students summarise their work by preparing a poster. Encourages students to think creatively about their work and present it effectively, as well as presenting findings and interpretations succinctly and attractively. Presentation and feedback potential, from tutor, self and peers.
Question-setting by students	Students are involved in preparing the questions to be asked. Helps clarify criteria and tutor's intentions. Provides an estimate of what students see as important in a course.

Reviews	Reviews books, journals or magazines. Can encourage deep learning, whereby students interact in depth with the information they review. Task needs to be delineated clearly and there must be enough resources available for the students.
Class tests	Variation between markers without structured forms, can be high. Closely supervised, giving feedback within a limited time period. Can test preparation via multiple-choice, short answer or essay question. Formative feedback potential.
Oral tests	This method tests communication, understanding, capacity to think quickly under pressure and knowledge of procedures. Feedback potential and marking for grading can be fast but some standardisation of interview procedure is needed.
Multiple-choice questions	A standard method, sampling a wide range of knowledge quickly. Measures of knowledge are relatively easy to set, although more complex questions take more time to set. Easy to mark and analyse results but danger of testing only superficial knowledge.

Table 2: Modifying Existing Assessments

<b>Existing Task</b>	<b>Alternatives</b>
Essay	Article for a serious newspaper. Article for a professional magazine. Article for a popular newspaper ( <i>i.e. encourage students to target work towards a particular audience</i> ). Book review. Paper to a committee. Case for an interest group. Popular book review. Serious book review. Script for a radio programme. Script for a TV programme.
Experimental design	Marketing research bid. Research bid. Design of a survey, or other research tool. Tender for a contract.
Laboratory report	Instructional guide for a beginner. Popular account of experiment and its findings. Brief seminar paper on experiment. Group report of a set of linked experiments.
Problem solving	Real case. Match ideal and possible. Compare precise solution and estimate.
Short answer questions	Set them on a theme which provides more information or complexity as they proceed through the set of questions.
Multiple-choice	Set some that require reasoning or distinguish assertions and reasons.
Survey design	Design a task for a real client's problem.
Project	For a real client ('live' project) or based in a work setting.
Dissertation	Convert into a brief publication, illustrated presentation or exhibition.
Group project	On a theme or task in a setting outside the university. It may in some cases be useful to assess some of the skills of effective group work ( <i>i.e. process assessment</i> ) in addition to or indeed instead of always assessing the final 'product' of the work.

The most frequently used types of coursework are considered in more detail in subsequent sections of the Handbook (adapted where applicable from Race and Brown, 1998).

### 3.2 Volume and Timing of Coursework Required

Assessment strategies at a programme level require clarity and co-ordination about when formative and summative assessments take place, what is to be assessed and against which criteria. As well as the achievement of learning outcomes, it is important to ensure parity of workload between modules and to consider issues such as the timing (submission) of work and the variety of assessment methods being used. It is also important to avoid duplication of assessment of outcomes.

Each module of the same credit value is relatively similar in terms of workload. Twenty credit point modules are notionally attributed 200 hours of student effort (including lectures, seminars and/or other classes, independent study and assessment) (1 credit point = 10 hours). The overall assessment load should be commensurate with the module credit value. It is, therefore, worth thinking about the amount of work which the student is to be expected to undertake to meet the learning outcomes and ensure that they are not overburdened. Course/Subject Committees should discuss and agree that the assessment mechanisms are fair and equitable across all modules.

As part of the development of curriculum design principles (2017), the expectation is that modules will have no more than two items of assessment (one item may include more than one component but the overall item will result in a single mark). Typically coursework would require 2,000 words (or equivalent) per 10 credit points.

The QAA in Scotland has facilitated a national programme of enhancement themes aimed at developing and sharing good practice. The *Assessment* theme has considered ways of avoiding over-assessment, including the use of peer and self-assessment; a review of assessment instruments to ensure that specified outcomes are only assessed once; and substitution of summative assessments with more formative ones. Structural solutions include 'long-thin' modules, which can be particularly effective for first year students, and the use of synoptic assessments.

It is important to take account of the timing of assessment across modules to avoid, if possible, bunching. Students should be informed of the timetable for assessments in the course/module handbook. There are advantages in setting some particular pieces of coursework early in the semester, in order to identify students at risk, particularly in the case of first year students, to gauge performance standards and to give feedback at an early stage.

All Faculties have guidelines on assessment loads and appropriate scheduling. Comments on volume and timing may be obtained from other members of the teaching team, external examiners, module evaluation and student consultation. University-level guidance on equivalence in different assessments was adopted in 2018 to help ensure equitable and consistent workloads related to notional effort hours and credit value of the module. See Appendix B1 - [ulster.ac.uk/cherp/academic-development/resource](http://ulster.ac.uk/cherp/academic-development/resource).

### 3.3 Approval of Coursework Assessment Scheme by External Examiners

The University expects that External Examiners are involved in the approval of coursework assessments just as they are in approving draft examination papers. External Examiners have the authority to consider and approve each piece of coursework but are not required to do so. While the University has agreed that External Examiners may elect, if they wish, not to be involved in the examining process for undergraduate degree modules at Level 3 or 4 which do not contribute to a final award, their involvement is welcomed. All other modules, and modules at Level 3 or 4 which contribute to an exit award, require the involvement of the External Examiner. The exact nature and extent of involvement in approval of the coursework assessment scheme must be discussed and agreed with External Examiners in advance. They should be informed about the general assessment schedule and forms of assessment for each module and be asked whether they wish to be consulted about each specific piece of assessment.

### 3.4 Receiving Assignments

When setting coursework, in addition to defining the task itself, it is important to provide students with clear information on the procedures for submission. The former Teaching and Learning Committee (June 2001) agreed that all coursework should be receipted to ensure that work is submitted by the deadline and that this is acknowledged to students.

Learning and Teaching Committee agreed in June 2016 an Electronic Management of Assessment policy. (See: [ulster.ac.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/396671/EMA\\_Policy.pdf](http://ulster.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/396671/EMA_Policy.pdf) and <https://ulster.sharepoint.com/sites/ODL>.)

From Semester 2 2016/17, all coursework should be submitted online, except where this is not practicable on account of the nature of the assignment. Assignment submission points should be set up within modules on Blackboard Learn. Three supported technologies, integrated within Blackboard Learn, can be used: Turnitin, Blackboard Assignments and Panopto (Video Submissions). These issue an electronic receipt and provide secure back-up.

From 2018/19, marks and feedback are expected to be provided electronically.

For non-electronic submissions, students should know:

- To whom to submit work (*for example, the lecturer and/or Module Co-ordinator concerned, the School Office secretary or other nominated person*).
- Where to submit the work (*whether the lecturer's office, School Office or other designated room*).
- When to submit the work, including both the date and time of acceptance (*for example by 2 pm: it is good practice to set the submission deadline at least two hours before the end of the working day*).
- Acceptable forms of submission (*for example electronic or paper copy*).
- Other procedural requirements (*see below*).

For non-electronic submission the former Teaching and Learning Committee agreed:

#### Process

- a) All coursework submitted by students should be dated on receipt (preferably with a date stamp) and a receipt issued to students. In some instances it may be appropriate for small pieces of weekly work to be signed in by the student and countersigned by the member of staff responsible for receiving the coursework (e.g. at the end of a class).
- b) Ideally there should be a uniform University-wide receipting system. A coursework cover sheet as a standard form is considered to be good practice and more efficient than the use of receipt books. On receipt of the completed cover sheet and coursework, the member of staff responsible should date stamp both sections of the form and issue a receipt. Core information should be included on the cover sheet (sample at Appendix B), but Faculties/Schools may design their own form to include other specific information.
- c) The use of secure boxes and pigeon holes is not considered to be appropriate, given that students must be issued with a receipt as evidence of the date of submission of the coursework.

### Management

- d) Responsibility for the receipt of coursework ultimately lies with the module tutor. Faculties/Schools should determine their own systems and clarify responsibilities for managing the process based on the lecturing, secretarial and technical staff resources available and the Faculty's policy in this regard.
- e) The submission process and assignment requirements should be stated in the course and module handbooks given to students (as indicated in the templates for these documents).

Students should also know when the marked work (and related feedback) will be available for collection (date, time, location) (see Section 16: Feedback on Assessment).

### 3.5 Late Submission of Coursework

Coursework must be submitted by the dates specified. Coursework submitted after the deadline, without prior approval, is not normally accepted.

The Course/Subject Director is the member of staff authorised to approve requests for late submissions, on behalf of the Course/Subject Committee. Students who fail to submit coursework, whether or not this is due to authenticated medical or compassionate circumstances, must notify their Course/Subject Director by the date on which the coursework was due to be submitted.

Where a student fails to submit coursework owing to extenuating circumstances, or where a student considers that his/her performance has been affected by extenuating circumstances, he/she should ensure that written medical evidence or evidence of other circumstances is presented to the Course/Subject Director by the date on which the work was due to be submitted.

It is the student's responsibility to submit all relevant information regarding extenuating circumstances preferably on form EC1 (obtainable from the relevant Faculty Office or School Office). Information supplied after the deadline may not be taken into account (see also Section 19.5: University Regulations and Examination Procedures - Extenuating Circumstances).

Where coursework is adversely affected as a direct result of a disability-related cause, this should not unjustifiably impede a student's subsequent academic progress. It is important that the practical arrangements for submission of assignments are transparent and fully accessible for students with disabilities. The procedures relating to extenuating circumstances should not present a barrier to equality. Flexible deadlines for coursework may be considered to accommodate the needs of these students.

### 3.6 Retention of Coursework

Submitted coursework is the physical property of the University. (Subject to University regulations on intellectual property, students retain the copyright and intellectual property of the coursework submitted for any form of assessment.)

It is common practice to return coursework to students for feedback purposes (section 16.4). Students should be advised that they may be required to give back such coursework at any time for up to six months after the Board of Examiners which has considered the assessment results for the related modules. Any copies of coursework retained by the faculty/school may be disposed of after that period.

For the purposes of archiving and review, sample coursework may be retained for longer periods (see Section 17: Reviewing the Effectiveness of Academic Standards of Assessment).

## 4 ESSAYS

In many subjects, assessed coursework (as well as examinations) is dominated by essay-writing. In many disciplines, essays represent the form of assessment with which students are most familiar. However, mature students and increasingly school leavers often admit that this is the medium of assessment which worries them most. Guidance may, therefore, be needed for some groups of students.

Brown, Bull and Pendlebury (1997) identify the following types of essay questions, *inter alia*:

- Speculative (*to invite the student to construct alternative realities*).
- Problem-based.
- Witty (*to stimulate creative flair*).

They may be introduced by:

- A quotation to discuss (*to stimulate examination of a perspective or challenge a view*).
- Or
- An assertion (*to encourage the student to examine the pros and cons*).

They may be introduced by the following words:

- 'Write on' (*students have to select from their knowledge and develop their own framework for the question*).
- 'Describe' or 'explain' (*to give an account and/or rationale*).
- 'Compare and contrast' or 'discuss (critically)'.
- 'Evaluate' (*in practice all essays involve varying degrees of interpretation and evaluation*).
- 'Design' (*may require more in-depth work by the student*).

The following advantages, disadvantages and tips are largely drawn from Race and Brown (1998).

### **Advantages of Essays**

- Essays allow for student individuality and expression. They are a medium in which the 'best' students can distinguish themselves. This means, however, that the marking (assessment) criteria for essays must be flexible enough to be able to reward student individuality fairly.
- Essays can reflect the depth of student learning. Writing freely about a topic is a process which demonstrates understanding and a grasp of the material involved.

### **Disadvantages of Essays**

- Essay-writing is very much an art in itself. Some students are disadvantaged regarding essay-writing skills as they have never been coached in how to do this well. Students who happen to have perfected the art are repeatedly rewarded irrespective of any other strengths or weaknesses they may have. Hence the need to vary the assessment mechanisms.
- Essays take a great deal of time to mark objectively. Even with well thought-out assessment criteria, it is not unusual for markers to need to work back through the first few essays they have already marked, as they become aware of things that the best students are doing with the questions, and difficulties experienced by other students.

## Essays

- Essays take time to write (whether as coursework or in examinations). This means that assessment based on essay writing is restricted regarding the amount of the syllabus that is covered directly. There may remain large untested tracts of the syllabus.
- 'Write down the number we first thought of!' Essays are arguably one of the forms of assessment where the dangers of subjective marking are greatest, even when equipped with clear sets of assessment criteria.

### Tips on Setting and Using Essays

- Help students to see exactly how essays are marked. Alert students to the credit they gain from good structure and style. Groups of students could look at examples of past (good, bad and indifferent) essays, and apply assessment criteria. This helps them to put their own efforts into perspective, and to learn things to emulate (and things to avoid!) by seeing how other students go about devising essays. This could be followed by involving them in peer assessment of the essays of other students.
- Subdivide essay questions into several parts, each with marks clearly allocated. This helps to prevent students from straying so far off the point that they lose too many of the marks they could have scored.
- Give word limits. This helps to avoid the quantity versus quality issue (leads some students into simply trying to write a lot, rather than thinking deeply about what they are writing) and also helps reduce the time it takes to mark the essays. The University expects it to be made clear to students whether a limit is set, above which a penalty will apply, or indicative word length is given as guidance. Students should be made aware of the policy on penalties through the course/subject and/or module handbooks. (A University policy on penalties was agreed in March 2018. See Section 14.3: Marking Schemes.)
- Do not assume that longer equals better. It is often harder for students to write succinctly than to just ramble on. However, students need to be briefed on how best we want them to develop their art in writing succinctly. Merely presenting lists of points for example, is not normally an acceptable substitute.
- Do not use the same essay questions, year after year.
- Help students develop the skills required to assemble the 'content' for essays. One of the best (and most time efficient) ways of doing this is to set class or coursework tasks which require students to prepare essay plans rather than fully finished masterpieces. A concept map or diagram can show a great deal about the eventual 'worth' of students' essays and making the plans may involve more thinking on their part.



## 5 PRESENTATIONS AND ORAL EXAMINATIONS

### 5.1 Definition

**Presentations** and **oral examinations** refer to forms of assessment which are normal parts of the assessment strategy for a module/course. Presentations are given to an audience of peers and/or teaching staff, at seminars or as part of the assessment of a dissertation (as *Coursework*). Oral examinations are conducted by one or two examiners, e.g. for the assessment of foreign language skills (as formal *Examinations*). (A presentation may be an element of oral examination.)

A **viva voce examination** is discretionary and the Academic Development and Enhancement Committee decided in April 2015 that it should no longer be available for use to determine results for individual candidates, to provide a Board of Examiners with supplementary evidence on which to base their judgement of a candidate's performance. External Examiners may meet a sample of students in discretionary interviews, as part of their moderation of the standards of assessment and final awards.

A viva may be used as part of the process to investigate alleged cheating.

Students with disabilities or particular extenuating circumstances may be given the option to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes through oral examinations as a form of 'reasonable adjustment' to the assessment method.

### 5.2 Presentations

This section covers instances where a student or group of students (see Section 9: Group Work) gives a verbal report (possibly supported by presentational aids such as PowerPoint, overhead transparencies, handouts, etc.) to an audience of peers and/or teaching staff – often within a seminar. The report may be related to the 'literature' or may be a summary of the student's own research work and possibly associated with a research report or dissertation. Additionally it covers verbal reports given at the end of placement or study abroad that contribute to the award of Diploma in Professional Practice or Diploma in International Academic Studies (see Section 11: Placement and Study Abroad).

Race and Brown (1998) state that giving presentations to an audience requires substantially different skills from essay writing and that it may also be argued that the communication skills involved in giving good presentations are much more relevant to professional competencies needed in the world of work. It is, therefore, increasingly common to have assessed presentations as part of a student's overall coursework assessment.

Like many transferable skills, students should be given the opportunity to do trial presentations before the 'real thing'; they should also be given copies of the assessment criteria (see below). Video recordings of good and bad presentations (by other students, with permission or by yourself) are an excellent means of getting the message across. Discussion of such recordings can help to develop, clarify or improve the assessment criteria.

The following advantages and disadvantages are adapted from Race and Brown (1998).

#### **Advantages**

- There is no doubt whose performance is being assessed. When students give individual presentations, the credit they earn can be duly given to them with confidence.

- Students take presentations quite seriously. The fact that they are preparing for a public performance usually ensures prior research and preparation and they are more likely to engage in deep learning. (See Section 9 for further consideration of the assessment of individual and all lecturer contributions.)
- Presentations may involve collaborative work. When it is less important to award students individual credit for presentations, the benefits of students working together as teams, preparing and giving presentations can be realised.
- Presentations can allow the assessment of a wide range of key skills. These include oral communication, ability to plan and structure material and perhaps working as a team. They may also facilitate the use of information and communication technology (e.g. use of PowerPoint).

### **Disadvantages**

- It is time-consuming for all students to present. (Splitting the class into smaller groups and using peer assessment against a set of discussed and agreed criteria with the member of staff attending only part of each group's work may reduce the burden but may be less robust as an assessment approach.)
- Some students find the experience traumatic, but this is probably true to a greater or lesser degree of all forms of assessment.
- Presentations can never be anonymous and, therefore, it can be difficult to eliminate bias.

The essence of assessment of oral presentation is that unlike written work it cannot be 're-graded' – the work is 'of the moment.' Thus it is essential that guidelines are in place to ensure security and reliability of the assessment process. These notes are designed to assist with this process.

- Wherever possible, oral presentations should be attended and assessed by more than one member of staff. Where the oral presentation contributes significantly to the marks for a module, for example more than 20%, it is considered good practice that at least two staff independently assess the presentation.
- Assessment should be carried out using forms with associated assessment criteria (see examples in Appendix C); when using more than one marker, the marking should be carried out independently and any major discrepancies between markers resolved using the guidelines established within the subject area (see Section 15: Moderation).
- The assessment criteria should reflect the weighting relevant to the purpose of the presentation. For example, assessment of some presentations may focus just on the student's ability at giving the presentation whilst others may include criteria related to research and reading as well. It can be worth reserving some marks for the ability to handle questions at the end of their presentation. (It is useful to discuss the assessment criteria with the students and even to get the students to establish their own criteria for assessment. This gives them a sense of ownership and they tend to work harder at trying to achieve them.) Staff should consider whether there is a time limit to the presentation and whether students will be stopped at that time or, if not, the penalty which will be applied.
- If possible (and if it does not interfere greatly with the presentations themselves) it is useful to video seminar work so that not only can the staff re-assess the work afterwards in the case of disputed marks but also the recordings can be used for

formative feedback. With permission, they can also be used as a teaching aid for subsequent cohorts of students.

- It is essential to give very rapid feedback on an oral presentation whilst it is fresh in the student's mind. This need not include a grade at this stage, just an expression of perceived strengths and weaknesses. General feedback to the student cohort as a whole at the end of a seminar session may be appropriate after a number of presentations and may spare the sensitivities of individual students. However in general it is better to give private individual feedback, or sometimes a mixture of individual and class feedback.
- Oral presentations lend themselves well to peer assessment (see Section 8: Peer and Self Assessment); it does ensure that the class is more attentive. Clear assessment criteria must be established for this to work successfully. Develop a grid with the assessment criteria and the different levels of achievement and get all students to fill in the grid for each presentation; an average peer assessment mark is likely to be at least as good an estimate of worth as that of a single tutor's mark.

### 5.3 Modern Language Oral Examinations

Oral examinations are a well established part of the examination scene in modern languages and are used principally to test the student's spoken skills. They may take many forms depending on the level of the students and the particular oral skills being tested.

Some examples of orals: a short talk or presentation by the student on an agreed topic, followed by discussion of the subject and other matters in the foreign language; an interpreting examination; a recorded oral activity. In all cases, it is important to outline to the student beforehand the shape of the oral; to indicate the general areas likely to be covered; and to discuss the marking criteria.

Orals are particularly stressful for candidates as there is little time for reflection or for recouping errors. It is thus very important that students should understand fully the nature of the activity and that it should be conducted according to clear guidelines and in a supportive atmosphere.

In order to ensure equity it is important, particularly in final year oral examinations, that two examiners should be present, one of whom, at least, should be familiar with the student's programme. External Examiners should be accompanied by an internal examiner.

### 5.4 General Advice on Oral Examinations

Oral examinations may take place in a range of subjects as well as modern languages where they are a standard feature.

When using oral examinations Race and Brown (1998) suggest that the following points should be borne in mind:

- Prepare the agenda in advance and with input from colleagues. It is dangerously easy (and unfair to students) for the agenda to develop during a series of interviews with different students.
- Prepare and use a checklist or pro forma to keep records. Memory is not sufficient and can be unreliable, especially when different examiners have different agendas.

- Ensure there are no surprises. Share the agenda with each candidate and clarify the processes to be used. You are likely to get more out of candidates this way.
- Work with one or more colleagues. Divide the agenda of questions so that there can be an observer at each point as well as a questioner.
- Make sure that you put the student at ease at the beginning of the examination.

### 5.5 Viva Voce Examinations

As mentioned at 5.1, the University has discontinued the use of viva voce examinations as discretionary components of assessment. Only the approved form of assessment for all candidates may be used. Exceptionally, these may be varied in regard to illness or disability. As part of an investigation of alleged cheating or plagiarism, a candidate's knowledge may be tested in a 'viva' interview with examiners.

Race and Brown (1998) offer the following advice on the use of viva voce examinations.

Viva voce examinations have long been used to add to or consolidate the results of other forms of assessment. They normally take the form of interviews or oral examinations where students are interrogated about selected parts of work they have had assessed in other ways. They are frequently used by External Examiners. They can be used to reach decisions on specific candidates (e.g. borderline candidates, or those unable in exceptional circumstances to take the normal form of assessment), or to confirm the general judgement on appropriateness and consistency of marking standards (including the internal and external moderation process).

Vivas are useful checks on the ownership of evidence. It is relatively easy to use a viva to ensure that students are familiar with things that other forms of assessment seem to indicate they have learned well. They are also useful when deciding on a borderline case for degree classification. Candidates must be examined fairly. With a well-constructed agenda for a viva, a series of candidates may be asked the same questions and their responses compared and evaluated. Vivas can be used to probe understanding. They can be useful as a means of allowing students to clarify issues in their other work that an examiner finds problematic.

However, it must be remembered that some candidates never show themselves well in vivas. Cultural and individual differences can result in some candidates under-performing when asked questions by experts and figures of authority. The agenda may 'leak'. When the same series of questions is being posed to a succession of students, it is quite difficult to ensure that candidates who have already been examined are not able to communicate with candidates yet to be interviewed. The actual agenda covered by the viva is usually narrow; they are seldom good at measuring how well students have learned and understood large parts of the syllabus.

In considering the outcomes of such examinations, it is important to take account of the implications for the whole cohort, in order to ensure equitable treatment. It is useful to give consideration to the size and range of the sample and the format of the examination in consultation with the external examiner if applicable.

Also, University course/subject committees may use discretionary interviews with selected candidates for benchmarking purposes, in order to allow external examiners an opportunity to assess the quality of students' learning opportunities and experience. It should be made clear to students that such interviews are not part of the courses' assessment process and therefore do not contribute to a particular individual's result. (They contribute to the moderation process and the determination of final results for all candidates.)

## 6 PRACTICAL WORK

Many areas of study involve practical work. It may be laboratory-based or undertaken in a clinical setting or involve an artistic or creative process. Practical work may be assessed in the University or during the placement period.

Learning outcomes for modules and programmes need to be very carefully worded when addressing practical work. For example, a laudable learning outcome for a module might be: 'At the end of this module, a student should be able to set up and use a pH meter to measure the pH of a soil sample.' Clearly, assessment should entail judging how well the student can set up and use a pH meter. This could be both time-consuming (entailing effective 'driving tests' during which students individually demonstrate their capabilities) and difficult to assess consistently. The establishment of exacting and explicit assessment criteria is essential (see Section 5.2: Presentations and Oral Examinations - Presentations) just as they are for oral presentations for this to work successfully.

It is important that the practical aspects of study are reviewed to ensure that, wherever possible, barriers to participation by a disabled student are removed and that the student can participate fully in this aspect of study unless there are genuine and well documented reasons for this not to happen and no other alternatives can be implemented.

Some examples of practical work assessment are given at Appendix D. The following advantages, disadvantages and tips are drawn from Race and Brown (1998).

### **Advantages of Practical Work**

- Practical work may be essential, particularly in vocationally relevant programmes.
- Employers may need to know how good students' practical work is (and not just how good their reports are). It is, therefore, useful to reserve part of the overall assessment for assessing that students are competent in, as well as knowledgeable about, practical tasks.
- Practical work is learning by doing. Increasing the significance of practical work by attaching assessment to it helps students approach such work more professionally and critically.

### **Disadvantages of Practical Work**

- It is often difficult to assess practical work in its own right. It is usually much easier to assess the end point of practical work, rather than the processes and skills involved.
- It can be difficult to agree on assessment criteria for practical skills. There may be several ways of performing a task well, requiring a range of alternative assessment criteria.
- Students may be inhibited when someone is observing their performance in a laboratory or other practical environment.
- It is important to ensure that all students are involved fairly. Task allocation briefings and appropriate observation can help ensure this.

### **Tips for Assessing Practical Work**

- Start measuring practical skills early on in a course, to allow students to develop effectively.

## *Practical Work*

- Reserve some marks for the processes. Help students to see that practical work is not just reaching a defined end point, but is about the processes and skills involved in doing so successfully. Ensure students know the relative importance of each skill.
- Use a 'driving test' format if it is essential that the student should be able to demonstrate a particular skill; develop exacting and explicit assessment criteria to ensure consistent assessment.
- Get students to self-assess how well they undertook tasks. This at least helps students to reflect on their performance in practical work, and since the overall mark attributed to the process side of their work will probably be small, the risk of any error due to over- or under-confidence is well worth the benefits accruing from reflection. There is also scope in some circumstances for peer assessment to develop further the students' own skills and help them develop those of others.
- Ask students to include in their reports 'Ways I would do the experiment better next time.' This encourages them to become more aware of how well (or otherwise) they are approaching practical tasks.
- Include some 'supplementary questions.' Make these questions that students can only answer when they have thought through their own practical work. For example, students could be briefed to compare their findings with a given published source, and comment on any differences in the procedures used in the published work from those used by the students.
- Ask students to prepare a poster (individually or in groups) of their investigative work and the associated findings. Posters can make an interesting alternative to reports, as an outcome of practical work. They can provide practice in developing the skills relevant to communicating by such visual means and can be good preparation for students who intend to move on to research.

## 7 PORTFOLIOS

Race and Brown (1998) note that building up evidence of achievement is becoming a more common method of assessment. The resulting portfolios are compilations of students' achievements and may include major pieces of their work, feedback from tutors and reflection analyses by the students themselves.

Race and Brown (1998) identify the following advantages, disadvantages and tips:

### **Advantages**

- Portfolios can tell much more about students and should encourage them to make connections among the items of work they have done. They can contain evidence reflecting a wide range of skills and attributes, and can also provide useful evidence when students are seeking employment.
- Portfolios can reflect development. Most other forms of assessment are more like 'snapshots' of particular levels of development, whereas portfolios can demonstrate progression and the accumulation of skills and abilities. This can help students to place what they have learned in a wider personal and academic context.
- Portfolios can reflect attitudes and values as well as skills and knowledge. This makes them particularly useful to employers looking for the 'right kind' of applicants for jobs.
- Portfolios can allow students to choose the elements that best reflect their strengths.

### **Disadvantages**

- Students may require extra initial support, when introducing a portfolio-based approach, in order to appreciate fully what is required.
- Portfolios take a lot of looking at! It can take a long time to assess a set of portfolios. The same difficulty extends beyond assessment; even though portfolios may contain material of considerable interest and value to prospective employers, it is still much easier to draw up interview shortlists on the basis of paper qualifications and grades.
- Portfolios can be much harder to mark objectively. Because of the individual and/or creative nature of portfolios, it is harder to decide on a set of assessment criteria which will be equally valid across a diverse set of portfolios. The best approach is to start from the learning outcomes being assessed.
- The ownership of some elements of the evidence can sometimes be in doubt. It may, therefore, be necessary to couple the assessment of portfolios with some kind of oral assessment or interview to authenticate the origin of the contents of portfolios, particularly when some of the evidence may be based on the outcomes of collaborative work.

### **Tips on Using and Assessing Portfolios**

- Specify or negotiate intended learning outcomes clearly. Ensure that students have a shared understanding of the level expected of their work.
- Propose a general format for the portfolio. This helps students demonstrate their achievement of the learning outcomes in ways which are more easily assembled.
- Specify or negotiate the nature, range and extent of the evidence which students should collect. This makes it easier to assess portfolios fairly, as well as more straightforward for students.

## *Portfolios*

- Put a limit on the physical size of the portfolio. For example, a single box file is ample for most purposes; alternatively a specified size of ring binder can provide guidance for the overall size. Other portfolio-related work (for example in Art and Design) may require different specifications.
- Give guidance on audio or video elements. Where students are to include video or audiotapes, it is worth limiting the duration of the elements they can include.
- Provide interim (formative) assessment opportunities. Give candidates the opportunity to receive advice on whether the evidence they are assembling is appropriate.

An example of a portfolio guide from the former Postgraduate Certificate in University Teaching (now Higher Education Practice) is given in Appendix E.



## 8 PEER AND SELF ASSESSMENT

There has been a very noticeable increase in the use of self and peer assessment methods in higher education in recent years. Between 1992 and 1995, a Peer Tutoring Project was undertaken at the University, which provided funding for twenty-four lecturers and two counsellors, to introduce and monitor changes in their teaching practice (Griffiths, Houston and Lazenbatt, 1996 a and b). These changes were planned to test the effectiveness of peer tutoring as a teaching method. At that point in time, there was little in the higher education literature to draw upon. Since that time, peer learning, peer support, peer tutoring and peer and self assessment have become common methods of learning and teaching in higher education. It is prudent to point out that self and peer assessment methods are possibly more advantageous as formative tools than summative ones. Students at the University found that peer assessment was beneficial to them in developing a complete range of personal transferable skills, which would assist them:

- when seeking employment in the future;
- when approaching learning in the future; and
- in making skilled judgements in professionally related contexts.

What then, are self and peer assessment methods and how do they differ?

**Self assessment** has been defined as “*the involvement of students in identifying standards and/or criteria to apply to their work and making judgements about the extent to which they have met these criteria and standards*” (Boud, 1991).

Students naturally prepare for this mode of operation by checking their work, revising drafts of assignments, revisiting texts, carrying out research and reflecting upon their past experience and practice. Teachers in higher education also reflect upon their practice in teaching, as well as making judgements about their own performance.

In addition to a judgement on one’s own work the concept of self assessment involves the development of the process of self-awareness. Self-awareness can be a complex skill to develop but it can be fostered through the recognition of one’s own strengths and areas which need improvement.

As indicated above, Boud (1991) suggests there are two parts to self assessment: the development of criteria and their application to a particular task. It has been suggested that the development of criteria is the more important and often more absent feature. The development of one’s own criteria requires opportunities for practice and discussion and, in this context, it is linked to peer learning and assessment. It is important that teachers in higher education assist students to design self-assessment tools and evaluate the usefulness, both during and after completion of tasks.

The difference between self and peer assessment might be summed up in relation to the nature of the judgements being made. In self assessment, students are judging themselves and their own work. In peer assessment, students judge the work of their peers; in so doing, they often also judge their own work. In this sense, the methods of self and peer assessment inform one another.

**Peer assessment** may be defined as assessment of the work of others by people of equal status and power. In the context of student learning, peer assessment is used in making formal estimates of worth of other students’ work and giving and receiving feedback. Making estimates of other students’ work is sometimes known as peer marking.

One way of undertaking this is to ensure that all peers mark each other's work. This approach requires very careful planning, agreement of criteria and use of common tools for analysing marks. Feedback sessions based on the results of the peer assessment make the process more useful for students, in that the decisions about arrival at judgements become transparent. Feedback may also be used as a method entirely in its own right, i.e. without awarding marks. It is in this context that peer assessment as a formative tool is most powerful.

When students are involved in deriving criteria, developing a peer assessment form, providing feedback and assigning a global mark, the results can be very beneficial. However, in practice, as Hunter and Russ (2000) point out, peer involvement in assessment can vary from a single decision taken by students, such as ascertaining the preferred modes of assessment to involvement in the entire process. Essays, assignments, project work, oral presentations and group working may all be assessed by peers.

Peer assessment can fulfil both formative and summative functions, though practice in the Peer Tutoring Project in the University (Griffiths, Houston and Lazenbatt, 1996 b) would suggest that the teacher should retain an element of control as guide and final arbitrator over decisions, thus retaining overall responsibility for the assessment procedure and process.

Experience in this Project would also suggest that the following points be borne in mind when setting up self and peer assessment tasks:

- Staff need training in the use of the techniques. This form of staff development may best be organised to parallel and underpin actual curriculum implementation in this area.
- Such challenges to staff empower them to consider their efficacy as teachers and examiners and change their role in quite a profound manner from 'the fount of all knowledge' to skilled facilitator and manager of the learning environment.
- Issues of power and authority need to be confronted honestly, since any shift in responsibility from lecturer to student requires re-definition and clarification of roles. For example, the issues surrounding confidentiality need to be tackled by staff introducing peer assessment. Evidence in the Project strongly indicated that students wished to know that staff were in control and, in the final analysis, were the final arbitrators.
- Students report real benefits in retention of the knowledge, enhanced creativity, greater use of library material, greater resourcefulness and increased motivation. There are also gains in specific deeper knowledge in the subject area itself. During the project, this was demonstrated through the perceived enhanced performance in the final examinations of students in some subject areas.
- The quality experience of learning and the self-development of students are accorded a new status, using these methods.
- The choice of what to give over to a peer assessment mode is a vital factor in the success of the scheme. Some topics, or parts of the curriculum, lend themselves more readily to peer assessment methodology than others. There are aspects of subjects which require a high level of expertise and careful judgement is needed to ascertain what to hand over to a peer assessment mode and what not.
- Peer assessors often learn as much from the experience as the peer whom they are assessing. It is important that curriculum designers capitalise on the achievement gains that are made by both assessor and the assessed.

The next section in this handbook, which is on group work, further elaborates the implementation of the techniques of self and peer assessment.

## 9 GROUP WORK

Increasingly, students are being asked to work in groups, such as in practical work, presentation of practical reports, case studies, literature searches and posters. Diverse views are held on group work, its role, timing and assessment. This section outlines some of the strategies involved in assessing groups. Assessment is of the group but various strategies are available for the determination of individual marks (see below). It is essential to bear in mind the level of the module when setting assessed group work. Some staff using group work in the first year find that it enables interaction and bonding among new students, while others would suggest that it needs careful introduction to incoming students, given their newness to university study and one another. Final year students may resent group work that contributes to their final degree classification. Group work encourages the development of skills useful in employment (co-operation, negotiation, compromise, leadership, delegation, etc.) that might be difficult to achieve in other forms of assessment. Students also learn from each other. It *may* reduce staff marking time, though more time may be spent in organising and supervising the groups. Before embarking on the assessment of group work, it is essential that the objectives are very clear:

*“Do you need to assess an individual student’s contribution to the effort of the group?”*

*Do you want to assess the product that the students produce (e.g. report, design, model, poster) or do you want to assess the process, that is, the way the group has worked together?*

*Who do you want to involve in the assessment – lecturer, demonstrators, students?”*

(from Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall 1999).

Answers to these questions will largely dictate the form of assessment. It is essential to focus on the learning outcomes of the module and the course; for example if the learning is to focus on teamwork then the students will have to make records on how the group process works in practice. Group work can thus assess a variety of different things including knowledge and understanding, the presentation and communication (oral and written) of that learning, how the group works and the skills that each individual student has learned through the group work process (Anon 1999/2000). In any group work assignment, it may thus be possible to identify different elements for assessment each contributing separately to the success of the group. Some marks may be for the ‘product’, some for the process and some for the individual contribution.

It is important to remember that disability is situational and whilst a student with a disability may perform well in certain group work settings, they may perform less well in others. If group work is selected as a means of assessment, academic staff must be aware of the implications this will have for certain students and be prepared to put in place alternative arrangements or make reasonable adjustments.

The texts referred to in Section 20: References and Further Reading will provide the practitioner with a wealth of ideas on how to organise and assess group work.

The following has been modified from Moore and Exley (1993).

Groups may be assessed in a number of different ways:

**1 A group task with individual products marked separately.**

This allows for marks to be allocated to individuals and allows the (partial) identification of the laggard.

**2 A group task, one product. Same mark allocated for all group members.**

Unfairness may creep into this method. If this is to be successful, it is important that all members of the group agree to this method of marks allocation. It may be necessary to resort to the strategy described in 3 below to avoid conflicts.

**3 A group task, one product, one mark multiplied by the number of group members. The group determines the distribution of this aggregate mark amongst its members.**

This method can allow students to adjust a product-based mark in the light of contributions to the process (i.e. team working). In order to do this, either:

- a) Pre-set criteria yourself and explain them to the students; or
- b) Get the student group to develop and agree criteria at the outset.

It is important to ensure that the criteria are clear. (For example, are the students expected to fulfil all roles and, therefore, satisfy all the criteria or is there to be a division of labour with students taking different roles – the chair, note-taker, rapporteur, etc.?)

**4 A group task, one product, one mark. In addition, individuals submit a separate brief piece of work for an individual mark.**

For example, a learning log that records the group's activities and an individual's contributions to them.

This allows you to assess both the product and the process and you can obtain group and individual marks. However, beware; in assessing the learning log you are mixing student self-assessment for formative purposes (an excellent end in itself) with summative assessment by the lecturer. It is essential in this instance that the assessment criteria are very clear and that these have been made explicit to the students well before the task is started.

**5 A group task, one product, one mark. Peer assessment of contribution to the group task used to modify individual marks.**

Each student is issued with a rating sheet with pre-set criteria (see example in Appendix F1), which each person completes for each member of the group and hands these to the lecturer. Marks are deducted for unsatisfactory contributions. The weightings may be pre-set by the lecturer or in negotiation with the class.

There are a number of ways in which students can be asked to provide evidence of the group work process. These include (from Anon 1999/2000):

- Minutes or other record of group meetings.
- Completion of a structured record or feedback sheets, showing what criteria have been met.
- Peer assessment feedback, indicating how group members worked together.
- Individual critical comment on individual performance.
- Logs or diaries of work.
- Learning contracts, indicating how the criteria were met.
- Portfolio of evidence, which may include some or all of the above.
- Output in the form of other tangible evidence such as a group report.

Assessment of groups can be a minefield. Provided the lecturer has thought out the reasons for adopting group work in the first place (including the anticipated learning outcomes), has informed the class in detail about how the assessment will operate and against what criteria the work will be judged, has in place a strategy for collecting information about the group work process and has contingency plans for groups which 'fall apart', then all should run fairly smoothly. The process can be 'tightened' by issuing individual learning contracts so that each student is clearly aware of their individual responsibilities in the group work process.

Problems that frequently arise include:

- There might be disagreement over the allocation of marks to individual students. Staff need to ensure that any justification of marks can be made on the basis of written evidence (such as records of meetings, individual diaries, etc).
- A student who is ill may not be able to make a full contribution to the work of the group. It is necessary to consider not just the student who is ill but also the effect that a missing student has had on the total work of the group. This can be particularly significant if the groups are of just two or three students. Since group work is often undertaken over an extended period a short illness may not be significant.
- Contingency plans must be in place for groups that 'fall apart'. Removal of a particular student from a group may be sufficient to ensure the smooth running of the remainder of the group. However, decisions then need to be taken about the student who has been removed. One school of thought is that such a student has already failed and should be immediately allocated a fail grade. Achieving the learning outcomes (that might highlight group working skills) may be almost impossible in any 're-sit' coursework which adds to the difficulties.
- Excessive amount of group work with final year students; Course/Subject Committees may wish to set limits on the amount of group work at final year level.
- Often group work involves an element of peer assessment; this may be detrimental to the workings of the group itself – is it possible for a group to work effectively when the members know that they are judging each other all the time? Other factors may come into play, such as the influence of gender, disability, ethnic or religious background or even age. Experience (on the part of the students) should help alleviate some of these difficulties.
- Peer and self assessments are not complete substitutes for assessment by staff; all assessment schemes must have a significant proportion of the marks determined by the staff and these marks must be available for moderation through whatever mechanisms the Course/Subject Committee has determined.

An example of a Group Self-Assessment Form is given in Appendix F2 and an example of a group evaluation sheet for a seminar presentation is given at Appendix F3.

A paper on collaborative learning and group work which reviews practice, outlines issues and highlights benefits is available at the Centre for Higher Education Research and Practice's website under Resources.

Arising from a themed audit on the use of group work (2008/9), all Faculties were asked to consider formulating policies on group work.

The then Teaching and Learning Committee has noted that, while the University encourages the use of group work, its assessment had been a concern to students, particularly where a single common mark is given and the results contribute to an award's final grading. The Committee agreed in June 2010 that in a module which contributes to an award classification and where group work is a component of assessment, normally at least 25% of each student's assessment in the group work shall be based on his or her individual contribution. If a module is assessed wholly or mostly by group work, a significantly higher contribution is expected. Validation panels give particular attention to this topic; proposals which depart from the policy require a clear rationale.

## 10 DISSERTATIONS AND PROJECT REPORTS

### 10.1 Definition

Dissertations are a form of coursework which involve the submission of a substantial report on a major project. Different approaches are taken in different subject areas. It or a project, is a normal component of the final level of an undergraduate honours degree (and carries 20 to 40 credit points). A dissertation may be the final element of a Master's degree (usually comprising 60 credit points). After examination, those Master's dissertations achieving a mark of 70% or above are deposited in the University Library, presented in accordance with University guidelines. Course committees may deposit other dissertations in the Library.

### 10.2 Challenges for Students

For many students writing a dissertation is very challenging for the following reasons:

- May be the first time they have been asked to write such an extensive document.
- May have difficulty in selecting a topic.
- May be unsure of the standard expected.
- May be unsure of the definition and the parameters of the specific topic.
- Time pressures.
- Having to decide on which specific aspect(s) of the topic to concentrate.
- Being able to develop a topic that results in a coherent whole rather than a series of parts.
- Carrying out an empirical study, where this is required.

In most courses the dissertation occurs at the end and forms part of the summative assessment. Formative feedback, therefore, needs to be given during the compilation process.

Students need guidance to plan and monitor their progress. Generally if the proposal and action plan is realistically developed and approved this will provide excellent support for the student, therefore time spent at the initial stage to get this right will pay benefits later on.

Students also need guidance and support during the process of writing a dissertation; this usually takes the form of individual tutorials with the academic supervisor.

Generally students require more and longer meetings at the beginning of the process, to discuss and receive guidance on challenging issues. A supervisor may hold open meetings with their dissertation students to solve the initial general problems of getting started.

A dissertation handbook detailing all the issues generally raised by students provides essential information and reduces the task of supervision. (Most courses have such a publication.)

### 10.3 Issues for Consideration in the Assessment of Dissertations

Criteria used should assess the intended learning outcomes as detailed in the approved course document. The learning outcomes should be clearly related to the level of

dissertation, undergraduate or Master's. The qualification descriptors in the national Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (Quality Assurance Agency, 2008), NICATS (now EWNI) level descriptors (NICATS, 1999) adopted by the University to define its own levels, and the University's generic level assessment criteria and relevant subject benchmark statements are useful aids to setting assessment criteria.

The assessment criteria should be explicit, clear and understood by the students. These are usually included in the student's module handbook. Criteria should clearly indicate the demands of the classification categories (see also Section 14: Marking Schemes).

Determine what is to be assessed and when assessments take place. For example, should the process and time management of the project be assessed?

Determine if there should be interim feedback on progress and the effect this may have on the final assessment. (Some students need and receive more support than others. Some topics are more complex than others.) Determine if this feedback is given in the form of a formative assessment.

Common criteria used to mark dissertations:

- **Abstract**

Does the abstract give a comprehensive overview of the project?

- **Introduction to the topic**

Should set out clearly the content and structure of the project.

Should clearly identify the problem to be examined.

- **Review of the literature**

Should cover an adequate range of literature.

Should cover appropriate and relevant literature which relates closely to the problem and hypothesis of the project.

Should cover historical and current literature.

- **Experimentation/fieldwork/empirical study/agreement**

- **Conclusions**

Examples are given in Appendix G.

Dissertations should be second marked (see Section 15: Moderation). Where there is wide discrepancy in the two marks and a compromise cannot be reached a third marker may be involved.

Determine if a presentation is to be part of the assessment process (as a course decision for all students) (see also Section 5: Presentations and Oral Examinations).

#### 10.4 Master's Dissertations: Assessment Criteria

General criteria for assessment include:

- Statement and definition of issues and problems.

## *Dissertations and Project Reports*

- Project planning and organisation.
- Initiative and diligence.
- Complexity of issues.
- Information content.
- Research methods, their organisation and suitability.
- Empirical and desk research.
- Findings.
- Innovation.
- Quality of discussion and conclusions.
- Implementation where appropriate.
- Presentation, management, accuracy and style.

The distinction made in the University's assessment criteria between level 7 and 6 modules (see Appendix I) provides useful indicators of what might be expected of the standard in a Master's dissertation in contrast to an undergraduate standard. The expectations for a Master's dissertation are illustrated in the marking sheet for the Dissertation in the former MSc Marketing and Entrepreneurship at Appendix G3.



## 11 PLACEMENT AND STUDY ABROAD

### 11.1 General

Many courses involve students undertaking periods of work experience or study outside the University. This activity is assessed as part of the formal requirements of the course. Placement may take place in clinical settings or in other work settings including business, industry and the public sector. These vary in duration and are assigned appropriate credit. Placement of one year's duration (minimum 25 weeks, commonly 48 weeks) in undergraduate courses leads to the award of Diploma in Professional Practice or Diploma in Professional Practice (International). Periods of study at other institutions are organised through exchange schemes, many under the auspices of Erasmus and the Study USA schemes. Intercalary periods of study which last for an academic year may lead to the award of the Diploma in International Academic Studies.

Work experience and study abroad should be accessible where possible to students with disabilities. In addition, it is important that the principles of SENDO, in particular the duty to make reasonable adjustments, are applied to all stages of the placement and study abroad including approving and finding placements, health and safety, collaborative arrangements and lines of responsibility with host organisations.

Where placements, including international placements, are a formal requirement or standard component of the programme, it is important to consider ways of ensuring that the specified learning opportunities are available to students with disabilities, e.g. by seeking placements in accessible contexts. Where a placement is an optional but desirable element of the programme, it is important to consider making similar arrangements to support access.

### 11.2 Assessment of Industrial and Clinical Placement

The preparation, organisation and assessment of placement vary among Faculties and courses within the University. The University's *Guide to Good Practice* (2008) for all courses incorporating an element of work experience sets out the following expectations.

In the assessment of placement, each programme should have a clear assessment strategy statement on how the placement is to be assessed and accredited. It should meet the learning outcomes of the placement experience and comply with the relevant professional accreditation. In addition:

- Assessment should ensure parity of marking procedure and treat all students equally regardless of the perceived quality of the placement.
- Assessment of placement should reflect quality of learning and should be based on evidence supplied by the three principal participants – student, visiting Academic Supervisor/Tutor, Employer Supervisor/Practice Educator.
- All parties involved should be aware of their responsibilities in the assessment process.
- The assessment mechanisms should encourage students to reflect upon their own learning and performance through the use of
  - Student written work such as log books and diaries
  - Academic supervisor evaluation
  - Employer Supervisor/Practice Educator and visiting Academic Supervisor evaluation.

### 11.3 Assessment of Work-Based Learning/Industrial Placement (non-clinical)

In 2005, a working group produced guidelines to promote best practice in assessing work-based learning in full-year placements. The principles in the guidelines may also be used in the assessment of shorter periods of placement such as those in Foundation degrees, but do not apply to short periods of clinical placement. The full guidelines are available from the Academic Office website ([www.ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice/policies](http://www.ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice/policies), under W) and include guidance on the preparation and debriefing of students. The following paragraphs address the assessment aspects of the guidelines.

#### Purpose of industrial placement

Where it is used, Work-based learning (WBL) is an integral process within programmes. The process (learning model) includes placement preparation, reflection and evaluation of the WBL experience itself and feedback into final year study. On a more general level, the ethos behind WBL is an intention to raise students' awareness of their skills and needs, encourage them to reflect on their experience in the light of this heightened awareness and enable them to identify and focus on what and how they have learned. The ultimate outcome is moving towards becoming a "reflective practitioner."

#### Learning outcomes of placement year

Upon successful completion of the 60 credit Level 5 placement module, students will be able to:

1. Solve work-based problems underpinned by subject-specific related theory and contribute to the employer organisation.
2. Demonstrate professional standards, ethics and etiquette in collaborative work environments.
3. Critically reflect on the professional learning experience and self-development in the context of career decision making.
4. Communicate effectively to a variety of audiences using appropriate written, verbal, or digital delivery methods.

#### Industrial placement assessment strategy

The assessment strategy for industrial placement is based on evidence supplied by the three principal participants – student, academic supervisor, industrial/professional supervisor. Two standard models for the assessment of the placement year have been agreed by the Learning and Teaching Committee, from placement year 2015/16 (revised May 2018) as follows:

##### **Model 1**

The precise nature of the work is specified by individual course teams.

Students are required to produce a maximum of two pieces of academic work that demonstrate their achievement of the module learning outcomes in a subject-appropriate way. Student Projects may take the form of written reports, presentations, design and digital artefacts - other alternatives may be specified.

##### **Student Project (50%)**

This should comprise

- Student Project - short description required
- Method of feedback

##### **Employer Assessment (20%)**

This should comprise

- Employer Assessment – short description required
- Method of feedback

### **Academic Supervisor Assessment (30%)**

This should comprise

- Placement Visitor Assessment – short description required
- Method of feedback

Cues for assessing the student project can be found in the Appendices: H1, sample pro forma for student project assessment, H2, associated assessment criteria and H3, report form. Where the employer assessment is conducted independently, Appendix H4 offers parameters within which to make judgements.

To pass the module a student must achieve a mark of 40%.

### **Model 2**

Subject to the requirements below for both Academic and Competency Assessment, individual course teams may differ in the nature of the set work, the number of required submissions and the scheduling of the assessment process. The precise nature of the work is specified by individual course teams. At least one submission is at or near the end of the placement period and enables the student to reflect upon their experience.

#### **Academic Assessment:**

Students are required to produce a maximum of two pieces of academic work that demonstrate their achievement of the module learning outcomes in a subject appropriate way. Academic work may take the form of written reports, presentations, design and digital artefacts - other alternatives may be specified. Further information on a reflective development portfolio is given at Appendix H5.

#### **Academic Assessment x**

This should comprise

- short description of the type of work involved
- an indication of its percentage contribution
- method of feedback

Assessment is carried out by subject academics using a numeric scale.

#### **Competency Assessment:**

Students are required to demonstrate their achievement of a range of competencies that may include generic employability skills and attributes, as well as subject specific ones. The list of competencies to be assessed is specified by individual course teams.

A successful student must normally demonstrate achievement of the specified competencies before the end of the placement period. If necessary, a student may be given more than one opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the competencies.

Assessment is carried out by the Academic Supervisor, typically during a visit to the placement workplace. Competency judgements are made by the Academic Supervisor, giving due weight to employer observations, and with reference to corroborative evidence sources such as: student placement journal, samples of student work, observation of student at work, and discussion with student and employer.

Competency judgements are recorded as either pass or fail.

To pass the module, a student must pass both the academic and competency assessments. A successful student's percentage mark in the module is based upon their academic assessment alone.

The assessment criteria for the year in placement are set at Level 5 in degrees (see Appendix H2). The Diploma award is made upon successful completion of the associated degree. It is graded overall with a Pass awarded at 40%, Pass with Commendation at 60% and Pass with Distinction at 70%.

#### 11.4 Assessment of Study Abroad with Particular Reference to Europe and other Non-English

##### Speaking Countries

The experience of studying abroad has proved to be exceedingly valuable through the introduction to a new culture and new academic approaches. The assessment of this period and its integration with the period of home study do, however, present a number of challenges which vary according to the course, the student and the host institution concerned. The University adopted in 2002 a Protocol (now Policy 2015) for Quality Assurance in respect of University study or other experience outside the United Kingdom. This provides more information on issues relating to assessment. Certain potential areas of difficulty and measures that may be taken to counter them are outlined below.

##### Prior Briefing

An extensive pre-departure briefing is essential. In addition to other aspects of the period of study abroad it should cover the precise nature of the system in which the students will find themselves and should give clear details of the work which they are expected to complete. Any such briefing will be complemented by clear and unambiguous written material for reference by the student to supplement any lapses in memory and act as a reminder of what is required when the student is away from the University.

##### Assessment in the Host Location and its Relationship to the Ulster Programme

The European ideal is that marks for study in Europe will be simply transferred to the home institution, as a situation of trust will obtain between third level institutions in Europe.

A number of issues may arise relating to the student, their prior study, their linguistic ability and knowledge of the language of the target community. In certain cases, no account may be taken in the host institution during the marking process of the fact that these are not native speakers of the target language; in certain instances, the students' linguistic level may not permit them to take examinations with local students on the same terms.

It is also likely that the quality assurance mechanisms may be different. There may well not be any sort of double marking or External Examiner review in the host institution as in many countries a lecturer's marks are considered sacrosanct and not subject to scrutiny. While the judgements of experienced staff in these systems are normally reliable and beyond reproach, in certain cases there may be unchecked idiosyncratic marking.

Such variations reflect a possible danger that the student may be disadvantaged by the different nature of the two systems. It is important that staff and students be aware of the differences in the host country and that account be taken of this when setting up schemes for assessing work completed within another academic environment. It will also be necessary to consider the host country and university marking patterns and to decide appropriate equivalents for the UK marking and grading system.

##### University Responses

A number of responses may be found on the part of staff within the University to the above situation.

Students may be given work to undertake for the University as well as certain study units within the host institution. This will mean that there is a counterbalance to any work done for the institution abroad. Such pieces of work might be a dissertation or shorter study. An oral examination on return may be particularly useful for language students but a presentation may also perform a valuable function in some other areas.

It may be possible for the University to agree with the host institution that papers undertaken by exchange students are made available for scrutiny by home staff and by

our External Examiners. This has been possible in some cases but is frequently not feasible (and may be considered to run counter to the spirit of European co-operation and ECTS).

In certain programmes, staff have found it appropriate for students to work in a laboratory or similar situation in the host institution under the guidance of staff there on a project which the students will write up as a project or dissertation for their home university award.

#### 11.5 Assessment of Study Abroad: Diploma in International Academic Studies (DIAS)

Students spend an approved period studying at a host institution where they will complete an agreed number of credits as specified for the associated programme of study and/or study abroad option. These must be equivalent to the undergraduate credit load of the host institution. For programmes within Europe, students must complete 60 ECTS across the academic year. For programmes outside of Europe, please confirm the necessary credit load with the Global Engagement Office: [studyabroad@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:studyabroad@ulster.ac.uk).

Students must submit a transcript from the host institution upon completion and must undertake the relevant Ulster University assessment.

Candidates are assessed using a combination of methods appropriate to the associated programme of study and/or study abroad option. Normally this comprises:

- a) transcript from the host institution indicating that a minimum of 60% of courses studied have been awarded a pass mark. Where necessary, a grade conversion document can be provided by the Global Engagement Office; and
- b) submission of an Ulster University project with clear learning outcomes and mark scheme as agreed before departure.

Grade conversion guidance must be provided to the student if requested and additionally there should be a clear rationale and assessment criteria for the Ulster University project.

The assessment criteria for the project are set out in Appendix H6.

Normally, the student's performance overseas (component A) will have a 60% weighting and the reflective Ulster University project (component B) will have a 40% weighting.

The overall pass mark for the DIAS will comprise one aggregate mark. The results of candidates shall be graded by order of merit as Pass with Distinction, Pass with Commendation and Pass. The following shall be the minimum percentages used in determining the overall gradings of candidates:

Pass with Distinction 70%  
Pass with Commendation 60%  
Pass 40%

#### 11.6 Work and Study Abroad

An example of such an arrangement is where students follow the Study USA programme and also may spend some time in industry, e.g. Hospitality, Hotel and Tourism students.

The assessment of such students for the award of a Diploma in International Academic Studies should cover both elements drawing on the guidance above.

## 12 COMPUTER-ASSISTED ASSESSMENT

There are many ways of carrying out Computer-Assisted Assessment (CAA), nearly all of which require a student to make a response to a question which has a predetermined answer set by the tutor. CAA can be delivered in a number of ways which includes the Web (potentially distributed worldwide), over an intranet (on computers in a specific location) or on a CD-ROM. In the first two methods students' answers can be recorded and analysed and it is possible to carry out statistical analysis of questions to ensure they are of appropriate difficulty and are sufficiently discriminatory. CD delivery is used mainly for formative assessment (self assessment) where students can gauge their competence with particular topics using any computer to which they have access. Questions can be asked in a variety of ways and feedback can be programmed in to fit particular responses a student might make. Thus if a student gives an incorrect response, an explanation can be given. The major advantage of CAA from a tutor's point of view is that large numbers of students can be tested quickly without significant demands on staff time for marking. Other advantages and disadvantages are summarised below (adapted from Bull and McKenna, 2004). Further information on this topic is available in the report on the Assessment Enhancement Theme workshop on online assessment published by QAA, Scotland (2004) in *Reflection on Assessment: Volume II* ([enhancementthemes.ac.uk](http://enhancementthemes.ac.uk) – search for Volume II).

### Advantages

- Tutors can monitor the progress of students through more frequent assignments.
- Graphics and multimedia allows questions which are not possible in paper-based assessments.
- Diagnostic reports and analyses are easily generated.
- Students' marks are easily transmitted to student records databases.
- Marking is completely consistent and free from human error.
- Assessments can be made available on demand to support flexible learning.
- Adaptive testing can be used to match the student's ability.
- Randomisation of questions can reduce the potential for cheating.
- Question banks in specific topics can be constructed and shared between tutors.

### Disadvantages

- Initial set-up time can be lengthy.
- Hardware and software must be monitored to avoid failure during tests.
- Tutors may require some training in assessment design, IT skills and test management.
- Co-ordination of IT staff, academics and other support staff is required.

CAA has sometimes been criticised on the grounds that it encourages surface learning. CAA is particularly good at testing knowledge of facts, meaning of terms and competence in numerical exercises. However modern software provides question templates which are much more versatile than the traditional multiple-choice format. For example a set of questions can be based on a case study and questions can adapt according to responses made by the student. Provision can be made for students to justify their answers (though this would usually be marked manually). Graphic images can be manipulated and constructed in advanced forms of testing. If used

imaginatively modern assessment software can be used to test much higher order skills such as Application, Synthesis and Evaluation (Bloom, 1956) much more easily than has hitherto been the case. However there are limits to what CAA can achieve. For example it cannot automatically mark communication skills or evaluate an original response from a student. Most authorities agree that it is best to use a range of assessment techniques since no technique is without its imperfections. However faced with large numbers of students, especially in the early parts of a course, CAA is an attractive option.

### CAA and the University of Ulster

The University has adopted Blackboard Learn as an institutional virtual learning environment. One of the many educational tools provided by BbLearn is a comprehensive on-line assessment tool. In addition, a number of other compliant CAA packages (such as Questionmark Perception) can be fully integrated into course areas, providing staff and students with a single on-line interface.

Staff involved in on-line assessment receive support and training in their roles.

### CAA and General Data Protection Regulation

It is recommended that the following measures be introduced to facilitate compliance:

- Make students aware of the form of assessment at the beginning of the module.
- Request that they express any dissatisfaction with the use of CAA no later than 21 days after commencing the module, and prior to undertaking any assessment.
- Ensure that students are aware of how marks will be computed and attributed before they are assessed.

### URLs

[www.advance-he.ac.uk/guidance/teaching-and-learning/technology-enhanced-learning](http://www.advance-he.ac.uk/guidance/teaching-and-learning/technology-enhanced-learning)

[www.blackboard.com](http://www.blackboard.com)

[www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/](http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/)

[www.jisc.ac.uk](http://www.jisc.ac.uk)

[www.ulster.ac.uk/about/governance/compliance/gdpr](http://www.ulster.ac.uk/about/governance/compliance/gdpr)

## 13 ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING

### 13.1 General Principles and Policy

The University permits students to be admitted with advanced standing or granted exemption from modules, on the basis of studies pursued and examinations passed in respect of other qualifications awarded by the University or another educational institution or on the basis of learning demonstrated from experience. In addition, applications for admission by prospective students, who do not have the approved entry qualifications, may be made on the basis of equivalent knowledge and aptitude acquired through work or life experience.

In 2006 the University adopted general principles and policy for both the Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) and the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL). The policy was reviewed and confirmed in 2008 and again in 2011.

#### Principles

The following principles are fundamental to the achievement of awards that meet nationally recognised standards of achievement.

- 1 Learning shall be recognised irrespective of the context in which it is achieved.
- 2 It is the achievement of learning, or the outcomes of that learning, and not just the experience of the activities alone that shall be accredited.
- 3 Learning must be evidenced in writing and authenticated at the appropriate level.
- 4 All claims for APL shall be considered with the same degree of rigour and shall be comparable in terms of evidence and effort.
- 5 Decisions regarding the accreditation of prior learning are a matter of academic judgement, informed by professional bodies and other stakeholders.
- 6 The entire APL process shall be transparent to all stakeholders and demonstrably rigorous and fair.
- 7 All staff associated with the accreditation of prior learning shall have their roles clearly and explicitly defined, and underpinned by appropriate staff induction/development.
- 8 Limitations to APL shall be clearly defined.
- 9 Policy and procedures for the accreditation of prior learning shall be subject to regular monitoring and review every five years.

#### Policy

- i) Exemptions shall be granted for whole modules only, save in the exception where a module is clearly defined into theoretical and practical elements. In this case, claims may be considered for either theoretical or practical components.
- ii) For programmes of 180 or more credit points, students must register on the programme for modules amounting to at least the final third of the credit value of the award at the highest level. For programmes of up to and including 120 credit points, students must register on the programme for modules amounting to at least the final half of the credit value of the award at the highest level. Exemptions shall not be permitted for these modules. This restriction shall not apply to the



Certificate of Personal and Professional Development or the Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development.

- iii) Duly constituted APL Boards at the level of the School of Faculty shall take decisions on claims for APL.
- iv) Faculties may employ an alternative decision-making body to that of a formally constituted APL Board at programme level. Such bodies shall include as 'Selectors' at least two members of staff and should normally include the Course/Subject Director, the APL Adviser and a subject expert. The alternative body must be able to demonstrate the same degree of rigour and status as that provided by a formal APL Board. References below to the APL Board shall be taken to include an alternative decision-making body.
- v) The duly constituted APL Board shall have due regard for the authenticity, currency, validity, reliability and sufficiency of the evidence provided (see 13.5 Glossary of Terms).
- vi) Subject/Course Teams shall make explicit any modules where an APL claim cannot be considered and also make explicit the rationale and justification.
- vii) Claims must be evidences by certification or in writing (for experiential claims).
- viii) Faculties/Schools shall have due regard for core elements of the programme to ensure that applicants have met the requisite learning outcomes within APL claims.
- ix) The process for considering APL claims shall be transparent to all stakeholders and demonstrably rigorous and fair.
- x) Faculties and Schools shall appoint an APL Adviser(s) to provide advice and guidance to applicants on claims for APEL (see 13.5 Glossary of Terms).

## 13.2 APCL

### APCL for Advanced Standing

- i) Regard shall be taken in relation to the currency of the certified evidence.
- ii) The APL Board shall determine whether the certificated evidence is commensurate with the learning outcomes of that part of the programme for which exemption is sought.
- iii) It shall be the responsibility of the student to furnish the APL Board with the requisite information of the learning achieved within a certified claim.

### APCL for Exemptions for Individual Modules

- i) Regard shall be taken in relation to the currency of the certificated evidence.
- ii) The APL Board shall determine whether the certificated evidence is commensurate with the learning outcomes within the module(s) for which exemption is sought.
- iii) It shall be the responsibility of the student to furnish the APL Board with the requisite information of the learning achieved within a certified claim.

### 13.3 APEL

#### APEL for Admission

- i) The APL Adviser shall, in consultation with the applicant, determine whether the evidence presented is likely to meet the criteria of being authentic, current, valid, reliable and sufficient.
- ii) Undergraduate Admissions  
Admission to undergraduate programmes is based upon prospective students, with considerable life and work experience, demonstrating evidence of their ability to undertake the programme. A portfolio of evidence shall be presented for consideration. Subject/Course Committees shall specify the minimum outcomes to be demonstrated for admission to the programme.
- iii) Postgraduate Admissions  
The principle of admission to postgraduate programmes is based on the premise that students shall hold a degree or equivalent qualification. In exceptional circumstances, where an individual has substantial and significant experiential learning, a portfolio of written evidence demonstrating the meeting of graduate qualities (including subject specific outcomes, specified by Subject/Course Committees) may be considered as an alternative entrance route. Evidence used to demonstrate graduate qualities may not be used for exemption against modules within the programme.

#### APEL for Advanced Standing

- i) The APL Adviser shall, in consultation with the applicant, determine whether the proposed evidence is likely to meet the criteria of being authentic, current, valid, reliable and sufficient. Notwithstanding the responsibility for advice, the responsibility for the claim lies with the applicant.
- ii) The portfolio of evidence presented to demonstrate the meeting of learning outcomes in an experiential learning claim for advanced standing shall be available to the external examiner(s). The level and nature of involvement of the external examiner(s) shall be agreed between the Subject/Course Committee and the examiner(s).

#### APEL for exemptions from individual modules

- i) The APL Adviser shall advise applicants on whether an APEL claim is appropriate and against which module(s) exemption may be sought.
- ii) The APL Adviser shall, in consultation with the applicant, determine whether the evidence presented is likely to meet the criteria of being authentic, current, valid, reliable and sufficient.

### 13.4 Guidance for the Operation of the APL Process

- 1 The APL Adviser shall be the first point of contact for all APL applicants and shall, in consultation with the applicant, determine whether the application would be appropriate and whether the evidence to be presented is likely to meet the criteria for exemption of being authentic, current, valid, reliable and sufficient.
- 2 Faculties/Schools shall have in place a duly constituted APL Board or alternative body to take decisions. The Board shall receive recommendations from the relevant Subject/Course Director on behalf of the Subject/Course Committee.
- 3 Constitution of the APL Board/Alternative Body:

The membership of the Board/Alternative Body shall be determined by Faculties, with due regard to its status. Membership shall include at least two members of staff and should normally be drawn from:

Faculty Partnership Managers  
Co-ordinator for Teaching and Learning/equivalent  
Associate/Head of School  
APL Adviser(s)  
APL Co-ordinator  
Subject/Course Directors  
Subject Expert  
PSRB – invited members, where appropriate.

Any alternative body shall include as 'Selectors' at least two members of staff and should normally include the Course/Subject Director, APL Adviser (normally Course/Subject Director) and subject expert.

- 4 Appropriate training and support shall be available to all staff associated with the guidance and assessment of claims for the accreditation of prior learning.
- 5 Faculties shall ensure that procedures are in place at Faculty level to oversee the operation of the APL process and to ensure equitable and consistent treatment of claims.
- 6 Faculties/Schools shall determine a process to record activity for the individual and to assimilate a dataset to ensure fairness and consistency of decisions.
- 7 Outcomes of claims:  
Approved  
Insufficient evidence  
Not approved  
  
Where a decision is of insufficient evidence, there shall be one opportunity for the student to provide additional evidence to the Board if this is considered necessary and appropriate, within a timeframe determined by the Board.  
  
The decision of the Board shall be final (no right of appeal except on grounds of procedural irregularity).  
  
Students shall be informed of the outcome following the Board's decision on a timely basis.
- 8 Where opportunity to undertake a module is limited, decisions on advanced standing and exemption shall be taken before the student is required to commence the module so that the student is not disadvantaged.
- 9 Faculties/Schools shall have prepared materials to inform students and prospective student show to make a claim for APL.
- 10 Evidence of prior experiential learning shall be presented in the form of a portfolio of evidence. The portfolio shall contain written material which clearly demonstrates how the student's prior experience is evidence of his/her achievement of the requisite learning outcomes.

A typical portfolio shall normally contain:

- Title page
- Table of contents
- Curriculum Vitae
- Employment History
- Education and Training History
- Training and Professional Qualifications

And include the following sections

Introduction	Setting the context of the claim in the overall academic and career plans of the student.
Experience	An expansion on a curriculum vitae or other significant life events including a description of experiences including informal learning activities e.g. conferences/workshops.
Learning Account	An account of the learning that has resulted and reflections on what has been learned from the experience.
Learning Outcomes	Clear statements of demonstrable behavioural change/performance resulting from the learning together with a list of demonstrable learning outcomes.
Evidence	Evidence of the achievement of each learning outcome.
Authenticity	Evidence demonstrating that the prior learning claimed was completed by the applicant.

- 11 Faculties/Schools shall determine the minimum and maximum levels of support that should be provided to students to enable students to complete their APEL claim.
- 12 Faculties/Schools may consider appointing an APL co-ordinator.
- 13 There shall be no fee applied to APEL claims for undergraduate admission in keeping with the University's commitment to widening access or to articulation arrangements within linked postgraduate programmes or agreed articulation arrangements involving collaborative provision. A flat fee as set out in the University's schedule of fees shall be charged for all other claims for the accreditation of prior learning.
- 14 Subject/Course Committees shall give consideration to the currency of the evidence submitted in relation to subject specific requirement.
- 15 All successful claims for admission to a programme or exemption from a module(s) or part of a programme shall be reported to Subject/Course Committees and subsequently noted at Faculty Boards. Where appropriate, decisions shall be reported to Academic Registry for amendments to be made to individual student records. In the case of decisions on admission, the outcome shall be reported to the Head of Faculty Administration for communication to the applicant. In all other cases the duty of informing applicants of decisions shall lie with the Chair of the APL Board/Alternative Body.
- 16 Approved exemptions shall be recorded on the student's record. Where required, in accordance with programme regulations, marks achieved in prior studies or awarded for experiential learning through assessment of a portfolio of evidence, shall be used to calculate the student's overall result.

The University has compiled a common set of Guidelines for Staff and Applicants on APL which Faculties may use or adapt as appropriate. These are available on the Academic Office website (Policies) and at Appendix I.

### 13.5 Glossary of Terms

Accreditation: the process of identification, assessment and formal acknowledgement of prior learning and achievement.

Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL): a process for assessing and, as appropriate, recognising prior experiential learning or prior certificated learning for academic purposes. This recognition may give the learning a credit value in a credit-based structure and allow it to be counted towards the completion of a programme of study and the award of qualifications associated with it.

The term 'accreditation of prior learning' is used here to encapsulate the range of activity and approaches used formally to acknowledge and establish publicly that some reasonably substantial and significant element of learning has taken place. Such learning may have been recognised previously by an education provider described as 'prior certificated learning'; or it may have been achieved by reflecting upon experiences outside the formal education and training systems, described as 'prior experiential learning'.

Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL): a process through which previously assessed and certificated learning is considered and, as appropriate, recognised for academic purposes.

Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL): a process, through which learning achieved outside education or training systems is assessed and, as appropriate, recognised for academic purposes.

APL Board/Alternative Body: a duly constituted body to consider all APL applications. Faculties/Schools may employ an alternative decision-making body to that of a formally constituted APL Board so long as it demonstrates the same rigour and status as that provided by a formal APL Board.

Advanced Standing: is a broad term associated with admission where applicants are deemed to have met the requisite outcomes to enable them to commence the programme at an advanced stage.

APL Adviser: person with subject expertise to provide advice and guidance to applicants. Normally this role would be performed by a Course/Subject Director.

APL Co-ordinator: person appointed with responsibility for the overview of APL activity in the School/Faculty and who may chair the APL Board.

Authenticity: the evidence should clearly relate to the applicant's own effort and achievements.

Credit: is an educational currency which provides a measure of learning achieved at a given level.

Currency: the evidence should relate to current learning. Where the subject/course teams and/or professional, statutory or regulatory bodies have specific requirements and/or time limits for the currency of evidence, certification or demonstration of learning, these shall be made clear and transparent.

Exemptions: is the awarding of academic credit against specific outcomes on a modular basis.

Level: the standard of achievement reached on completion of the specified outcomes for which accreditation is being claimed.

Module: a module is a component of a course with its own approved aims, objectives, learning outcomes and assessment methods.

Reliability: the extent to which there is inter-assessor agreement or consistency in the assessment of claims.

Sufficiency: there should be sufficient written evidence to demonstrate fully the achievement of the learning being claimed.

Validity: there should be a clear and transparent link between the learning being evidenced and the outcomes against which recognition is being sought.

## 14 MARKING SCHEMES

### 14.1 Marks and Grades

Performance is generally recorded in percentage marks, but it may be recorded on a pass/fail basis. This is common in certain practice-related modules.

The pass mark in undergraduate modules is 40%. In postgraduate modules (level 7) it is 50%. In 'Extended' Master's degrees, candidates must achieve 50% in order to progress from the Level 6 to the Level 7 stage.

A weighting may apply to the calculation of the overall module result. The University defines a pass in a module as the achievement of the overall pass mark for the module, with a minimum mark of not less than 5% below this threshold in each assessment element (coursework and examination). Course/subject teams have the option of requiring the standard in both elements for 'core' modules. It may also be required in specified coursework components. In supplementary (resit) examinations, the actual mark or the pass mark, whichever is the lower, is recorded.

From 2009/10, the University does not use the concept of condonement of failure.

Coursework may be graded by staff using the Honours classifications or other conventions (e.g. A to G) for feedback purposes (see Section 16: Feedback on Assessment).

It is increasingly common to draw up qualitative statements to define mark bands. The performance standards reflected in these bands should be related to the level of the module. From 2002/3 the University adopted as generic guidelines a set of assessment criteria. They were originally developed by the then Faculty of Business and Management. These are given in Appendices J1-10. Criteria used in Faculties should accord with the University generic criteria. In 2019, the Quality Assurance Agency published nationally agreed classification descriptions for the different classes in bachelor's honours degrees as Annex D to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications. These are available at [qaa.ac.uk](http://qaa.ac.uk).

### 14.2 Marking Schemes

Marking (or mark) schemes are aids used by examiners to assist in the marking of student assessments. They consist of breakdowns of the marks available for an assignment. They may be attached to model answers and show how marks will be awarded for different aspects of a good answer. While it would be common for a mark scheme to specify individual marks it may be also appropriate to assign groups of marks to allow subjective, qualitative judgements to be made. This allows an element of flexibility and addresses the situation where students give different answers but to the same overall standard.

The use of mark schemes varies with Faculty policy and practice. In some areas a marking scheme that is more detailed than the assessment criteria is not desirable. It may be, for instance, that each student has been set a different research paper to review and the content will inevitably vary. Examples are given in Appendix J.

The advantages to academic staff include:

- Marking is both quicker and easier.
- The preparation of valid assessments is made easier since a marking scheme constitutes an internal check on the possible answers.
- Since the qualities of a 'good' answer are predetermined and the judgements applied to each assessment in turn, the assessment process is more likely to be free from bias (i.e. fair).
- Marking can be demonstrated to be both reliable and fair particularly if students subsequently query the assessment result.
- Students grow to trust assessment processes where they are made transparent.
- Other people can mark to the same standard.

The advantages to students involve the improvement in the quality of feedback when mark schemes are made available after an assignment is complete. Students should be able to see where their answers deviate from the mark scheme and thus how their work might have been improved.

### 14.3 Word Limits

If a word limit, as distinct from an indicative work length, has been set, there should be a penalty for work which exceeds that limit, after a discretionary amount. A University-wide policy was agreed in March 2018 by the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee. The principles and guidance where word limits are set apply to both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

#### *Principles*

Penalties for exceeding word count or other requirements in relation to the length of a piece of assessed work can only be imposed where the following principles have been applied:

- There must be an obvious and transparent relationship between the assessment rubric for a module and the learning outcomes of that module.
- If a student has met the learning outcomes of a module the penalty imposed for exceeding the word, or other, limit cannot result in the student failing the module.
- Requirements in relation to the length of a piece of assessed work should be expressed in the unit most appropriate to the learning outcomes of the module: word count, number of pages, duration of recording / video etc.
- In all cases clear instructions in relation to requirements, including font size, spacing, margins and what is included / excluded from calculations must be provided as part of the assessment brief issued to students and care should be taken to ensure these instructions are unambiguous and easily understood.
- Students should be asked to self-declare word counts and any other specified measurements related to the assessment.
- A margin of +10% of the size limit will normally apply before a penalty is considered.
- A student will not receive a double penalty on any piece of work. If the marking scheme already has a specific reduction associated with assignment length, a separate additional penalty cannot be applied under this policy.

#### *Additional Guidelines*

- If concise writing is deemed a necessary skill this should appear as a learning outcome and any penalty for failing to achieve it should be identified in the marking scheme.
- Consider which of the following, inter alia, will (not) be included in determining word count:
  - Content pages
  - In line references
  - Appendices
  - Footnotes
  - Abstracts
  - Bibliographies
  - Reference lists
  - Diagrams / graphs / images
  - Title sequences / credits

## Marking Schemes

- If the coursework submitted is very much in excess of the limits set there is no expectation that staff will read the entire piece or provide feedback on every aspect. Students should be made aware of this.

### *Penalties*

+10% - no penalty  
+>10% - 20% - 5% penalty  
+>20% - 30% - 10% penalty  
+>30% - 40% - 15% penalty  
+>40% - 50% - 20% penalty  
+>50% - maximum mark of 40% UG/ 50%PG

Penalties must be applied consistently. Penalties represent an absolute figure to be deducted from the mark achieved when the latter is expressed as a percentage, rather than a proportional percentage reduction in the mark.

#### 14.4 Relationship to Assessment Criteria

Marking schemes vary with the nature of the assessment and should be considered as a very much more detailed version of the assessment criteria since individual marks may be attached to identifiable components of the assessment. While assessment criteria are made known to the students to assist them in preparing their assignments with the necessary content and to the necessary standards, marking schemes may be withheld since they may contain details of acceptable answers or solutions to problems. They are often disclosed, however, as part of the process of feedback.

For example, marks allocated for *presenting information* might be awarded on the basis of quoting from named authors in the field and the range of journals cited.

The Centre for Higher Education Research and Practice has developed guidance on building marking rubrics related to criteria and differentiation of performance. See [ulster.ac.uk/cherp/academic-development](http://ulster.ac.uk/cherp/academic-development) under Resources.

#### 14.5 Preparing a Marking Scheme

Draft marking schemes should be prepared at the same time as the assessment is designed. Comparisons between what the students have been requested to do in the assignment and the associated marking scheme will often highlight areas of ambiguity in the question or task. It will also facilitate judgements concerning the validity of the task (*does the marking scheme represent a reasonable match with the module syllabus and intended learning outcomes?*). They should be sent to the External Examiner with the draft examination papers where appropriate.

It is *essential* to prepare an agreed marking scheme where there is more than one 'first' marker (i.e. the answers to the same questions will be marked by different individuals). This ensures consistency between markers. It is also *essential* to produce a mark scheme where it constitutes Faculty policy.

It is *desirable* to produce a mark scheme where work is to be double marked. This is especially so where the second marker is a non-specialist as would be the case in many final year assignments.

It is common practice in public examinations to modify the mark scheme after reviewing a sample of the student work. This ensures that common misinterpretations of the examination questions or coursework or unforeseen alternative answers can be accommodated within the mark scheme.

In some cases a marking scheme will specify precisely what a student will have to do in order to be awarded each mark. There is little room for individual judgement. This is



practical in some types of assignment such as numerical ones, but not in others such as extended writing. The example in Appendix J11 shows a marking scheme in which the marker is given some guidance but still has to exercise judgement concerning the extent to which each learning outcome has been demonstrated. The detail to be expected in a mark scheme, therefore, cannot be prescribed but must follow the potential variability of the answer. Other examples are given in appendices J12-15.

There is valuable advice in the checklist adapted from Race (date not known) (Appendix J16).

#### 14.6 Marking Procedures

It is good practice to annotate coursework and examination scripts, to assist in feedback and the moderation process. A mark sheet may be used. The Faculty or School may have marking conventions which should be followed.

Written examinations are subject to 'anonymous marking'. Anonymity is lifted after the marking process is complete before meetings of Boards of Examiners and progress boards. While anonymous marking is not always feasible for coursework, it is encouraged where appropriate and practicable. Faculties are expected to have their own methods for safeguarding student anonymity during the process, but it should be lifted when internal marking is complete for the purpose of student feedback.

#### 14.7 Final Award Bands

From 2009/10 intake onwards, the University extended to all awards the principle (in place for Honours degrees from 2001) that the summary classification or grading represents the 'exit velocity' of the students and therefore should be determined by achievement at the highest credit level (the full transcript evidences achievement in each module at the time it was taken). In Honours degrees exceptions were allowed to this rule, if a professional body requires a Level 5 contribution. The algorithm for Honours degree classification has been reviewed and a 30 per cent contribution from Level 5 in Bachelor degrees was approved from 2018/19 intake. In Integrated Master's degree, the contributions from Levels 5 and 6 are 20 and 30% respectively. During a transitional period for continuing students who were admitted before 2018/19 the final results are calculated using both algorithms with the most favourable outcome applied for the individual student. (Two algorithms are also applied for those studying at Level 5 and Level 6 in integrated Master's degrees in 2019/20 during the Covid-19 pandemic.)

At postgraduate level, in Master's degrees, including those of more than 200 credit points, the overall mark and class band are usually determined by results from all Level 7 modules, but some courses use the final 120 credit points.

(For intakes up to 2009/10 the classification of awards other than undergraduate degrees and Master's degrees of more than 200 credit points was based on results from all modules.)

The method of calculating the overall final mark is detailed in course regulations.

To be eligible for a particular class of degree or for Commendation or Distinction, candidates must pass all modules and achieve the requisite mark in their overall summary result. In calculating the overall mark each module's contribution is weighted according to its credit value. For the award of Distinction in Master's courses, a mark of at least 70% must be obtained in the overall average and in the dissertation (where available). Integrated Master's candidates must achieve 50% in each Level 7 module to be eligible for the award of the Master's degree.

The Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) is an unclassified award.

## Marking Schemes

The percentages used to determine overall gradings/classifications of awards are set out in the following table:

Overall Percentage	Honours Degree including Integrated Master's Degree	Degree, Graduate Certificate/Diploma, Advanced Certificate/Diploma, Certificate, Diploma, Access Diploma, Diploma in Professional Practice, Diploma in International Academic Studies	Master's Degree, Postgraduate Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate
At least 70%	Class I	Pass with Distinction	Pass with Distinction
At least 60%	Class Iii	Pass with Commendation	Pass with Commendation+
At least 50%	Class Iiii		Pass
At least 40%	Class III	Pass	-

+From 2015 intake.

Boards do not have discretion to award a class of degree or grade where the marks do not warrant it (for example Iii for 58% or 59%). The Board should ensure that through its moderation process, including the involvement of external examiners and discretionary interviews with a sample of candidates if appropriate, the overall results, the module marks and the class of degree/grade accord. A review conducted in 2011 confirmed that no change should be made to the University's policy in respect of classification boundaries and 'borderline' candidates, in the interests of clarity and consistency.

Until 2014/15 placement year, in undergraduate courses with a year of study abroad or placement which leads to the Associate award of Diploma in International Academic Studies or Diploma in Professional Practice or Diploma in Professional Practice (International), the standard required for the award was 50%, but students were permitted to progress to the final year with a mark of 40%.

## 15 MODERATION AND DOUBLE MARKING

### 15.1 General

In seeking to achieve equity, validity and reliability in the assessment of student work, moderation processes are used. Each Faculty has in place its own policy in respect of internal moderation which accords with the University policy set out below. Practices vary, with full or sample double marking of examination scripts being common in arts-based disciplines. In other courses which have a technical subject base, a reasonably precise specification of the required answers and marking schemes makes a system of 'monitoring' more appropriate. It is not usual to double mark all coursework fully, except for final year undergraduate projects and Master's dissertations.

Internal sampling should ensure that the full range of marks is covered and should reflect the principles established for sampling by External Examiners (see 15.4 c) below).

The UK Quality Code states that 'internal moderation is a process separate from that of marking and provides assurance that assessment criteria have been applied appropriately, reflecting the shared understanding of the markers, and an approach which enables comparability across academic subjects [...]. It is separate from the question of how differences in marks between two or more markers are resolved, and is not about making changes to an individual student's marks.'

The External Examiner plays an important role in the moderation of examination papers, assessment questions and marks awarded.

### 15.2 University Policy for Internal Moderation

#### All Work except Projects/Dissertations

- a) At all levels and for both coursework and written examinations, the assessment of all work which is first marked as failed shall be moderated.

In addition, a sample of at least 20% (exceptionally 10% during the coronavirus pandemic of 2020-2021) of the remainder shall be selected for moderation, subject to the following:

- where there are fewer than 12 scripts in total, all scripts shall be selected;
- where there are 12 or more but fewer than 60 scripts in total, a minimum of 12 scripts shall be selected;
- where there are more than 150 scripts in total, normally a maximum of 30 scripts shall be selected;
- the scripts shall be selected in a random manner subject to at least two being selected from each of the classification bands;
- the sample shall include work at classification/grade boundaries.

#### b) Form of Moderation

Faculties shall determine the type of moderation, taking account of the form of the assessment; the subject area; and the level of study. Moderation may involve either double-marking or monitoring (as defined below). Faculties/subject areas may determine whether the second marker has sight of the first marker's marks or not (blind double-marking). In the case of oral examinations and presentations a panel of members may agree a single mark.

In certain circumstances (e.g. to assist a new member of staff or where poor marking practice has been identified), double-marking rather than monitoring may take place and/or the sample size above may be exceeded.

#### Projects/Dissertations

All projects/dissertations (Level 6 undergraduate and Level 7 postgraduate) shall be double-marked (during the pandemic sampling at 10% allowed for 20 credit point projects/dissertations).

### 15.3 Double Marking

The marking of students' work by more than one person helps to ensure fairness and aims to achieve reliability in the final mark awarded. There are several different practices which are generally described as double marking.

**First and second marking** is where two markers are assigned to assess different elements of an assessment, e.g. in student projects one marker assesses for process and the other for content.

**Monitoring** is a system whereby one person marks an assessment and a second person 'validates' the mark and feedback given by the marker. Monitoring may be carried out on all scripts or on a selected proportion.

**Double marking** is a process whereby each script is marked by two markers (same as 100% monitoring). The second marker has sight of the first marker's marks. The final mark is determined by agreement between the two markers.

**Double blind marking** is very similar to double marking except that the second marker does not have sight of the marks awarded by the first marker.

**Double internal marking** is the process whereby a marker marks a set of scripts and then, after a short period of time, re-marks (blind) a sample of the scripts to ensure consistency. (It of course only involves one marker.)

The main philosophy behind these schemes is that if two people can independently (or one person after an interval in the case of double internal marking) come to an agreement on a student's mark, then there is greater confidence in the reliability of the mark.

There are many issues to be considered regarding the practice of double marking.

- Time to carry out the process.
- May not overcome the issue of 'hard' and 'easy' markers.
- There is a need to overcome the 'variability of answer content' where some answers may contain aspects not mentioned in others.
- Double marking only enhances reliability, it does not improve validity.
- Double marking requires:
  - an explicit set of marking criteria;
  - a set of weightings for each criterion;
  - in many cases, an indication of the content of the answer (but not for example, in a dissertation); and
  - an explanation of standards required e.g. for each degree classification.

### 15.4 External Examiners

The University appoints External Examiners for all award-bearing courses. For subject-based Honours degrees and the Certificate of Personal and Professional Development and the Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development, responsibilities are divided between subject External Examiners and, in respect of progress and award, a Chief External Examiner. The Chief External Examiner does not have a role in the moderation of assessment. The University's Regulations Governing Examinations in Programmes of Study (Appendix K) include the following duties for External Examiners:

- Consultation with the internal examiners, through the Course/Subject Directors, in relation to the approval and moderation of examination papers and other forms of assessment.
- Consideration of the standard of marking of examination papers and other forms of assessment and reporting to Boards of Examiners on such revisions of the marking as they consider necessary.

External Examiners are provided with a University Handbook and course information and attend the University for induction.

While the University has agreed that External Examiners may elect, if they so wish, not to be involved in the examining process for undergraduate degree modules at Levels 3 or 4 which do not contribute to a final award, their involvement is welcomed. (If there is a CertHE exit award, the External Examiner must be involved.)

Normally each module (and version thereof) is the responsibility of only one External Examiner.

In order that course and subject External Examiners are able to fulfil their duties, the course or subject director should ensure that, subject to the above proviso regarding first year undergraduate degree modules:

- a) all draft examinations papers and coursework assessment schemes for the modules in each External Examiner's area of responsibility are approved by the External Examiner in advance. (The schedule for the approval of examination papers is set out in Section 2: Written Examinations.);
- b) External Examiners have access to all examination scripts and coursework for the modules (including placement modules) in their area of responsibility. External Examiners have the authority to consider and approve all coursework in advance but are not required to approve every piece of coursework set in the module. The nature and extent of involvement in approval of the coursework assessment scheme must be discussed and agreed in advance;
- c) where it is agreed that the External Examiner should see a selection of the scripts and coursework, the principles for such a selection are agreed in advance. External Examiners are given enough evidence to determine that internal marking and classifications are of an appropriate standard and are consistent. External Examiners should see a sample from the top, the middle and the bottom of the range. They must sample the work of candidates at classification boundaries. They should also see all work assessed internally as failures; and
- d) where External Examiners are to attend oral examinations, the arrangements are agreed with them in advance. Where at the discretion of the Board of Examiners it is agreed that interviews are held with selected candidates to assist External Examiners in judging the standards of assessment and the quality of student learning, the principles for the selection and the form of the interviews are discussed with the External Examiners in advance. (It should be made clear to students that such interviews are not part of the assessment process and will not contribute to their individual results.) External Examiners may choose to meet with groups of students. (Viva voce examinations are not held - see 5.1 and 5.5.)

The External Examiner may request additional marking or recommend adjustments to provisional marks. Where there is unresolved disagreement in a Board of Examiners, reports are made by the external examiner and the Chair of the Board to the Senate which determines an appropriate course of action. If it requires the appointment of a new external examiner to moderate assessments, results remain provisional until the Board has confirmed them and final recommendations are made to Senate for awards.

## 16 FEEDBACK ON ASSESSMENT

### 16.1 General

Assessment contributes to the learning process by providing feedback to students on their progress towards the achievement of learning outcomes. It enables students to realise what they have done well and what they could improve on in future assessment (formative role), as well as to justify the grade awarded (giving a formal measure of achievement which counts towards a final award or measures performance against other regulatory requirements). The QAA Guide, *Understanding Assessment* (Quality Assurance Agency, 2012), stresses the role of feedback as a fundamental part of promoting student learning. It notes that feedback has gained significant attention in recent years, not least through the results of the National Student Survey, where it is the area of least satisfaction. This suggests in part a lack of shared expectations about what constitutes good quality work and the importance of communication which involves discussion of assessment criteria.

The Learning and Teaching Support Charter states that students will be provided with feedback on their academic progress, highlighting strengths and areas which would benefit from further development. The University's Principles of Assessment and Feedback for Learning are set out at Appendix A2.

The University has agreed an Electronic Management of Assessment Policy. (See [ulster.ac.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/396671/EMA\\_Policy.pdf](http://ulster.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/396671/EMA_Policy.pdf) and <https://ulster.sharepoint.com/sites/ODL>)

From semester 2 2016/17 coursework was to be submitted online unless this is not practicable. To ensure a consistent experience for students, all marks and feedback were also to be made available in Blackboard Learn from 2018/19.

Students also receive formal notification of their marks after each semester in the Banner Student Records system through the Portal. This profile builds up into a Statement of Academic Record (transcript) at the conclusion of the course. Arrangements are made to interview poor performing students after the first semester review of progress. All marks are provisional until confirmed by the Board of Examiners. A formal Communication of Results is issued after a Board of Examiners to students who have been unsuccessful.

Submitted coursework and written examination scripts are the property of the University. This section of the Assessment Handbook is concerned with the timing of coursework return, the mechanisms for the return of coursework and the feedback given on students' work, including written examinations.

### 16.2 The Timing of the Return of Coursework

- All programmes should have an established protocol for the timing of the return of coursework, with marks and feedback. This should take into account the number of students completing the assignment and the nature of the task. Generally, all assignments must be returned within 20 working days of submission (from 2020 – previously 15 days) but it is considered good practice for work to be returned sooner if at all possible. If work is returned many weeks after submission, the students tend to ignore any feedback; work that is returned promptly will still be fresh in the mind and, therefore, the feedback is likely to be more effective.
- It is useful for module outlines to include not only the submission dates for coursework but also the return dates.
- If, for any reason, coursework cannot be returned within the specified time, the students should be given an explanation and a new date set.

- Work should be returned to students at the same time. For work submitted through Blackboard Learn, the relevant Grade Centre column should be hidden until all marks are populated.

### 16.3 The Logistics of Returning Coursework

- The Faculty/School should have an established protocol for the secure return of coursework which has not been submitted online. It is not good enough for work to be left in cardboard boxes outside office doors (or similar) for collection.
- When a piece of work is submitted it should be made very clear what arrangements have been made for the return of the work. As far as is possible, work should be handed back directly to the student either in class or through specified tutorial or student advice sessions. On no account should work be handed to another student (or any other third party) for transmission to the recipient. The particular needs of part-time and distance learning students should be taken into account.
- Students should be advised that they should retain their work carefully, as it may have to be returned, if required (see 3.6 for timeframe). Failure to do so may be deemed sufficient reason for a Board of Examiners not to take the work into account.

### 16.4 Giving Feedback on Coursework

The University aims to achieve the online return of all marks and feedback to students through Blackboard Learn from 2018/19. There are three supported technologies for providing feedback digitally: Turnitin Grade Mark/Turnitin App; Blackboard Assignment inline viewer/Grader App; and Blackboard Grade Centre (by uploading Word/PDF documents). Students should receive an agreed set of comments from internal markers and a single mark.

There is little doubt that good quality, comprehensive and timely feedback on students' coursework is one of the important factors in driving student learning. In addition to written feedback, oral feedback may be given. Giving feedback can be a time-consuming process and staff should develop strategies appropriate to the student group and the nature of the assignments; nevertheless, there are some general principles that apply. The notes that follow have been informed partly by the guidance given in Race (1999). Whilst the majority (if not all) of the coursework completed by the student is summative in nature, good feedback will ensure that it fulfils a formative function too. If, during the feedback process, the student discloses that he/she has a disability or it becomes evident that the student has a disability, it is important that the member of staff is aware of the support that can be provided by the University, and the appropriate referral mechanisms.

- Feedback must be designed to enhance student learning. It cannot be over-emphasised just how important feedback is in supporting student learning. Too often marking becomes judgemental and the feedback follows this approach; feedback should be supportive and should focus on what the student should do to improve their work.
- For this reason, it is suggested that the use of 'crosses' to identify material that is wrong should be used sparingly. A more supportive approach is to use a short comment and possibly direct the student to the literature, lecture handouts, or other resources.
- Similarly, it is preferable to avoid using 'ticks' all the time to indicate work that is correct; it may take a little longer to add a phrase such as 'good point' or 'true' but the students are more motivated by such an approach.
- Adopt a positive tone as this encourages and enables dialogue with the student.

For example avoid 'this does not make sense' and encourage the student to reflect and discuss learning through comments such as 'I am unsure about this'.

Wherever possible one should try to start off by mentioning something positive about the work; give constructive comments and then try to end on a positive note. One should find something positive to say about any piece of work no matter how bad.

- Feedback should be informative and should be a learning experience in itself. This can be promoted by referring the student to other sources of information, alternative approaches, errors in logic, organisational difficulties in the work, contraventions of accepted conventions, etc.
- Wherever possible provide concrete examples. Simply stating, 'you have not evaluated the policy' will be of limited use if the student has a limited understanding of how to evaluate.
- Feedback should be explicit. For example, 'see Heenan (2002) for an alternative view,' instead of 'consult the appropriate literature.'
- Wherever possible comment on the skills that have been developed and the learning outcomes.
- It may be possible to make use of employers, patients or clients in giving feedback, where appropriate.
- A student should be able to see from the returned work not only where he/she went wrong but also how the work could have been improved in order to gain full marks or the highest grade.
- Feedback should be efficient and the lecturer should endeavour to devise methods to maximise the feedback with minimal work on your part. Some suggestions are:
  - a) Use of a feedback sheet to give all members of the class generic feedback - this might be focussed around the assessment criteria established for the work. Individual pieces of work can then be annotated using perhaps a numbering system and the student directed to specific points on the sheet. These sheets themselves can become a useful and important learning resource. Generic feedback sheets may contain space for individual comments.
  - b) Use of a marking sheet to focus the student's attention on the strengths and weaknesses of their work (examples of these are included in Appendix L). One should avoid making them too negative.
  - c) Use of e-mail to give feedback. This could be simply the generic feedback sheet (see a) above) or individual comments could be e-mailed the marking each student's assignment is completed. (Students seem to prefer the anonymity of the computer to receiving (possibly) bad news in front of their peers in a class.)
  - d) Giving generic feedback to the class as a whole in specially arranged sessions or in normal timetabled slots. This can be a very efficient means of getting over a number of points to a large group.
  - e) Recording specific comments; more extensive specific comments can be given than in writing. Here, the tone of the voice can be a great support when explaining to a student the reasons why a poor grade was given.



- Students should be encouraged to engage with the feedback process.
  - a) Students should be able to question the comments and the mark given; they are more likely to accept a poor grade if they are clear how they have lost marks. Students should always be given the opportunity to come and discuss their work with the member of staff privately - even the best students may learn something from such encounters.
  - b) Feedback should facilitate and encourage self-assessment. For example students could be invited to identify areas on which they would value feedback.
  - c) Use phrases which encourage a response, such as 'I would welcome your views on ...'.
  - d) Return the work with just the comments but no grades. Students should then try to work out what grade they have been given. This will encourage them to look closely at their work and possibly that of their peers as they try to balance out the strong points with the weak ones. Of course they should finally be given the grades. (See also Section 8: Peer and Self Assessment.)
  - e) Some subject areas have found it useful to require students to provide an explanation of how previous feedback has been incorporated in a subsequent assignment. This is attached at the end of the piece of work. (Staff had been concerned that students were not learning from feedback and did not understand that it may be relevant to other work.)
  - f) Staff will also wish to consider the point in the module or programme when it is no longer appropriate to continue providing feedback. Chapter B6 of the *Quality Code* dealing with assessment (Quality Assurance Agency, 2013) recognises that, in relation to assessment taking place at the end of a programme, it may be appropriate not to provide feedback in all cases.
- Make sure that any grading system that you use on returned work has been fully explained to the students so that they are well aware of the significance of their mark (and the consequences of any failure).
- And lastly, ensure that your handwriting is legible (if applicable).

Further information on good feedback practice is available in *Reflections on Assessment* (Quality Assurance Agency, 2005).

#### 16.5 Giving Feedback on Written Examinations

University regulations state that “*for the purpose of providing feedback on examination performance, candidates may be given access to examination scripts in the presence of a member of academic staff. Candidates are not permitted to retain examination scripts.*”

Generally staff have not given feedback on written examinations. However, in certain circumstances it may benefit an individual student to understand why he/she achieved a certain result. This may be particularly true for failing students who have been given examination resits. In such cases, the member of staff should go through the script with the student highlighting errors, good points, irrelevant parts of the answer, poor examination technique, etc. Under no circumstances should the student take the script away or be left alone with the script.

Staff may find it useful to give such feedback generally to students to assist with examination technique.

## 17 REVIEWING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS OF ASSESSMENT

### 17.1 General

As part of the University's quality assurance and enhancement procedures a review of the effectiveness of the assessment used to measure student learning is undertaken. This review occurs at university, subject, course and module levels through the use of a number of formal and informal processes.

The QAA *Code of Practice*, Section 6: Assessment of Students (Quality Assurance Agency, 2006) encouraged institutions to consider analysing trends in results, for example to consider mark, grade or honours distributions or to identify any relationship between entry qualifications and assessment outcomes.

The then Teaching and Learning Committee noted (February 2007) that a number of such exercises have been undertaken locally within Faculties but that they were limited in scope and resource-intensive. The introduction of the new student records system (2008) was expected to allow easier analysis in support of academic standards and effective student learning. Standard reports are available for Board of Examiners on:

- mean and standard deviation for each module, based on its recurrence within a course year group;
- number of results within mark bands and minimum and maximum marks for each module;
- final year candidates ranked in aggregate award mark order.

The annual monitoring exercise - the programme management system in the University - provides opportunities for the University and course/subject committees formally to review, consider and evaluate student performance. The University monitors the effectiveness of the committees' reviews through a range of performance indicators.

The module monitoring process also provides for identification of 'outlier' modules (i.e. those with significantly higher or lower student performance than expected), worthy of investigation through initial consideration of statistical data on student progress and achievement. In addition course/subject and module teams review the assessment procedure(s) of the module. Such evaluation is a formative process ongoing throughout the delivery of the module.

The data generated on each module following examinations should be considered, including:

- The variation of performance between different groups undertaking the module.
- The spread of marks, mean and standard deviation.

Consideration should also be given to the ongoing validity and reliability of the assessment process.

When setting the examination and coursework, account should be taken of the previous year's work to ensure consistency and fairness within and between years. Previous years' marking should also be taken into account when marking both coursework and examinations to ensure validity and reliability of the assessment process.

External Examiners are required, as part of their annual report, to comment upon the effectiveness of assessment procedures and how academic standards have been maintained.

17.2 Archive

The 2000 edition of the *Code of Practice* (Quality Assurance Agency, 2000) suggested the use of archives of sample marked work. The Teaching and Learning Committee returned to consideration of this matter in 2004 when it noted that archives might be useful in support of individual staff development, particularly for new members of staff, and to assist maintenance and monitoring of standards over a period. It was agreed that individual members of staff should be responsible for the retention of such material, in accordance with the Faculty's guidelines, and that samples should be kept for a minimum of three years.

An archive should include all forms of assessment and it may be feasible to record oral presentations. The sample size should be appropriate to the subject area and the number of students being assessed. A minimum sample frame might be three from the top third, three from the middle third and three from the bottom third from each piece of assessed work in the module across a three year period.

## 18 CHEATING

### 18.1 University Regulations

The University's regulations on cheating are addressed in the Ordinance on Student Discipline. A breach of discipline by a student includes "offences in connection with examinations and other forms of assessment." The relevant clause of the University's Regulations governing Examinations in Programmes of Study states:

*It is an offence for a candidate to infringe, or to attempt to infringe, the [...] regulations or to engage, or to attempt to engage, in conduct for the purpose of gaining for himself or herself, or for another candidate, an unfair advantage with a view to obtaining a better result than he or she would otherwise achieve.*

*Examples of such conduct are:*

- a) *copying from the examination script or other work undertaken for assessment by another candidate;*
- b) *personation of others;*
- c) *fabrication of results;*
- d) *plagiarism;*
- e) *collusion;*
- f) *use of inadmissible material; and*
- g) *contract cheating.*

*Reports of alleged offences shall be considered under procedures approved by the Council in consultation with the Senate in accordance with the Ordinance on Student Discipline.*

These procedures are outlined below. They are available in more detail from [ulster.ac.uk/studentadministration/staff/policies-and-procedures](http://ulster.ac.uk/studentadministration/staff/policies-and-procedures). (In the case of an Affiliate College, the role of the University Provost is fulfilled by the Executive Dean.) From 2018/19 all offences are recorded on an expanded central Register for Plagiarism and Other Offences (see 18.4 below).

### 18.2 Procedures for Dealing with Reports of Alleged Offences in Written Examinations

- a) Where a candidate is suspected of infringing the regulations or rules for the conduct of examinations or of otherwise committing an offence during a written examination, the senior invigilator shall at the end of the examination submit a written report on the circumstances to the Examinations Office.
- b) Disciplinary proceedings are instigated and the matter is referred to the Provost/Executive Dean of the Faculty and the University Secretary and Module Co-ordinator informed.
- c) The Provost, acting on behalf of the Disciplinary Committee, shall interview the candidate.
- d) If the Provost finds against the student, a range of penalties is available as at 18.3 below. The Board of Examiners is informed accordingly.

### 18.3 Procedures for Dealing with Reports of Alleged Offences in Coursework other than Plagiarism

- a) Where a member of staff suspects that a candidate has committed an offence such as engaging another person to undertake the assessment or fabrication of

results, he or she shall submit a written report accompanied by any relevant supporting material and the candidate's coursework to the Course/Subject Director for the course on which the candidate is registered.

- b) The Course/Subject Director may make such enquiries as may be considered necessary including interviewing the candidate. He or she shall consider the report in consultation with the member of staff responsible for the coursework and determine if there is a *prima facie* case that the candidate has engaged, or attempted to engage, in conduct for the purpose of gaining an unfair advantage. On the basis of this decision the Course/Subject Director shall determine in consultation with the Executive Dean whether or not to instigate disciplinary proceedings.
- c) If the Course/Subject Director decides not to instigate disciplinary proceedings he or she shall inform the candidate, the member of staff responsible for the coursework, and the Dean, accordingly. The member of staff shall determine what credit, if any, the candidate should receive for the coursework. The Course/Subject Director shall report the matter to the Course/Subject Committee and, in due course, to the Board of Examiners. The Course/Subject Committee may, in light of the candidate's performance in the coursework, take such action as it considers necessary in advance of the Board of Examiners.
- d) If the Course/Subject Director decides to instigate disciplinary proceedings he or she shall submit a written report to the Dean, who shall refer the matter to the Provost and inform the University Secretary, and the steps at 18.2 c and d are followed.

#### Penalty

The Provost interviews the student and, if he/she finds against the student, a range of penalties is available to the Provost. If the Provost is of the opinion that the gravity of the offence is such that he or she should not deal with it, it is referred to the Disciplinary Committee for consideration. Penalties include a reprimand, a warning, a fine, a decision to disallow the work or all work in the year, a delay in the re-examination period or that the candidate be required to withdraw from the course.

#### 18.4 Contract Cheating

Contract cheating was added explicitly to Regulations as a disciplinary offence in 2012, in view of growing concerns about the use of 'essay mills' and similar.

The Quality Assurance Agency Audit has published useful information and guidance for staff and students. See [qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/assessment](http://qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/assessment) under further resources: Contracting to Cheat in Higher Education or search for contract cheating.

Offences should be recorded in the cheating register (see 18.6).

#### 18.5 Plagiarism

The University's Policy and Guidance on Plagiarism was updated in 2012, following review by a working group. The Policy is available from the Academic Office website: [ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice/policies](http://ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice/policies). The following information relates to plagiarism in taught courses and the MRes.

Plagiarism is an area which presents particular difficulties. It is important that the problem be treated in a way which incorporates sufficiently rigorous penalties as a deterrent but which also offers support and guidance to students. There is no doubt, however, that

some students plagiarise simply to gain an unfair advantage and to improve their mark profile. Despite being quite aware of the seriousness of the offence, they persist nonetheless. In other cases, however, the motivation is more complex and an understanding of the underlying reasons may help staff to deal more effectively with the situation and provide more constructive initial support to prevent recourse to this form of cheating. The basic principle in the University's approach is that, whether deliberate or accidental, it is unacceptable and should be penalised accordingly.

The Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) of the UK higher and further education funding bodies completed a four-strand project on the electronic detection of plagiarism in 2001, and as a result established a national plagiarism advisory service. The Higher Education Academy has built on that work and its website offers useful resources on academic integrity and the design of assessment to minimise plagiarism opportunities. The University has registered to use a detection facility, and the relevant software, *Turnitin* ([turnitinuk.com](http://turnitinuk.com)). This is integrated in the digital learning environment, Blackboard Learn, and is available in all modules.

### Why do Students Plagiarise?

- a) They wish to improve their profile. The desire to do well overcomes a sense of morality, particularly in a competitive world where a good job may depend on a good degree.
- b) The use of material drafted by others in unacknowledged forms is rife and common practice in a variety of settings so that the full seriousness of the offence is not grasped. Some students may indeed have developed the practice of writing plagiarised essays and arrive at university thinking that a compendium of other people's writing is the right way to construct an essay. On one level too, part of learning involves memorising and repeating material from others so that some sense of confusion may occur in the student's mind as to what is legitimate and what is not. It has also to be said that in some cases there are grey areas regarding use of ideas and acknowledgement in general such that the establishment of plagiarism is ultimately a matter of academic judgement.
- c) Students may lack confidence in their abilities and for some reason believe that they cannot do the work themselves. They may feel on reading a particular piece in a source that it is so much better than what they could write themselves that it will impress more.
- d) Students' fear of failure and the reaction of friends, family and the world at large overcomes any other sense of appropriate behaviour.
- e) Sometimes, however, the cause of plagiarism is not so much lack of confidence as sloth, an unwillingness to make the intellectual effort involved.
- f) Students get behind with their work and find that the only way to meet an assignment deadline is to find a source from which they can copy.

### Forms of Plagiarism

Some of the more common forms of plagiarism are outlined below.

- a) Total plagiarism: copying out a whole piece of work (e.g. essay, dissertation) from a source written by someone other than the student. This may be taken from a bank of ready made essays or it may involve copying another student's work on the same or a similar subject.
- b) Partial plagiarism: this typically involves the student taking elements of work from a source or sources and incorporating them without acknowledgement into the submitted piece in such a way as to suggest that they are the student's own unaided efforts.

- c) Disguised plagiarism: this may involve the student closely following a source, not giving the source and changing words or phrases as they go along so that the result cannot be said to be an exact copy of the original. This is nonetheless a form of plagiarism as the student is dependent on the source and has not assimilated or internalised the subject.
- d) Use of the ideas of others in completely unacknowledged form. This is a difficult one because everyone assimilates and uses the ideas of others. They are widely discussed and are part of the prevailing ethos and intellectual movements of the time. In order to form one's own ideas and set them in a wider context of scholarship, it is also important to read about the theories and knowledge that others have discovered. Students should be encouraged to reference the ideas that they find as well as to reflect on them and to develop them as appropriate to the context and subject. There is, however, a difference between the assimilation of a range of views and their synthesis into a personal response and a slavish copy of an original.
- e) Unconscious plagiarism. It can happen that a student has made extensive notes on a source to which they do refer to some extent. In incorporating elements of the source, however, they use a form of words very similar indeed to the original, simply because they are working from notes which are closer to it than they remember.
- f) Internet plagiarism: downloading from the internet is very easy for the student. Apart from dedicated cheating sites there is a wealth of other information relevant to the student's assessment activities.

### **Prevention of Plagiarism and Guidance to Students**

'Prevention is better than cure' runs the old adage. Students should be warned about plagiarism and supported in their studies in ways that will help them avoid it.

The University's Student Handbook informs students that:

'plagiarism is the act of taking or copying someone else's work, including another student's, and presenting it as if it were your own. Plagiarism is said to occur when ideas, texts, theories, data, created artistic artefacts or other material are presented without acknowledgement so that the person considering this work is given the impression that what they have before them is the student's own original work when it is not. Plagiarism also occurs where a student's own work is re-presented without being properly referenced. Plagiarism is a form of cheating and is a disciplinary offence.

An holistic approach to the problem of plagiarism should be taken, striking an appropriate balance between formative and punitive measures. As evidence suggests that students entering the University in first year may not be aware of what constitutes plagiarism, course/subject teams should ensure that students receive guidance on plagiarism, acceptable academic practice and writing and referencing skills. The induction period is a key opportunity to introduce students to the concept and to University policy and School approaches. Guidance should spell out exactly what constitutes plagiarism by reference to the University's definition, give subject-specific examples, including consequences in relation to progression, and refer to the use of electronic detection systems and an interview if plagiarism is suspected. This message should be reinforced throughout the year and in subsequent years. The declaration of ownership on the coursework submission sheet (Appendix B) requires students to confirm that they understand the offence and the penalties which may be applied. The University has developed an online resource, Skills+, which supplements School and subject-specific material.

Assessing the extent of plagiarism is a matter of academic judgement. This can be prone to inconsistency both within and across subject areas. University-level guidance is

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generic and consequently it is expected that discussion about it should take place at School level to foster a common understanding and consistent application of policy and procedure.

Some points to remember:

- a) It is important at the outset to give the class a clear explanation of what constitutes plagiarism in general and in relation to any particular piece of assessment.
- b) The class should understand what the penalties are and that plagiarism is cheating. Cite examples or cases anonymously.
- c) The students should be given clear guidelines about what is sought in a particular piece of work and understand how to set about doing it. Inexperienced students, in particular, may need quite extensive counselling about how to undertake the generic task in question (e.g. how to write an essay at university level). For longer pieces of work in particular, an indicative timeframe may foster better organisational ability. Students should also understand the criteria for assessment. If students are given the tools to do the work and properly supported they should not feel the same need to plagiarise and they will also understand that there is no excuse for it.
- d) The implications of plagiarism in group work for group members should be made clear to them.
- e) In setting assignments, staff should endeavour to set on topics which limit the scope for plagiarism. The rubric should discourage students from re-using material from their own earlier work unless it is to develop a theme, e.g. from proposal to final output, or they are legitimately citing earlier work involving themselves. *Plagiarism.org* offers guidance on the design of assessment.

## **Spotting Plagiarism**

There are certain tell-tale signs that indicate the likelihood of plagiarism.

- a) The work is unduly sophisticated for a student in language and in content.
- b) There is a discrepancy between the plagiarised elements and what the student has written unaided in terms of level, use of language and, in foreign language, linguistic accuracy.
- c) The work may seem unfocused as it moves from paragraph to paragraph or sentence to sentence from diverse sources, or indeed different parts of the same source, without any clear linkages or movement. While a lack of organisation is certainly a feature of some work that has not been plagiarised, it is the combination of quite sophisticated sequences with a lack of focus that may denote plagiarism.
- d) Internet plagiarism may be spotted in certain cases through features such as Americanised spelling; through a change in script or formatting for downloaded sections; from the existence of linked sites; from reference to another country in the text as being the one in which the student is writing.
- e) The work is much better than that normally produced by the student. A difficult one this since people do improve and the issue should not be pre-judged. In a situation where examinations and much course work are anonymous, this may also not become apparent until quite a late stage.



- f) Where internet plagiarism is suspected, an appropriate plagiarism search engine may be used. Staff have also found that feeding a number of words into a search engine has enabled them to locate the source.

### Turnitin Detection System

Students formally consent to the submission of their work to electronic detection systems at enrolment. The University has subscribed to the JISC-recommended *Turnitin* system and, while its use is not compulsory in taught courses, the University strongly encourages staff to use it and Faculties comment on this matter in their annual reports to Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee.

It should be noted that *Turnitin* provides evidence of similarity and is not the sole means of detecting or confirming plagiarism. It is up to the individual member of staff, in accordance with Faculty/School policy, to determine whether all work should be submitted or just a sample or suspicious work. Its use is strongly encouraged in at least some work at all levels in taught courses. It is used routinely for all assessment material submitted for research degrees. The then Teaching and Learning Committee agreed in April 2009 that students could be allowed access to Originality Reports in *Turnitin* as a pre-submission check, as this would be a useful resource to assist them in improving their academic referencing (and with respect to group work in the discharge of shared responsibility for the assignment).

Certain types of work cannot be submitted to the *Turnitin* system, for example artefacts or visual images.

University Guidelines for the use of *Turnitin* (2016) are given at Appendix M1.

### Dealing with Plagiarism

- a) The easiest form of plagiarism with which to deal is the case of the student who copies directly from a source with which the staff member is familiar and can easily locate.
- b) Where a member of staff suspects that a piece of coursework contains plagiarised material, it should normally be double marked. The piece of work may be submitted to the *Turnitin* detection system, or other detection system as appropriate, if it has not already been screened as part of the submission process. The member of staff should also consult texts and other members of staff in order to ascertain if plagiarised material is present. (It may also be appropriate at this stage to alert the module coordinator, if not the tutor concerned, and the Course/Subject Director to the suspicion of plagiarism.) Academic judgement should be exercised in order to determine if plagiarism of a very minor nature may be attributed to incorrect referencing techniques and should be penalised as such, rather than as plagiarism.
- c) Staff may also wish to ask the student to attend an interview to discuss the piece of work. Best practice recommends that more than one member of staff should be present when interviewing a student. A record of the meeting should be kept. Failure on the student's part to attend for interview cannot be taken as conclusive proof of plagiarism, although this should be noted on the student file.
- d) Care should be taken in the conduct of the interview. Sometimes it will be sufficient to suggest to the student that their work is rather more sophisticated or advanced than one would normally expect for the level or wonder if he or she has perhaps relied a little too much on sources. In discussion with the student, it is important to approach the matter delicately. One should leave open the possibility that one may be wrong and phrase the question as an enquiry. One does not want the student to be able to say that he or she was accused without foundation

## *Cheating*

and it is also easier for some students to confess if the question is put gently. Students then often admit that this was in effect the case. Others may brazen the matter out.

- e) Where plagiarism is still suspected but not admitted after an interview (or indeed if an interview is judged inappropriate), it may be necessary to have recourse to methods such as a viva to test the student's actual knowledge and understanding of the material. Sometimes, staff may choose to wait until a slightly later stage in the assessment process when the student's overall profile becomes clearer before undertaking a viva. For longer pieces such as dissertations contributing to a final award, the External Examiner is likely to be consulted if the internal staff cannot prove the allegation of plagiarism.
- f) Where a member of staff is satisfied that there is plagiarised material in a student's work, he/she should bring this formally to the attention of the module co-ordinator (if not the tutor concerned) who should inform the Course/Subject Director.
- g) The Course/Subject Director may make such further enquiries as may be necessary. The student should have the opportunity to provide further information, evidence that the work has not been plagiarised, by way of an informal appeal process. The Course/Subject Director should consult with the module co-ordinator and member of staff and, if they agree that plagiarism has occurred, the student should be penalised in accordance with the Framework of Penalties for Plagiarism Offences (see below). The student should be informed accordingly and a note placed on the student's file (using the 'Record of Plagiarism Offence' form (see below). The implications of the offence for fitness to practise should also be considered where appropriate, in accordance with the Ordinance on Fitness for Practice.
- h) The student has the formal right of appeal as provided for in the Regulations Governing Examinations in Programmes of Study following the meeting of the Board of Examiners, or under the Ordinance on Student Discipline, as appropriate.
- i) Collusion, where a student has supplied material to another student to use, is plagiarism on the part of the recipient, but not on the part of the supplier, who should be dealt with in accordance with section 18.3 above. Contract cheating, whereby a student engages a third party to undertake an assignment, should be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure described at 18.3.
- j) Where a student is considered to have copied another student's work in an examination, this form of plagiarism is dealt with in accordance with Section 18.2.
- k) The Teaching and Learning Committee confirmed (April 2009) that with regard to plagiarism in group work, while only those involved in cheating would suffer the disciplinary penalty, there would be consequences for the whole group in terms of the mark awarded.

## **Penalties**

There is some diversity of opinion about penalties. Some feel that the deterrent effect must be strong and the penalties harsh, whereas others would tend to favour a softer and more supportive approach.

The University has adopted a consistent institution-wide framework which applies a graduated scheme of academic and disciplinary penalties as set out below and in the table at Appendix M2. Within the framework of penalties, only the most severe outcomes, i.e. those leading to a recommendation for suspension or expulsion from the University,

are referred to the University Disciplinary Committee. All other cases are dealt with locally by Faculties, either through the Course/Subject Committee and Board of Examiners in respect of confirmation of reduced or zero marks or by Heads of School for formal letters of reprimand and Deans for fines.

When in the academic judgement of the member of staff, the plagiarism is of a very minor nature and may be attributed to incorrect referencing, it may be penalised as such rather than as plagiarism. It should be noted that, when a student fails in assessment following the application of a penalty, the normal consequence of failure apply, as set out in the course regulations. In some instances, students may also be subject to the codes of ethics or behaviour of a profession and the University's Ordinance on Fitness for Professional Practice may also apply.

#### First offence

This leads to a reduction in marks for the assignment (not the whole assessment element) based on the exclusion of plagiarised work. A formative interview is held with the module coordinator/and or lecturer.

After this first interview, offences are cumulative and carry over from year to year. A student who does not attend for interview is deemed to have received formative advice for the purpose of applying any subsequent penalties.

#### Second offence

This leads to a mark of zero for the assignment containing the plagiarised material. The penalty of zero cannot be applied until formative advice has been given or deemed to have been given as above. It may, therefore, be appropriate, depending on the proximity of assignment deadlines, to count two or three occasions of plagiarism as one offence). The student is interviewed by the Head of School and/or Course Director and/or lecturer. A formal letter is subsequently sent to the student and a copy placed on the student's file.

#### Third offence

This leads to a mark of zero for the assignment containing the plagiarised material and a cap on the mark for the coursework element of the module of 40% (undergraduate) and 50% (postgraduate). The case is referred to the Dean of the Faculty with the recommendation of the disciplinary penalties of a reprimand and a fine. A formal letter is subsequently sent to the student and a copy placed on the student's file.

#### Fourth offence

This leads to a mark of zero for the whole module. The case is referred to the University's Disciplinary Committee with a recommendation of suspension (one semester or one year as advised by the Faculty) or expulsion from the University.

Where plagiarism is detected following award, the award may be revoked.

Penalties are recorded on a central register (18.6).

### 18.6 Recording of Plagiarism and other Offences

A central recording system has been established to ensure the consistent application of penalties. This central register supports regular review of the extent of plagiarism within the University. Plagiarism offences are recorded on the register by the designated member of Business Support staff within the Faculty/School who has general responsibility for inputting information on the Student Records System. This person can query the register on behalf of academic staff. The register was initially established for plagiarism offences and was extended to all forms of cheating from 2018/19.

## *Cheating*

Where there is evidence of a plagiarism offence, this should also be documented in the student's paper file using the form at Appendix M3. This form is available from the Academic Office's website at [ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice/documents-and-forms](http://ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice/documents-and-forms).

As inclusion on the register is not a penalty *per se*, offences are not removed from the record. If a student withdraws from one programme and enrolls on another, any plagiarism offences are still counted cumulatively.

Offences are not formally carried over from undergraduate study to postgraduate study. Any information regarding plagiarism (and other) offences by students who have completed their undergraduate study at the University will still be held on the student's file and may be supplied as part of a reference to inform the admission decision, but should not be taken into account in dealing with plagiarism following enrolment.

The Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee receives an annual report on the occurrence of plagiarism and commentaries from faculties and the Doctoral College as part of the annual report on cheating.

## 19 UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS AND EXAMINATION PROCEDURES

### 19.1 Regulations Governing Examinations and Examination Procedures

Regulations governing Examinations in Programmes of Study cover the following:

- Appointment and duties of External Examiners.
- Conduct of examinations.
- Offences in connection with examinations and other forms of assessment.
- Presentation of extenuating circumstances.
- Publication of results.
- Retention of examination material.
- Appeals against decisions on academic progress.

They are set out in full in Appendix K.

A calendar of examinations and associated activities is published annually by the Examinations Office detailing dates for such matters as processing results, meetings of Boards, communication of results and appeals.

### 19.2 Examination Invigilation

Invigilators are appointed by the Student Administration Department to be responsible for the efficient supervision of examinations which must be conducted in accordance with University Regulations. Invigilation is part of the normal duties of academic staff. Deans may grant exemption to categories of staff (for example, staff in a particular school). Invigilation duties are allocated to staff in each faculty in accordance with the faculty's proportion of modules assessed by examination. Staff may be granted exemption on an individual basis for specific days or for a particular examination period. Heads of School require the written authorisation of the Dean to be exempted from this duty. Individual staff require the written authorisation of the Head of School. Where staff are exempted, their duties are assigned as additional sessions to other staff in the School. The Examinations Office issues detailed instructions to invigilators.

### 19.3 Boards of Examiners: Course and Subject Boards

Course Boards of Examiners determine on behalf of the Senate of the University the academic progress of students and make recommendations regarding their final award. Undergraduate degree Subject Boards are concerned solely with the confirmation of results of Honours degree students, except in the case of Single Honours degree students, where they also consider progress and final classification. Faculties also constitute boards to determine the results of students taking credit-bearing short courses. These may take place at the same time as course or subject boards but are formally separate. If the modules contribute to the award of the Certificate of Personal and Professional Development or Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development, they function in the same way as Subject Boards and forward results to a Progress and Award Board (19.4).

The course or subject Board comprises all internal examiners, the relevant Head of School, and the External Examiner(s). It is chaired by the Dean or Associate Dean of the Faculty or by a Head or Associate Head of School in the Faculty other than the School in which the course is located. In his/her absence, the Board is chaired by a person

appointed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Student Experience). At recognised institutions, for validated courses, the Board may be chaired by a senior member of the College staff, as determined by the Faculty.

### Duties

The duties of a Course Board are as follows:

- a) to determine the module results obtained by candidates;
- b) where such results lead directly to a degree, diploma, certificate or other academic distinction, to forward to the Senate and, where appropriate, to external bodies, lists of successful candidates, classified in accordance with the relevant course regulations, with recommendations for the award of degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic distinctions;
- c) to determine on behalf of the Senate or of the institution the academic progress of students on the basis of their performance in examinations and other forms of assessment;
- d) to ensure that the examination and assessment of candidates are conducted in accordance with regulations and procedures prescribed by the Senate;
- e) to deal with such other matters as the Senate may refer to them from time to time.

The duties of a Subject Board are as follows:

- a) to determine the module results obtained by candidates;
- b) to forward the results to the Progress and Award Board of Examiners; or, where candidates are enrolled for a Single Honours degree, to determine on behalf of the Senate the academic progress of students on the basis of their performance in examinations and other forms of assessment, or where such results lead directly to a degree, to forward to the Senate and, where appropriate, to external bodies, lists of successful candidates, classified in accordance with the relevant course regulations with recommendations for the award of degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic distinctions;
- c) to ensure that the examination and assessment of candidates are conducted in accordance with regulations and procedures prescribed by the Senate;
- d) to deal with such other matters as the Senate may refer to them from time to time.

Unresolved disagreement about results or awards within a Board of Examiners is reported to the Senate. It receives reports from the Chair of the board and the external examiner(s) and determines what action to take. This may include the appointment of new external examiners.

### Attendance

Boards of Examiners usually meet once annually to consider student progress and award. For courses which take place in the September-June period, this meeting takes place in May/June. A supplementary (resit) Board meets in August/September. A Board of Examiners meets to consider Summer semester (Semester 3) results. In certain undergraduate courses in the School of Nursing, Boards meet each semester. For Master's courses and other courses of a different pattern, the meeting may take place at a different time.

All internal examiners are expected to attend. The Chair of the Board may exceptionally approve the non-attendance of members.

For partner institution provision, where the course is part of a larger network or a franchise, or an external examiner has responsibilities for more than one course in a network, the Faculty may approve the following two-stage arrangement:

- preliminary meeting of all internal examiners (at a partner institution);
- final meeting, involving external examiner(s) and, as a minimum, the Course Directors from each college.

Records of the preliminary meetings are kept as a formal report and recommendations regarding progress or award are made to the final Board.

There must also be University representation at all such Board of Examiners including supplementary Boards. This may be through the Faculty Partnership Manager, the subject contact person or nominee, or an (Associate) Dean or Head of School chairing the meeting.

External Examiners are entitled to attend meetings of the Boards of which they are members. They are expected to be present at all meetings where the performance of candidates in assessment which contributes to the final result is being considered, except for linked Postgraduate Diploma and Master's courses. For such courses the Faculty Board may determine whether the External Examiner should attend Boards for either or both stages, in accordance with the following procedures.

Each Faculty is authorised to determine whether the External Examiner should attend for either the Postgraduate Diploma or Master's stage of a postgraduate course, or for both. If the Faculty decides on attendance for only the Postgraduate Diploma stage the following conditions should be fulfilled:

- a) there is no requirement for oral examination associated with the Master's award;
- b) the Master's dissertation/project component only remains to be examined;
- c) the External Examiner moderates the work for the dissertation/project.

If the Faculty decides on attendance for only the Master's stage:

- a) the Course/Subject Committee would review candidates' results in the taught modules, with the External Examiner's role being to moderate the work and endorse the results, decisions regarding progress and resit, and recommendations, where appropriate, for the award of the Postgraduate Diploma;
- b) the Master's results and recommendations for award would be considered by the full Board of Examiners on the basis of both the taught modules and the dissertation/project.

In exceptional circumstances, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Student Experience) may approve arrangements for the external examining of a course in the absence of the External Examiner(s). This may include the submission of written reports or the appointment of substitute examiners. Attendance at resit Boards is not required but it is expected that the External Examiner is consulted.

For courses commencing in September, Boards do not normally meet at the end of the Autumn semester (Semester 1), as progress from the Autumn to the Spring semester (Semester 2) is automatic. However, Course/Subject Committees meet to review performance of students and to arrange interviews for students who require advice and guidance.

### Conduct of Business

Any member of staff who has a personal interest, involvement or relationship with a student shall temporarily withdraw from meetings where the student's specific case is being discussed (see Section 19.8: Code of Practice). Preliminary meetings of internal examiners to consider the performance of candidates are arranged by the Course/Subject Director. These may involve the External Examiner. Provisional results, including the results from the Autumn semester which are unmoderated, are presented on computerised course results sheets for each year of a course, listed by candidate in alphabetical order. Percentage marks are provided under the following headings for each module:

CW:	coursework
EX:	examination
T:	total (weighted overall mark)
GR:	grade (where applicable).

Whole numbers only are used in presenting module marks, year averages and aggregate award marks, with the usual convention for rounding decimal points observed: to 0.49, down; 0.5 and above, up. Fail marks are highlighted in bold. An overall mark is included for each student who is not in the final year of the course. This is the average mark of all modules for which the student has been enrolled in the current year.

In undergraduate Honours and Integrated Master's degrees during a transitional period for pre 2018 entrants, the classification is based **either** on the existing algorithm deriving from performance in final level modules amounting to 120 credit points or includes a specific Level 5 (and Level 6 for integrated Master's) contribution approved by a professional body, **or** on a new standard algorithm of 70% from Level 6 and 30% from Level 5. In integrated Master's degrees the algorithm is 50% Level 7, 30% Level 6 and 20% Level 5.

An aggregate mark and award classification (which are subject to confirmation by the board) are provided, together with an explanation of the calculation used to give the student the better outcome. The classification mark is based on the appropriate weightings of levels with the weighting of each module based on its credit value. At each applicable level, each total module mark is multiplied by the module's credit points to give the total 'mark credits' for the module. The total mark credits are then added together and divided by the total module credits to give the average mark for the level rounded to two decimal points. This mark is then multiplied by the appropriate percentage weighting for the level (70% or 30% at Level 6 and 5 respectively for undergraduate degrees or 50% or 30% or 20% at Levels, 7, 6 and 5 respectively for integrated Master's degrees) to give the weighted level mark rounded to two decimal places. The weighted level marks are added together to give the final summary mark. This figure is then rounded to the nearest whole number for display on the course result sheets.

The classification mark is not provided for the small number of courses where a non-standard algorithm is used, or where the modules passed at the final level do not equal 120 credit points. It is the responsibility of the course director (subject director in respect of Single Honours candidates in subject-based provision) to ensure that the final award mark is calculated in accordance with the appropriate award regulations.



The following standard reports are available for Boards and for External Examiners:

- mean and standard deviation data for each module, based on its occurrence within a course year group;
- whole-module means and standard deviations (all students enrolled on a module across courses);
- number of results within mark bands and minimum and maximum marks for each module based on occurrence within course and year;
- final year candidates ranked in aggregate award mark order (Honours degrees only).

In addition to confirming results, the Board of Examiners determines the academic progress of candidates using Academic Standing (AST) codes (Appendix N), the consequences of failure, and makes recommendations to Senate for awards and their class.

The Chair of the Board and the External Examiner(s) sign the course results sheets to signify confirmation of the results and recommendations for awards and that the assessment processes have been carried out in accordance with the University's regulations, rules and conventions.

#### Notes of Guidance for Boards of Examiners

The Examinations Office issues a suggested agenda and detailed Notes of Guidance for Boards of Examiners. Minutes are kept of the meeting.

#### 19.4 Progress and Award Boards

Progress and Award Boards of Examiners determine on behalf of the Senate of the University the academic progress of Combined Honours Degree students, and make recommendations regarding their final awards. Progress and Award Boards are also constituted for students taking short course modules within the frameworks of the Certificate of Personal and Professional Development and the Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development.

The duties of the Progress and Award Board are as follows:

- a) to receive module results from Subject Boards of Examiners;
- b) where such results lead directly to a degree, diploma, certificate or other academic distinction, to forward to the Senate and, where appropriate, to external bodies, lists of successful candidates, classified in accordance with the relevant course regulations, with recommendations for the award of degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic distinctions;
- c) to determine on behalf of the Senate the academic progress of students on the basis of their performance in examinations and other forms of assessment;
- d) to ensure that the examination and assessment of candidates are conducted in accordance with regulations and procedures prescribed by the Senate;
- e) to deal with such other matters as the Senate may refer to them from time to time.

The combined Honours Progress and Award Board includes all Subject Directors for the undergraduate honours subjects contributing to Major, Main and/or Minor subject strands on the campus, the Director of Combined Studies and the Chief External Examiner. It is chaired by a Dean of a Faculty appointed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Student Experience). The Professional Development Framework Boards meet to consider results from candidates who have completed successfully modules to a value of 60 credit points. They include representatives from each faculty and are chaired by the chair of the Distributed Education Board.

The Board meets to consider student progress and awards in June of each year. In addition, a supplementary board meets in August/September.

The Chief External Examiner is entitled to attend all meetings of the Board and is required to attend the main meeting in June. Attendance is not required at the resit Board, but the Chief External Examiner must be consulted about decisions. In exceptional circumstances, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Student Experience) may approve arrangements for external examining in the absence of the Chief External Examiner. This may include the submission of a written report or the appointment of a substitute examiner.

The results of candidates, confirmed by the Subject Boards of Examiners, are forwarded to the Progress and Award Board. The meeting determines, in accordance with Honours degree award regulations, the academic progress of each candidate or recommends an award and its class.

The Chair of the Board and the Chief External Examiner sign the results sheet to signify confirmation of the progress decisions and recommendations for awards, and that decisions have been made in accordance with award regulations.

#### 19.5 Extenuating Circumstances

Except when prevented by medical reasons or other sufficient cause, candidates who fail to present themselves for an examination, or to submit cumulative or other forms of assessment by the due date, shall be deemed by the Board of Examiners to have failed in that examination or assessment.

Candidates should ensure that:

- a) written medical evidence or evidence of compassionate circumstances relevant to their performance in a written examination is presented to their Course/Subject Director not later than five days following the examination; and
- b) medical evidence or evidence of compassionate circumstances relevant to their performance in coursework or other forms of assessment is presented to their Course/Subject Director by the date on which the work was due to be submitted.

Candidates are responsible for submitting all relevant information, preferably using form EC1 (obtainable from the School, Faculty Office or Examinations Office website), about their performance in all forms of assessment in accordance with the deadlines in a) and b) above. Information submitted at a later date may not be taken into account unless there are exceptional circumstances. Detailed procedures are available from the Examinations Office website: [ulster.ac.uk/studentadministration/staff](http://ulster.ac.uk/studentadministration/staff).

Except in exceptional circumstances such as the Covid-19 pandemic, supporting medical evidence for periods longer than five days should be presented. Self-certification is accepted for shorter periods.

Guidelines on the treatment of extenuating circumstances were approved in 2006. These were reviewed in 2017/18 and presented as 'Principles for Implementation' and again in 2019 when regulations were revised to permit self-certification for periods up to five working days. They are available on the Academic Office website: [ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice](http://ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice) under Policies, or from Student Administration (Examinations).

While cases are considered on individual basis, Faculties are expected to be consistent in their approach and ensure that claims are reviewed by a course, school or faculty panel rather than by a sole person.

Following review of the evidence and consideration of its likely impact on performance, recommendation is made to the Board of Examiners about the acceptability of the case made (the Board does not consider the case in detail). The Board may allow candidates to complete, as for the first time, or retake assessments. A first sit of Autumn Semester work is normally undertaken in the Spring Semester examination period and of Spring Semester work in August. At the request of the student, the first semester work may be taken at the supplementary examination period. A student's consent to this arrangement should be given in writing.

## 19.6 Appeals

The Examinations Office issues notes of guidance on the procedures for considering Student Administration requests from University students for review of decisions on academic progress. The full guidance is available from the Student Administration website under Examinations Office.

A candidate may appeal against a review of a decision on academic progress:

- a) on the basis of evidence of extenuating circumstances, relevant to his/her examination performance which, in his/her view, was not in the possession of the Board of Examiners at the time of the Board's initial decision about his/her academic progress (SA1 process); or
- b) on the basis of procedural or other irregularities in the conduct of the examinations (SA2 process).

Associate students, who are enrolled at partner institutions, may appeal to the University, having exhausted the appeals procedure of their own institution on the grounds of irregularity in the appeals process (SA3 process).

## 19.7 Course Regulations

The University has common regulations for each of its awards.

Regulations specify minimum thresholds with regard to:

- entry requirements;
- course duration; and
- assessment (pass mark; consequences of failure; overall grading and classification).

The University's general regulations and award regulations are available from the website containing the University's Charter, Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations ([ulster.ac.uk/about/governance](http://ulster.ac.uk/about/governance)). Templates for course regulations can be downloaded from [ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice/](http://ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice/). Course-specific regulations are drawn up according to these templates. Course regulations identify specific modules where a threshold standard is required in both assessment elements and/or in specific coursework components in accordance with the University's definition of a pass at 14.1. Departures from general award regulations require explicit consideration and approval by the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee.

### Consequences of Failure

The general consequences of failure are detailed in award regulations and templates which the specific course regulations reflect. The concept of condonement was removed from 2009/10. The number of repeat opportunities and the timing of supplementary examinations/re-submission of coursework are related to the number of modules failed,

and the semester in which these were first taken, and are set out below in summary form (timing for courses which start their academic year in September). The maximum mark allowed in repeated assessment is that set for the pass mark. The overall module result may, therefore, exceed this mark. Only failed work is repeated. Penalties and restrictions do not apply to 'first sits'. The particular requirements of the MBBS are set out in its regulations.

A Communication of Results form is issued to each student who has failed, is permitted a first sit, or is recommended for a lower award.

#### Number of Repeat Attempts

In pre-final years of undergraduate degrees and Access courses, two repeat attempts are permitted (subject to a decision to discontinue studies as summarised below). In all other courses (undergraduate diplomas, certificates, postgraduate certificates, diplomas and Master's) and in the final year of undergraduate degrees and Access courses, only one repeat attempt is permitted. (There are further restrictions in certain health-related degrees.)

#### Timing of Supplementary Examinations or Resubmission of Coursework

For courses commencing in September, if modules up to and including 60 credit points are failed at the first attempt and attendance is not required, resits take place in August so as to allow progress to the next year, without loss of time, if the candidate is successful. Otherwise they are scheduled to take place in the appropriate semester in the next year. Carrying failure is only permitted for modules to a maximum value of 20 credit points (except for prerequisites as below and BSc Hons Computing Systems) and this is restricted to pre-final years of undergraduate degrees and Access courses. There is no summer resit opportunity in accelerated part-time Foundation degrees.

#### Number of Credit Points

#### Timing of Resits or Withdraw

##### Failure at first attempt (usually considered at June Board)

##### Undergraduate Courses (except final year):

Up to and including 60 credit points

August.

70/80 credit points

Next academic year.

(Exceptionally second year students on sandwich courses may be permitted to commence the placement period, pending the completion of supplementary assessment.)

More than 80 credit points

Withdraw from the programme.

##### Failure at second attempt (pre-final year in degree and Access courses) (usually considered at September Board, unless year retaken)

Up to and including 20 credit points

Proceed and carry failure to repeat in next year (unless a prerequisite which a professional body requires to be passed in order to progress).

Up to and including 40 credit points (except as above)

Next academic year.

More than 40 credit points

Withdraw from the programme.

#### Failure in Final Year

Up to and including 40 credit points

August.

More than 40 credit points

Withdraw from the programme.

#### Postgraduate Courses:

#### Timing of Resits

Up to 60 credit points	August.
Between 60 and 90 credit points	Next academic year.
More than 90 credit points	Withdraw from the programme.

Students who fail at the final attempt and are required to withdraw from the course are not permitted to apply for re-admission to the same course in the next academic year, nor to the course offered in a different mode (full-time or part-time).

19.8 Code of Practice on Admissions, Examining and Assessment, where a Member of Staff has a Personal Interest, Involvement or Relationship with a Student or Prospective Student (Taught Courses)

The University adopted the Code of Practice in 2002. Extracts relating to examining and assessment are given below:

Preamble

This policy is aimed at ensuring the integrity of the teaching, learning and examining environment within the University. It provides important safeguards for staff and students in close personal relationships, with the objectives of ensuring that the admission and progression of the student are managed entirely on a professional basis and protecting staff from potential allegations of favouritism and unfairness. University regulations governing examinations in courses of study require members of staff to declare personal interest, involvement or relationship with a student to their Head of School, the relevant Course/Subject Director and the Chairman of the Board of Examiners.

Any departure from the following principles shall be approved by the Dean of the Faculty. The Dean shall keep a record of such approved arrangements. Where the Dean has a personal interest, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Student Experience) shall approve the arrangements.

Examination and Assessment

The member of staff shall inform his/her Head of School\* and the relevant Course/Subject Director of any student in whom he/she has a personal interest.

The member of staff shall not normally have advance sight of questions which are to be answered under examination conditions across all modules in the course of study in the year in which the student is enrolled.

It is preferable that a member of staff does not undertake assessment of the student's work. Where a member of staff is involved in assessment of the student's work, the member of staff shall not normally be involved in the preparation of examination papers associated with the module. The examination papers should be prepared independently of the member of staff (in the context of the module's learning and teaching plan) and must be approved by both the Head of School\* and relevant external examiner(s).

All of the student's assessed and examined work (in the particular year of study) shall be double marked and forwarded to the relevant external examiner(s).

A small representative sample of assessed and examined work, across all modules in the course of study (in that year), shall be double marked and forwarded to the relevant external examiner(s).

The member of staff shall temporarily withdraw from any meetings, including examination boards, when the student's specific case is being discussed.

NOTE: (\*) Where a Head of School is involved, the Dean of the Faculty shall substitute. Where the Dean is involved, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Student Experience) shall substitute.

## 20 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

### Section 1: Assessment Principles and Strategies

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Centre for Higher Education Research and Practice website: [ulster.ac.uk/cherp](http://ulster.ac.uk/cherp): see Resources under Academic Development.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A1

### **Assessment 2020: Seven propositions for assessment reform in higher education**

#### **Preamble**

Universities face substantial change in a rapidly evolving global context. The challenges of meeting new expectations about academic standards in the next decade and beyond mean that assessment will need to be rethought and renewed.

This document provides a stimulus for those involved in the redevelopment of assessment practices. It draws on the expertise of a group of highly experienced assessment researchers, academic development practitioners and senior academic managers to identify current best thinking about the ways assessment will need to address immediate and future demands.

#### **Underpinning principles**

- Assessment is a central feature of teaching and the curriculum. It powerfully frames how students learn and what students achieve. It is one of the most significant influences on students' experience of higher education and all that they gain from it. The reason for an explicit focus on improving assessment practice is the huge impact it has on the quality of learning.
- Assessment is the making of judgements about how students' work meets appropriate standards. Teachers, markers and examiners have traditionally been charged with that responsibility. However, students themselves need to develop the capacity to make judgements about both their own work and that of others in order to become effective continuing learners and practitioners.
- Assessment plays a key role in both fostering learning and the certification of students. However, unless it first satisfies the *educational* purpose of ensuring students can identify high quality work and can relate this knowledge to their own work, the likelihood that they will reach high standards themselves is much reduced.

#### **The purposes of the propositions**

The propositions have been developed to guide assessment thinking in the light of the increasing focus on standards, and to address criticisms of current practice. They set directions for change designed to enhance learning achievements for all students and improve the quality of their experience.

The propositions, however, do not stand alone. They must be considered within overall curriculum thinking alongside teaching and learning strategies and changing disciplinary content. They need to be supported by a range of development opportunities to foster the shifts in thinking and practice on the part of teaching staff and students that they imply.

The propositions are posed in a form that needs to be embraced and be taken up at different levels - specifically, by educational institutions, by programmes and courses of study, and by those responsible for teaching and learning. They have implications for resources and the nature of workload; when addressed thoughtfully they may contribute to reduced costs through a better focusing of effort on those features of the curriculum and teaching that have most direct impact on learning.

#### **1. ... assessment is used to engage students in learning that is productive.**

##### ***i. ... assessment is designed to focus students on learning***

To improve student engagement in learning, and to support better quality learning outcomes, it is necessary that assessment tasks are designed to direct student attention to what needs to be learned and to the activities that best lead to this. Effective learning can be hampered by assessment tasks that focus student attention on grades and marks or reproductive thinking.

##### ***ii. ... assessment is recognised as a learning activity that requires engagement on appropriate tasks.***

Assessment tasks should be significant learning activities in themselves, and not only enable judgements to be made about what has been learned. The potency of student engagement in learning is enhanced when assessment tasks require substantial involvement over time, and when they are designed in an interlinked, constructive, organised and coherent sequence.

**2. ... feedback is used to actively improve student learning.**

***i. ... feedback is informative and supportive and facilitates a positive attitude to future learning.***

Students benefit from clear and helpful feedback on their learning. Everyday learning activities as well as special tasks and tests provide opportunities for the provision of feedback. This places responsibility on staff to plan assessment in order to (a) develop their own skills in providing quality feedback, and (b) develop in students the skills they need to provide sound feedback to each other.

***ii. ... students seek and use timely feedback to improve the quality of their learning and work.***

Students' own skills of judgement are developed by their utilisation of feedback, guidance provided by those already inducted into the culture and standards of the discipline, and opportunities to grow their own skills of critical appraisal. They need to be able to seek and employ feedback from a variety of sources to develop a full range of outcomes from their studies.

***iii. ... students regularly receive specific information, not just marks and grades, about how to improve the quality of their work.***

Marks and grades provide little information to students about specific qualities of their work and do not indicate how it might be improved. While marks and grades may provide a crude tracking measure of how well students are doing, they do not help students move beyond their present standard of performance. Specific and detailed information is needed to show students what has been done well, what has not, and how their work could be better.

**3. ... students and teachers become responsible partners in learning and assessment.**

***i. ... students progressively take responsibility for assessment and feedback processes.***

The overall aims of higher education include developing students' critical thinking abilities, which include self-critique, independent judgement, and other skills for continuing learning. Personal responsibility for assessing performance and providing and responding to feedback is a desired graduate outcome. It is necessary and appropriate for university programmes to foster this development throughout the curriculum.

***ii. ... students develop and demonstrate the ability to judge the quality of their own work and the work of others against agreed standards.***

Students need confidence and competence in making informed judgements about what they produce. They need to develop the ability to evaluate the quality, completeness and/or accuracy of work with respect to appropriate standards, and have the confidence to express their judgements with conviction. This requires deliberately managed assessment processes and practice that relates to judgements required in professional practice and mature community engagement.

***iii. ... dialogue and interaction about assessment processes and standards are commonplace between and among staff and students.***

Assessment activities and standards require disciplinary and contextual interpretation if they are to be understood, yet discussion of processes and reference points for determining standards is relatively rare. Assessment judgements are more consistent when those making them are able to reach consensus as to ways of establishing levels of performance. Student understanding of processes they can use to judge their own performance are similarly enhanced when they participate in dialogue about them with peers and teachers.

**4. ... students are inducted into the assessment practices and cultures of higher education.**

***i. ... assessment practices are carefully structured in early stages of courses to ensure students make a successful transition to university study in their chosen field.***

For students to become independent and self-managing learners, they need to be supported in the development and acquisition of the skills they need for learning, including those of assessment. Critical to this attainment is early engagement in manageable assessed tasks to build confidence, and the expectation that learning requires not only an investment of effort but also the taking of initiative. This

contributes to alleviating anxiety around assessment information, instructions, guidance, and performance. Early assessment provides information to both students and teachers on progress and achievement, and allows for identification of students in need of additional support.

**ii. ... *assessment practices respond to the diverse expectations and experiences of entering students.***

Students come to higher education with great diversity in preparedness and understanding of what it involves. To ensure that all can engage equitably with assessment tasks, the implicit rules and expectations around what is required for success in any discipline need to be made accessible to students and opportunities provided for them to develop the academic skills they require to perform those tasks.

**5. ... *assessment for learning is placed at the centre of subject and programme design.***

**i. ... *assessment design is recognised as an integral part of curriculum planning from the earliest stages of course development.***

Assessment is not an 'add-on' to the curriculum structure of a programme. It needs to be considered from the outset of course design and intimately embedded and linked to considerations of student learning as part of the curriculum. Assessment tasks, types and means of deployment need to be fully aligned with all other aspects of the curriculum.

**ii. ... *assessment is organised holistically across subjects and programmes with complementary integrated tasks.***

The development of a full range of graduate attributes requires a systematic approach to assessment that builds and enhances those attributes through tasks that are diverse, complementary to each other and embedded strategically throughout a programme of study. Integrated whole-of-programme curriculum design needs to incorporate assessment and feedback as well as learning outcomes and teaching and learning activities. If carried out in this way, an emphasis on feedback for learning can be the focus of teaching and learning engagement in the early curriculum, leading to capstone and integrated assessment in later years.

**6. ... *assessment for learning is a focus for staff and institutional development.***

**i. ... *professional and scholarly approaches to assessment by academic staff are developed, deployed, recognised and rewarded by institutions.***

Academics need particular support in developing expertise required for subject and programme assessment responsibilities. Such support could include mentoring, dialogue with peers in informal and formal moderation activities or formal courses. However, while enhanced assessment skills are essential, their acquisition is not sufficient to ensure good assessment practice. Institutions should have explicit requirements that professional and scholarly proficiency in assessment is necessary for satisfactory teaching performance. Further, leadership and exemplary performance in assessment matters should be recognised for promotion, awards and grants.

**ii. ... *assessment practices and the curriculum should be reviewed in the light of graduate and employer perceptions of the preparedness of graduates.***

The impact of courses on student learning, and the role of assessment in them, can only be fully evaluated following graduation. Common post-graduation measures (eg. The Course Experience Questionnaire, the Graduate Destinations Survey) presently provide insufficiently detailed information for the improvement of programmes. In particular, they do not enable assessment and feedback processes to be sufficiently monitored. Systematic study of the impact of such experiences on graduates (at, say, one and five years from graduation) and employers' perceptions of such preparation and standards are needed to ensure that courses are effective in the longer term.

**iii. ... *assessment of student achievements is judged against consistent national and international standards that are subject to continuing dialogue, review and justification within disciplinary and professional communities.***

The quality of awards in higher education will be increasingly scrutinised nationally and internationally. Assessment practice needs to provide convincing evidence of students' accomplishments that can be



judged against external reference points. Disciplinary and professional communities (both within and beyond the academy) are the focus for ongoing collaboration and dialogue to determine, review and moderate academic achievement standards. Such collaboration and dialogue requires clarity of expectations and persuasive evidence of learning outcomes.

**7. ... assessment provides inclusive and trustworthy representation of student achievement.**

***i. ... interim assessment results used for feedback on learning and progress do not play a significant role in determining students' final grades.***

For purposes of certification, care must be taken to avoid the formal use of early grades that do not represent the outcomes reached by course or programme completion. Entry-level knowledge, learning rates and final achievement levels differ. Although learning itself is cumulative, progressively adding marks throughout the learning period towards the final grade can distort representation of end-of-study achievement. What is important is using interim outcomes to improve learning.

***ii. ... evidence of overall achievement to determine final grades is based on assessment of integrated learning***

Many separate low-value pieces of assessment can fragment learning without providing evidence of how students' knowledge and skills from a unit of study are interrelated. This is often compounded across subjects, leading students to experience knowledge as disconnected elements. Strong evidence of achievement of the totality of outcomes can be provided by larger-scale tasks that require students to demonstrate coherent integrated learning, not isolated or atomistic performance.

***iii. ... certification accurately and richly portrays graduates' and students' achievements to inform future careers and learning.***

An academic transcript that lists subject titles and grades provides limited information to students, employers or educational institutions. Increased scope and sophistication of the reporting of achievement is needed to communicate outcomes well. Two areas for improvement are: *veracity*, in grades that are fully and robustly aligned with learning outcomes and standards; and, *richness*, in the documentation of student accomplishments to convey information about what students can and cannot do.

### **Suggestions for use**

These propositions can be used to focus debate and action on those features of assessment that have the greatest impact on learning and the quality of courses. They might be most productively used by:

- > planning teams and programme directors in new course design and course review and renewal
- > teaching and learning committees and academic boards, institutionally and locally
- > groups of Associate Deans and Directors of Teaching and Learning within and across Faculties
- > those running courses and workshops for academic staff on assessment, and particularly within Graduate Certificates in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education
- > those running leadership programmes to ensure that leaders at all levels have a strong appreciation of assessment issues and directions
- > those with academic development roles who consult with staff and course teams
- > those guiding staff-student discussions about the improvement of courses

The challenge is to consider how these might be best pursued within existing cost constraints. This must necessarily involve deciding which assessment tasks should be discontinued in order to provide space for more worthwhile initiatives.

## **Contributions to this document were made by:**

David Boud (University of Technology, Sydney), Royce Sadler (Griffith University), Gordon Joughin (University of Wollongong), Richard James (University of Melbourne), Mark Freeman (University of Sydney), Sally Kift (Queensland University of Technology), Filip Dochy (University of Leuven), Dai Hounsell (University of Edinburgh), Margaret Price (Oxford Brookes University), Tom Angelo (La Trobe University), Angela Brew (Macquarie University), Ian Cameron (University of Queensland), Denise Chalmers (University of Western Australia), Paul Hager (University of Technology, Sydney), Kerri-Lee Harris (University of Melbourne), Claire Hughes (University of Queensland), Peter Hutchings (Australian Learning and Teaching Council), Kerri-Lee Krause (Griffith University), Duncan Nulty (Griffith University), Ron Oliver (Edith Cowan University), Jon Yorke (Curtin University), Iouri Belski (RMIT University), Ben Bradley (Charles Sturt University), Simone Buzwell (Swinburne University of Technology), Stuart Campbell (University of Western Sydney), Philip Candy University of Southern Queensland), Peter Cherry (Central Queensland University), Rick Cummings (Murdoch University), Anne Cummins (Australian Catholic University), Elizabeth Deane (Australian National University), Marcia Devlin (Deakin University), Christine Ewan (Australian Learning and Teaching Council), Paul Gadek (James Cook University), Susan Hamilton (University of Queensland), Margaret Hicks (University of South Australia), Marnie Hughes-Warrington (Monash University), Gail Huon (University of Newcastle), Margot Kearns (University of Notre Dame, Sydney), Don Maconachie (University of the Sunshine Coast), Vi McLean (Queensland University of Technology,) Raoul Mortley (Bond University), Kylie O'Brien (Victoria University), Gary O'Donovan (University of Tasmania), Beverley Oliver (Curtin University), Simon Pyke (University of Adelaide), Heather Smigiel (Flinders University), Janet Taylor (Southern Cross University), Keith Trigwell (University of Sydney), Neil Trivett (University of Ballarat), Graham Webb (University of New England).

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*This document may be cited as: Boud, D. and Associates (2010). *Assessment 2020: Seven propositions for assessment reform in higher education*. Sydney: Australian Learning and Teaching Council.*

**Download available from [assessmentfutures.com](https://assessmentfutures.com)**

## ULSTER'S PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK FOR LEARNING

Please read assessment to include all assessment (formative and summative, coursework and examinations).

Assessment and Feedback for Learning should:

- 1 Help to clarify, from the early stages of a programme, what good performance means (goals, criteria, standards);
- 2 Encourage 'time and effort' on challenging learning tasks which recognise the importance of learning from the tasks, not just demonstrating learning through the tasks;
- 3 Deliver timely learner-related feedback information that helps students to self-correct and communicate clear, high expectations and professionalism;
- 4 Provide opportunities for students to act on feedback and close any gap between current and desired performance through complementary and integrated curriculum design and pedagogic practice;
- 5 Ensure that all assessment has a beneficial, constructive impact on student learning, encouraging positive motivational beliefs, confidence and self-esteem;
- 6 Facilitate the development of self- and peer-assessment skills and reflection on learning, to enable students to progressively take more responsibility for their own learning, and to inspire a lifelong capacity to learn;
- 7 Encourage interaction and dialogue around learning and professional practice (student-student, lecturer-student and lecturer-lecturer) including supporting the development of student learning groups and peer learning communities.

The implementation of these principles will influence curriculum design, delivery and educational practice, such that students and staff become co-creators and collaborators in learning.

## **ASSESSMENT WORKLOAD EQUIVALENCE GUIDE**

### **BACKGROUND**

Curriculum Design principles are being implemented at the point of programme approval/re-approval with a view to enhance students' learning experience and improve the working lives of staff. In summary, modules should normally be of 20 credit points or more, have up to four learning outcomes and no more than two items\* of assessment. Programme teams will also be encouraged to ensure equity and consistency in assessment workload across modules of the same level and credit worth.

This guide has been constructed to support the process of assessment design, and to help ensure consistency of student effort commensurate with the credit value of the module. Nonetheless, it is not meant to be overly prescriptive as the demands and preparation time of assessed work can vary considerably depending on the nature, context and level of that work, and also the differing work rates of individual students.

Word count equivalence is traditionally used as a workload indicator but it must also be acknowledged that allocating word count equivalency to practical or non-traditional assessments is challenging. Programme teams are therefore encouraged to share and discuss their assessment strategies, to determine appropriate workloads/work hours for their subject-specific contexts, stages and programme levels. This guide is aimed at supporting such discussion.

This guide includes examples of word count equivalency for commonly used assessment methods but also suggests notional assessment work hours/preparation as a proportion of the notional learning hours for the module. Independent study contributes to the majority of learning hours for a given module. Work undertaken during this time may include background reading, reflection, preparation for seminars or tutorials, online activity, follow-up work, wider practice as well as assessment tasks. The proportion of notional learning hours for the preparation and completion of assessment tasks is set at 20% i.e. 40 hours for a 20 credit module. Assessment work hours will include e.g. gathering, reading and organising information, drafting plans, writing-up/assembly, editing, revision or rehearsal, and delivery time i.e. delivering a presentation or completing an exam.

Five credit workload examples have been offered to support staff in designing staged assessment methods comprising multiple assessment tasks\* spread over a semester or academic year. The small assessment tasks comprise the building blocks of an assessment item and collectively assess the module learning outcomes.

Note: many of the assessment types can be scaled up for 20 or more credits but scaling up may be impractical in some cases (e.g. presentations) due to large student numbers.

#### **\* Further guidance on assessment items and tasks:**

##### **Assessment Items**

Different items of assessment measure different learning outcomes within a module. As a general rule of thumb, a single learning outcome should not be double-assessed however, you may wish to triangulate students' performance across two assessment methods if there are both cognitive and practical components within one learning outcome. This may also be a professional body requirement.

##### **Assessment Tasks**

One item of assessment can be broken down into smaller staged/cumulative tasks (deliverables) as long as the tasks are complementary and ultimately stitch together to measure the same learning outcomes. A [patchwork text](#) assessment is a good example. A staged approach can allow the assessment workload to be distributed over the semester or year and can enable timely

feedback between each task. This formative feedback could also be generated by students as a peer review exercise, helping them to appraise their own work.

### MODULE SIZE AND WORKLOADS

20 Credit Module		
200 notional learning hours (comprises contact time, directed study, independent study including assessment preparation)	Assessment learning hours/preparation constitutes approx. 20% of notional module learning hours	40 hours notional assessment work hours  4000 word count equivalence

#### Assessment equivalence examples:

Assessment Type	Word Count Equivalence (WCE)	Notional Assessment Work Hours	Credits
Written essay	1000 words	10 h	5
Exam / test	1 hour	10 h	5
Reflective journal/log	1000 words	10 h	5
Lab/practical report	1000 words	10 h	5
Group assignment	750 words per member	10 h	5
Individual presentation	15 minutes	20 h	10
Viva/oral exam	20-30 minutes	20 h	10
Small Group presentation	10 minutes per member	20 h	10
Portfolio of evidence	6000 words	40 h	20
Research proposal, small project	4000 words	40 h	20
Research project/dissertation	8000 words	80 h	40

Note: where there is more than one item of assessment per module, the assessment workload will be divided between items, for example:

Item 1: 2 hour exam (measures LO 1&2), item 2: 2000 word essay (measures LO 3&4) for 20 credits.

In relation to a staged/cumulative assessment where there is more than one assessment task within a single assessment item, the assessment workload will be divided across the multiple tasks, for example:

Item 1: staged assessment comprising 3 tasks (100%) for 20 credits.

- 1 hour class test (foundation knowledge before placement)
- 1000 word reflective log (reflections of placement experience)
- 30 minute viva (synthesis of experience and application of theory to practice)

*(3 tasks are interrelated to measure all LO)*

APPENDIX B2

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

**FACULTY OF** .....

**COURSEWORK SUBMISSION SHEET** [paper submission]



*University Date Stamp*

**This sheet must be completed in full and attached to the front of each item of assessment before submission to [XXX]**

Student's Name.....

Registration No.....

Course Title .....

Module Code/Title .....

Lecturer .....

Date Due .....

(NB: Latest hand-in time is [XXX] on the due date unless otherwise advised)

**Submitted work is subject to the following assessment policies:**

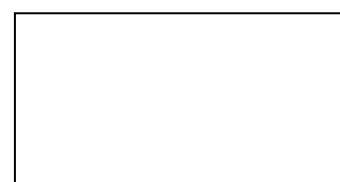
- 1 Coursework must be submitted by dates as specified by the [Course/Subject] Committee.
- 2 Students may seek prior consent from the [Course/Subject] Director to submit coursework after the official deadline; such requests must be accompanied by a satisfactory explanation, and in the case of illness by a medical certificate.
- 3 Coursework submitted without consent after the deadline will not normally be accepted and will therefore receive a mark of zero.

*I declare that this is all my own work and that any material I have referred to has been accurately referenced. I have read the University's policy on plagiarism and understand the definition of plagiarism. If it is shown that material has been plagiarised, or I have otherwise attempted to obtain an unfair advantage for myself or others, I understand that I may face sanctions in accordance with the policies and procedures of the University. A mark of zero may be awarded and the reason for that mark will be recorded on my file.*

**COURSEWORK RECEIPT – Not valid unless stamped**

Student's Name .....

Module Code and Title .....



**University Date Stamp**

*It is your responsibility to retain this receipt.*

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT SEMINAR PRESENTATIONS**

The following represents an amalgam of five or six examples of assessment of student seminar presentations currently in use in the University; it is suggested that the list is individualised for specific instances.

The marking scheme is designed for a five-point scale with 5 = excellent and 1 = very poor. Grade descriptors are given where appropriate.

**NAME OF STUDENT****CONTENT****INTRODUCTION**

Well structured introduction

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Absent

**OBJECTIVES**

Clearly stated, possibly as a series of bullet points

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Absent

**LOGICAL ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS**

Main body of the talk has a logical sequence to it, often referring back to objectives

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Apparent random order not obviously related to objectives

**FACTS AND FIGURES**

Uses facts and figures appropriately and uses overheads/PowerPoint slides to re-enforce them

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Reels off numbers and facts with little concern for audience understanding

**CONCLUSION**

Logical conclusion with some 'take-away' points

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Conclusion absent

**MANAGES TIME**

Keeps perfectly to time or under-runs

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Seriously over-runs

**HANDLING OF QUESTIONS**

Confident, 'thinks well on their feet'

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Mumbles a response and lacks confidence

**PRESENTATION, OVERHEADS AND POWERPOINT SLIDES****QUALITY**

Structured, good use of colour, free of spelling mistakes

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Poorly drawn, bland, possible errors

**USE**

Directs audience to specific key words or facts and reveals information gradually

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Puts on overhead/ PowerPoint slide and generally ignores it

**SUMMARIES OF INFORMATION**

Series of bullet points, or equivalent on overheads/ PowerPoint slide

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Talk written out verbatim and put on to overhead/ PowerPoint slide, no attempt to summarise

**SCREEN IMAGE**

Checks and re-adjusts screen if necessary

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Image too far left/right or on ceiling/floor

**POSITION OF STUDENT**

Stands to side to allow audience to see the image

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Stands in front of image

**PRESENTATION, PERSONAL**

**GOOD BODY POSTURE**

Stands upright and alert

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Slouches, looks uninterested

**EYE CONTACT**

Looks at all of the audience frequently

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Turns away from the audience or talks to the ceiling or floor

**DELIVERY (THE WORDS)**

Tries to explain things

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Reads the talk out and doesn't deviate from the words on the card

**DELIVERY (SPEED)**

Goes at an acceptable pace with very short breaks to allow the audience to catch up

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Doesn't really care about whether the audience are keeping up or not; rattles on at break-neck speed

**VOICE PROJECTION**

Can be heard clearly in all parts of the room

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Mumbles and difficult to hear properly

**VOICE TONE**

Attempts to vary the tone to emphasise specific words or phrases

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Monotonous

**DISTRACTING MANNERISMS**

No obvious distractions

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Lots of distractions



BMus

**INDIVIDUAL SEMINAR PRESENTATION ASSESSMENT SHEET**

Name of speaker:

Year:

Module:

Topic:

Date:

**1 Comment on the structure of the presentation.**

(Was the presentation: clearly structured; was there an opening, main part and conclusion/summary? Did the speaker use signposts, frames, links, etc.?)

**2 Did the speaker reveal knowledge and understanding?**

(In your opinion, was the speaker knowledgeable about the topic? Had the speaker consulted a range of sources? Does the speaker fully understand the material s/he is discussing?)

**3 Comment on presentation skills.**

(Were explanations clear; was delivery well paced? Comment on use of overheads and other resources.)

**4 Did the speaker hold your interest?**

(Was there an appropriate use of examples, analogies, metaphors, etc.?)

**5 How well did the speaker respond to questions?****6 Things that were very good:****7 Things to improve:****Overall assessment** (percentage mark):

(excellent 80%+, very good 70-79%, good 60-69%, satisfactory 50-59%, fair 40-49%, weak 30%-39%, poor 29% and below)

Assessing Group:

## APPENDIX D

### EXAMPLES OF THE ASSESSMENT OF PRACTICAL WORK

**Sports Studies** courses assess pre-impact, impact and post-impact stages, i.e. the preparation, the performance, and an analytical reflection of the performance. Sports Studies assess the coaching of a skill as opposed to the competence of the skill itself. Students have practice in the coaching of the skill before being assessed.

**Physiotherapy** assesses the clinical competence of the student by using problem solving case studies. Well developed criteria are used to assess the competencies also during clinical placement.

Undergraduate **Hospitality Management** courses require students to achieve a level of operational competency in year one. This includes not only being able to produce and serve a tangible end product, but also to operate as part of a team. Year two requires students to develop a level of supervisory competence, which entails not only product knowledge but also the planning, organising, controlling, co-ordinating and delivery in ever-changing simulated environments.

In the **Bachelor of Music** degree performance is assessed at two points: mid semester and at the end of the semester.

#### Mid Semester

Assessment is conducted of the preparation for the performance. The instrumental tutor involved completes a report and awards a mark. The assessment of the performance (given in a performance platform) is conducted either by a staff panel or by a process of collaborative assessment (involving a significant element of peer assessment) and the assessment criteria are negotiated with the students involved.

Weighting: assessment of process 20%, assessment of the performance 80%.

#### End of Semester

A more substantial programme is performed at this point. Normally, these performances are assessed by a staff panel and there is no audience present. However, those students who major in performance in the final year of the degree give their final performance in an assessed public recital.

It is often more difficult to assess such work in its own right; indeed assessing reports of practical work may only involve measuring the quality of the end product of the practical work, and not the work (process) itself.

## FORMER POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN UNIVERSITY TEACHING, EDU826: PORTFOLIO GUIDE

The portfolio is a “*collection, selection and organisation of ... (a teacher’s) ... work over time that shows evidence of self-reflection and learning*” (Wade and Yarborough, 1996). It is thus a personal statement of growth in understanding of teaching and learning based - in this module - on a reflective analysis of your experience and achievement in teaching performance. The use of a portfolio for documenting reflective thinking about teaching and learning is thoroughly addressed in the article: Wade RC and Yarborough DB (1996) Portfolios: a tool for Reflective Thinking in Teacher Education? *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 12, 1: pp.63-79.

Since the portfolio is a personal document its contents reflect your ownership and individual perspective. Thus the task of deciding what exactly should be included and how it should be organised are necessarily matters for you to decide. The guidelines which follow offer some structural suggestions for the portfolio but are not meant to be so rigorously prescriptive that the open-ended, exploratory, nature of the task of compiling the portfolio is stifled.

You are required to prepare a written commentary of some 5,000 words and to back the content up with a folder of evidence in the form of a number of appendices. Together, the commentary and the appendices should provide evidence that you have advanced your understanding about teaching; i.e. that you have a deeper understanding of yourself, of the university institution and the processes of student learning.

You are advised to cover the four broad areas of a teacher’s role (but not necessarily to equal depth) and to use these as the headings of four sections of the written portfolio. You may adjust the sequence of these four areas:

- a) classroom teaching and the support of student learning; (e.g. reflection, evaluation and action steps taken on activities and techniques used in your on-going time-tabled work);
- b) design and planning of learning activities (i.e. reflection on experience and practice at module, unit and/or at classroom levels);
- c) assessment and giving feedback to students (e.g. reflection on types of assessment used, how assessment was advanced); and
- d) environments for learning and student support (e.g. reflection on experience with educational services, accessing computer labs, developing studies advice, placements, international students, students with a disability and student support).

The early classes will clarify further as to how your past achievement might be identified.

### Submission

Portfolios should be delivered by [Date] to [XXX]. If posted the address is:

### Assessment criteria

The criteria used for the assessment of the portfolio are based on the intended learning outcomes of the module and will include:

- a) Quality of Presentation

The extent to which you can physically create a portfolio for one or more audiences. One challenge here is to organise ease of access to the evidence and to cross-reference between the text or commentary and the appendices.

b) Effectiveness of Organisation, Structure, Personal Ownership

The extent you can handle the content which arise from experiences that perhaps only you have had.

The first person can be appropriate.

c) Insightfulness of Reflection on Teaching and Learning

Anecdotes or critical incidents can also be revealing.

Reflection may include your feelings.

d) Level of Critical Reflection of Achievement

This includes background and contextual content and may feature historical, cultural, philosophical and political issues.

Are the limitations of student learning understood?

e) Quality of Supporting Evidence

The selection and range of material (in text as well as appendices) to support the claims you make.

You are the authority in this submission and you are not expected to have a long list of references. Nevertheless, some references are expected where appropriate.

**PEER ASSESSMENT OF GROUP WORK**

(Taken from Moore, I. and Exley, K., 1993). *Innovative teaching in science departments*. Workshop materials, University of Ulster, Coleraine.)

Student ..... has contributed to the group's work in the following ways:

	Major Contribution	Some Contribution	Little Contribution
Leadership and direction	0	-1	-2
Organisation and management	0	-1	-2
Ideas and suggestions	0	-1	-2
Data/information collection	0	-2	-4
Data analysis/information Synthesis	0	-2	-4
Report writing	0	-3	-6

(Note: the individual weightings would be modified in the light of the assessment task and their relative importance within the task.)

Heathfield (1999) has identified a similar list that could be used to help students to assess their contribution to the work of a group and these could be used for self assessment (or peer assessment) of the process:

- Regular attendance at group meetings
- Contribution of ideas for the task
- Researching, analysing and preparing material for the task
- Contribution to co-operative group process
- Supporting and encouraging group members
- Practical contribution to the end product

(Heathfield, M., 1999. How to assess student group work. *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 26 March 1999, 40-41.)

APPENDIX F2

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**SELF/GROUP ASSESSMENT**

Year:

Module:

Topic:

Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

Please assess your contribution to the preparation of the topic in relation to that of the other members of your group.

Did everyone contribute equally? If so, each member of the group should be given 25% (assuming a group of four). If two members of the group contributed significantly more than their colleagues, the distribution of percentage weighting should reflect this, e.g. 15 + 15 + 35 + 35.

Allocate a mark for each member of the group. Ensure that the four together total 100.

Group members	Assessment (self)
1. _____	
2. _____	
3. _____	
4. _____	
5. _____	
	100

What particular responsibility/task did you undertake during the preparation of the topic?

Report completed by \_\_\_\_\_

**BMus****GROUP EVALUATION OF SEMINAR PRESENTATION**

Group Members \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Topic \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Presentation \_\_\_\_\_

---

*Preliminary Comments*

1. Explain the process of preparation, commenting on:
    - i) Group meetings (including discussion of agreed stages).
    - ii) Research.
    - iii) Assembly of material.
  2. Comment on difficulties encountered and how you dealt with them.
  3. Explain what informed the choice of format for the presentation.
  4. Addressing the criteria for seminar presentations, what mark would you consider appropriate for your presentation?
  5. Justify the mark awarded.
- 

*Reflective Comments*

6. Which aspects of the presentation (including responses to questions) were you pleased with?
7. Were you disappointed with any part of the presentation (including responses to questions)? Yes/No. If yes, explain.
8. Do you want to revise the mark awarded above? Yes/No. If yes, explain.

Revised mark, if appropriate:

## APPENDIX G1

### **CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT OF DISSERTATION AND PRESENTATION: BA HONS CONSUMER STUDIES**

#### Management and Planning (5%)

The selection and planning of the dissertation. The problem and/or objectives stated and defined clearly. Effective phasing and management of stages. Utilisation of tutorials.

#### Literature Review (20%)

Evidence of the depth and breadth of reading. Production of an effective, relevant and critical review of pertinent literature. Correct and appropriate use made of references and appendices.

#### Methodology (10%)

The design of the study and the appropriateness of the research methodology. The systematic carrying out of any enquiry and the accurate collection and recording of data and/or information.

#### Results and Analysis (30%)

Clear presentation of the findings from which interpretations and/or recommendations have been made and conclusions drawn in a valid and justifiable manner. Critical comment made on the extent and limitations of the study.

#### Overall Content (20%)

The style and accuracy of the dissertation. Depth and degree of coherence/progression of work.

#### Presentation of Work (5%)

Effectiveness of abstract and introduction. General syntax and writing style. Typography.

#### PowerPoint Presentation (10%)



SCHOOL OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT

**UNDERGRADUATE DISSERTATION ASSESSMENT**

Student .....

Title of Dissertation.....

Assessor .....

Assessment (TICK the appropriate column to provide guidance for the overall assessment.)

<b>Marks %</b>	<b>0-39</b>	<b>40-49</b>	<b>50-59</b>	<b>60-69</b>	<b>70-79</b>	<b>80-100</b>
Introduction						
Review of Literature						
Methodology						
Presentation of Results						
Discussion of Results						
Conclusion and Recommendations						
Written Expression						
General Presentation						
Management (Supervisor only)						

General Comments

**Mark Awarded %**

Academic Signature

**MSc MARKETING & ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
DISSERTATION ASSESSMENT**

**Examiner's Comments**

**NAME**

**COHORT**

Give **specific explanations** of main issues under each of the following headings:

**SECTION 1: Rationale, aims and objectives**

- a. Rationale/Background/Justification of research
  
- b. Research problem/research issues
  
- c. Research aims and objectives

Mark/  
Grade:

**SECTION 2: Acknowledgement and understanding of relevant literature**

- a. Acknowledgement of parent and core literature
  
- b. Application of relevant literature to specific topic
  
- c. Key theories/concepts identified and debated in context of research objectives

Mark/  
Grade:

**SECTION 3: Description of empirical research methodology**

- a. Justification of Methodology
  
- b. Description of actual empirical research methodology and analysis framework with justification

Mark/  
Grade:

**SECTION 4: Empirical Findings/Analysis**

- a. Key areas presented in full with relevant analysis and cross-analysis
- b. Coherence and logic applied to presentation of findings
- c. Integration and links between topics and theory

Mark/  
Grade:

**SECTION 5: Conclusions and Recommendations**

- a. Aims and objectives covered in detail
- b. Clear conclusions which illustrate an outcome/answer to research question(s) and some refinement and tightening of relevant theories to topic

Mark/  
Grade:

**SECTION 6: Integration and Flow of Dissertation:**

- a. Flow and structure/ Presentation and style
- b. Integration and co-ordination within and between sections
- c. Progression of research topic/debate

Please confirm that the student has met with and consulted the supervisor and has responded to the supervisor's suggestions regarding dissertation progression

Mark/  
Grade:

**Overall Mark**  
**Examined by:**  
**Overall Grade:**

**PLACEMENT: STUDENT PROJECT**

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date Submitted:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Marker:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Assessment: TICK the appropriate column to provide guidance for the overall assessment.**

<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	<b>0 - 39%</b>	<b>40 - 49%</b>	<b>50 - 59%</b>	<b>60 - 69%</b>	<b>70 - 79%</b>	<b>80 - 100%</b>
Management and Submission of Relevant Documentation						
Definition of Objectives						
Development of Objectives/Reflection						
Depth/Quality of Experience						

<b>General Comments:</b>

Overall Mark Awarded: \_\_\_\_\_ %

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR STUDENT PROJECT ASSESSMENT – LEVEL 5

<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	<b>0 - 39 %</b>	<b>40 - 49 %</b>	<b>50 - 59 %</b>	<b>60 - 69%</b>	<b>70 - 79 %</b>	<b>80 - 100 %</b>
Management and Submission of Relevant Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meets few or no deadlines</li> <li>• Little or no contact with academic and industrial supervisors</li> <li>• Little or no personal responsibility exercised in the achievement of set objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meets a very limited number of deadlines</li> <li>• Very limited contact with academic and industrial supervisors</li> <li>• Competent level of personal responsibility exercised in the achievement of set objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occasionally meets some deadlines</li> <li>• Evidence of some contact with academic and industrial supervisors</li> <li>• Basic level of personal responsibility exercised in the achievement of set objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meets a reasonable number of deadlines</li> <li>• Maintenance of a reasonable level of contact with academic and industrial supervisor</li> <li>• Sound level of personal responsibility exercised in the achievement of set objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meets the majority of deadlines</li> <li>• Maintenance of effective contact with academic and industrial supervisor</li> <li>• High level of personal responsibility exercised in the achievement of set objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meets all deadlines</li> <li>• Maintenance of effective, proactive contact with academic and industrial supervisor</li> <li>• Very high level of personal responsibility exercised in the achievement of set objectives</li> </ul>
Definition of Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little or no ability to identify appropriate personal and professional objectives</li> <li>• Insufficient evidence of ability to set quantifiable and realistic set objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very limited ability to identify appropriate personal and professional objectives</li> <li>• Very limited ability to set quantifiable and realistic objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic ability to identify appropriate personal and professional objectives</li> <li>• Basic ability to set quantifiable and realistic objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sound ability to identify appropriate personal and professional objectives</li> <li>• Sound ability to set quantifiable and realistic objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good ability to identify appropriate personal and professional objectives</li> <li>• Good ability to set quantifiable and realistic objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive ability to identify appropriate personal and professional objectives</li> <li>• Comprehensive and clearly set, quantifiable and challenging objectives</li> </ul>

<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	<b>0 - 39 %</b>	<b>40 - 49 %</b>	<b>50 - 59 %</b>	<b>60 - 69%</b>	<b>70 - 79 %</b>	<b>80 - 100 %</b>
Development of Objectives/ Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient progression towards the achievement of set objectives</li> <li>• Little or no critical reflection on personal and professional development</li> <li>• Unacceptable level of reflection in determining career plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very limited progression towards the achievement of set objectives</li> <li>• Very limited critical reflection on personal and professional development</li> <li>• Very limited reflection in determining career plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic progression towards the achievement of set objectives</li> <li>• Basic evidence of critical reflection on personal and professional development</li> <li>• Basic level of reflection in determining career plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sound progression towards the achievement of set objectives</li> <li>• Sound evidence of critical reflection on personal and professional development</li> <li>• Sound reflection in determining career plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wide progression towards the achievement of set objectives</li> <li>• Good evidence of critical reflection on personal and professional development</li> <li>• Good evidence of depth of reflection in determining career plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive progression towards the achievement of set objectives</li> <li>• Comprehensive evidence of critical reflection on personal and professional development</li> <li>• Clear evidence of depth of reflection in determining career plan</li> </ul>
Depth/Quality of Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient ability to maximise opportunities encountered on placement</li> <li>• Little or no ability to effectively manage self and maximise business impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very limited ability to maximise opportunities encountered on placement</li> <li>• Very limited ability to effectively manage self and maximise business impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic ability to maximise opportunities encountered on placement</li> <li>• Basic ability to effectively manage self and maximise business impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sound ability to maximise opportunities encountered on placement</li> <li>• Sound ability to effectively manage self and maximise business impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wide ability to maximise opportunities encountered on placement</li> <li>• Good evidence of the ability to effectively manage self and maximise business impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive ability to maximise opportunities encountered on placement</li> <li>• Self-starter, clear ability to effectively manage self and maximise business impact</li> </ul>

**Academic and Employer Supervisors' Report**

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Visiting Academic: \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Checklist	Yes/No	Comments
Training / Experience Programme Arranged		
Employer Supervisor Appointed		
Student Interviewed		
Company Representative Interviewed		

Checklist	Yes/No	Comments
Health and Safety Checklist Inspected		
Student Accommodation Satisfactory		

Changes to the Training / Experience programme

Comments on the Student and Programme

In order to assess the overall performance of students on placement we have identified a number of areas that we would wish you to ask the supervisor to grade or comment on:

- Grades: A – **Outstanding** (consistently exceeded the standard expected of a placement student; first class)  
 B – **Very Good** (frequently exceeded the standard expected of a placement student; upper second class)  
 C – **Good** (always achieved (at least) the standard expected of a placement student; lower second class)  
 D – **Satisfactory** (achieved (at least) the minimum accepted standard for a placement student; third class)  
 E – **Unsatisfactory** (did not achieve the minimum accepted standard for a placement student; fail)

GRADES	A	B	C	D	E
Initiative					
Enthusiasm					
Productivity					
Quality of Work					
Attendance/Punctuality					
Time Management					
Interpersonal skills (inc. team working)					

Noted Strengths/Abilities:

Noted areas for improvement:

Any other relevant information:

Please rank the overall performance of the student by recording a Pass/Fail result.

Signature of Employer Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Visiting Academic Tutor: \_\_\_\_\_

(Please attach the student's work summary sheet when returning this form to the Placement Tutor).



**Employer Supervisor's Evaluation**

**Student Name:** ..... **Year of Employment:** ...../.....

**Organisation:** .....

<p><b>Interest in Work</b></p> <p> <input type="radio"/> High interest in job. Very enthusiastic.           <input type="radio"/> More than average amount of interest and enthusiasm for job.           <input type="radio"/> Satisfactory amount of interest and enthusiasm for job.           <input type="radio"/> Interest spasmodic. Occasionally enthusiastic.           <input type="radio"/> Little interest or enthusiasm for job.         </p> <p><i>Comment</i> .....</p>
<p><b>Initiative</b></p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Self-starter. Asks for new jobs. Looks for work to do.           <input type="radio"/> Acts voluntarily in most matters.           <input type="radio"/> Acts voluntarily in routine matters.           <input type="radio"/> Relies on others. Must be told frequently what to do.           <input type="radio"/> Usually needs to be told what to do next.         </p> <p><i>Comment</i> .....</p>
<p><b>Organisation and Planning</b></p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Does an excellent job of planning and organising work.           <input type="radio"/> Usually organises work well.           <input type="radio"/> Does normal amount of planning and organising.           <input type="radio"/> More often than not fails to organise and plan work effectively.           <input type="radio"/> Consistently fails to organise and plan work effectively.         </p> <p><i>Comment</i> .....</p>
<p><b>Ability to Learn</b></p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Exceptionally quick.           <input type="radio"/> Quick to learn.           <input type="radio"/> Average.           <input type="radio"/> Slow to learn.           <input type="radio"/> Very slow to learn.         </p> <p><i>Comment</i> .....</p>
<p><b>Quality of Work</b></p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Very thorough in performing work. Very few errors if any.           <input type="radio"/> Usually thorough. Good work with few errors.           <input type="radio"/> Work usually passes review. Has normal amount of errors.           <input type="radio"/> More than average amount of errors for a trainee.           <input type="radio"/> Work usually done in a careless manner. Makes errors often.         </p> <p><i>Comment</i> .....</p>
<p><b>Quantity of Work</b></p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Highly productive in comparison with other students.           <input type="radio"/> More than expected in comparison with other students.           <input type="radio"/> Expected amount of productivity for a student.           <input type="radio"/> Less than expected in comparison with other students.           <input type="radio"/> Very low in comparison with other students.         </p> <p><i>Comment</i> .....</p>
<p><b>Judgement</b></p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Exceptionally good. Decision based on thorough analysis of problem.           <input type="radio"/> Uses good common sense. Usually makes the right decision.           <input type="radio"/> Judgement usually good in routine situations.           <input type="radio"/> Judgement often undependable.           <input type="radio"/> Poor judgement. Jumps to conclusions without sufficient knowledge.         </p> <p><i>Comment</i> .....</p>
<p><b>Dependability</b></p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Can always be depended upon in any situation.           <input type="radio"/> Can usually be depended upon in most situations.           <input type="radio"/> Can only be depended upon in routine situations.           <input type="radio"/> Somewhat unreliable, needs above average checking.           <input type="radio"/> Unreliable.         </p> <p><i>Comment</i> .....</p>

<b>Relations with Others</b>				
<input type="radio"/>	Always works in harmony with others. An excellent team worker.	<input type="radio"/>	Congenial and helpful. Works well with associates.	<input type="radio"/>
		<input type="radio"/>	Most relations with others are harmonious under normal circumstances.	<input type="radio"/>
			Difficult to work with at times. Sometimes antagonises others.	<input type="radio"/>
				<input type="radio"/>
				Frequently quarrelsome and causes friction.
<i>Comment</i> .....				
<b>Verbal Communication Skills</b>				
<input type="radio"/>	Very Good.	<input type="radio"/>	Good.	<input type="radio"/>
		<input type="radio"/>	Satisfactory.	<input type="radio"/>
			Needs improvement.	<input type="radio"/>
				<input type="radio"/>
				Unsatisfactory.
<i>Comment</i> .....				
<b>Written Communication Skills</b>				
<input type="radio"/>	Very Good.	<input type="radio"/>	Good.	<input type="radio"/>
		<input type="radio"/>	Satisfactory.	<input type="radio"/>
			Needs improvement.	<input type="radio"/>
				<input type="radio"/>
				Unsatisfactory.
<i>Comment</i> .....				

<b>Acceptance of Criticism and Suggestions</b>  <input type="radio"/> Satisfactory <input type="radio"/> Unsatisfactory	Comments ..... .....
<b>Professionalism</b>  <input type="radio"/> Appropriate <input type="radio"/> Inappropriate	Comments ..... .....
<b>Attendance</b>  <input type="radio"/> Satisfactory <input type="radio"/> Unsatisfactory	Comments ..... .....
<b>Punctuality</b>  <input type="radio"/> Always on time <input type="radio"/> Irregular time keeping	Comments ..... .....

**Overall Performance**

- Grades: A - **Outstanding** (consistently exceeded the standard expected of a placement student; first class)  
 B - **Very Good** (frequently exceeded the standard expected of a placement student; upper second class)  
 C - **Good** (always achieved (at least) the standard expected of a placement student; lower second class)  
 D - **Satisfactory** (achieved (at least) the minimum accepted standard for a placement student; third class)  
 E - **Unsatisfactory** (did not achieve the minimum accepted standard for a placement student; fail)

Please rank the overall performance of the student by allocating a grade in the range A to E as above. Bear in mind that a grade of A is associated with a 1<sup>st</sup> Class Honours classification and is normally only achieved by a small number of students in any particular year grouping.

Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
+ A -	+ B -	+ C -	+ D -	+ E -
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

**Additional Comments, Projects undertaken, etc. which may be helpful in assessing the placement student.**

**Do you feel the academic knowledge and level of transferable skills evident initially in the placement student are adequate and, if not, what changes would you like to see implemented by the course team?**

**As we are constantly trying to improve the placement process to the benefit of all the parties involved, can you please provide feedback on your experience of the placement process itself and make recommendations on how it may be improved.**

**Future Participation: do you wish to be contacted by the University concerning the employment of placement students next year? Yes / No**

**Rated by..... Title**  
**Signed..... Date**

## STUDENT WRITTEN WORK – REFLECTIVE DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO

At the commencement of the industrial placement, the student will establish a Learning Agreement outlining their job-related and personal objectives, in association with the Employer Supervisor. At regular periods throughout the placement, students will be required to reflect critically on the development of their employability skills and to develop appropriate action plans.

At the end of the placement year students will submit a **Reflective Development Portfolio**. The portfolio will include a reflective report or commentary (3,000 words), based either on an aspect of their work and how it relates to the relevant theoretical concepts, **OR** on their placement experiences and how they have developed personally and professionally. (There will be considerable variation in the portfolios, based on the nature and form of the placement.)

The aims of this portfolio are to provide an opportunity to:

- Set objectives, record progress and critically reflect on personal and professional development.
- Critically reflect on management of self and business impact.
- Conduct a research based in-depth study **OR** critical reflection of personal/professional development to include employability skills.
- Display an ability to integrate information from a range of sources and research techniques.
- Synthesise information and apply to organisation or self.

The Portfolio would normally contain the following types of information:

- Reflective Report / Commentary.
- Learning Agreement.
- Progress Reports (in relation to employability skills).
- Student Evaluation of Placement.
- Career Development Plan.

It may also include:

- A record of new learning experiences.
- Achievements and significant occurrences.
- Personal and professional development, i.e. in-house appraisal information.

The completion of this Portfolio should encourage the student towards autonomous and reflective learning, which are essential elements for education and continuous professional development. It will also allow the student to demonstrate learning and achievement to other people, in this case to his/her employer and academic supervisors.

**STUDY USA: DIPLOMA IN INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC STUDIES  
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

PROJECT	<u>Marks Allocated</u>
<u>Definition of Problem/Topic Area</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear definition and development of problem/topic.</li> <li>• Clearly established project objectives.</li> <li>• Relevance of subject/topic area to chosen industry or community in local area.</li> </ul>	10%
<u>Reading and Background Research</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation of background to problem/topic.</li> <li>• Variety and relevance of published information used.</li> </ul>	15%
<u>Research Method</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear explanation of research technique(s) used.</li> <li>• Appropriateness of chosen data collection technique(s) used.</li> </ul>	15%
<u>Evaluation of Data Collected</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sufficient relevant data collected to satisfy project objectives.</li> <li>• Content more than a summary of others' work.</li> <li>• Evidence of appropriate conclusions and/or recommendations.</li> </ul>	50%
<u>Presentation and Style</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear, concise and grammatically correct content.</li> <li>• Presentation of information in a coherent and readable form.</li> <li>• Well structured and organised information.</li> </ul>	10%

## APPENDIX I

### **GUIDELINES FOR STAFF AND APPLICANTS ON THE ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING (APL)**

#### **1. Glossary of Terms** [see section 13.5]

#### **2. Principles**

The following principles are fundamental to the achievement of awards that meet nationally recognised standards of achievement.

Learning shall be recognised irrespective of the context in which it is achieved.

It is the achievement of learning, or the outcomes of that learning, and not just the experience of the activities alone that shall be accredited.

Learning must be evidenced in writing and authenticated at the appropriate level.

Faculties/Schools shall determine the minimum and maximum levels of support that should be provided to students to complete their APL claim.

The APL process shall be transparent to all stakeholders and demonstrably rigorous and fair.

All claims shall be subject to the same rigour and be comparable in terms of evidence and effort.

Faculties shall ensure that procedures are in place to ensure the equitable and consistent treatment of all claims.

Decisions regarding the accreditation of prior learning are a matter of academic judgement, informed by professional bodies and other stakeholders.

For programmes of 180 or more credit points, students must register on the programme for modules amounting to at least the final third of the credit value of the award at the highest level. For programmes of up to and including 120 credit points, students must register on the programme for modules amounting to at least the final half of the credit value of the award at the highest level. Exemptions shall not be permitted for these modules. This restriction shall not apply to the Certificate of Personal and Professional Development or Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development.

Appropriate training and support shall be available to all staff associated with the guidance and assessment of claims for the accreditation of prior learning.

Approved exemptions shall be recorded on the student's record. Where required, in accordance with programme regulations, marks achieved in prior studies or awarded for experiential learning through assessment of a portfolio of evidence, shall be used to calculate the student's overall result.

#### **3. Process**

All initial enquiries regarding APL shall be directed to the APL Adviser who shall advise the applicant on the process and its requirements.

All APL applications shall be made using a form (example attached at Annex A).

All applications must include evidence of the prior certificated and/or experiential learning, provided by the applicant.

All applications for APL shall normally be made prior to the student's date of registration.

All formal written applications shall be made in the first instance to the APL Adviser to determine whether the evidence to be presented is likely to meet the required criteria of being authentic, current, valid, reliable and sufficient before forwarding to the APL Board (or alternative body) for consideration.

All applications for the accreditation of prior experiential learning shall be presented in the form of a portfolio of evidence. A typical portfolio should be presented as indicated below. Additional material may be required. The portfolio shall contain written material which clearly demonstrates how the student's prior experience is evidence of his/her achievement of the requisite learning outcomes. The assessment criteria included at Annex B to these Guidelines may be used to assess and award a mark for the portfolio. [Contents of typical portfolio in 13.5].

All applications shall be formally considered by an APL Board (or alternative body).

Applicants seeking exemption based on prior experiential learning may be invited to attend for interview by the APL Board (or alternative body). A record of the interview shall be made using a form (example included at Annex C).

All claims will be decided as follows: Approved / Insufficient Evidence / Not approved. Where the decision is of insufficient evidence, there shall be one opportunity for the student to provide additional evidence to the Board if this is considered necessary and appropriate, within a timeframe determined by the Board.

The decision of the Board shall be final (no right of appeal except on grounds of procedural irregularity).

All successful claims for admission to a programme or exemption from a module(s) or part of a programme shall be reported to the relevant Subject/Course Committee and subsequently noted at Faculty Boards (standing item). Where appropriate, decisions shall be reported to Academic Registry for amendments to be made to individual student records. In the case of decisions on admission, the outcome shall be reported to the Director of Faculty Operations for communication to the applicant otherwise this duty shall lie with the Chair of the APL Board.

Applicants shall be informed of the outcome following the Board's decision on a timely basis.

Each Faculty shall ensure that the APL process is monitored at Faculty level to ensure equitable and consistent treatment of claims.

A schematic of the APL process can be found at Annex D.

#### **4. Fees**

There shall be no fee applied to APEL claims for undergraduate admission in keeping with the University's commitment to Widening Access or to articulation arrangements within linked postgraduate programmes or agreed articulation arrangements involving collaborative provision.

Apart from the above, a flat fee as set out in the University schedule of fees shall be levied for all claims for the accreditation of prior certificated and experiential learning.

## UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

Faculty: \_\_\_\_\_

## APL Application Form

PART 1: PERSONAL INFORMATION				
Surname:				
Forename(s):				
Title:				
Date of Birth:				
Student ID No (if applicable)				
<p>If you have already submitted an Application for full-time study via UCAS, please insert your UCAS number here:</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">11 -</td> <td style="width: 100px;"></td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> </table>		11 -		-
11 -		-		
<p>Contact Details</p> <p>Home Address:</p>   <p>Postcode:</p>				
<p>Telephone Number(s)</p> <p>Home:</p> <p>Work:</p> <p>Mobile</p> <p>Email address:</p>				
<p>Employer Name and Address:</p>   				



**PART 2: PROPOSED COURSE OF STUDY**

Programme title:

Mode of attendance:

Month and year of entry:

Please tick the level of APL for which you are applying:

(i)	Entry	
(ii)	Advanced Standing	
(iii)	Modules – please list the module(s) for which you are seeking exemption. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.	

**PART 3: OUTLINE OF APL CLAIM**

I enclose the following documentation:

(i)	APL Application Form	
(ii)	Certificated Evidence	
(iii)	Portfolio of Evidence	

Signature	Date:
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**Please return this form and evidence to the APEL Adviser**

**UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER**

**FACULTY:**

**PROGRAMME:**

**Module / Level for which exemption sought:**

**Assessed by:**

**Date:**

**Criteria for Assessment of APEL Portfolios**

**1. DESCRIPTION OF EXPERIENCE (10%)**

1.1 **Clarity** in terms of:

- a) Specification of amount of time devoted to the activity
- b) Precision of description of activity

1.2 **Relevance** in terms of:

- a) Linkage to learning outcomes of Teaching and Training Studies course units

**2. REFLECTION ON EXPERIENCE (30%)**

2.1 **Depth**, in that the reflection:

- a) Moves from the anecdotal/personal to make generalisations
- b) Moves from the descriptive to the analytical and evaluative levels
- c) Demonstrates change in behaviour as a result of reflection on experience

2.2 **Breadth** in that it:

- a) Relates to each of the learning outcomes identified

**3. DESCRIPTION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES (30%)**

3.1 **Specificity** in terms of:

- a) Clear identification of changes in knowledge, understanding or competence
- b) Currency: the learning outcomes are relevant now

**4. EVIDENCE (20%)**

4.1 **Relevance** insofar as it:

- a) Is clearly linked to the learning outcomes identified above
- b) Is relevant today: evidence of *recent* application where learning outcomes were acquired some time ago

4.2 **Authenticity** in that:

- a) The evidence demonstrates that the student actually did what is claimed

**5. PORTFOLIO (10%)**

5.1 **Organisation** in terms of:

- a) Clear mapping of experience → reflection → learning outcomes → evidence

5.2 **Clarity** in terms of:

- a) Accessibility to non-specialists
- Only for subject-specific credit

## UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

FACULTY: \_\_\_\_\_

**APL Assessment / Interview Pro-forma***INSTRUCTIONS TO APL BOARD / SUBJECT SELECTORS / INTERVIEWERS*

Where an applicant is not to be interviewed, the pro-forma should be used for recording assessment of the evidence presented and the decision of the APL Board / Subject Selectors. The form shall be signed by each participating member of staff.

Where an applicant is to be interviewed, at least two members of academic staff should be present and the form signed by each.

Sections A, B, E & F should always be completed. If an applicant is interviewed, section C must be completed. If the applicant is seeking exemption from an individual module(s) or entry via Advanced Standing, section D must also be completed.

**SECTION A: Candidate details**

Name of candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of course applied for: \_\_\_\_\_

Mode of attendance (P/T or F/T): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of interview (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence presented (certificated / experiential): \_\_\_\_\_

Exemption sought - admission / module(s) / advanced standing: \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION B: Evaluation of evidence presented (certificated or experiential learning)**

**NOTE:** Annex B to the Guidelines may be used for detailed assessment of a portfolio of evidence.

*A copy of the evidence produced for interview should be retained by the APL Board/Subject Selectors.*

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## SECTION C: Evaluation of interview – APEL application

The APL Board / Subject Selectors should assess the candidate's suitability for the course on the basis of the criteria outlined below. They should base their decision both on evidence from the interview and from the evidence produced. A score of between 1 and 5 should be awarded under each heading.

The APL Board / Subject Selectors shall have due regard for the authenticity, currency, validity, reliability and sufficiency of the evidence provided.

Criteria	Assessment of candidate's ability to meet the criteria based on evidence presented	Score (1 – 5) See below*
Relevant experience (professional, industrial or education) <i>Please explain how the candidate's prior experience is relevant to the selected course of study</i>		
Academic skills (e.g. critical thinking, reflective writing, knowledge of subject area etc). <i>Please outline how the candidate shows an appropriate understanding of the academic skills required for the selected course of study</i>		
Awareness of course expectations <i>Please outline how the candidate shows an appropriate understanding of the content and workload for the selected course of study</i>		
<b>TOTAL SCORE:</b>  <i>An aggregate score of 11 is normally necessary for admission to a programme. Where the number of applications for places exceeds the number of places available on programme, the score awarded in this interview may be used to rank candidates in order to preference.</i>		/15

\*A score of between 1 and 5 should be awarded for each of the criteria listed above, where 1 suggests the candidate does not show enough merit in the area and 5 suggests the candidate shows considerable merit in the area.

**SECTION D: Module Exemption**

**ONLY to be completed for candidates applying for APL to gain exemption from an individual module(s) or entry via Advanced Standing.** Please indicate how the candidate's prior learning or prior experiential learning meets the relevant learning outcomes for each module for which an exemption is sought.

Title and code of Ulster module for which an exemption is sought:	Outline of evidence presented by candidate that he/she has met the learning outcomes of the module	Module exemption recommended? Yes/No

**SECTION E: Recommendations of APL Board / Subject Selectors**

*Please add any additional information you feel may be relevant when considering this applicant's request for APL.*

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**SECTION F: Overall Recommendation:**

<b>Approved</b>	
<b>Insufficient evidence</b>	
<b>Not approved</b>	

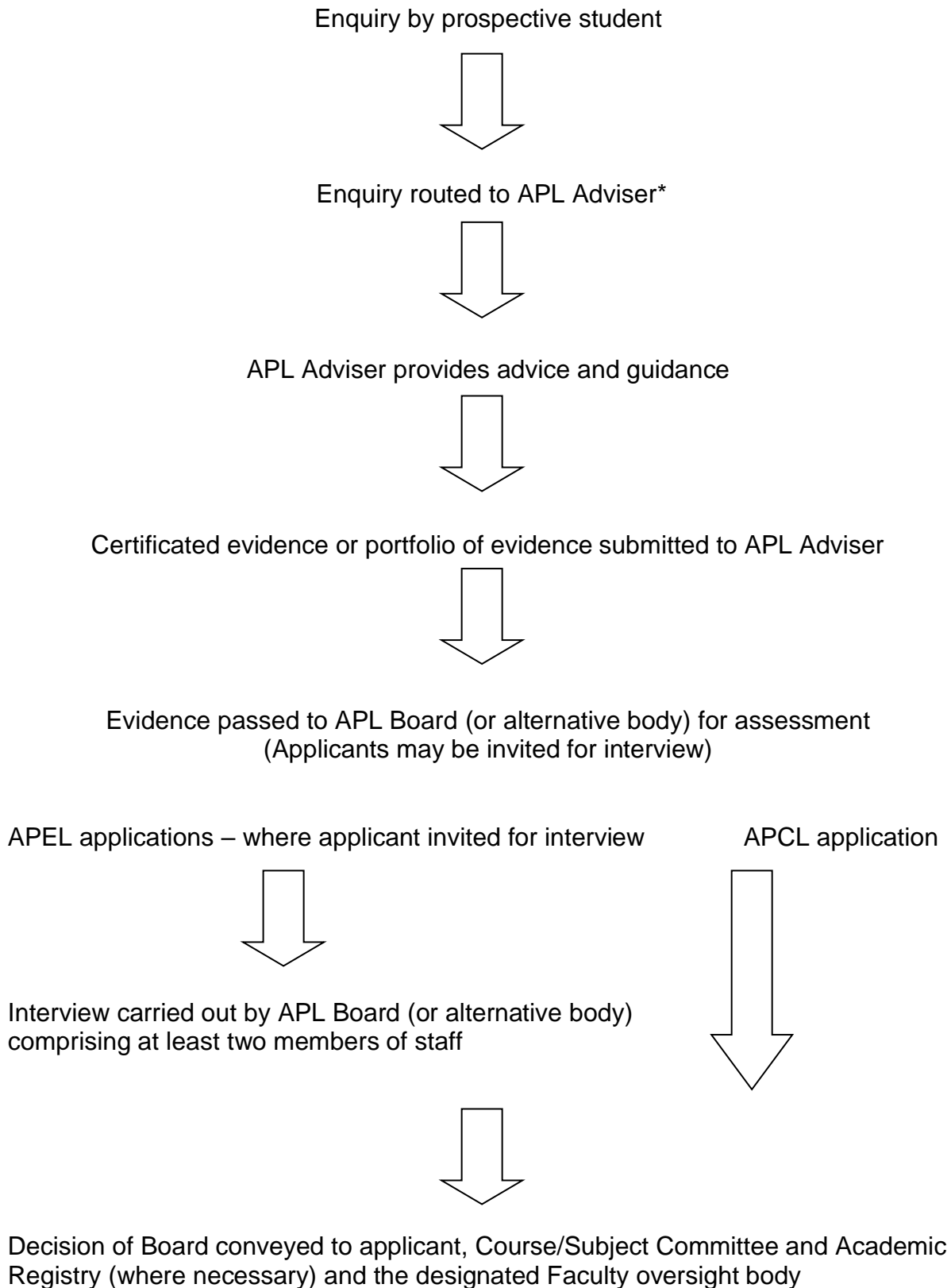
**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Position:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Position:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Position:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Position:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**APL APPLICATION PROCESS**



\* Role of APL Adviser normally performed by the Course/Subject Director

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – QUALITATIVE-BASED WORK

### Level 3

Classification	% Range	Content (Analysis and Enquiry)	Application of Theory	Knowledge and Understanding	Evidence of Reading	Referencing & Bibliography	Communication / Presentation Skills
I <i>[Outstanding Work]</i>	80 – 100	Excellent description and discussion of views, issues and information with evidence of critical evaluation and some original thinking	Evidence of detailed, relevant application of theory, where applicable	Detailed knowledge and depth of understanding of principles and concepts	Evidence of reading appropriate supplementary sources	Accurate referencing and bibliography	Excellent presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using an accurate, coherent style
I <i>[Excellent Work]</i>	70 – 79	Detailed description of main issues and information with evidence of evaluation	Evidence of relevant application of theory, where applicable	Knowledge and understanding of principles and concepts	Evidence of reading some supplementary sources	Appropriate referencing and bibliography	Good quality presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using an accurate and logical approach
II (i) <i>[Good Quality Work]</i>	60 – 69	Description of main issues and information with occasional evidence of discussion	Occasional relevant application of theory	Adequate knowledge of key principles and concepts	Evidence of directed reading only	Adequate referencing and bibliography	Acceptable presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a competent style with appropriate vocabulary
II (ii) <i>[Acceptable Work]</i>	50 - 59	Description of main issues and material only	Limited evidence of relevant application of theory	Elementary knowledge of key principles and concepts	Limited evidence of directed reading	Limited referencing	Adequate presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a largely clear if basic style with adequate vocabulary
III <i>[Adequate Work]</i>	40 – 49	Limited description of main issues and material only	Very limited evidence of relevant application of theory	Limited and/or inconsistent knowledge of key principles and concepts	Evidence of minimal reading only	Limited referencing	Weak presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a basic and inconsistent approach
Fail (marginal) <i>[Limited Work]</i>	35 – 39	Omission of some relevant material	Little or no evidence of relevant application of theory	Little evidence of knowledge of key principles and concepts	Little or no evidence of reading	Little or no referencing	Poor presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, adopting a basic style with inconsistent/ inaccurate vocabulary
Fail <i>[Unacceptable Work]</i>	0 – 34	Insufficient and largely irrelevant material	No evidence of relevant application of theory	No evidence of knowledge of key principles and concepts	No evidence of reading	No referencing	Inadequate presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, adopting a very basic approach with many inaccuracies and errors in spelling, vocabulary and syntax

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – QUALITATIVE-BASED WORK

### Level 4

Classification	% Range	Content (Analysis and Enquiry)	Application of Theory	Knowledge and Understanding	Evidence of Reading	Referencing & Bibliography	Communication / Presentation Skills
I [Outstanding Work]	80 – 100	Excellent description and discussion of views, issues and information with evidence of critical evaluation and some original thinking	Evidence of detailed, relevant application of theory, where applicable	Excellent knowledge and depth of understanding of principles and concepts	Evidence of reading a wide range of appropriate supplementary sources	Excellent referencing and bibliography	Excellent presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using an accurate, logically structured, expressive style
I [Excellent Work]	70 – 79	Detailed description of main issues and information with evidence of evaluation	Evidence of relevant application of theory, where applicable	Knowledge and depth of understanding of principles and concepts	Evidence of reading appropriate supplementary sources	Accurate referencing and bibliography	Good quality presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a clear, coherent style with appropriate vocabulary
II (i) [Good Quality Work]	60 – 69	Description of main issues and information with occasional evidence of discussion	Occasional relevant application of theory	Knowledge and sound understanding of the key principles and concepts	Evidence of directed reading and some supplementary sources	Appropriate referencing and bibliography	Acceptable presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a largely clear and coherent style with appropriate vocabulary
II (ii) [Acceptable Work]	50 - 59	Description of main issues and material only	Limited evidence of relevant application of theory	Basic knowledge of the key principles and concepts only	Evidence of directed reading	Adequate referencing and bibliography	Adequate presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a largely clear if basic style with adequate vocabulary
III [Adequate Work]	40 – 49	Limited description of main issues and material only	Very limited evidence of relevant application of theory	Adequate knowledge of key principles and concepts only	Limited evidence of reading	Limited referencing and bibliography	Weak presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a basic and inconsistent approach
Fail (marginal) [Limited Work]	35 – 39	Omission of some relevant material	Little or no evidence of relevant application of theory	Limited and or inconsistent knowledge and understanding of key principles and concepts	Evidence of minimal reading only	Inadequate referencing and bibliography	Poor presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, adopting a basic style with inconsistent/ inaccurate vocabulary
Fail [Unacceptable Work]	0 – 34	Insufficient and largely irrelevant material	No evidence of relevant application of theory	Little or no evidence of knowledge and understanding of the key principles and concepts	Little or no evidence of reading	Little or no referencing and bibliography	Inadequate presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, adopting a very basic approach with many inaccuracies and errors in spelling, vocabulary and syntax



## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – QUALITATIVE-BASED WORK

### Level 5

Classification	% Range	Content (Analysis and Enquiry)	Application of Theory	Knowledge and Understanding	Evidence of Reading	Referencing & Bibliography	Communication / Presentation Skills
I [Outstanding Work]	80 – 100	Extensive critical insightful evaluation and synthesis of a range of views, issues and complex information which demonstrates original and reflective thinking	Evidence of detailed, relevant application of theory, and/or empirical results, where applicable	Excellent knowledge and depth of understanding of principles and concepts	Evidence of reading a wide range of supplementary sources	Excellent referencing and bibliography	Exceptional presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using an accurate, coherent, original style
I [Excellent Work]	70 – 79	Critical evaluation and synthesis of views, issues and information which demonstrates some originality	Clear evidence of relevant application of theory, and/or empirical results, where applicable	Comprehensive knowledge and depth of understanding of principles and concepts	Evidence of reading a range of supplementary sources	Comprehensive referencing and bibliography	Excellent presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using an accurate, coherent, expressive style
II (i) [Good Quality Work]	60 – 69	Evaluation and synthesis of main issues and information	Appropriate application of theory and/or empirical results, where applicable	Knowledge and sound understanding of principles and concepts	Adequate evidence of reading supplementary sources	Appropriate referencing and bibliography	Good quality presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a clear, coherent style with appropriate vocabulary
II (ii) [Acceptable Work]	50 - 59	Accurate description of main issues and information, with some evaluation	Occasional relevant application of theory and/or empirical results	Knowledge and understanding of key principles and concepts only	Evidence of directed reading and some supplementary sources	Adequate referencing and bibliography	Acceptable presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a largely clear and coherent style with appropriate vocabulary
III [Adequate Work]	40 – 49	Description of main issues and information only	Limited evidence of relevant application of theory and/or empirical results	Basic knowledge and understanding of key principles and concepts only	Evidence of directed reading only	Limited referencing and bibliography	Adequate presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a largely clear if basic style with adequate vocabulary
Fail (marginal) [Limited Work]	35 – 39	Omission of some relevant information with weak and/or incomplete explanation	Very limited evidence of application of theory and/or empirical results	Limited and/or superficial knowledge and understanding of key principles and concepts	Evidence of minimal reading only	Inadequate referencing and bibliography	Poor presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, adopting a basic style with inconsistent/ inaccurate vocabulary
Fail [Unacceptable Work]	0 – 34	Insufficient and largely irrelevant information with inadequate explanation	No evidence of application of theory and/or empirical results	Little or no knowledge and understanding of key principles and concepts	Little or no evidence of reading	Little or no referencing and bibliography	Inadequate presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, adopting a very basic approach with many inaccuracies and errors in spelling, vocabulary and syntax

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – QUALITATIVE-BASED WORK

## Level 6

Classification	% Range	Content (Analysis and Enquiry)	Application of Theory	Knowledge and Understanding	Evidence of Reading	Referencing & Bibliography	Communication / Presentation Skills
I [Outstanding Work]	80 – 100	Critical insightful evaluation and synthesis of a wide range of views, issues and complex information which demonstrates an original and reflective approach	Extensive evidence of relevant and perceptive application of theory, and/or empirical results, where applicable	Exceptional knowledge and in-depth understanding of principles and concepts	Extensive evidence of researching and integrating appropriate supplementary sources	Outstanding referencing and bibliography	Outstanding presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using an accurate, coherent, sophisticated style
I [Excellent Work]	70 – 79	Critical evaluation and synthesis of a wide range of views, issues and information which demonstrates original and reflective thinking	Evidence of extensive relevant application of theory, and/or empirical results, where applicable	Excellent knowledge and depth of understanding of principles and concepts	Evidence of extensive research and reading of supplementary sources	Excellent referencing and bibliography	Excellent presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using an accurate, coherent, expressive style
II (i) [Good Quality Work]	60 – 69	Critical evaluation and synthesis of a range of views, issues and information	Evidence of relevant application of theory and/or empirical results, where applicable	Comprehensive knowledge and depth of understanding of principles and concepts	Evidence of research and reading a range of supplementary sources	Comprehensive referencing and bibliography	Good quality presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a clear, coherent and expressive style with appropriate vocabulary
II (ii) [Acceptable Work]	50 - 59	Accurate description of main issues and key information, with some critical evaluation	Occasional relevant application of theory, and/or empirical results where applicable	Appropriate knowledge and understanding of principles and concepts	Evidence of making use of directed reading and some supplementary sources	Adequate referencing and bibliography	Acceptable presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a largely clear and coherent style with appropriate vocabulary
III [Adequate Work]	40 – 49	Limited evaluation and description of main issues and information	Limited evidence of relevant application of theory and/or empirical results	Basic knowledge of key principles and concepts only	Evidence of basic reading only	Limited referencing and bibliography	Adequate presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a largely clear if basic style with adequate vocabulary
Fail (marginal) [Limited Work]	35 – 39	Omission of some relevant information with weak and/or incomplete explanation	No evidence of relevant application of theory and/or empirical results	Limited and/or superficial knowledge of key principles and concepts	Minimal evidence of reading	Inadequate referencing and bibliography	Poor presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, adopting a basic style with inconsistent/ inaccurate vocabulary
Fail [Unacceptable Work]	0 – 34	Insufficient and largely irrelevant information with inadequate explanation	No evidence of application of theory and/or empirical results	Insufficient evidence of key principles and concepts	Little or no evidence of reading	Little or no referencing and bibliography	Inadequate presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, adopting a very basic approach with many inaccuracies and errors in spelling, vocabulary and syntax

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – QUALITATIVE-BASED WORK

### Level 7

Classification	% Range	Content (Analysis and Enquiry)	Application of Theory	Knowledge and Understanding	Evidence of Reading	Referencing & Bibliography	Communication / Presentation Skills
Distinction	70 – 100	Critical insightful evaluation and synthesis of a wide range of views, issues and complex information which demonstrates a highly original and reflective approach. Demonstrates the ability to pursue research at Doctoral level	Extensive evidence of advanced, relevant and perceptive application of theory, and/or empirical results, where applicable, informed extensively by current research and practice in the area	Exceptional knowledge and conceptual understanding of complex and/or specialised principles and concepts and the development and advancement of ideas and practice	Extensive evidence of integrating supplementary sources	Outstanding referencing and bibliography	Outstanding presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using an accurate, coherent, sophisticated style
Commendation	60 – 69	Critical evaluation and synthesis of a wide range of views, issues and information which demonstrates original and reflective thinking	Clear evidence of relevant applications and/or empirical results, where applicable, informed by current research and practice in the area	Wide knowledge and depth of understanding of complex and/or specialised principles and concepts and the development of ideas and practice	Evidence of extensive reading of supplementary sources	Comprehensive referencing and bibliography	Excellent presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using an accurate, coherent, expressive style
Pass	50 – 59	Some critical evaluation and synthesis of a range of views, issues and information	Evidence of relevant applications and/or empirical results, where applicable with some links to current research in the area	Appropriate knowledge and depth of understanding of key principles and concepts with some understanding of their development in practice	Evidence of reading supplementary sources	Adequate referencing and bibliography	Acceptable presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a largely clear and coherent style with appropriate vocabulary
Fail (marginal)	45 – 49	Some evaluation and synthesis of issues and information	Occasional relevant applications and/or empirical results, where applicable	Basic knowledge and depth of understanding of key principles and concepts only	Limited evidence of reading	Limited referencing and bibliography	Adequate presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a largely clear if basic style with adequate vocabulary
Fail	31 – 44	Limited evaluation and description of main issues and information	Limited applications and/or empirical results, where applicable	Limited and/or superficial knowledge of key principles and concepts	Minimal evidence of reading	Inadequate referencing and bibliography	Poor presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, adopting a basic style with inconsistent/ inaccurate vocabulary
Fail	0 – 30	Insufficient and largely irrelevant information with inadequate explanation	Little or no evidence of relevant application and/or empirical results	Virtually devoid of any evidence of knowledge and understanding	Little or no evidence of reading	Inadequate referencing and bibliography	Inadequate presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, adopting a very basic approach with many inaccuracies and errors in spelling, vocabulary and syntax

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – QUANTITATIVE-BASED WORK

## Level 3

Classification	% Range	Knowledge and Understanding	Problem Solving	Calculations	Analysis and Interpretation	Presentation of Work
I <i>[Outstanding Work]</i>	80 – 100	Evidence of knowledge and understanding of key theories, principles and concepts	Competent in the use of appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems. Can work beyond routine context or complexity	Able to demonstrate the steps taken, very few errors in calculations, using recognised methods to formulate solutions	Evidence of analytical and interpretation in familiar contexts, evaluating outcomes and deriving conclusions	Well directed presentation, logically structured
I <i>[Excellent Work]</i>	70 – 79	Knowledge and understanding of most key theories, principles and concepts evident	Able to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems and those of some complexity	Demonstrates the steps taken, few errors in calculations, using recognised methods	Reasonable evidence of use of analytical and interpretative skills in familiar contexts, evaluating outcomes and making judgements	Clearly presented, logically structured
II(i) <i>[Good Quality Work]</i>	60 – 69	Adequate knowledge and understanding of most key theories, principles and concepts evident	Able to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Errors in the steps taken or in the calculations, recognised methods not always used correctly	Some evidence of use of analytical and interpretative skills in familiar contexts, evaluating outcomes and making judgements	Competent presentation and structure
II(ii) <i>[Acceptable Work]</i>	50 - 59	Knowledge and understanding of key theories, principles and concepts is limited	Ability to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems is limited	Steps taken in calculations lack clarity, recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	Limited evidence of the use of analytical and interpretative skills	Limited presentation and/or structure
III <i>[Adequate Work]</i>	40 – 49	Knowledge and understanding of key theories, principles and concepts is very limited	Very limited ability to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Steps taken in calculations are incomplete, calculations largely incorrect, recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	Little evidence of analysis and/or incorrect interpretation	Poor presentation, and/or structure
Fail (marginal) <i>[Limited Work]</i>	35 – 39	Lack of knowledge and understanding of key theories, principles and concepts	Not able to or does not use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Steps taken in calculations are incomplete or/and incorrect, recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	No analysis and/or interpretation	Very poor presentation and inadequate structure
Fail <i>[Unacceptable Work]</i>	0 – 34	No evidence of knowledge or understanding of key theories, principles and concepts	Does not use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Steps taken in calculations are incorrect, recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	No analysis and/or interpretation	Unacceptable presentation and structure

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – QUANTITATIVE-BASED WORK

### Level 4

Classification	% Range	Knowledge and Understanding	Problem Solving	Calculations	Analysis and Interpretation	Presentation of Work
I <i>[Outstanding Work]</i>	80 – 100	Substantial knowledge and clear understanding of major theories, principles and concepts	Able to identify more complex problems and competent in the modelling of standard problems	Clear demonstration of the steps taken, few errors in calculations, using recognised methods to formulate solution	Evidence of analysis and interpretation of new and seen data in conclusions derived	Very well directed presentation, logically structured
I <i>[Excellent Work]</i>	70 – 79	Evidence of knowledge and clear understanding of a range of theories, principles and concepts	Competent in the use of appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Able to demonstrate the steps taken, errors in calculations, using recognised methods to formulate solutions	Reasonable evidence of analytical and interpretation in evaluating outcomes and deriving conclusions	Well directed presentation, logically structured
II(i) <i>[Good Quality Work]</i>	60 – 69	Knowledge and understanding of key theories, principles and concepts evident	Able to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Errors in the steps taken in calculations, recognised methods used incorrectly	Some evidence of use of analytical and interpretative skills in evaluating outcomes and making judgements	Clearly presented, logically structured
II(ii) <i>[Acceptable Work]</i>	50 - 59	Knowledge and understanding of key theories, principles and concepts limited or inconsistent	Limited ability to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Steps taken in calculations lack clarity recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	Limited evidence of the use of analytical and interpretative skills	Competent presentation and structure
III <i>[Adequate Work]</i>	40 – 49	Knowledge and understanding of key theories, principles and concepts very limited	Very limited ability to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Steps taken in calculations are incomplete, calculations largely incorrect, recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	Little evidence of analysis and/or incorrect interpretation	Poor presentation, and structure
Fail (marginal) <i>[Limited Work]</i>	35 – 39	Lack of knowledge and understanding of key theories, principles and concepts	Not able to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Steps taken in calculations are incomplete or/and incorrect, recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	No analysis and/or interpretation	Very poor presentation and inadequate structure
Fail <i>[Unacceptable Work]</i>	0 – 34	No evidence of knowledge or understanding of key theories, principles and concepts	Does not use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Steps taken in calculations are incorrect, recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	No analysis and/or interpretation	Unacceptable presentation and structure

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – QUANTITATIVE-BASED WORK

## Level 5

Classification	% Range	Knowledge and Understanding	Problem Solving	Calculations	Analysis and Interpretation	Presentation of Work
I <i>[Outstanding Work]</i>	80 – 100	Comprehensive knowledge and clear understanding of major and complex theories, principles and concepts	Competent in both the identification and modelling of more complex problems	Applies appropriate techniques, and demonstrates innovation and creativity in formulating substantially correct solutions	Clear evidence of analysis and interpretation of new or abstract data and in conclusions derived	Excellent, well directed presentation, logically structured
I <i>[Excellent Work]</i>	70 – 79	Substantial knowledge and clear understanding of major theories, principles and concepts	Able to identify more complex problems and competent in the modelling of standard problems	Clear demonstration of the steps taken, few errors in calculations, using recognised methods to formulate solutions	Evidence of analysis and interpretation of new and seen data in conclusions derived	Well directed presentation, logically structured
II(i) <i>[Good Quality Work]</i>	60 – 69	Evidence of knowledge and clear understanding of a range of theories, principles and concepts	Competent in the use of appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Able to demonstrate the steps taken, errors in calculations, not always using recognised methods to formulate solution	Reasonable evidence of analysis and interpretation in evaluating outcomes and deriving conclusions	Clearly presented, logically structured
II(ii) <i>[Acceptable Work]</i>	50 - 59	Knowledge and understanding of key theories, principles and concepts evident	Able to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Errors in steps taken in calculations, recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	Some evidence of analytical and interpretative skills in evaluating outcomes and deriving conclusions	Neat presentation and structure
III <i>[Adequate Work]</i>	40 – 49	Knowledge and understanding of key theories, principles and concepts limited or inconsistent	Limited ability to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Steps taken in calculations are incomplete or largely incorrect, recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	Very limited use or incorrect use of analytical and interpretative skills	Weak presentation and structure
Fail (marginal) <i>[Limited Work]</i>	35 – 39	Knowledge and understanding of key theories, principles and concepts very limited	Very limited ability to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Steps taken in calculations are incomplete and incorrect recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	Little or no analysis and interpretation	Poor presentation and inadequate structure
Fail <i>[Unacceptable Work]</i>	0 – 34	Lack of knowledge and understanding of key theories principles and concepts	Not able to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Steps taken in calculations are incomplete and incorrect recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	No analysis or interpretation	Unacceptable presentation and structure

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – QUANTITATIVE-BASED WORK

### Level 6

Classification	% Range	Knowledge and Understanding	Problem Solving	Calculations	Analysis and Interpretation	Presentation of Work
I <i>[Outstanding Work]</i>	80 – 100	Comprehensive depth of knowledge and clear understanding of major and complex theories, principles and concepts	Very competent in both the identification and modelling of more complex problems	Techniques are appropriately and effectively used demonstrating innovation and creativity in formulating substantially correct solutions	Evidence of excellent analysis and interpretation of new or abstract data and in conclusions derived	Excellent, well directed presentation, logically structured
I <i>[Excellent Work]</i>	70 – 79	Comprehensive knowledge and clear understanding of major and complex theories, principles and concepts	Competent in both the identification and modelling of more complex problems	Applies appropriate techniques, and demonstrates innovation and creativity in formulating mainly correct solutions	Clear evidence of analysis and interpretation of new or abstract data and in conclusions derived	Well directed presentation, logically structured
II(i) <i>[Good Quality Work]</i>	60 – 69	Substantial knowledge and clear understanding of major theories, principles and concepts	Able to identify more complex problems and competent in the modelling of standard problems	Clear demonstration of the steps taken few errors in calculations using recognised methods to formulate solution	Evidence of analysis and interpretation of new and seen data in conclusions derived	Clearly presented, logically structured
II(ii) <i>[Acceptable Work]</i>	50 - 59	Evidence of knowledge and clear understanding of a range of theories, principles and concepts	Competent in the use of appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Able to demonstrate the steps taken, errors in calculations, may not always using recognised methods to formulate solution	Reasonable evidence of analysis and interpretation in evaluating outcomes and making judgements	Neat presentation and structure
III <i>[Adequate Work]</i>	40 – 49	Knowledge and understanding of key theories, principles and concepts limited or inconsistent	Able to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Steps taken in calculations lack clarity, calculations have numerous errors, recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	Limited use of analytical and interpretative skills	Weak presentation and structure
Fail (marginal) <i>[Limited Work]</i>	35 – 39	Very limited knowledge and understanding of key theories, principles and concepts	Limited ability to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Steps taken in calculations are incomplete or largely incorrect, recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	Little or no analysis and interpretation	Poor presentation and structure
Fail <i>[Unacceptable Work]</i>	0 – 34	Little or no evidence of knowledge and/or understanding of key theories, principles and concepts	Very limited ability to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Steps taken in calculations are incomplete and incorrect, recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	No analysis or interpretation	Unacceptable presentation, and structure

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – QUANTITATIVE-BASED WORK

## Level 7

Classification	% Range	Knowledge and Understanding	Problem Solving	Calculations	Analysis and Interpretation	Presentation of Work
Distinction	70 – 100	Systematic understanding of specialised and/or applied areas of theoretical or research based knowledge	Independent and professional in the approach taken to complex problem solving	Can use a large range of techniques appropriately and demonstrates innovation and creativity in complex and unpredictable situations	Very high level of competence in analysing and interpreting complex or incomplete data and in communicating the outcome	Excellent well directed presentation, logically structured
Commendation	60 – 69	Clear understanding of specialised or applied areas of theoretical or research based knowledge	Largely independent and professional in the approach taken to complex problem solving	Uses techniques effectively and demonstrates innovation and creativity in complex situations	Competent in analysing and interpreting complex or incomplete data and in communicating the outcome	Clearly presented, logically structured
Pass	50 - 59	Demonstrates understanding of specialised or applied areas of theoretical or research based knowledge	Reasonably competent in solving of complex problems	Uses techniques effectively and demonstrates some innovation or creativity in complex situations	Reasonably competent in analysing and interpreting complex or incomplete data and in communicating the outcome	Neat presentation and structure
Fail (marginal)	45 – 49	Limited understanding of specialised or applied areas of theoretical or research based knowledge	Solve complex problems only with some guidance or direction	Some errors in techniques used, work lacks innovation or creativity, reliance on routine procedures	Limited ability to analyse and/or interpret complex or incomplete data and in communicating the outcome	Weak presentation and structure
Fail	31 - 44	Very limited understanding of specialised or applied areas of theoretical or research based knowledge	Limited ability to solve complex problems	Many errors in techniques used, no innovation or creativity shown, reliance on routine procedures	Little or no analysis and interpretation of complex data, poor presentation of results	Poor presentation and structure
Fail	0 – 30	Has not grasped the theoretical or research base of the subject	Very limited ability to solve complex problems	Inability to use techniques, routine procedures have errors	No analysis or interpretation of complex data, poor or very poor presentation of results	Unacceptable presentation, and structure



**BMus****REPORT ON WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_ Module \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Structure** Is there an introduction, main part and conclusion (where appropriate)?  
 Comment:

**Argument** Is the topic explored through a clear and consistent development of ideas?  
 Comment:

**Content** Evidence of understanding of material. Knowledge and range of relevant sources. Depth of enquiry. Use of examples, illustrations, quotations.  
 Comment:

**Bibliography** Presentation in accordance with guidelines in Student Handbook.  
 Comment:

**Presentation** Word-processed. Cover page provided. Use of English. Referencing in accordance with guidelines in Student Handbook.  
 Comment:

Penalties incurred:

**Mark:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 100

Lecturer:

Original returned with marked assignment. Copy placed in student's file.

## APPENDIX J12

### **GUIDELINES FOR MARKING ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMINATION PAPERS: ULSTER BUSINESS SCHOOL**

All marking of assignments and examination papers should be carried out under the direction of the member of academic staff responsible for the module.

These guidelines are provided to enable you to mark assignments and examination questions as efficiently and effectively as possible. They should be used selectively and with discretion. It is clearly impossible, and indeed undesirable, to devise and impose an all-purpose marking scheme which can be applied to every possible assignment or examination question; allowances must be made for differences in level, and in the nature of the assignment. In order to apply the guidelines in practice, a number of separate steps should be followed.

Select which of the criteria listed are appropriate to the particular assignment or examination question. Additional criteria may be added, provided that these can be justified on educational grounds.

- 1        Knowledge and Comprehension  
The ability to reproduce accurately basic information concerning facts, principles, theories and techniques.  
Evidence of understanding of principles, theories and techniques encountered in lectures and directed private study.
- 2        Application of Knowledge  
The ability to transfer basic knowledge to alternative situations.  
The ability to link theory to practice.
- 3        Data Collection/Information Gathering  
The ability to identify and exploit appropriate sources of information.  
The depth and appropriateness of background reading.
- 4        Analysis and Evaluation  
The ability to identify the critical elements of a particular problem or situation, and to discuss the inter-relationships between these key elements.  
The ability to compare and contrast alternative theoretical or practical approaches to a particular issue.
- 5        Problem Solving  
The ability to suggest alternative solutions to a particular problem and to justify the recommendation of a specific course of action.
- 6        Originality  
Evidence of independent thinking and the ability to generate a fresh approach.
- 7        Communication  
The overall style and presentation of a piece of work.  
The ability to develop and present a coherent argument.
- 8        Other Criteria  
Other criteria specific to a particular module.

**MEDICAL ELECTRONICS, MODULE EEE510J2****Marking of Assignments**

(BEng (Hons) Electronics Systems Cohort)

Typical marking scheme for a library based assignment in Medical Electronics. This is provided for general guidance, to ensure that you have a reasonable concept of what is important within a library based assignment at this level.

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Aspect Assessed

	Percentage Awarded	Percentage Available
General presentation and structure	_____ %	10%
Proper use of English, Mathematics, symbols include labelling of figures, equations and reference to same	_____ %	10%
Appropriate usage of reference material and proper citation	_____ %	10%
Comprehensive coverage of the set topic	_____ %	25%
Analytical/in-depth aspects	_____ %	25%
Evidence of 'honours flair'	_____ %	20%
As demonstrated by extended reading evidence, innovations and links to research, etc.		
TOTAL	%	100%

Signature of Assessor \_\_\_\_\_ Please print also \_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>nd</sup> Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to: Dr J. A. C. Webb, Module Co-ordinator (EEE510J2).

**FACULTY OF ARTS, FRENCH DISSERTATION MARKING GRID**

Student's Name:	MARK: (1 <sup>st</sup> Marker): (2 <sup>nd</sup> Marker): AGREED MARK:																																																																																																																																																																																						
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Outstanding in all respects Some very good features Satisfactory overall Some serious inadequacies Inadequate in most respects	1) 70%+ 2) 60% - 69% 3) 50% - 59% 4) 40% - 49% 5) under 40%																																																																																																																																																																																						
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Marker: [1<sup>st</sup>: ]      [2<sup>nd</sup>: ] (Please tick as appropriate); NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

General Comments:

**EXAMPLE OF MARKING OUTLINE**

The text below is a brief account written in response to the following question. [The errors in the text are intentional.]

***Innovative assessment methods give students too much help; you end up doing the work for them and they do not result in fair tests of students' abilities? Discuss in no more than 300 words.***

Evidence (Heywood, 1989) suggests that some traditional methods of assessment (e.g. tutor marked examinations) are unreliable. Results are not consistent with repeated applications. Several studies have shown that not only can the same candidate be given different marks by two different tutors but also the same tutor may give different marks to the same candidate when the same paper is remarked (Heywood, 1989).

Peer assessment does not suffer from these drawbacks (Boud, 1989). Research conducted by Wondrak (1993) involving health care students and by Orpen (1982) involving political science and psychology students has demonstrated that students and their peers are capable of being very reliable assessors of their own work. Wondrak (1993) also found that students, peers and tutors found themselves in agreement about the merits of their written work and in some cases the positive correlations he found between student, peer and tutor grades were statistically significant. Wondrak (1993) found that the better students, if anything, generally under-mark themselves.

It is clear therefore, that self assessment, far from giving students too much help, in fact requires a greater input from students, enhances student learning and results in fairer, less biased tests of student learning.

## References

- BOYD, H. & COWAN, J. A case for self-assessment based on recent studies of student learning, *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 10(3), 1985, p225-235
- HEYWOOD, J. *Assessment in Higher Education*, John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1989.
- ORPEN, C. Student versus lecturer assessment of learning: A Research Note, *Higher Education*, 11, 1982, p.567-572.
- WONDRAK, R. Using self and peer assessment in advanced modules, *Teaching News*, 1993, p22-23.

**Learning outcomes, associated Assessment Criteria and Marking Scheme**

<b>The assessment will test a student's ability to:</b>										
<b>Write a well-constructed exposition in concise, continuous prose.</b>										
Accuracy in the use of English	Effective use of grammar and punctuation					Poor use of grammar and punctuation				
	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Answer relevant to question	Response focussed on question with relevant examples					Response only loosely related to question. Examples irrelevant.				
	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Clarity	Good plan; ideas well organised; coherent					Weak plan; confused presentation				
	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Compose a reference list.</b>										
Referencing	Full, accurate and detailed references given					Inadequate citation of sources				
	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Retrieve and interpret information from the literature.</b>										
Interpretation of information	Conclusions follow logically from data					No logical link between data and conclusions				
	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

## **CHECKLIST FOR A HIGH QUALITY MARKING SCHEME**

(adapted from Race (date not known))

### **Could anyone mark an assignment?**

A good mark scheme should be able to be applied by any member of staff with sufficient knowledge to understand the answer. Agreement should be within the relevant mark band.

**1 Does the scheme allow credit for alternative good answers?**

All reasonable ways of tackling the answer should be catered for.

**2 Does the scheme distribute marks according to the importance of each component of a good answer?**

The balance of the marks should be allocated to the most important points. It should not be possible to compensate for a bad answer by accumulating marks allocated to trivia.

**3 Does the scheme allow 'consequential' marks where an early mistake throws out the rest of an answer?**

It should not be possible for a student to make a mistake early in a question and then lose marks by proceeding logically and, in a sense, correctly down the wrong route, for example through a simple error of calculation.

**4 Does the scheme make it quicker and easier to mark an assignment?**

Mark schemes are particularly appropriate for large classes and should allow some automation of the marking process.

**5 Is the standard of marking as close as possible to that which will apply in subsequent assessment events?**

Mark schemes constitute important elements of feedback to students. They indicate where marks were won and lost. This is only useful if practices are consistent so that what a student learns from one assignment the feedback can be applied to the next.

**6 Does the marking scheme prevent students from 'hedging' their bets?**

Students should not gain marks by putting down all they know on a particular topic and hoping the examiner will pick out the right things and reward them while ignoring the inappropriate or wrong things. Mark schemes must therefore reward logical exposition and focussed writing rather than ill informed regurgitation by speed writers.

**8 Does the question point sufficiently towards the marking scheme?**

When the mark scheme has been prepared, review it and determine whether the question asked will lead the knowledgeable student to this answer. This will help to re-write the question to remove ambiguities.

**REGULATIONS GOVERNING EXAMINATIONS IN PROGRAMMES OF STUDY***Appointment and Duties of Examiners*

- 1 Subject to the final responsibility of the Senate the examinations for programmes of study, and the assessment of performance and determination of the academic progress of the students enrolled therein, shall be undertaken by Boards of Examiners. There shall be Course Boards of Examiners for integrated courses of study and Subject Boards of Examiners and Progress and Award Boards of Examiners for combined undergraduate Honours degrees and the Certificate of Personal and Professional Development and the Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development.

The Senate may annul a decision of the Board of Examiners, and substitute its own decision, where circumstances make it appropriate to do so.

- 2 The membership of the Course Board of Examiners shall include internal examiners and one or more External Examiners. The Head of School in which the programme is located shall be an ex-officio member of the board. The Chairperson of the Course Board of Examiners shall be the Dean or Associate Dean of the faculty in which the programme is located, or a Head or Associate Head of School in the faculty, other than the School in which the programme is located. In the absence of the designated chairman, the board shall be chaired by a person appointed by the Senior Officer<sup>1</sup> responsible acting on the authority of the Senate. Members of the board are required to declare personal interest, involvement or relationship with a student being assessed to the Chairperson of the board.

- 3 All members of the Course Committee engaged in teaching and assessment shall be internal examiners for the programme. Internal examiners are required to inform their Head of School and the Course Director of any personal interest, involvement or relationship with a student being assessed.

Course External examiners shall be appointed by the Senior Officer<sup>1</sup> responsible, acting on behalf of the Council on the recommendation of the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee under delegated authority from the Senate after consideration of reports from the boards of the faculties.

Appointments shall be for a period of not more than four years but may exceptionally be extended for a period of not more than one year.

- 4 The duties of Course Boards of Examiners shall be:
- a) to determine the module results obtained by candidates;
  - b) where such results lead directly to a degree, diploma, certificate or other academic distinction, to forward to the Senate and, where appropriate, to external bodies, lists of successful candidates, classified in accordance with the relevant course regulations, with recommendations for the award of degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic distinctions;
  - c) to determine on behalf of the Senate the academic progress of students on the basis of their performance in examinations and other forms of assessment;
  - d) to ensure that the examination and assessment of candidates are conducted in accordance with regulations and procedures prescribed by the Senate;
  - e) if regulations regarding the classification of final results have been revised during a candidate's period of registration, to apply the regulations which gives the most favourable outcome;
  - f) to deal with such other matters as the Senate may refer to them from time to time. All assessed work shall be available to the Course Board.

All assessed work shall be available to the Course Board.

The Course Board shall not adjust the marks awarded or progress decisions made by an earlier Course Board, except in accordance with the procedures for the Review of Decisions

<sup>1</sup> Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Student Experience)

and the Consideration of Offences in Connection with Examinations and other Forms of Assessment.

5 The duties of Course External Examiners shall include:

- a) consultation with the internal examiners, through the Course Director, in relation to the approval and moderation of examination papers and other forms of assessment;
- b) consideration of the standard of marking of examination papers and other forms of assessment and reporting to Course Boards of Examiners on such revisions of the marking as they consider necessary;
- c) attendance at meetings of Course Boards of Examiners;
- d) attendance with one or more internal examiners at such oral examinations as are determined by the Course Board of Examiners;
- e) confirmation, by joint signature with chairpersons of Course Boards of Examiners, of results and the pass and classified lists of candidates including recommendations for the award of degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic distinctions;
- f) submission of an annual report to the Senior Officer responsible, in the first instance;
- g) submission to the Senate or to committees of the Senate, as requested, of comments on any matters relating to the teaching, organisation, syllabus and structure of the course;
- h) such other duties as the Senate may specify from time to time.

6 The membership of the Subject Board of Examiners shall include internal examiners and one or more External Examiners. The Head of School in which the subject is located shall be an ex-officio member of the Board. The Chairperson of the Subject Board of Examiners shall be the Dean of the Faculty in which the subject is located, or a Head of School in the Faculty, other than the School in which the programme is located. In the absence of the designated chairman, the Subject Board shall be chaired by a person appointed by the appropriate Senior Officer<sup>1</sup> responsible acting on the authority of the Senate. Members of the Board are required to declare personal interest, involvement or relationship with a student being assessed to the Chairperson of the Board.

7 All members of the Subject Committee engaged in teaching and assessment shall be internal examiners for the subject. Internal examiners are required to inform their Head of School and the Subject Director of any personal interest, involvement or relationship with a student being assessed.

Subject External Examiners shall be appointed by the Senior Officer<sup>1</sup> responsible, acting on behalf of the Council on the recommendation of the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee under delegated authority from the Senate after consideration of reports from the boards of the faculties.

Appointments shall be for a period of not more than four years but may exceptionally be extended for a period of not more than one year.

8 The duties of Subject Boards of Examiners shall be:

- a) to determine the module results obtained by candidates;
- b) to forward the results to the Progress and Award Boards of Examiners; or, where candidates are enrolled for a Single Honours degree, to determine on behalf of the Senate the academic progress of students on the basis of their performance in examinations and other forms of assessment, or where such results lead directly to a degree, to forward to the Senate and, where appropriate, to external bodies, lists of successful candidates, classified in accordance with the relevant programme regulations with recommendations for the award of degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic distinctions;
- c) to ensure that the examination and assessment of candidates are conducted in accordance with regulations and procedures prescribed by the Senate;
- d) if regulations regarding the classification of final results have been revised during a candidate's period of registration, to apply the regulations which gives the most favourable outcome;
- e) to deal with such other matters as the Senate may refer to them from time to time.

All assessed work within the Subject modules shall be available to the Subject Board.



The Subject Board shall not adjust the marks awarded or progress decisions made by an earlier Subject Board, except in accordance with the procedures for Appeals and the Consideration of Offences in Connection with Examinations and other Forms of Assessment.

- 9 The duties of Subject External Examiners shall include:
- a) consultation with the internal examiners, through the Subject Director, in relation to the approval and moderation of examination papers and other forms of assessment;
  - b) consideration of the standard of marking of examination papers and other forms of assessment and reporting to Subject Boards of Examiners on such revisions of the marking as they consider necessary;
  - c) attendance at meetings of Subject Boards of Examiners;
  - d) attendance with one or more internal examiners at such oral examinations as are determined by the Subject Board of Examiners;
  - e) confirmation, by joint signature with chairpersons of Subject Boards of Examiners, of results and, in the case of Single Honours degrees candidates, pass lists and classified lists of candidates including recommendations for the award of degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic distinctions;
  - f) submission of an annual report to the Senior Officer responsible, in the first instance;
  - g) submission to the Senate or to committees of the Senate, as requested, of comments on any matters relating to the teaching, organisation, syllabus and structure of the programme;
  - h) such other duties as the Senate may specify from time to time.

- 10 The membership of the Progress and Award Board of Examiners shall include the Subject Directors for the undergraduate honours subjects contributing to undergraduate Honours Major, Main or Minor subject strands on the campus, and a Chief External Examiner. The Chairperson of the Progress and Award Board shall be a Dean appointed by the Senior Officer<sup>1</sup> responsible. The membership of the Progress and Award Boards for the Certificate of Personal and Professional Development and the Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development shall be a representative from each faculty, the programme director, and the Chief External Examiner. The Chairperson shall be the chair of the Distributed Education Board.

Chief External Examiners shall be appointed by the Senior Officer<sup>1</sup> responsible, acting on behalf of the Council on the recommendation of the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee under delegated authority from the Senate. Appointments shall be for a period of not more than four years.

- 11 The duties of the Progress and Award Board of Examiners shall be:
- a) to receive module results from Subject Boards of Examiners;
  - b) where such results lead directly to a degree, diploma, certificate or other academic distinction, to forward to the Senate and, where appropriate, to external bodies, lists of successful candidates, classified in accordance with the relevant programme regulations, with recommendations for the award of degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic distinctions;
  - c) to determine on behalf of the Senate the academic progress of students on the basis of their performance in examinations and other forms of assessment;
  - d) to ensure that the examination and assessment of candidates are conducted in accordance with regulations and procedures prescribed by the Senate;
  - e) if regulations regarding the classification of final results have been revised during a candidate's period of registration, to apply the regulations which gives the most favourable outcome;
  - f) to deal with such other matters as the Senate may refer to them from time to time.

The Progress and Award Board shall not adjust the marks awarded by a Subject Board, nor shall it adjust the progress decisions of an earlier Progress and Award Board, except in accordance with the procedures for the Appeals and the Consideration of Offences in Connection with Examinations and other Forms of Assessment.

- 12 Duties of Chief External Examiners shall include:
- a) consideration of the standards of awards for combined undergraduate honours degrees;
  - b) attendance at meetings of Progress and Award Boards of Examiners;
  - c) confirmation, by joint signature with chairpersons of Progress and Award Boards of Examiners, of the pass and classified lists of candidates including recommendations for the award of degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic distinctions;
  - d) submission of an annual report to the Senior Officer responsible, in the first instance;
  - e) such other duties as the Senate may specify from time to time.

The Chief External Examiner shall not have responsibility for the approval and moderation of assessment within subjects nor for the determination of results of candidates in modules.

- 13 Course and Subject External Examiners need not be involved in the examining process for first year undergraduate degree modules which do not contribute to the final award.
- 14 Unresolved disagreement between examiners shall be reported to the Senate.
- 15 External Examiners shall be entitled to attend meetings of Boards of Examiners of which they are members. Subject to clauses 16 and 17, they shall be present at all meetings where the performance of candidates which contributes to the final result is being considered. The Senate may prescribe that the External Examiners shall be present for consideration of all stages of the examining of the course.
- 16 In linked postgraduate diploma and master's programmes, the Faculty may determine in accordance with approved procedures whether the External Examiner should attend one or both award stages.
- 17 In exceptional circumstances, the Senior Officer<sup>1</sup> responsible, acting on the authority of the Senate, shall make arrangements for external examining during the absence of the External Examiner(s), which may include the submission of written reports or the appointment of substitute examiner(s) or both.

#### *Conduct of Examinations*

- 18 Examinations for degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic distinctions shall be conducted under conditions determined by the Senate.
- 19 To be admitted to an examination a candidate shall have complied with the conditions laid down in ordinances and regulations and paid the prescribed fees.
- 20 Teaching and assessment (coursework and examinations) shall normally be through English. Where the subject of study is a language other than English, the Course/Subject Committee may require or permit teaching and/or assessment to be conducted in that language.
- 21 Candidates shall not take into the examination room any books or papers or information recorded in any form relevant to the examination except with the permission of the examiners or the senior invigilator.

Candidates shall not take paper or electronic translation or other dictionaries into the examination room, unless their use is permitted by the examiners as stated in the rubric of the examination paper.

Candidates shall not take mobile phones, smart watches or similar devices into the examination room.

Electronic calculators, provided that they are operationally quiet, hand-held, contain their own power source, do not have an SD card slot and cannot communicate with other devices, may be used by candidates in an examination unless the use of any type of calculator or of particular types of calculators has been expressly forbidden by the examiners.

Candidates shall not bring food or drink into the examination room without prior permission from the senior invigilator.

- 22 No information relating to the examination paper, additional to that contained in the paper, shall be conveyed to candidates during the examination, unless there is an error in the paper, in which case the information shall be provided to all candidates taking the examination.
- 23 Candidates shall not remove from an examination any answer books or material provided for the examination, other than the question paper unless it is specified that it may not be removed.
- 24 During an examination candidates shall not communicate with one another or leave their places except to obtain additional stationery or to speak to an invigilator.
- 25 Candidates shall not be admitted to an examination later than one hour after it has commenced, except with the permission of the senior invigilator.
- 26 Candidates shall not leave an examination until one hour after it has commenced, or within the last fifteen minutes, except with the permission of the senior invigilator. Candidates who leave before the end of an examination shall do so in such a way as to cause the minimum of disturbance to the other candidates.
- 27 Candidates may leave an examination temporarily only with the permission of the senior invigilator, and when accompanied by an invigilator or other person authorised by the senior invigilator.
- 28 Except when prevented by medical reasons or other sufficient cause, candidates who fail to present themselves for an examination, or to submit cumulative or other forms of assessment work by the due date, shall be deemed by the Board of Examiners to have failed in that examination or assessment.
- 29 Candidates shall ensure that all their examination scripts and other work submitted for assessment are legible. The examiners may decide not to mark examination scripts or other work judged by them to be illegible.
- 30 A person who is considered by the senior invigilator to be disruptive during an examination may be required to withdraw from that examination.
- 31 If the senior invigilator considers that annotation of prescribed texts used in an examination could give a candidate an unfair advantage, the texts may be retained at the end of the examination.
- 32 Except with the permission of the senior invigilator, no person other than the candidates for the examination and other invigilators shall be allowed in the examination room.
- 33 It is the responsibility of each candidate to ensure that his or her script is received by an invigilator.
- 34 Instructions to invigilators setting out the details of the procedures to be followed in the conduct of examinations shall be approved by or on behalf of the Senate.

#### *Offences in Connection with Examinations and Other Forms of Assessment*

- 35 It is an offence for a candidate to infringe, or attempt to infringe, the above regulations or to engage, or attempt to engage, in conduct for the purpose of gaining for himself or herself, or for another candidate, an unfair advantage with a view to obtaining a better result than he or she would otherwise achieve.

Examples of such conduct are:

- a) copying from the examination script or other work undertaken for assessment by another candidate;

- b) personation of others;
- c) fabrication of results;
- d) plagiarism;
- e) collusion;
- f) use of inadmissible material;
- g) contract cheating.

Reports of alleged offences shall be considered under procedures approved by the Council in consultation with the Senate in accordance with the Ordinance on Student Discipline.

*Presentation of Evidence of Extenuating Circumstances*

- 36 a) Save in exceptional circumstances:
- i) written medical evidence, or evidence of compassionate circumstances, relevant to the performance of a candidate in a written examination must be presented to the Course/Subject Director not later than five working days following the examination;
  - ii) written medical evidence, or evidence of compassionate circumstances, relevant to the performance of a candidate in coursework must be presented to the Course/Subject Director not later than five working days following the date on which the work was due to be submitted.
- b) For periods of more than five working days, evidence of ill-health must be authenticated by the candidate's doctor or registered counsellor. Medical certificates from doctors and appropriate documentation from counsellors should be forwarded directly to the Course/Subject Director. Self-certification will not be accepted for periods of more than five working days.

The term 'exceptional circumstances' will be given a restrictive interpretation. The Senate, through the relevant committee, shall determine exceptional circumstances which allow alternative forms of authentication of ill-health in respect of clause (b). Such circumstances may include an epidemic or pandemic. A candidate claiming exceptional circumstances in relation to the late submission of evidence under clause (a) must do so in writing in accordance with clause 42.

- 37 Evidence of extenuating circumstances shall be considered, as appropriate, by the Board of Examiners or, in respect of semester one performance, by the course committee or by the subject committee for Single Honours degree candidates on modular programmes. The Progress and Award Board shall consider such evidence in respect of Major/Minor, Joint and Combined Honours candidates.

*Publication of Results*

- 38 The list of results obtained by candidates in each examination, and the decisions about the academic progress of candidates, shall be drawn up by the appropriate Board of Examiners. The Board shall forward:
- a) to the Senate the pass and classified lists of candidates who have successfully completed the final examinations leading to a degree, diploma, certificate or other academic distinction of the University;
  - b) to the appropriate national or professional body results of candidates in examinations leading to an award of the body concerned.
- 39 The results of individual candidates shall be made available to them in their student record. The final pass and classified lists of successful candidates shall be placed in the public domain. It is the responsibility of all candidates to find out their results, and of unsuccessful candidates to request their Course/Subject Director to provide them with a written record of the decision which the Board of Examiners has taken about their progress.

### *Retention of Examination Material*

- 40 Except where alternative arrangements have been approved by or on behalf of the Senate, a candidate's written examination scripts and work on which cumulative and other forms of assessment have been based, shall be preserved for six months following the Board of Examiners which has confirmed the candidates' results in the assessment.
- 41 For the purpose of providing feedback on examination performance candidates may be given access to examination scripts in the presence of a member of academic staff. Candidates shall not be permitted to retain examination scripts. Work on which cumulative and other forms of assessment have been based may be returned to candidates. It shall be given back, if required, at any time within one year from the examination. Failure on the part of a candidate to return work as required will be a sufficient reason for a Board of Examiners not to take the work into account in determining the results of a candidate.

### *Appeals*

- 42 A candidate may appeal against a decision on academic progress:
- a) on the basis of evidence of extenuating circumstances, relevant to his/her examination performance which, in his/her view, was not in the possession of the board of examiners at the time of the Board's initial decision about his/her academic progress; or
  - b) on the basis of procedural or other irregularities in the conduct of the examinations.

The decision shall be reviewed in accordance with the procedures established by the Senate.

- 43 Students should raise any concerns or complaints about any aspect of programme delivery or supervision as soon as they arise.

APPENDIX L1

**ULSTER BUSINESS SCHOOL UNDERGRADUATE ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK  
(Quantitative-Based Work)**

Module Name:

Module Code:

Student Name:

Range (%)	Descriptors
6 70 – 100	'Excellent' and 'Comprehensive'
5 60 – 69	'Good' and 'Substantial'
4 50 – 59	'Limited' and 'Reasonable'
3 40 – 49	'Partial' and 'Restricted'
2 35 – 39	'Poor' and 'Inconsistent'
1 0 – 34	'Lacking' and 'Unacceptable'

**ANALYSIS**

Excellent analytical skills in evaluating outcomes and making decisions

6	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---

Restricted analytical skills

**INTERPRETATION**

Excellent interpretative skills in evaluation outcomes and making decisions

6	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---

Restricted interpretative skills

**SOLVING PROBLEMS**

Clear understanding of the methods used in solving problems

6	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---

Lack of understanding of the methods used in solving problems

Clear demonstration of the steps taken in calculations

6	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---

Lack of demonstration of the steps taken in calculation

**UNDERSTANDING**

Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of concepts and principles

6	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---

Little or no evidence of knowledge of key concepts and principles

**CALCULATIONS**

Substantially correct calculations

6	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---

Incorrect calculations

**STRUCTURE**

Logical structure

6	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---

Unacceptable structure

**GRAMMAR**

Correct grammar

6	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---

Unacceptable grammar

**SPELLING**

Correct spelling

6	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---

Poor spelling

**PRESENTATION**

Excellent well directed presentation

6	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---

Unacceptable presentation

*See Comments Overleaf*

**UNDERGRADUATE ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK  
(Quantitative-Based work)**

MARK AWARDED:

COMMENTS:

(Feedback should reflect the following: strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement.)

The policy on double marking is for 10% or 6 pieces (which ever is greater) of student work where coursework accounts for 50% (or more) of the total marks awarded for the module.

SECOND MARKER'S COMMENTS (if appropriate):

AGREED OVERALL MARK (if appropriate):

LECTURER:

SECOND MARKER (if appropriate):

**ULSTER BUSINESS SCHOOL UNDERGRADUATE ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK – LEVEL 6  
(Qualitative Work)**

<b>Module Name:</b>	<b>Range (%)</b>	<b>Descriptors</b>	
	7 80 – 100	'Insightful', 'Original' and 'Reflective'	
	6 70 – 79	'Excellent' and 'Comprehensive'	
	5 60 – 69	'Good' and 'Wide'	
	4 50 – 59	'Limited' and 'Occasional'	
	<b>Module Code:</b>	3 40 – 49	'Basic' and 'Weak'
		2 35 – 39	'Poor' and 'Limited'
	1 0 - 34	'Little' and 'Insufficient'	

<b>Student Name:</b>
----------------------

**Analysis and Synthesis**  
Analysis and synthesis is critical, insightful, including an original and reflective approach

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

**Analysis and Synthesis**  
No evaluation or synthesis

**Application**  
Clear evidence of relevant applications and or empirical results

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

**Application**  
No evidence of relevant application of theory to practice

**Understanding**  
Comprehensive knowledge and in-depth understanding of key principles and concepts

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

**Understanding**  
Little or no evidence of knowledge or key principles and concepts.

**Reading**  
Extensive evidence of integrating appropriate supplementary sources

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

**Reading**  
Little or no evidence of reading

**Referencing and Bibliography**  
Comprehensive referencing and bibliography

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

**Referencing and Bibliography**  
Little or no referencing

**Structure**  
Logical structure

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

**Structure**  
Unacceptable structure

**Presentation**  
Excellent well-directed presentation

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

**Presentation**  
Unacceptable presentation

**Grammar and Spelling**  
Correct grammar and spelling

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

**Grammar and Spelling**  
Unacceptable grammar and spelling



**UNDERGRADUATE ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK – LEVEL 6  
(Excluding Quantitative Work)**

**SECTION A**

**PROVISIONAL MARK AWARDED:**

(Provisional denotes that the mark is subject to the moderation process)

Pass Mark: 40

**COMMENTS:**

(Feedback should include comments on the achievement of the learning outcomes)

(Strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement should be highlighted)

**Signed (1<sup>st</sup> Marker):**

**SECTION B**

**MODERATION PROCESS**

(This section is to be completed if moderation of a script occurs)

**Second Marker's Comments:**

**Agreed Overall Mark**

**Signed (1<sup>st</sup> Marker):**

**Signed (2<sup>nd</sup> Marker):**

**Faculty Double Marking Policy**

The Policy on Double Marking is for 10% or 6 pieces (whichever is greater) of student work where coursework accounts for 50% (or more) of the total marks awarded for the module.

## APPENDIX L3

### **THE FOOD INDUSTRY ESSAY FEEDBACK SHEET – Year One, Food Technology Management**

(original supplied by Mr P. Mitchell, School of Biomedical Sciences, University of Ulster, Coleraine)

ABC102C2 The Food Industry: Essay

Title: Evaluate the usefulness and limitations of gene technology to supply foods that meet the needs of consumers in Western countries

Name:

Member of staff:

#### **Sections of essay**

Relevant background and clear statement of aims	out of 10 marks
Additional and relevant sources of information	out of 20 marks
Logical structure including a conclusion	out of 10 marks
Balanced presentation of the facts	out of 15 marks
Relevant examples	out of 10 marks
Balanced interpretation of the facts	out of 15 marks
Correct referencing	out of 10 marks
Concise, coherent and fluent written expression	out of 10 marks
Total:	out of 100 marks

#### **Strengths**

#### **Areas for improvement**

**ANIMAL BIOLOGY ESSAY FEEDBACK SHEET – HND Level**

(original supplied by Dr S. Fitzpatrick, Faculty of Life and Health Sciences, University of Ulster)

Animal Biology Essay

Name:

**Information**

	Too detailed	About right	Unclear	Muddled	Omissions
Body plan					
Major groups					
Diversity					
Adaptation					

**Diagrams**

Clear ( )      Untidy ( )      Cluttered ( )      Inaccurate ( )

Not adequately labelled ( )      Labels wrong ( )      Label lines crossing ( )

Poor copies of lecture notes ( )      Textbook diagrams used uncritically ( )

**Structure of the essay**

**Introduction**    Good ( )      Too general ( )      Too short ( )      Too long ( )

**Content**      Not well organised ( )      Not sufficiently selective ( )      Good ( )

Ideas not followed through ( )      Examples not followed through ( )

Not wide-ranging enough ( )      Evidence of reading ( )

**Conclusion**    Good ( )      Too general ( )      Too short ( )      Too long ( )

**Language**    Appropriate ( )      Repetitive ( )      Stilted ( )

Ideas not expressed clearly ( )      Waffle ( )

Obviously derived from textbooks ( )      Plagiarised ( )

**Further**

**comments**

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF TURNITIN AT ULSTER UNIVERSITY**

Turnitin is originality checking software and has been used to detect potential instances of plagiarism and incorrect referencing at Ulster since the early 2000s. Ulster has an institutional licence for the software, with single sign on from within Blackboard Learn.

The University's primary focus for using the software is to support Ulster's Plagiarism policy<sup>2\*</sup> which states that: *"It is expected that all students are educated in correct academic practice, including writing and referencing, early in their careers at the University and know what is expected of them and understand the meaning of plagiarism and its consequences"*.

To support this aim - Turnitin is available to all staff and students, through Blackboard Learn integration, and should be used to:

- help improve students understanding of academic writing with the aim of reducing instances of plagiarism;
- improve student understanding of academic integrity;
- support discussions about the academic integrity of a submission;
- aid the detection of plagiarism where an individual student is suspected of plagiarism.

A secondary use of Turnitin, which has and continues to become increasingly popular, is for the Electronic Management of Assessment. Turnitin's Grademark functionality supports online annotation, online marking, reusable comments, audio feedback and digital feedback.

These guidelines set out how Ulster staff use the service at Ulster and include recommendations to support academic staff and students who use the service.

1. At Ulster University Turnitin is primarily used to encourage students to improve their academic practice.
  2. Turnitin is integrated with Blackboard Learn and is available in all modules. Turnitin should be accessed through Blackboard Learn for single sign-on and ease of use.
  3. It is acknowledged that there are specialised, subject specific, assignment types which Turnitin cannot check for originality; for example, specialist binary file types, graphics, animations, video and non-digital artefacts. Ulster staff will therefore apply judgement to decide if Turnitin is appropriate for individual assessments.
  4. Ulster staff will be open and transparent when checking students' work. If an originality report is to be generated and reviewed by the academic team, it will be clearly indicated in the Turnitin submission area and module handbook.
  5. There may be occasions when it is necessary to generate a Turnitin originality report to assist in the identification of plagiarised work as part of a formal disciplinary process. In these circumstances, academic staff are permitted to submit papers on behalf of the students.
  6. Turnitin is not a substitute for academic judgement on student submissions. Text matching indicated by Turnitin should be used as an indicator and a particular percentage value does not prove instances of plagiarism. The text matches identified in an Originality Report must be reviewed, and judgement applied, to determine:
-

- a. sources that can be excluded;
  - b. proper referencing and citation in accordance with University requirements;
  - c. common terminology in the discipline;
  - d. the nature of the submission.
7. Turnitin will be made available to students, prior to final submission, permitting multiple submissions to check their assignments throughout their course of study. A separate Turnitin submission box (not submitted to the UK repository) should be available for this purpose.
  8. Turnitin matches against its database material, this is not guaranteed to identify all instances of potentially plagiarised text.
  9. All students should be advised that their work may be made available to third parties (such as Turnitin) for business workflows such as external examining, quality assurance and originality checking.
  10. Academic staff should bulk download and back up submissions locally and once marked bulk download and back up any annotated submissions.
  11. There may be occasions, beyond Ulster's control, when Turnitin may be unavailable due to technical reasons. Downtime is rare and normally short in duration. As marking is often a time critical process, it is advised that local backups of your assignments are created for business continuity purposes.
  12. If Turnitin is unavailable during submission deadlines, assignment extensions will be permitted until the service is restored. Turnitin settings should be amended to facilitate later submission or a separate submission box can be set up to accept late submissions.
  13. The Office for Digital Learning will endeavour to communicate downtime through available channels – all student emails, Blackboard announcements and Twitter. Academic staff are encouraged to use module specific communication channels to notify students of the downtime.
  14. If Turnitin is unavailable and you need an alternative submission method there are other options available:
    - a. Blackboard Assignment tool.
    - b. Paper submission.
    - c. Email submission.
  15. If Turnitin is unavailable and you need to mark assignments offline, you have three options:
    - a. Use the iPad app – the Turnitin iPad app stores copies of assignments locally and allows you to mark offline. Marks and feedback will be transferred to Turnitin when the system is restored. You should sync assignments to the app as soon as the submission deadline has passed.
    - b. If you have prepared in advance and downloaded all submissions locally you can
      - i. mark assignments offline and record marks locally for transfer to Turnitin when service is restored. This process is manual and will be labour intensive.
      - ii. Use offline annotation tools such as Adobe Acrobat Reader, Word etc – again this process is manual and will be labour intensive.

**FRAMEWORK OF PENALTIES FOR PLAGIARISM OFFENCES IN TAUGHT PROGRAMMES AND MASTER OF RESEARCH (2012)**

1 <sup>st</sup> OFFENCE	2 <sup>nd</sup> OFFENCE	3 <sup>rd</sup> OFFENCE	4 <sup>th</sup> OFFENCE	PLAGIARISM DETECTED AFTER GRADUATION
<p>Reduction in marks based on exclusion of plagiarised work.</p> <p>Formative interview with module co-ordinator and/or lecturer.</p>	<p>Mark of zero for assignment containing plagiarism.</p> <p>Interview with Head of School and/or Course/Subject Director and/or lecturer.</p> <p>Formal letter of reprimand from Head of School. Copy placed on student file.</p>	<p>Mark of zero for assignment containing plagiarism and maximum mark of 40% (UG) or 50% (PG) for coursework element<sup>1</sup>.</p> <p>Case referred to Dean with recommendation of reprimand and fine not exceeding the maximum amount permitted under the Ordinance on Student Discipline at the time of application of penalty.</p> <p>Interview with Dean.</p> <p>Formal letter of reprimand from Dean. Copy placed on student file.</p>	<p>Mark of zero for module.</p> <p>Case referred to University Disciplinary Committee with recommendation of suspension (1 semester or 1 year as advised by Faculty) or discontinuation of studies at the University.</p> <p>Outcome recorded on student file.</p>	<p>The award may be revoked.</p>

<sup>1</sup> 'Assignment containing plagiarism' means the assignment which contains the plagiarised material, and not all the assessments for the module. 'Maximum mark for coursework element' refers to the total aggregate percentage mark for all the pieces of coursework in the module.

**UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER PLAGIARISM REGISTER  
PLAGIARISM OFFENCE RECORD AND INPUT DOCUMENT**

Student's Name	
Registration Number	
Undergraduate/Postgraduate offence	
First/second/subsequent offence	
School	

Module code and title	
Module Co-ordinator	
Type of assignment	
Date assignment submitted	
Date plagiarism detected	
Date of interview	
Interviewer(s)	

Narrative comments and penalty imposed	
--	--

Form completed by		Date
Date recorded on register		By

APPENDIX N

**ACADEMIC STANDING (AST) CODES FOR RECORDING ACADEMIC PROGRESS AT BOARDS OF EXAMINERS**

**Successful Leavers**

AST	DESCRIPTION
S1	Course completed and award obtained.
S2	Exit with lower award on a linked higher-level course and not eligible to apply for readmission to the same/similar or part-time version of the course in next academic year.
S3	Completion of course or period of study (no University award).
<b>For Nursing Courses Only</b>	
SA	Course completed, award obtained and record professional award.
SB	Completion of course or period of study (no University award) and record professional award.
SC	Exit with lower award on a linked higher-level course and record professional award. Not eligible to apply for readmission to the same/similar or part-time version of the course in the next academic year.

**Proceed**

AST	DESCRIPTION
P1	Proceed to the next year/stage of the course in the next academic year.
P2	Proceed to the next year/stage of the course in the same academic year.
P3	Proceed to the next year/stage of the course in the next academic year but required to take or retake specified examination(s) and/or coursework.
P5	Student has satisfied the examination requirements for the course and is eligible to proceed to a linked higher-level course in the next academic year (e.g. PgDip to Master's degree).
P6	Student has satisfied the examination requirements for the course and is eligible to proceed to a linked higher-level course in the same academic year.
P9	Dissertation in progress and within the normal duration as specified in the course handbook. Proceed to next academic year. No fee due (Master's courses only). This code has limited application and is <u>not</u> to be used when an extension of time has been granted or an EC1 submitted.
<b>For Nursing Courses Only</b>	
PA	Proceed to the next semester but required to take or retake specified examination(s) and/or coursework. (Pre-registration Nursing courses only.)
PC	Proceed to the next year/stage of the course in the next academic year and record professional award.
PD	Student has satisfied the examination requirements for the course and is eligible to proceed to a linked higher-level course in the next academic year and record professional award.

<b>For Courses with a Placement Year</b>	
P4	Proceed to placement year but required to take or retake specified examination(s) and/or coursework.
P7	Permitted to proceed to final year due to extenuating circumstances. Final award will not include DPP(I)/DIAS. Student otherwise in good academic standing.
P8	Proceed to final year without placement, as placement is optional.



<b>PP</b>	Proceed to placement year.
<b>PE</b>	Exempt placement - sufficient effort but unable to obtain placement.
<b>PF</b>	Exempt placement - extenuating circumstances.
<b>PG</b>	Exempt placement - prior work experience.
<b>PH</b>	Exempt placement – HND/Foundation degree containing a placement element.
<b>PL</b>	Proceed and taking leave of absence.
<b>PN</b>	Decision on progression to placement deferred.
<b>PX</b>	Proceed to final year, exempt placement but required to take or retake specified examination(s) and/or coursework.

### Transfer

<b>AST</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>T1</b>	Recommend transfer on educational grounds to another course [e.g. BEng to MEng (student in good academic standing). Transfer route explicitly identified in course regulations].
<b>T2</b>	Recommend transfer on educational grounds to a lower level course e.g. MEng to BEng (progress on current course not permitted). Cannot be used to transfer from one Honours degree to another.
<b>T3</b>	Student record amendment form (SRAF) requesting transfer to another programme completed by student earlier in the year.

### Decision Deferred/Resit

<b>AST</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>D1</b>	Resubmit coursework and/or retake examinations before the start of the next academic year.
<b>D2</b>	First sitting of examinations and/or extension of period of time granted to submit coursework/project/dissertation due to authenticated medical or other extenuating circumstances before the start of the next academic year (no fee to be charged).
<b>D3</b>	Combination of resit/resubmission and first sit/first submission prior to the start of next academic year.
<b>D4</b>	Resubmit coursework and/or retake examinations before the start of the next academic year, but for exceptional reasons exempt from payment of resit fee.
<b>D5</b>	Submit dissertation by a specified date in the next academic year due to authenticated evidence of medical or other extenuating circumstances (postgraduate courses only).
<b>D6</b>	Resubmit dissertation by a specified date prior to the start of the next academic year (postgraduate courses only).
<b>D7</b>	Decision on progress deferred due to insufficient information.

### Non-progressing – Progress to next stage not permitted

<b>AST</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>N1</b>	Retake year in full with attendance, as for the first time, where there is authenticated evidence of medical or other extenuating circumstances.
<b>N2</b>	Retake year in part with attendance, as for the first time, where there is authenticated evidence of medical or other extenuating circumstances. Take specified examinations and/or coursework.

AST	DESCRIPTION
N3	Retake year in part with attendance and repeat specified examinations and/or coursework for failed modules.
N4	Repeat specified examinations and/or coursework for failed modules, without attendance, during the next academic year.
N5	Take specified examinations and/or coursework during the next academic year, without attendance (first sitting/submission because of authenticated extenuating circumstances).
N6	Resubmit dissertation by a specified date during the next academic year (postgraduate courses only).
NP	Take placement year in full with attendance as for the first time due to extenuating circumstances.

#### Unsuccessful Leavers

AST	DESCRIPTION
U1	Fail and required to withdraw from the course and not eligible to apply for readmission to the same course in the next academic year.

#### Early Leavers

AST	DESCRIPTION
L1#	Withdrawn - recorded by the Board of Examiners as having withdrawn from the course.

# Leaver code to be entered in addition to L1: 01 - Health reasons, 02 - Financial reasons, 03 - Personal reasons, 04 - To take up employment, 05 - Course unsuitable, 06 - Transfer to another Ulster course, 07 - Transfer to another institution, 12 – Unknown, 14 – Visa issues.

#### ACADEMIC STANDING (AST) CODES FOR RECORDING STUDENT PROGRESS AT THE END OF THE FIRST SEMESTER

AST	DESCRIPTION
F1	Take for the first time examinations and/or submit coursework, in May/June or August ('first sit').
F2*	Proceed to the next year of the course in Semester Two of the current academic year and reverse semesters.
P1*	Proceed to the next year/stage of the course in the next academic year.
T1	Recommend transfer on educational grounds to another course (student in good academic standing).
T2	Recommend transfer on educational grounds to another lower level course (progress on current course not permitted). Cannot be used to transfer from one Honours degree to another.
U1*	Fail and required to withdraw from the course and <b>not</b> eligible to apply for readmission to the same course in the next academic year.
L1#	Withdrawn – recorded by the course/subject committee or Progress and Award Board as having withdrawn from the course.

\* May only be used for students who have repeated examinations and/or coursework from the previous academic year.

# Leaver code to be entered in addition to L1 as above.

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