



UNIVERSITY  
*of York*

# **POLICY ON ASSESSMENT, EXAMINERS, MARKING AND FEEDBACK 2023/24**

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**GUIDE TO ASSESSMENT, STANDARDS, MARKING  
& FEEDBACK**



# **Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking & Feedback**

## **Policy on Assessment, Examiners, Marking and Feedback**

### **2023/24**

<b>Assessment: Principles, Policies and Requirements</b>	<b>3</b>
1. Assessment Principles	3
2. Definitions	3
3. Assessment Policies	4
4. Assessment Requirements	6
5. Assessment, Progression and Awards for study abroad, placements, and partner institutions.	23
<b>Examiners for Taught Programmes</b>	<b>30</b>
6. Board of Examiners for Taught Programmes	30
7. Internal Examiners	33
8. External Examiners	34
<b>Assessment Formats</b>	
9. Closed Examinations	43
10. Open Book Examinations	49
11. Open examinations	50
12. Cumulative Assessment – multiple tasks throughout a module	51
13. Coursework (e.g essays/reports in non-examination conditions)	52
14. Capstone Projects	53
15. Posters and Presentations	56
16. Group Projects	58
17. Viva voce and oral examinations in taught programmes	61
18. Online examinations	61
<b>19 Standards and Marking</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>20 Feedback</b>	<b>74</b>

# Assessment: Principles, Policies and Requirements

## 1. Assessment Principles

### 1.1 University assessment principles

Assessments must be:

- linked explicitly to the teaching and learning aims and outcomes of the academic programme concerned.
- designed to ensure that students are treated equitably and that they have the opportunity to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes of a programme of study
- provide a clear framework within which examiners can make judgements on the comparative performance of students.

Assessment leading to University awards should be based on the principles of:

- **Equity**
- **Openness**
- **Clarity**
- **Consistency**

## 2. Definitions

### 2.1 Defining purposes of assessment<sup>1</sup>

The way in which students are assessed fundamentally affects their learning. Good assessment practice is designed to ensure that, in order to pass the module or programme, students have to demonstrate they have achieved the intended learning outcomes. To test a wide range of intended learning outcomes, diversity of assessment practice between and within different subjects is to be expected and welcomed, requiring and enabling students to demonstrate their capabilities and achievements within each module or programme.

Students need to be aware of the purposes and implications of different assessment tasks and it is important that students know whether the outcomes of each assessment are to be used for formative and/or summative purposes.

### 2.2 Defining terms

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

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from the text of the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning. (October 2013)

- **‘Summative assessment’** is used to determine the extent of a learner’s success in meeting the assessment criteria used to gauge the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme and therefore contributes to the accumulation of credits and grades for purposes of progression and award;
- **‘Formative assessment’** has a developmental purpose and is designed to help learners learn more effectively by giving them feedback on their performance and on how it can be improved and / or maintained;
- **‘Diagnostic assessment’** is used to show a learner’s preparedness for a module or programme and identifies, for the learner and the teacher, any strengths and potential gaps in knowledge, understanding and skills expected at the start of the programme, or other possible problems. Particular strengths may lead to a formal consideration of accreditation of prior learning.

An assessment process can, and often does, involve more than one of these assessment purposes. For example, an assessment component submitted during a module may provide formative feedback designed to help students improve their performance in subsequent assessments. An end-of-module or end-of-programme examination or other assessment normally results in a summative judgement being made about the level the student has attained, but any feedback on it may also have an intended formative purpose that can help students in assessment later in their programme, or on another programme.

### 3. Assessment Policies

#### 3.1 Oversight of assessment policies

Assessment leading to university awards is governed by a regulatory framework, in the University Regulations and Ordinances, and under the Rules for Progression and Award and the policies set out in this Guide in this Guide. The implementation of the framework, rules and policy is the responsibility of schools/departments; their monitoring and development is the responsibility of the University Teaching Committee (UTC) and its related sub-committees, particularly the Standing Committee on Assessment (SCA).

School/departmental assessment processes and practice must be consistent with the Rules for Progression and Award and with this Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback unless any variation has been approved through the process of programme approval or by permission from SCA.

#### 3.2 School/Department information on assessment processes and practices

Schools/Departments must comply with University policies on assessment. Where such additional school/department level policies or processes exist as approved in line with 3.1 above, they must be clearly documented and presented in a way that is easily accessible to all students who will take such assessments (including those from other departments on joint programmes or taking elective modules). This information can form part of a school/department or programme specific handbook, but it must be clear which policies and procedures will apply to a given student.

Schools/Departments are responsible for ensuring that documentation about assessment processes and practices is made available to all staff, students and External Examiners. Heads of schools/departments must ensure that new members of staff receive appropriate induction to school/department assessment

policies and procedures. Documents about programmes, including any assessments, should be kept for 5 years after the end date of a course with OFS condition B4.3 (61), before being securely destroyed.

### **3.3 Scope of policies**

School/Department level information about assessment processes or practices must relate to all assessments which formally contribute to an award of the University of York, whether undertaken by students on campus or under other conditions (eg distance learning, placement, exchange). Each school/department that contributes to a combined programme of study must ensure that combined programme students and students from other schools/departments taking their assessments are provided with sufficient information and guidance on assessments to enable them to perform to as high a standard as they are academically able.

### **3.4 Planning assessments, marking and feedback**

In order to ensure adherence to University assessment policy and to maintain good practice, , schools/departments should give as much consideration to the planning of assessment, marking and feedback procedures, including for example:

- the need to set appropriate assessment tasks for different programmes/ modules/levels;
- consideration of a range of assessment tasks to support development of a range of skills and to balance marking demands across a programme;
- the dangers of over-assessing and therefore creating unmanageable marking and feedback loads;
- the availability of resources needed for assessment;
- timing of assessment: the assessment for a module should take place during the next available assessment period;
- the need to provide clear information to students about the support available to them in advance of assessment;
- staff availability/ allocation to assessment and marking duties;
- workload balance involved (for staff and students);
- time constraints (including completing marking and feedback within twenty-five working days);
- arrangements for marking (ie ensuring marking and feedback are planned appropriately for all students and staff).

### **3.5 Approval and review of policy and procedures**

Policies and procedures concerning assessment are considered by the SCA in the first instance and approved by the UTC. Schools/Departments are required to review processes and practices concerning assessment on a regular basis, in the light of the reports of External Examiners. They must ensure particularly that processes and practices have been implemented consistently, have contributed to the achievement of the outcomes of the degree programmes concerned, and continue to be appropriate to the aims and objectives of the school/department.

## 4. Assessment Requirements

### 4.1 Language of assessment

Except where proficiency/specialism in another language is being assessed, or the assessment forms part of an exchange programme, all assessments for awards of the University of York must be conducted in English, unless prior consent has been obtained from the at the point of programme approval. Exceptions will be considered only where it can be assured that the academic standards of the assessment are not compromised, where sufficient language expertise exists among the examiners (including the External Examiner), and where the arrangement does not create a lack of equity among students. Assessed work should not be written in another language and then translated into the language of assessment prior to marking. Translation tools may only be used to the extent approved in the Proofreading, Translation and Editing policy (on the [Guide to Assessment webpage](#)). This applies equally to collaborative programmes, and validated provision. See [UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Advice and Guidance: Assessment \(Nov, 2018\)](#).

### 4.2 Conflicts of interest

All personnel involved in the assessment of students, or in administering assessment, are expected to act with the highest standards of probity in this regard. Potential conflicts of interest should be declared at the earliest opportunity to the Chair of the relevant Board of Examiners (BoE), who will decide on the appropriate course of action. Serious conflicts of interest affecting External Examiners or the Chair of Board of Examiners (CBoE) should be notified at the earliest opportunity to SCA. In determining whether a set of circumstances amounts to a conflict of interest, the test should be whether an outsider, aware of the facts, could reasonably consider that the assessment process might be compromised by the potential conflict of interest.

### 4.3 Abiding by announced assessment programme

Students should be subject to the assessment policies in place at the start of the relevant academic year except insofar as any changes have been approved by UTC or SCA or under the University's Contingency Framework for Assessment and Examinations.

All students are expected to undertake the assessments outlined in programme and module documentation unless they have been formally notified otherwise by the Board of Studies (BoS) or by Student Services. Any variation in the assessments described in programme or module documentation available to students at the time module choices were made constitutes a 'major' programme modification and must be approved by the relevant Faculty Learning and Teaching Group (FLTG). Such variations include modifications to the timing of assessment as well as its nature (see 'Modifying Programmes and Modules' on the [Quality Assurance](#) webpage).

Requests for such modifications will normally be approved only if either:

- a) all students involved have been consulted and given their written consent for the change; or
- b) the department/school can provide evidence that no student on the module (including visiting students and any students taking the module as an elective) will be disadvantaged by the change.

Requests may have to be considered at a full meeting of the relevant FLTG and schools/departments are asked to allow for the timings of group's meetings if they wish to propose changes of this type. The same principle applies to modifications to the published teaching timetable and to assessment regulations of a programme of study for an existing cohort of students.

Where, however, an individual student interrupts their period of study (for example, through leave of absence) and re-enters a revised or altered programme, schools/departments are not expected to maintain the particular assessment procedures originally applicable to that student.

#### **4.4 Non-standard assessment arrangements**

Assessments should be delivered in line with the provisions set out under this Guide and any statements on assessment policy as outlined under 3.2 above. Where adjustments are required due to unusual and unexpected situations, departments/schools should first consider whether the situation can be dealt with under the Exceptional Circumstances policy. Where this is not possible, the provisions below should be followed.

Students and schools/departments should submit requests in sufficient time to allow proper consideration. If requests are submitted less than eleven weeks before examination period or assessment deadline, it may not be possible to implement the arrangements for the forthcoming examination(s). In such cases, a student may request temporary adjustment under the Exceptional Circumstances Affecting Assessment policy.

##### ***4.4.1 Adjustment to assessment arrangements for cohorts or groups of students***

Recommendations for any variation of the standard examinations procedures for groups of students during the academic year in which they are taking the relevant module must be approved by the Standing Committee on Assessment.

##### ***4.4.2 Individual assessment arrangements***

Adjustments in relation to individual students should either be provided for under a Student Support Plan (SSP) or, where a SSP is not possible or appropriate to the student's situation, by approval of following the Special Cases procedure.

Assessment adjustments under a SSP can only be made with the explicit recommendation of the student's disability advisor within their SSP, and require approval of the CBoE and the Standing Committee on Assessment. Applications relating to students following combined programmes should come from the BoS of the school/department responsible for the administration of the student's programme. The process of applying for individual arrangements for assessment for elective modules is the same as that for other academic study. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the school/department in which they are undertaking study – particularly in the case of an elective module – receives the appropriate information in a timely manner so that it can consider the recommendation for an individual arrangement on the student's behalf. Students requiring individual assessment arrangements whilst studying abroad should work with the Centre for Global Programmes to ensure that they follow the appropriate procedures at their host institution.

#### **4.4.3 Extra time allowance**

Detailed guidelines on the process for accessing individual arrangements in University examinations are available on the [Taking an Exam](#) university webpage.

Students with a contemporary formal diagnosis of relevant disabilities will normally be permitted up to 25% extra time on the standard time allowed on any closed University examination of up to three hours' duration and for open assessments of up to 72 hours duration. In the case of open assessments of up to 72 hours, the extension is applied in terms of an 8-hour working day, rather than the total time of the exam (eg 25% of a 72-hour assessment = 6 hours). This extra time is added on immediately to the end of the standard hand-in time. Release and submission deadlines for open assessments should, by default, be 11:00 in all departments unless other times have been permitted by SCA. Where this extra time would mean the student working beyond 17:00 that day, the clock stops and restarts again at 09:00 the next working day until extra time allowance is used (eg a standard 72-hour paper with 50% extra time recommended would result in an extra 12 hours. The first 6 hours will be applied to the original hand-in deadline day with the clock stopping at 17:00. The clock then re-starts again at 09:00 the following working day with an additional 6 hours applied. The new hand-in deadline would then be 15:00 on the fourth day).

Where it is considered that an exceptional case exists for extra time beyond these limits, Boards of Studies must seek approval from SCA of a specific recommendation for each paper based on quantitative assessments of the amount and intensity of reading and writing involved in the particular paper, together with various contributing factors (eg the candidate's writing speed), and demonstrating compatibility with the learning outcomes being assessed. Boards may wish to consider alternative assessments that may be appropriate for individual students as an alternative to extra time.

#### **4.4.4 Extensions for students with disabilities which require regular flexibility in deadlines**

A student with a contemporary diagnosis of a disability which may occasionally interfere with the student's ability to plan their time on assessments may have a recommendation included in their SSP (SSP) for occasional extensions without necessary recourse to the Exceptional Circumstances Affecting Assessment Policy. The relevant CBoE should only approve such an adjustment if timekeeping or the ability to meet deadlines is not a professional competency or formal learning outcome of the course.

The procedure for allowing these extensions must adhere to the following principles:

- a. Wherever possible students should be encouraged to meet the advertised deadlines. Students cannot be offered 'blanket extensions' to all work on a programme.
- b. Each extension must be requested on the exceptional circumstances form by the student to the school/department's disability contact. The request must include the reason for the request (which must relate to their disability) and where appropriate, include the duration to date of the period of particular difficulty.
- c. In approving extensions under this policy, the department/school should be mindful of the other assessment obligations the student is under, and avoid overloading the student wherever possible. A discussion with the student to identify a reasonable timeframe for any extension may well be appropriate at this point. Extensions will not be considered grounds for future mitigation claims,.
- d. In the event that the school/department or the student become concerned that either this policy is no longer effective, is being misused by the student, or suspect that additional support may be required to allow the student to continue with their studies, they should contact the disability



adviser and the SSP can be revisited to ensure adequate support is available. The disability adviser or the school/department may escalate concerns to the Head of the ODT/ Disability Services and the CBoE to determine adequate support mechanisms.

#### **4.4.5 Spelling/grammar stickers**

A student may have a certified disability that recommends they should not be penalised for errors of spelling or grammar in a closed examination or an open assessment. This is considered and recommended by Disability Services in developing the SSP. The BoS has oversight of these recommendations to ensure that they are consistent with relevant published module and/or programme learning outcomes. Once approval has been given the stickers can be placed on assessments by administrators prior to marking. The stickers will alert the marker that the student has such a disability and that errors of spelling or grammar should be ignored.

All schools/departments are expected to comply with this process, and it must be applied to all eligible students on all taught programmes.

### **4.5 Anonymous marking**

Anonymous marking is mandatory for all assessment contributing to a final award, except where unfeasible (eg in assessed practicals; weekly tutorials with associated written work; performance-based assessments; assessments not based on written or recorded work; projects; reflective portfolios relating to observed learning activities) or unnecessarily cumbersome (eg in class tests). Schools/Departments should consider how best to deal with marks which contribute to progression but not an award. Attention should be paid to the weight of each assignment and weigh this against the value of personalised feedback at the earliest stages of a degree programme.

- a. As part of the operation of the University's anonymous marking policy students are identified only by their assessment candidate number until marking has been completed. Assessment candidate numbers are the only 7-digit number appearing on the student's University Card, are automatically generated from the student records system at enrolment and are carried forward from year to year. Candidate numbers should be used in place of names in all assessments that are marked anonymously.
- b. It is important to ensure that assessment candidate numbers remain secure. All staff involved in the assessment must maintain the confidentiality of students' assessment numbers. Students should be advised that they must keep them confidential and the importance of not entering their name in addition to their number on any closed or open assessment should be emphasised.
- c. Schools/Departments should devise schemes which ensure that, as far as is practicable, markers do not know which examination number corresponds to which candidate when assessments are marked. However, once marking is concluded, anonymity should not interfere with effective feedback to students.
- d. Marks under consideration by a BoE should remain anonymous.
- e. Preserving the anonymity of a student's marks may not in fact preserve the anonymity of the student, especially in small schools/departments and some smaller postgraduate programmes. Nevertheless, it is important that all schools/departments attempt to preserve anonymity as far as possible by adopting the practice given above.

- f. Schools/Departments should include in their student handbooks a section describing their own procedures for anonymous marking; they should also emphasise to students the importance of using the correct examination candidate number.
- g. Members of staff having access to students' examination candidate numbers through the student records system should ensure that this information is treated in strict confidence.

## **4.6 Non-written or non-recorded work**

Assessment that is not based on written or recorded work should not comprise in total more than 12.5% of the weighted contribution to the final award. Any divergence from this principle requires the approval of the UTC. In the case of combined programmes the Boards of Studies of the school/department responsible for the administration of the student's programme must ensure that the 12.5% principle is not violated in a combined programme as a whole.

## **4.7 Assessment governing 'mixed student' modules**

For the purposes of this document, 'mixed student' modules are defined as modules in which students from more than one school/department are being assessed. Where a module is taken by students from more than one school/department, all students will be governed by the assessment rules of the school/department offering the module. Schools/departments should make available to incoming students full details of the assessment methods, the criteria and standards, the timing of submission of assessment and the release of results, to ensure that students are aware of specific school/departmental practices when choosing their module. Schools/departments should also ensure that incoming students are made aware of school/department level policies regarding accessibility, presentation of work, referencing conventions, and extensions.

## **4.8 Agreed penalties**

### ***4.8.1 Deadlines for assessed work and lateness penalties***

Deadlines for assessed work must be published in a format that is easily accessible to all students taking the module. For electronic submissions, deadlines may be set on any working day, including Fridays. Care should be taken with Friday deadlines to ensure that there is sufficient time for any required administrative or technical support.

All work submitted late, without valid exceptional circumstances, will have marks deducted. The deadline for work is on the hour, ie if the deadline is 16:00:00, work submitted at 16:00:01 is late.

Work which is up to one hour late will have five percent of marks deducted. After one hour, ten percent of the available marks will be deducted for each day (or part of each day) that the work is late, up to a total of five days, including weekends and bank holidays eg if work is awarded a mark of 30 out of 50, and the work is up to one day late, the final mark is 25. After five days, the work is marked at zero. Note, however, that the penalty cannot result in a mark less than zero.

Where submission of assessed work requires in-person (ie not electronic) submission, the following additional rules will apply:

- a. Schools/Departments must not set Friday deadlines for these submissions (the same principle

applies to the Thursday prior to a Friday bank holiday, eg Easter Bank Holiday weekend).

- b. Deadlines for such submissions should be set within office hours and the facilities for handing in student work should be open for a minimum of three hours prior to the deadline for submission. Any students in a queue to hand in work at the deadline should be able to hand in the work without penalty. A record of submission time must be kept.

#### **4.8.2 Pass/fail modules and components**

The penalty for submitting late on a pass/fail module or on a pass/fail component is a fail. Failures in pass/fail modules cannot be compensated, but can be re-assessed (if the module is defined as re-assessable). Schools/Departments should be aware of the consequences of failure of non-reassessable pass/fail modules when designing programmes.

#### **4.8.3 Reassessment – failure to submit an assessment or attend an examination**

Where a student, with no valid exceptional circumstances, has failed to submit an assessment by the deadline + 5 days or has failed to attend an examination, a mark of '0' will be awarded (see 4.7.1). The student will be given the opportunity for reassessment except where a module is defined as non-reassessable in accordance with [Regulation 5.2](#) (c) and (d). However, if the examination or assessment missed is already a resit or re-assessment to redeem an initial failure, no further reassessment opportunities will be available without proof of exceptional circumstances

#### **4.8.4 Marking limits and tariff penalties for overlength work**

References in these rules to 'limits' relate to any restriction where such limits are defined in the assessment specification on the maximum number of words or pages or to the maximum running time permitted to the student in completing an assessment task.

Each department may adopt one of these approaches to specified word, page or running time limits in assessments:

- a. A **tariff penalty**: the student loses marks where a limit is exceeded; or
- b. A **marking limit**: a rule that markers will not read or otherwise take into account work produced by a student that exceeds the specified limit.

Where a **tariff penalty** is adopted by a department, the department will use a standard University tariff for all forms of assessment with a set limit.

- Up to 15% = 5 mark penalty
- 16-50 % = 10 mark penalty
- Over 50% = mark of 0 awarded

Where a **tariff penalty** approach is adopted, markers will report two cases to the relevant module leader if either: (i) the student has declared the work to be over the word limit or (ii) the marker has identified the work to be in excess of the word limit whatever the student has declared. The department examination team will apply penalties as an administrative intervention and should, in the latter case, refer the work as a case of academic misconduct if requested to do so by the module leader.

Where a **marking limit** is adopted, only the specified number of words or pages will be read by the marker and used for grading. . In any assessment type, any content appearing in the submitted assessment after the specified limit will be ignored. For a time-limited assessment, the marker will stop watching or listening to that assessment at the specified limit or, if conducted live, the assessment will be concluded at the time

limit.

Students must declare word/time/page count on all open forms of assessment, if it is suspected that a limit has been inaccurately declared with intent to deceive, this will be investigated as cheating under Academic Misconduct regulations.

Under-length assignments are not to be penalised under this policy; such work is to be marked on its academic merit only and taken into account in the marking criteria.

Departments should clearly specify what material is or is not included in the word limits (such as reference/bibliographies/tables/figures/equations/credits, etc in respect to the limit)

Where a **marking limit** approach is adopted, markers will apply the limit as part of their marking. They will refer any cases of inaccurate presentation of limits to the module leader for consideration as academic misconduct.

## **4.9 Academic Integrity**

### **4.9.1 Academic Misconduct**

Policies, guidelines and procedures are available on the [Academic Misconduct](#) webpage.

Schools/Departments must ensure that students are aware of all issues relevant to academic misconduct before they undertake or prepare work for assessment. In particular they should draw students' attention to the requirement to successfully complete the Online Academic Integrity Tutorial. Students must be provided with explicit written guidance as to where the boundary lies between permissible mutual assistance and inappropriate collusion in open assessments. Boards of Studies should:

- a) ensure that clear guidance is provided for students (e.g in student handbooks) about how to avoid committing academic misconduct while maintaining the pedagogical value of legitimate collaboration in electronic and other environments;
- b) take steps to ensure that all those involved in the marking process are aware of the University's guidelines on academic misconduct;
- c) ensure assessment practices that promote academic integrity and reduce opportunities for academic misconduct;
- d) require students to maintain appropriate, verifiable records of progress on empirical research projects (eg a Lab Book) which a party other than the candidate can verify, and to be able to make this available at any point to supervisors and internal or External Examiners;
- e) review annually their academic misconduct processes and the guidelines to their students (including identification of the number of cases and the forms of academic misconduct that have been detected) and revise their learning delivery and assessment practices in light of such a review
- f) designate members of staff responsible for ensuring compliance with the University's expectations regarding students and academic misconduct and to serve on the faculty's Standing Academic Misconduct Panels.

### **4.9.2 University's Online Academic Integrity Tutorial**

All students are required to successfully complete the University Online Academic Integrity Tutorial within the first year of their programme of study. (See [Regulations](#) 2.1d, 2.7.7, 3e, 5.7a & 6.5c.) Confirmation of successful completion is required for:

- a) students registered on Foundation certificate programmes, to be able to achieve their award;
- b) undergraduates at the end of their first year, in order to be able to progress;
- c) students registered on pre-Masters programmes, to be able to achieve their award;
- d) students on postgraduate taught programmes before their first assignment is marked, although submission of the assignment will be accepted regardless of whether the student has completed the tutorial.

A student's results, or their confirmation/progression decisions, will not be processed until this confirmation has been received.

The Online Academic Integrity Tutorial should be used in combination with school/departmental or discipline-specific guidance as part of more general academic skills training and educating students about plagiarism. Schools/Departments are encouraged to require their students to undertake the Tutorial in Semester 1 prior to submission of their first assessment.

#### ***4.9.3 Staff submission of student work to Text-matching or authorship authentication software***

To ensure the highest levels of academic integrity and in line with University [Regulation 5.7b](#) staff have the facility to submit student work to the text matching packages – such as SafeAssign® and Turnitin®. In accepting the University Regulations on admission, students have agreed to the University's use of these software packages. However, as submitting student work to these software packages involves sharing student work and data with a third party, schools/departments and staff should:

- a) clearly state their policy regarding the use of software to all students in programme and module information;
- b) follow the VLE guidance available on setting up these tools.

#### **4.10 Notification of results and resits**

Schools/Departments should publish timing of notification of results to students in programme documentation. Undergraduate students should be notified at least five weeks prior to the date of a resit period that they will need to resit an assessment. Postgraduates need to be informed at least three weeks prior to the reassessment.

#### **4.11 Conduct of assessment administered at school/department level**

##### ***4.11.1 Assessment conditions***

Tests, examined practicals and similar types of examination should, as far as possible, be held in the same conditions as those for formal examinations. In particular, attendance should be checked and recorded, there should be adequate invigilation and a member of staff should record receipt of the scripts at the end of the examination.

##### ***4.11.2 Record-keeping by schools/departments***

A record should be maintained indicating receipt by the school/department of all assessments. They must also ensure that the work can be retained as submitted for 5 years after the end date of a course with [OFS condition B4.3 \(61\)](#), before being securely destroyed.

### **4.11.3 Record-keeping by students**

School/Department and student handbooks should make it clear that students must keep work undertaken in completing all of their assessments until their degree is complete.

## **4.12 Submission of assessments in electronic formats**

All written coursework must be submitted electronically except those that have to be produced physically in person (exams, posters, etc) or as part of ongoing activities (things produced during learning activities). Turnitin Feedback Studio is the main method of electronic submission though alternative methods may be considered to fit specific submission specifications in consultation with DET.

### **4.12.1 Electronic Submissions of Assessments**

Where schools/departments allow or require electronic submission of assessments, the following principles apply:

- a. Submission to the right submission point is the student's responsibility and schools/departments are therefore under no responsibility to locate an assessment. If, however, a student establishes (based on any explanation given and any evidence provided) to the satisfaction of the CBoE (or a delegate thereof), that (a) the correct file was submitted by the specified deadline but to the wrong submission point and (b) that the student's error was genuine, then the school/department may still accept and grade the student's submission without penalty if the CBoE or delegate considers it fair and appropriate to do so in all the circumstances.

If the student realises that they have submitted in error to the wrong submission point but within the relevant deadline, they should submit to the right submission point or email the school/department with the originally submitted document. If this results in a late submission, the CBoE (or delegate thereof), if convinced as specified above, may conclude that the on-time submission was submitted to the wrong site by reason of a genuine error, and that the on-time submission may be marked without penalty. If the CBoE or delegate is not convinced it was a genuine error then the late submission to the correct submission point will be marked subject to the standard late penalties.

- b. Schools/Departments should provide an alternative mode of submission (such as email to a central email account) for instances where technical difficulties prevent a student from submitting via the appropriate submission point. In order to use such a submission point, however, students must be able to provide evidence that it was not possible to submit in the normal way. Evidence will be verified by the Digital Education Team and/or IT Services. Issues such as browser compatibility or file size, which could reasonably have been checked in advance, will not be accepted as grounds for alternative submissions. It is expected that only VLE downtime or very rare technical issues, such as blocking of the whole internet in a particular geographical region, would be accepted as grounds for alternative submissions.
- c. Submission deadlines must be set within normal working hours. in order to ensure that technical support for submission points will be available.
- d. Assessments must be submitted in a file type that is acceptable for the submission platform in use and the assessment requirement for the assessment in question. Any such restrictions should be

advertised to students at the time of the issuing of the assessment, rather than only at the point of submission.

Where the integrity of formatting is essential for a text file submission – ie layout and formatting must be locked down so that the submission file is presented in exactly the same way to the marker, irrespective of the browser and operating system that is being used – then PDF must be stipulated as the only acceptable format for submissions. The marker's copy of the work must be identical to the one submitted by the student.

- e. VLE submission points should normally be configured to allow multiple submissions of the same assignment. The last submission before a deadline or, where no submission is on time, the first submission after the deadline is the one that will be marked.

Standard lateness penalties should be applied using the time stamp logged by the VLE when a submission has been successfully completed via the VLE, to determine whether a submission is late or not. Lateness penalties are to be applied strictly with any submission after the specified deadline being late (including those only seconds after that deadline). Students are expected to submit in line with guidance on ensuring that their work will be submitted in good time before any specified assessment deadlines. Submissions with images will take longer than plain text files. Students should be advised that a submission should be attempted at least 30 minutes before the official deadline and should be done using recommended technology, in order to ensure that the work is received in time and does not incur a lateness penalty. Where students do not use the recommended technology as suggested they should allow more time for potential troubleshooting and pay extra attention when double-checking the functionality and readability of the file they have submitted. Students should be advised against trying to submit assignments on a mobile device, smart TV or gaming console.

- f. Where a student submits an incorrect file, a subsequent piece of work submitted after the deadline may be marked without a lateness penalty if the CBoE (or delegate thereof) is satisfied that the student's error in submitting the wrong file was genuine. In so deciding, the CBoE (or delegate) should have regard to all the circumstances including the nature of the work submitted and any evidence the student has been able to submit that explains the error and the extent to which the student is at fault in making the error. Chairs of Boards (or delegate thereof) should be keep in mind that students should not be able to submit incomplete pieces of work simply to gain more time to complete an assessment and therefore that such waiver of the standard rule should only be made in what appear to be cases of genuine error.

#### **4.12.2 Electronic submission by email**

Schools/departments should not generally allow or require students to submit assessed work by email. Where however it proves necessary to do so, fail-safe procedures must be implemented, to address issues relating to submission that IT Services are unlikely to be able to resolve (eg a named member of staff responsible for receiving the work who must email each student to acknowledge their submission, warnings to students to enquire further if they do not receive such an electronic 'receipt' within a given period of time, etc).

## **4.13 Retention of assessment papers/evidence**

### **4.13.1 Assessment contributing to an award**

The storage of assessments is essential for the university to ensure standards, consider academic appeals and meet regulatory requirements<sup>2</sup>. All assessment tasks, students' completed work, associated grades, marksheets/marker feedback for assessment contributing to an award of the University from the academic year 2023/24 should be kept for 5 years after the end date of a course with OFS condition B4.3 (61), before being securely destroyed. Assessments submitted electronically via [VLE](#) will be stored in accordance with this requirement. The University Records Management and Information Governance [maintains a corporate retention schedule](#) and can advise on the storage of electronic and physical assessments.

### **4.13.2 Written or recorded work**

All written or recorded work contributing to the final award should be available for external examination or comment. Where such work has been returned to students, students are responsible for retaining it in a portfolio for possible future external scrutiny. Schools/Departments are responsible for alerting students to this requirement, which is particularly important in relation to the award of Aegrotat degrees.

### **4.13.4 Access to answer scripts**

Schools/Departments should not return answer scripts to closed examinations that contribute to the final award; however, schools/departments are encouraged to permit students to have supervised access to their own answer scripts as a means of feedback. In reaching a decision on whether to do this, schools/departments should consider whether access to scripts is likely to be useful to students, or whether alternative forms of feedback would be more effective. Schools/Departments are free to devise their own schemes for managing access (eg deciding whether access occurs on a given day for any student, or only for students who make a specific request; whether access is allowed only for specific groups; how requests will be managed) subject to the following principles:

- the possibility of access should be advertised to all students to whom it is open;
- no fee should be charged for access to scripts;
- students may not photograph or copy their answers during access;
- alteration of an exam script constitutes 'cheating' under the academic misconduct policy;
- access should be supervised but in such a way that respects the requirements for anonymity in assessment;
- individual requests for access to the exam scripts should not be granted unless the school/department has agreed to grant access as part of the feedback strategy.

Any clerical or procedural errors identified by the students as a result of access to their script should be reported immediately in writing to the CBoE responsible for the module. The Chair or nominated deputy should investigate and exercise academic judgement to determine whether further action should be taken. Such judgements should be made in the context of the cohort of students taking the module. The student should receive a response in writing. Students have no right of appeal against the academic judgement of examiners.

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<sup>2</sup> OFS (2022) [Quality and standards conditions: General ongoing conditions of registration](#).



## 4.14 Assessment of visiting students

For the purposes of this document, visiting students are defined as students of another University who are admitted for up to one year to take modules at York which are then normally recognised for credit as part of the degree programme at their home institution.

### 4.14.1 Assessment

Visiting students are required to submit all required assignments and written work and/or to attend any examinations which constitute the normal assessment regime for the module(s) for which they are registered. A fail mark will usually be issued for a module if the student has not met this requirement, but see also 4.14.1b and 4.14.1.c.

- a The expectation that visiting students take the same normal assessment for a module may only be varied where:
  - the standard assessment is an examination scheduled for a time after the student has left the University, or
  - a module has been shortened in order to allow a student to take elements of the module without completing the full module requirements.

Schools/departments should substitute some other form of assessment for an exam to establish whether the expected learning outcomes of the module have been met. This may be a special examination to be sat by the student prior to leaving the University, or some equally rigorous written assessment, every effort should be made to avoid students sitting examinations after leaving York. Where this is unavoidable, the principle outlined in paragraph [9.10 \(Conduct of distant examinations\)](#) must be adhered to. However, the examination may be scheduled to take place at a later time than the examination at York if the student's home University states in writing that it is willing to accept the risk of collusion.

For a student to be allowed to take a module of shortened length, the school/department should ensure that the BoS has approved a new module form detailing the module credits, learning outcomes and methods of assessment as a minimum. This form should then be forwarded to for set up in SITS.

- b Where it is not possible to implement the alternative assessment arrangements as set out above or and where students are unwilling to submit to the normal assessment regime for a module, the student should be informed that they will be deemed to have failed the module and a fail mark will be recorded on the student's academic transcript. Exceptions may be made in the following circumstances:
  - subject to the agreement of the school/department concerned, a student may take a module on an 'audit' basis provided that he or she requests to do so by the end of the third week of the semester in which the module begins;
  - such requests should only be agreed to if the student provides a written statement from his or her home University approving the request;
  - requests to audit modules received after the third week of semester will not be accepted;
  - students will not receive credit for any modules taken on an audit basis.

- c Visiting students are required to register for modules which constitute the normal full credit load for the period they are at York. Exceptions may be made where a student is required to undertake academic work for their home university, subject to the agreement of the school/department(s) concerned, or where a student is studying at York for the equivalent of one semester at his or her home institution, a student may take fewer credits than the normal full load providing:
- the student requests to do so by the end of the third week of his or her first semester;
  - the student's home University provides written permission and a clear statement confirming the proportion of the student's annual credit load which this work represents; and
  - the combined credit load of home and host University is approximately a normal full credit load.

It is not possible to drop modules after the third week of semester. A fail mark will be issued on the academic transcript for any modules remaining on a student's record for which assessments have not been completed.

Subject to the agreement of the school/department(s) concerned, a student may take more credits than the normal full load (normally up to 80 credits per semester or 140 credits in an academic year, excluding credit for Languages for All courses and modules) provided that a request is made by the end of the third week of the first semester. Such requests should only be agreed to if the student provides a written statement from a home University approving the request. Requests received after the third week of semester to add modules should not be agreed to.

- d In order that academic transcripts for visiting students can be issued in a timely manner, work submitted by visiting students should normally be marked as soon as possible after it is received even if this is in advance of the normal submission deadline. For the same reason, marks for non-award-seeking (visiting) students need not be ratified by an External Examiner, but will be ratified internally (by the CBoS, the CBoE or the Head of School/Department) prior to submission for academic transcript production.
- e All students are normally expected to attend resit examinations in York on the scheduled dates. Schools/departments may permit visiting students to take resit examinations on a different date from other students, provided they are prepared to produce special question papers for this reassessment and the arrangements have been approved in advance by the Chair of SCA
- f Opportunities to retake modules are not available to visiting students after leaving York, and it is important that home institutions have ensured that alternative arrangements to deal with any assessment results that do not meet the requirements of a student's degree programme at their home University (eg arrangements for the gaining of credit) are in place before study is undertaken at York.
- g Any variations in the above requirements for the assessment of visiting students must be approved in advance by the Standing Committee on Assessment.

#### **4.14.2 Resits for overseas students**

All students are normally expected to attend resit examinations in York on the scheduled dates. Any exceptions where resits take place at a different time to the rest of the cohort require special question papers for the early/late resits and provided the arrangements are approved in advance by the Chair of SCA

### **4.15 Assessment and student engagement**

#### **4.15.1 Policy on attendance, formative work and participation**

Formative opportunities enable students to test out ideas, practise skills and rehearse subject knowledge before summative assessment.

The following principles and practices should be adopted in relation to attendance, formative work and participation:

- a. Attendance: Marks or grades should not be awarded to students purely to incentivise or reward attendance (ie simply giving marks to students for being present at learning activities), and lack of attendance should not prevent students from accessing summative assessment.
- b. Formative work: Formative work or the submission of formative work should not be awarded module marks – this makes the work summative. In addition, non-completion of formative work should not prevent students from accessing summative assessment or completing the module.
- c. Participation: Marks for participation should be based on clear criteria in order to avoid risks of inappropriate grade inflation and unfair marking practices. Care should be taken to structure the assessment of participation appropriately and to ensure that steps have been taken to ensure that it is inclusive and makes suitable provision for students on SSPs. Where summative assessment of student participation is included in modules, fair assessment should be supported in the following ways:
  - That constitutes ‘participation’ (ie the specific aspects to be judged) needs to be clearly defined beforehand (criteria);
  - The expectation for participation at different levels (ie Stage 1; Stage 2; Stage 3; Stage 4) needs to be specified and fully understood by staff and students;
  - Students should have formative opportunities to perform and receive specific feedback (oral or written) on improving their performance.

### **4.16 Reassessment**

#### **4.16.1 Timing of Re-assessment**

Resit examinations and other assessments likely to affect an undergraduate student’s progress to the next year of a programme are held no later than the end of the University’s resit week, with notification to students of results as soon as possible thereafter, but in any case no later than by the end of the third week of September.

A reassessment outside the August resit period is permissible provided that all the following conditions are met:

- a. Students taking the reassessment have an outright fail for the module for which they are being reassessed;
- b. It is in the interest of the student’s learning not to be reassessed in the August resit period;

- c. The reassessment does not impinge on teaching and other assessments;
- d. The student is given five weeks' notice (UG)/three weeks' notice (PGT) of reassessment;
- e. The reassessment does not require a University administered examination.

#### **4.16.2 Support in preparation for reassessment or sits-as-if-for-the-first-time**

Students who are retaking assessments will not normally receive any repeat of the teaching associated with the module. All electronic and printed materials associated with the course should continue to be available to the student under the same conditions that they were available during the teaching of the module. Students should not expect one-to-one tuition in preparation for resit examinations or sits-as-if-for-the-first-time, and members of academic staff are not required to make themselves available for consultation during the summer vacation. However, teaching staff on modules should make themselves available following the release of feedback, ideally through office hours or bookable appointments but at least via email, to discuss both the feedback and strategies for the preparation for any repeated assessments.

#### **4.17 Peer marking of summative student work**

Involving students in assessing each other's formative work should be actively encouraged as such activity increases student familiarity with the standards expected of them, the criteria used to mark their assessments and the processes involved in making critical judgements. However, peers assessing summative work and contributing to the summative marks of other students is not permitted. Any divergence from this principle requires the approval of the UTC. To incorporate peer assessment and marking into summative work, group members may assess and mark other group members as long as such marks are then submitted to the acknowledged academic marker who has the final say over the marks.

#### **4.18 Repeat Study for UG programmes**

Undergraduate students whose stage 1 results, after compensation and reassessment, do not meet the requirement for progression into stage 2 are may be permitted to repeat the whole of stage 1, provided they have a minimum credit weighted mean of 10 marks. Tuition fees are charged for the repeat year. Assessment marks from the repeat year only are then used to judge whether the student can progress into stage 2. Marks from the first attempt at stage 1 are disregarded, though all marks are recorded on the transcript. A student normally has only one opportunity for repeat study.

In exceptional circumstances, if a school/department believes that repetition of stage 1 cannot be permitted (perhaps because the style of teaching relies on students not having seen the material before), then the case for opt-out may be made to the Chair of UTC, who can authorise an exception.

Repeating students should note that they may use their previously submitted work for their own learning and reference, in the same way they would use third-party information, but that they may not re-submit work for assessment. Such self-plagiarism will be regarded with the same severity as plagiarism in general in submitted work (see [Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures](#)).

#### **4.19 Guidance on school/departmental information about assessment processes and practices**

The Rules and Assessment and Progression and Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback define the majority of policy to be adopted with regard to student assessment in order to ensure

consistency across the institution. There is some allowable variation in implementation of these policies between disciplines and school/departments, however, and school/departments are responsible for clearly publishing any processes and practices that affect its students.

School/Departmental information on assessment processes and practices must be presented in a durable format (such as a PDF) which makes clear how assessments will be treated for all students on a given programme. Steps should be taken to provide information of general applicability or common across assessments in the school or department to all students in the form of a school/department or programme handbook, or a stand-alone statement on assessment. Information that is specific to the assessment of particular modules should also be included in module information on the VLE. Such information should be made easily available to students (including students from outside of the school/department taking their modules), and should be stored until 5 years after all students from the affected cohort have completed their programme with the University. School/Departments are responsible for drawing students' attention to this information as part of their induction process, and at relevant points in the programme (such as when an unfamiliar assessment format is encountered for the first time, or in the run-up to an assessment period).

School/Departments should provide general guidance on assessment practices for which they are responsible and specific guidance on the assessment of each module as follows:

#### **4.19.1 General Guidance**

1. Schools/departments should ensure that all students taking modules for which they are responsible have access to an overview of all of the different types of assessment used on their programmes). Approaches to assessment should be explained including a description of the marking procedures used by the school/department, including:
  - a. arrangements for any non-anonymous marking
  - b. procedures for double marking, or for alternative arrangements (for example, single marking against specimen answers);
  - c. arrangements for blind double marking where this is practised;
  - d. other relevant instructions and guidance to markers; including the treatment of scripts that deviate from the rubric;
  - e. an explanation of how differences in marks between first and second markers are resolved;
  - f. the involvement of External Examiners in the setting, vetting or approving of marks of individual assessments.
  - g. Conventions governing feedback to students on performance (including timing and nature of feedback) and the release of provisional marks. Where work is returned to students, this should be indicated together with procedures for ensuring its future availability to External Examiners.
  - h. Where specimen assessments and answers are available to students, information should be given as to how to access them.

- i. Where students are allowed supervised access to closed examination scripts details of school/departmental procedures should be given.
  - j. Assessment criteria, rubrics or class descriptors of expected standards of student attainment for each type of assessment (as appropriate). It assists markers to use the full range of the scale if separate descriptors are included for marks in the 70s, 80s and 90s, and similarly for the low end of the scale. Levels of achievement should be calibrated, where appropriate, against Benchmark Statements and/or the FHEQ. Differentiation by outcome in the context of appropriate assessment criteria may be necessary where undergraduates and postgraduates are taught and assessed together.
  - k. A description of examination procedures, including:
    - guidance for students who seek special arrangements (eg dyslexia, medical, disability or other personal reasons);
    - procedures for publishing deadlines for submissions;
    - procedures for students submitting assessments and for schools/departments issuing receipts;
    - policies on penalties (eg exceeding word-limits) etc
    - arrangements for assessments administered by schools/departments;
  - l. A schedule of departmental assessments (potentially broken down by year group) which should include the dates for release of assessment tasks in instructions, submission deadlines and information on how they will be dealt with under the exceptional circumstances and self-certification processes.
2. Schools/departments should also provide information for students on their programmes specifying how assessments contribute to progression requirements and/or the final award. This should include:
    - a. a description of how the school/department will treat assessment of study away from York within the University's study abroad rules;
    - b. the criteria for the recommendation of starred firsts
    - c. any PSRB requirements that may impact on the way in which modules are assessed or treated for the purposes of progression or award.
  3. Information for all students taking the school/department's modules and information specific to students on the school/department's programmes can appear in the same document but steps should be taken to ensure that information to students from other schools/departments is reasonably clear and accessible to them (for example in a discrete, easily accessible and clearly identified section).
  4. It is not necessary to include detailed module--by-module descriptions of assessment where these are covered in handbooks or module synopses but these should be available to students on the VLE site for each particular module and should include, as a minimum:
    - a. A description of assessment types for the module;
    - b. The timing for assessment, marking and the provision of feedback;

- c. Information on how each assessment component is marked (which should link to any general information about marking and assessment practices set out above);
- d. Information about specimen assessments and answers and how to access them
- e. The assessment criteria, rubrics or class descriptors applicable to the assessments on the module;
- f. What self-certification options are or are not available for each assessment on the module; and
- g. The usual adjustments for assessments under the exceptional circumstances process and any information about what sorts of adjustments may not be appropriate;
- h. the weightings for different components within modules;
- i. moderation procedures for individual assessments or modules;

Schools/Departments should also draw students' attention to the relevant university policies regarding assessments, progression, awards, and exceptional circumstances, including the existence of this guide, which also forms part of the student contract.

## **5. Assessment, Progression and Awards for study abroad, placements, and partner institutions.**

### **5.1 Assessment of study or placement away from York**

Special measures are required for the assessment of materials based on study abroad and work placements, and the following recommendations are made.

#### ***5.1.2 Study Abroad***

Schools/Departments should have clear statements of particular arrangements for assessment and how these relate to proposed incorporation within a programme of study. These statements should be available before any exchange is undertaken and will differ depending on whether the study abroad is for replacement or additional credit.

#### ***5.1.2 Placement***

Any external organisation involved in assessment should receive full written guidance on the conduct and requirements of assessment in advance of the placement beginning. It is good practice for any assessment from a placement to be second-marked from within the University, however it is recognised that in some cases a component of assessment will be within the hands of the placement organisation (eg conduct) and then second marking is not possible. In such cases there should be an inspection visit.

#### ***5.1.3 Distance Learning***

Consideration should be given to an appropriate balance between open and closed assessments to guard against the possibility of academic misconduct. For information on the conduct of distance examinations, see [section 9.10](#).

## **5.2 Incorporating study abroad and work placements**

**5.2.1** Study abroad and work placements should be incorporated into programmes as either ‘replacement’ or ‘additional’ credit. Where it is ‘additional’, this will lengthen the normal period of study required for an award.

**5.2.2** Where study abroad or work placements are taken as ‘additional’ credit, Boards of Studies should give consideration to whether, or what proportion of, the credit should be designated as pass/fail or given a mark on the University mark scale (see [the Framework for Programme Design](#)).

**5.2.3** Students should be made aware that reassessment opportunities in relation to study abroad or work placements are not normally available.

**5.2.4** The nature of any reassessment opportunities should be set-out in the Programme Module Catalogue (PMC) for additional credit. There is no University limit on the credit volume that can be reassessed in an additional year but the school/departments must set out the details of reassessment opportunities in advance in programme information (including the credit volume that can be reassessed and the nature of the reassessment task). Reassessment is only available where it is available at the host institution, and no work should be reassessed or remarked out of context upon the student’s return to York, as the home School/Department will not have access to the teaching materials or the work of the rest of the cohort.

**5.2.5** The nature of any reassessment opportunities should be set-out in the grade conversion and academic recognition checklist for students on replacement credit exchange. Schools/Departments must set out the details of reassessment opportunities in advance in programme information (including the credit volume that can be reassessed and the nature of the reassessment task). Reassessment is only available where it is available at the host institution, and no work should be reassessed or remarked out of context upon the student’s return to York, as the home school/department will not have access to the teaching materials or the work of the rest of the cohort.

**5.2.6** Progression decisions should take place prior to a student embarking on any period of study abroad or work placement. Students who fail the preceding or ‘normal’ credit-load stage (taking into account the outcome of any reassessment) will not be allowed to embark on study abroad or work placement. This should be reflected in student work placement contracts. A credit weighted mean at York of at least 60% in the year prior to exchange is required for study abroad.

## **5.3 Study abroad as additional credit**

**5.3.1** Students taking study abroad or work placements as additional credit will receive the credit if:

- a. all pass/fail components in the additional credit are passed, and
- b. the credit-weighted mean mark of any numerical marks on the University scale meets the mean mark criterion for the stage in which the additional credit is situated (eg, for additional credit designated as part of stage 2 a mean mark of 40 UG/50 PG is required).

**5.3.2** Students who do not meet the above criteria may be eligible for reassessment in the failed components of the additional credit for which reassessment is available.

**5.3.3** After reassessment, if the above criteria are met, the student receives the additional credit and a capped total mark for the additional credit given by the lowest mark consistent with a passing credit-



weighted mean (appropriate to the stage). In other cases, the student will transfer to a variant of the programme that does not include the additional credit. Marks for the failed credit will appear on the student's academic transcript but will not contribute to the calculation of the final award.

## 5.4 Study abroad as replacement credit

**5.4.1** Students taking study abroad or work placements as replacement credit will receive the credit if:

- a. all pass/fail components in the replacement credit are passed, and
- b. the credit-weighted mean mark of any numerical marks on the University scale meets the mean mark criterion for the stage in which the additional credit is situated (eg, for replacement credit designated as part of stage 2 a mean mark of 40 UG/50 PG is required).

**5.4.2** Students who do not meet the above criteria may be eligible for reassessment in the failed components of the replacement credit for which reassessment is available.

**5.4.3** After reassessment, if the above criteria are met, the student receives the replacement credit and a capped total mark for the replacement credit given by the lowest mark consistent with a passing credit-weighted mean (appropriate to the stage).

## 5.5 Calculating Study Abroad and industrial placements

For the purposes of establishing the weighting in degree classifications only, study abroad and work placements should be designated as part of a stage within a programme. The study abroad or work placement should contribute to the degree classification in accordance with the formula specified for that stage in the relevant programme documentation, based on a credit-weighted mean in one of the ways specified below:

- **Additional credit:** A student takes a year abroad or year in industry as 120 additional credits (lengthening a full-time bachelor's degree to four years), designated as part of stage 2. In this case, the year abroad should be marked on a pass/fail basis. The mark derived for stage 2 would still be based on the credit-weighted mean across 240 credits, but would of necessity exclude the pass/fail element, giving the year abroad a zero weighting in the overall degree classification (although whether it is passed or failed would be reflected in the final programme title awarded).
- **Replacement credit year abroad:** A student takes a year abroad as 120 replacement credits (keeping a full-time bachelor's degree to three years), designated as part of stage 2. The mark derived for stage 2 would be the credit-weighted mean across 240 credits, giving the year abroad a value of 20% in the overall degree classification (based on the 2:3 weighting for marks from stages 2 and 3; note that this gives equal weighting to the replacement credit in relation to the 'normal' stage 2 for the bachelors programme).
- **Replacement credit year in industry:** A student takes a year in industry for which assessment is divided into two parts: the placement itself, worth 60 credits, and designated as pass/fail, and 60 credits-worth of assessed material including reflective logs and an essay. In this case, the mark for stage 2 would still be based on the credit weighted mean of the two years with the pass/fail material necessarily removed, meaning that the additional year has half the weight of the year at York.

## 5.6 . Marks from Student Exchange Programmes for replacement credit

### 5.6.1 Principles of university exchange agreements

Work produced whilst on exchange should not be assessed outside the context within which it has been produced.

- a. Conversion tables, approved by the Standing Committee on Assessment, are provided by the Centre for Global Programmes online. These tables provide single integer mark equivalencies for each national grade or classification. Marks above the top integer can only be awarded where the school/department can justify this with additional evidence beyond the transcript of study.
- b. Only in exceptional circumstances should work completed whilst on exchange be re-marked, and then only with the explicit approval following the Special Cases procedure.
- c. School/Departmental examinations officers must use the approved conversion tables to convert grades provided on official exchange institution transcripts in line with the school/department's procedure for dealing with study abroad marks. The same procedure must be applied to all students in an outgoing cohort from that School/Department. Schools/Departments should provide External Examiners with a clear statement of how study abroad marks have been treated.
- d. Schools/Departments may use their discretion when awarding marks above the top integer in a table for students who receive the top available mark in the local grading system. The Centre for Global Programmes will encourage students to check with their school/department at York to find out what, if any, supplementary evidence may be required before they start their time abroad. For example; rankings in class, tutor reports, assessment sheets, exam papers or test marking sheets. The school/department should ensure discretionary marks are justified and evidenced.
- e. A range of marks is possible for fail grades. The minimum passing grade at a partner institution must be converted to a passing mark at York. If the partner institution has a range of failing grades, school/departments should use their discretion to award an equivalent grade between 0% and 39%.
- f. School/Departments may appeal to the SCA to make amendments to a specific conversion table in advance of student departure should they feel that it does not provide a fair representation of student performance. Evidence should be provided as to why the amendment is required, as well as an updated conversion table for review.
- g. Study Abroad marks for replacement credit should be converted into the largest module possible that aligns with the student's time abroad. For example, if a student has been on a full-year placement, their marks should be averaged into a single 120 credit module. For a student studying abroad for one semester, their marks should be averaged into a 60 credit module. Students on joint degrees will have two marks —appropriate to the proportion of studies taken into each subject during the time abroad. For example, History/English (equal) students would have two 60 credits modules if studying abroad for the full academic year.

- h. School/Departments are responsible for ensuring that meaningful study abroad modules are set up within SITS to input converted marks for each student.
- i. School/Departments may choose to calculate a student's study abroad mark from the full credit load shown on the transcript or by discounting a proportion of the credit up to a maximum of 25%. For example, if the full credit load at the partner institution was 16 credits per semester, making 32 for the full year, taken in eight four credit modules, then two whole modules could be discounted. However, if the full credit load at the partner institution was 15 credits per semester, making a total of 30 for the full year, taken in six five credit modules, only one module may be discounted, as two would exceed 25% of the total credits taken. School/Departments can decide the circumstances in which study abroad marks will be discounted (including whether they will only discount failed modules, or will discount lowest passing marks in some or all circumstances) but must ensure that a fair and consistent approach is taken when choosing to award grades based on discounted marks including consideration of joint honours students and students studying abroad for less than a full year. This policy must be advertised to students in advance and be clearly explained during the completion of each students' grade conversion and academic recognition checklist.
- j. If Schools/Departments have queries about the grade conversion process, they should contact the Progression and Awards team in the first instance.

## **5.7 Marks from Student Exchange Programmes for replacement or additional credit**

- a. All School/Departments are required to ensure that students embarking on an exchange have been informed of how their marks will be treated on returning to York, before the student departs. The Centre for Global Programmes will provide each student with a grade conversion and academic recognition checklist that should be used for this purpose. School/departments should keep a signed copy of this checklist, along with any additional information discussed in order to respond to student queries about their grade conversions.
- b. Wherever possible, marks from exchanges should be converted and available in time to meet the normal progression deadlines for returning students. Where this is not possible, for example, when students are on placements of 12 months' duration, marks must be converted and student progression completed by the beginning of Semester 1.
- c. Students on study abroad placements may be able to take modules that are awarded a "pass with distinction", "pass" or "fail" mark by the partner institution. However, they should avoid taking large volumes of pass/fail modules for replacement credit wherever possible. For each "pass with distinction" result students receive they should be awarded the highest possible grade conversion for that institution's approved grade conversion table.
- d. In force majeure situations (for example severe civil unrest or natural disaster), depending on when the event occurs, the University of York may require students to terminate their placement early or withdraw them before starting their time abroad. In such circumstances, the University of York will discuss with students what options are available to them and assist those students wishing to continue to study abroad to find alternative placements if required. If students do not wish to take

up an alternative placement, they may need to take a Leave of Absence until the beginning of the next academic year when they can continue their studies at the University of York.

## **5.8. Marks from Partner Institutions on Joint and Dual Awards**

### **5.8.1 Academic standards at partner institutions**

By approving joint and dual awards, the UTC accepts the academic standards, workload and assessment methods operated at the partner institution. This includes additional assessment requirements, such as a viva, which might not be required for students studying similar modules at York. Work produced on Joint or Dual awards should not be assessed outside the context within which it has been produced.

- a. Where study at a partner institution is taken abroad, conversion tables must be available to students prior to their engagement on the programme to indicate how their marks from the partner institution will translate onto the York marks scheme. Programme-specific grade conversion tables must be established at the appropriate level of study; they will be on different scales depending whether undergraduate or postgraduate studies are undertaken. The grade conversion tables must be approved by the Standing Committee on Assessment.
- b. Only in exceptional circumstances should work completed whilst at a partner institution be re-marked by staff at the University of York, and then only with the explicit approval following the Special Cases procedure.
- c. School/Departmental examinations officers must use the approved conversion tables to convert grades provided by partner institutions. School/Departments should provide External Examiners with a clear statement of how worldwide marks have been treated.
- d. School/Departments may propose amendments to a specific conversion table to the SCA in advance of student departure should they feel that it does not provide a fair representation of student performance. Evidence should be provided as to why the amendment is required, as well as an updated conversion table for review.
- e. School/Departments may use their discretion when awarding marks above the top integer in a table for students who receive the top available mark in the local grading system. Tables should be used in conjunction with other information available from the partner university to ensure that discretionary marks are justified and evidenced. Evidence could include rankings in class, tutor reports, assessment sheets or other data/information, and should be reviewed on a case by case basis by the examinations officers in the School/Department.
- e. Where the Centre for Global Programmes conversion tables are used, a range of marks is possible for fail grades. The minimum passing grade at a partner institution must be converted to a passing mark at York. If the partner institution has a range of failing grades, Schools/Departments should use their discretion to award an equivalent grade between 0% and the relevant pass mark for the students' degree programme at York.
- f. Marks from partner institutions should be converted into the largest module possible that aligns with the number of credits taken in a given academic year at the partner institution. Where a

partner institution does not operate a credit-based system, the size of the module will be determined by the proportion of the academic year spent in the partner institution, based on a notional 120 credit academic year. For a student studying abroad for one semester, their marks should be averaged into a 60 credit module. Students on joint degrees will have two marks — appropriate to the proportion of studies taken into each subject during the time abroad. For example, History/English (equal) students would have two 60 credits modules if studying abroad for the full academic year.

- g. School/Departments are responsible for ensuring that appropriately sized modules are set up within the student record system (SITS) proposed through the online module catalogue to input partner institution's marks for each student.
- h. In the event that a student does not successfully complete their intended joint or dual award (either due to academic failure or withdrawal), they can be considered for University of York exit awards, though credits obtained at partner institutions cannot amount to more than 50% of the total credit used to obtain the exit award. (So, a student cannot count more than 30 credits of partner-institution credit towards a PGCert, and cannot count more than 60 credits of partner-institution credit towards a PGDip).
- i. Only modules taken at York will be eligible for re-assessment or compensation in line with the progression and award rules of the programme. The credit-weighted mean applied will include the modules taken at partner institutions, as recorded in the student record system (SITs).

## Examiners for Taught Programmes

### 6. Board of Examiners for Taught Programmes

#### 6.1 Constitution of the Board of Examiners

##### **6.1.1 Ordinances and regulations**

University [Ordinance 14](#), [Regulation 3](#), [Regulation 5](#) and [Regulation 6](#) are relevant to this section of the Guide.

##### **6.1.2 Members**

All teaching members of the BoS are members of the BoE, as are the External Examiners; also any members of the academic and academic-related staff of the University who have assessed any of the students under consideration, and any other individuals recommended by the BoS to, and approved by, the SCA may be members of the BoE. (See also section on Internal Examiners).

##### **6.1.3 Quorum Requirements**

The quorum for a BoE for all taught programmes is a minimum of three, at least one of whom must be an External and one an Internal Examiner. For Combined Programmes, this must include at least one internal from each school/department.

Where an exit award is the automatic consequence of failure, the External Examiner's approval can be inferred from the signing of the previous progression list. Where there is no previous progression list the External can approve the award without needing to be present provided they have access to the full documentation.

##### **6.1.4 Combined Programmes**

Combined programmes have a named Programme Leader and an Associate Programme Leader in the Partner school/department. The primary responsibility for combined programmes rests with the school/department in which the Programme Leader is based. Interdisciplinary units are governed by an interdisciplinary BoS.

##### **6.1.5 Research Students**

For procedures for the BoE for research students, please consult the [Policy on Research Degrees](#).

### 6.2 Role and powers of the Board of Examiners

#### **6.2.1 Functions of the Board of Examiners**

The functions of the BoE include:

- a. ensuring the University's principles of assessment underpin assessment processes and decisions;
- b. taking an overview of the array of marks in relation both to performance of individual students and to mark distribution from individual modules, in the presence of the External Examiner(s) (see [External Examiners](#));

- c. ratifying provisional marks;
- d. making recommendations to Senate, on behalf of the BoS, on awards, progression and reassessment;
- e. ensuring documentation is completed.

### **6.2.2 Progression Decisions**

Boards of Examiners are required to convene formally at least once a year in order to make decisions about student progression (unless no students are registered on the programme) and in order to provide adequate opportunities for the External Examiner to interact with staff and, where appropriate, students.

### **6.2.3 Award Decisions**

Boards of Examiners are also required to convene at the end of each programme for which they are responsible in order to make award decisions. This meeting must be attended by at least one External Examiner (see [6.3](#) and [External Examiners](#)).

### **6.2.4 Records of Meetings**

Minutes must be kept of meetings of the BoE, with particular attention to decisions relating to individual students.

### **6.2.5 Timing**

For undergraduates a scrutiny panel or other process of scrutiny and moderation of module marks should take place before the release of marks to students. For undergraduates, there must be a Module Board and Ratification panel by Week 4 of Semester 3 (the Summer Semester).

For postgraduates, there will need to be some form of scrutiny of taught modules by Week 4 of Semester 3 (the Summer Semester) to identify any students at risk of failure and a Module Board and Ratification Panel by the end of November at the latest.

## **6.3 Procedures of the Board of Examiners**

Members of the BoE are involved in a variety of meetings at different stages in the academic calendar. At the end of each stage of a degree programme, the following meetings should take place:

#### **a. Scrutiny Panel**

**When:** By summer semester week 3 (SS3) for Semester 2 modules/

**Who:** CBoE, administrative staff, other examiners as appropriate.

**Purpose/powers:** the job of the Scrutiny Panel is to check that marks have been received and processed for all modules and that any penalties (lateness or academic misconduct) have been applied. They should also give initial consideration to any issues raised by External Examiners on particular modules, and to check for any further inconsistencies or irregularities which might be brought to External Examiners' attention.

#### **b. School/Departmental Exam Board (or Module Board)**

**When:** Summer vacation week 4 (SS4)

**Who:** CBoE, as many members of teaching staff as

possible, External Examiner(s)

**Purpose/powers:** the job of the School/Departmental Exam Board is to finalise and approve marks for all modules. The Board should ensure that all queries have been resolved, and any scaling has been agreed and applied. After this point, module marks will not be able to be changed. External Examiners are asked to make their oral reports to the Board at this meeting.

c. **Programme Exam Board (or Ratification Panel)**

**When:** Summer vacation SS4 (week 4) at least 2-3 days after Exam Board

**Who:** CBoE, other teaching staff as appropriate, External Examiner(s) (minimum: three people including at least one External for single-subject programmes; for combined degrees, at least one representative of each school/department). However, the External does not need to be physically present, but may take part either in person or via a reliable online platform (eg Zoom), provided they have access to full documentation.

**Purpose/powers:** the Programme Exam Board's role is to confirm that module marks have been correctly entered into SITS and to ratify the stage and award marks which are then calculated from the module marks, and the progression and award decisions generated. The meeting will receive overall runs of marks for students and will formally recommend (to Senate) degree results. This meeting will not expect to change any marks, either at module level, or at stage or award level. The Programme Exam Board or Ratification Panel's role is solely to check and confirm the accuracy of the marks as awarded under the University's Progression and Award Rules. It is NOT required to approve or endorse any assessment practices undertaken. There may be a discussion of the overall award profile for the degree(s), but this will feed into future discussion, rather than resulting in changes for the current cohort.

The CBoE (or appointed delegate) and one of the external examiners in attendance at the Programme Exam Board will be asked to confirm by signature the accuracy of the progression or award outcomes for students on each programme considered at the board. These outcomes will then be ratified on behalf of Senate by a member of the Standing Committee on Assessment.

### **6.3.1 Procedure for Combined Degree Programmes**

For Combined degree programmes, a similar structure is followed to that outlined above, but there will be as many school/departmental Exam Board meetings as there are schools/departments involved in the combined programme. When all relevant schools/departments have finalised marks for their own modules, progression and award decisions are generated and confirmed by a Combined Ratification Panel, which will involve representatives from all schools/departments as well as an External Examiner, either in person or via a reliable online platform (eg Zoom).

### **6.3.2 Semester 2 Postgraduate Taught Modules Examination Board**

A Module Board must take place for all Masters Programmes by Week 3 of the summer semester to approve module marks on all taught modules. Recommendations about reassessment, compensation and



early exit awards will be made at this board. External Examiners must be involved in these meetings, either in person or via a reliable online platform (eg Zoom), and must have had access to students completed and marked scripts prior to any meeting.

### **6.3.3 Confidentiality and GDPR**

Minutes of Boards of Examiners Meetings are also disclosable under the Data Protection Act 1998 where they are mentioned by name or candidate number.

## **7. Internal Examiners**

### **7.1 Permanent contract, limited contract and casual staff**

#### **7.1.1 Definition of 'Academic Staff'**

For the purpose of [Ordinance 14](#), 'academic staff' who may act as Internal Examiners includes not only teaching, but also research, library, careers and computing staff with appropriate levels of expertise and training. Staff who are also students of the University are eligible to be Internal Examiners provided they are on permanent or limited-term contracts with the University as outlined in section 7.1.2 below.

#### **7.1.2 Categories**

A distinction should be drawn between those staff for whom the University can accept responsibility as Internal Examiners (ie continuing employees, whether on permanent or limited-term contracts) and those for whom it cannot (ie casual teaching staff, persons not employed by the University). Those in the latter category may be involved in assessing examination work and in advising an Internal Examiner on the mark to be awarded; in every such case, however, the Internal Examiners will be required to 'second mark' the work concerned and be formally responsible for the marks awarded.

### **7.2 Responsibilities**

Staff nominated to act as Internal Examiners of the University may be required to take responsibility for the marking processes within single-subject or combined programmes, or taught postgraduate programmes.

### **7.3 Internal examiner lists**

Schools/Departments will be asked to confirm lists of Internal Examiners annually for approval by the Standing Committee on Assessment. These should also indicate separately, for information, the names and status of persons covered by section 7.1.2.

## **8. External Examiners**

The following guidelines have been formulated on the basis of the [QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Advice and Guidance: External Expertise \(Nov, 2018\)](#) and [External Examining Principles](#) (August 2022).

### **8.1 Purpose**

The purpose of the University's external examining system is:

- a. to ensure that its assessment policies and procedures are fair and fairly operated, and that the principles of clarity, equity, consistency and openness are observed;
- b. to ensure that assessment methods are appropriate;
- c. to ensure that the structure and content of programmes of study are appropriate;
- d. to ensure comparability of standards with other similar institutions.

[Ordinance 14.5](#) outlines the University's formal position on External Examiners.

## **8.2 Nomination and appointment**

External examiners must be appointed for all provision that leads to an award of the University, including collaborative provision and all undergraduate material.

### **8.2.1 Schools/departments responsibility**

Schools/Departments are responsible for considering the number of External Examiners required for the examination of a programme and the modules contributing to it to ensure the appropriate coverage of subject content and with consideration for the volume of work that will be covered by the External Examiner(s)

- a. If a programme is accredited by a PSRB, schools/departments must ensure that any additional external examining requirements are adhered to, for example, the appointment of a chief/lead External Examiner who has responsibility for all accredited programmes awarded by the University or for reporting to the PSRB on the award standards.
- b. In the case of complex provision, for example, an award with multiple subject pathways, schools/departments should give consideration to the appointment of a chief External Examiner to ensure suitable oversight of the programme.

### **8.2.2 Academic Quality Team responsibility**

The Academic Quality Team is responsible for:

- a. processing the nominations for External Examiners for new programmes approved by UTC following the nomination by the school/department:
- b. for notifying schools/departments that an External Examiner's period of appointment is nearing its end and that a replacement examiner needs to be nominated.

Schools/Departments are asked to provide details of nominations on a standard form issued by the Academic Quality Team, which is available on the [External Examiners for Academic School/Departments](#) page on the University website. Nominations are approved by the SCA on behalf of Senate.

### **8.2.3 Required specifications**

When submitting a nomination, schools/departments should provide a CV for the nominee indicating that they meet the required person specification and appropriately evidencing the following:

- a. knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality;

- b. competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study, or parts thereof;
- c. relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate;
- d. competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks and assessment procedures appropriate to the subject;
- e. credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command the respect of academic peers and, where appropriate, professional peers;
- f. familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed;
- g. fluency in English and where programmes are delivered and assessed in languages other than English, fluency in the relevant language(s) (unless other secure arrangements are in place to ensure that External Examiners are provided with the information to make their judgements);
- h. meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies;
- i. awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula;
- j. competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

Where an examiner does not meet one or more of the criteria under sections 8.2.b or 8.2.c, the school/department must include an explanation on the nomination form of how the nominee does not meet the normal required criteria and provide a rationale for why the school/department is proposing the appointment, and for consideration by the SCA.

#### **8.2.4 Exclusionary criteria**

Schools/Departments should not nominate as External Examiners anyone in the following categories or circumstances:

- a. Individuals that do not live and work in the United Kingdom;
- b. A member of a governing body or committee of the appointing institution or one of its collaborative partners, or a current employee of the appointing institution or its collaborative partners;
- c. Anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme of study;
- d. Anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study;
- e. Anyone who is, or knows that they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study;
- f. Anyone significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme(s) or modules in question;
- g. Associate staff employed for teaching or supervision (even on a casual or temporary basis), former staff or students of the institution unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the External Examiner have completed their programme(s);
- h. In circumstances that are, or could be seen to be, a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another institution;

- i. The succession of an External Examiner by a colleague from the examiner's home school/department and institution;
- j. The appointment of more than one External Examiner from the same school/department of the same institution;
- k. Anyone who holds more than one other concurrent substantial External Examinership during the relevant period;
- l. Any former External Examiners of the school/department unless an intervening period of at least five years has elapsed.

### **8.2.5 Terms and extensions**

In line with the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education the duration of an External Examiner's appointment will normally be four years. Once approved, the Academic Quality Team will confirm the appointment in writing to the nominee.

Exceptional extensions of one year to ensure continuity (for example where a programme is in the process of running out and it would be ineffective to involve a new External Examiner) are permitted subject to the approval of the Standing Committee on Assessment. Schools/Departments who wish to request an exceptional extension to an External Examiner's appointment must submit a rationale for the extension to the Academic Quality Team. The Academic Quality Team will submit the case to the SCA who will consider the merits of the request.

If the External Examiner fails to fulfil their obligations to the University and/or if a conflict of interest arises which cannot be satisfactorily resolved they may have their appointment terminated prior to the normal expiry date. A written request for such a termination should be submitted to the SCA for approval.

Schools/Departments are sent copies of all official University correspondence with External Examiners. Letters of appointment include details of the term of office and rates of payment of fees and expenses.

### **8.2.6 Fees**

Fees for External Examiners for taught programmes are calculated on the basis of an annual fee as detailed in the letter of appointment. Undergraduate External Examiners will claim their annual fee and expenses using the University's electronic claim form. Postgraduate External Examiners will claim their annual fee and expenses using the existing paper [claim form](#).

Fees are paid upon receipt of the External Examiner's signed annual report. In addition, the University will reimburse travelling expenses and any other reasonable expenses necessarily incurred.

## **8.3 The responsibilities of the school/department**

### **8.3.1. Provision of Documentation**

Schools/Departments are responsible for ensuring that External Examiners are provided with all necessary information for the effective fulfilment of their role as outlined in Section 8.4, and that they are consulted at appropriate stages of the assessment process. This will include:

- a School/Departmental and programme documentation
  - providing External Examiners with detailed syllabus and programme structure.
  - providing External Examiners with the latest departmental review documentation
  - providing newly-appointed External Examiners with the reports of outgoing and other continuing External Examiners or the programme(s) examined.
  
- b Assessment documentation
  - providing External Examiners with information about school/department and University assessment policies and procedures.
  - ensuring External Examiners are provided with assessment tasks/examination questions in good time to provide comment on them.
  - ensuring that all written or recorded work contributing to the final award or to progression decisions is available for external examination or comment. Where such work has been returned to students, students are responsible for retaining it in a portfolio for possible future external scrutiny and schools/departments are responsible for alerting students to this requirement.
  - when planning assessment schemes and schedules, ensuring that External Examiners are not overloaded, but taking into account the need for effective scrutiny by External Examiners.

Schools/Departments should not ask External Examiners for taught programmes to act as markers under any circumstances.

- c Practical and meeting arrangements:
  - Ensuring that they check with new External Examiners if they have any special needs and arranging for any required reasonable adjustments.
  - Liaising with External Examiners to arrange meetings of the BoE.
  - Considering ways in which Examiners might have an opportunity to meet with students on the programmes they are examining, so that they might reflect on the student experience of the provision in their reports.
  - Ensuring that, within a reasonable time, the CBoE provides the External Examiners with a written response to the comments and recommendations made in their annual report to the BoE and the VC, including information on the detailed consideration of their reports, and an indication of any action taken as a result of the report, or clear reasons for not accepting any recommendations or suggestions.
  
- d Student engagement:
  - Including the name, position and institution of their External Examiners in module or programme information provided to students. Schools/Departments should caveat this information however with a statement indicating that “it is inappropriate for students to make direct contact with External Examiners, in particular regarding their individual performance in assessment. There are appropriate mechanisms available to students, such as appeal or complaint”. Schools/Departments should advise any External Examiners who are contacted by students to forward the relevant communication directly to the CBoE without replying to the student.
  - Making the External Examiners’ reports available to all students on the programme, with due consideration to student and staff member anonymity and the redaction of any potentially identifying information, such as dissertation titles or student numbers. Schools/Departments

may, for example, make External Examiners reports available to students through a VLE site or school/departmental webpage on their intranet.

- Providing students with the opportunity to be fully involved in the external examining process, to understand all the issues raised and the school/department or University's response, for example through inclusion of student representatives at Boards of Studies, and the wider student body in Annual Programme Review and Staff Student Forums.

### **8.3.2. Review of marking and recommendations**

Schools/Departments may ask External Examiners to provide an opinion to inform their decisions on changes to marks on individual pieces of work and External Examiners can make recommendations that marks be changed, but the External Examiner should only make any such recommendations following a review of the full range of marks and a suitably representative sample across all the pieces of work in the cohort, and with the understanding that the full Board is responsible for making a final decision on the mark to be awarded.

Where an External Examiner considers that a sample of work reveals evidence of significant over or under-marking they may recommend to the BoE the rescaling of the marks for the cohort or other appropriate adjustments to the whole cohort of marks. The final decision remains with the BoE and must be applied to all marks for the assessment task in question and not just those seen by the External Examiner. If the recommendation to rescale is not accepted, both the recommendation and the reasons for its refusal should be minuted in the BoE minutes.

## **8.4 The responsibilities of External Examiners**

### **8.4.1 Expectations**

In broad terms, External Examiners are asked to:

- a. Attend the University induction for External Examiners;
- b. Comment and give advice on programme content, balance and structure;
- c. Comment on draft examination papers and other forms of assessment and reassessment;
- d. Assist in the ongoing calibration of academic standards through the review and evaluation of completed examinations and other forms of assessment and assessment practices (including assessment of work-based learning, where relevant), particularly in relation to any work that contributes to progression decisions or to the final award;
- e. Be a member of, and attend, Boards of Examiners, where their signature is required to support the Board's recommendations for awards and recommendations of failure to progress, and ensure fairness and consistency in the decision-making process;
- f. Submit a written report on an annual basis to UTC including commentary and judgments on the validity, reliability and integrity of the assessment process and the standards of student attainment.
- g. External Examiners should declare any conflicts of interest to the CBoE at the earliest opportunity (section 8.2.4).

### **8.4.2 Commenting on drafts for assessment and reassessment**

Prior to students undertaking assessments, External Examiners are expected to have had the opportunity to review closed examination questions and other forms of assessment task, with the intention that they comment on such aspects as:

- The suitability of the task set in assessing the learning outcomes of the module (or part thereof);
- The level of challenge presented by the task in relation to for the credit level of the module;
- The volume of work expected to successfully complete the assessment in relation to the proportion of the module it assesses;
- The clarity of the assessment brief and/or questions presented.

Examiners should expect a response from the school/department to the feedback they provide about the assessment tasks they review.

### **8.4.3 After internal marking of assessments**

Following completion of internal marking of students' examinations and other forms of assessment External Examiners should review a sample of work, particularly in relation to any work which contributes to progression decisions or to the final award. Review of scripts should be conducted on the following bases:

- External Examiners should see a sufficient sample of work from the top (including work assessed internally as first class), middle and bottom (including fails) of the range, and borderlines of each classification to determine that internal marking and classifications are of an appropriate standard and are consistent.
- External Examiners have the right to see all examination scripts and other pieces of written or recorded formative or summatively assessed work (for example, Internal Examiners' comments on oral performance in seminars where participation is formally assessed), completed by students on the relevant programme of study for which the examiner is appointed to review.
- In relation to Section 8.3.3, External Examiners may provide an opinion to the school/department to inform their decisions on changes to marks on individual pieces of work, but the External Examiner should only provide such an opinion following review of the full range of marks from all the pieces of work in the cohort, not just a sample, and with the understanding that the full Board is responsible for making a final decision on the mark to be awarded.
- Where a student undertakes a module as an elective or option in a school/department other than their 'home' school/department, the BoE and its External Examiner for the 'non-home' school/department is responsible for the mark awarded to the student for that module. The BoE and the External Examiner of the 'home' school/department is responsible for the incorporation of that mark into the mark profile of the student and approval of the student's overall degree classification.

### **8.4.4 Role in advising on programme enhancements**

External Examiners can provide valuable expertise and insight to schools/departments when changes are being considered to programmes and modules they examine, and as such may be asked to provide comments on proposed modifications to modules and programmes as a critical friend to the school/department.

In addition, External Examiners may be asked to provide formative comment on new programme proposals where the school/department believes their expertise could add value to the development of such proposals which will then be reviewed by separately appointed External Assessors as part of the University's programme approval process.

#### **8.4.5. Role at Boards of Examiners meetings**

The role of the External Examiner at meetings of Boards of Examiners is particularly important both for providing an independent opinion on the maintenance of quality and standards in assessment and in advising on appropriate resolutions to concerns about the marks to be awarded for a particular piece of assessment for all students taking the assessment. Meetings also provide a valuable opportunity for External Examiners to comment and advise on more general aspects of the programme of study.

If an External Examiner cannot attend a school/departmental Exam Board meeting in person, they may take part either in person or via a reliable online platform (eg Zoom). The External Examiner must have access to all relevant paperwork in order to be able to fully participate in such a meeting.

- a. External Examiners are expected to attend Module Boards to provide an oral and/or written report on their main findings which will then be minuted. (This is in addition to the External Examiner's annual written report to UTC).
- b. At least one External Examiner is expected to attend the Programme Exam Board/Ratification Panel where their signature is required to confirm that the Board's recommendations for awards or progression reflect the application of the University's Progression and Award Rules (including any contingency rules) and that these rules have been implied, so far as the external can determine, fairly and impartially to students on the programme. The External Examiner should be able to approve award decisions where the award of a qualification (ie, an exit award) is an automatic consequence of a failure without the need to be present at, or otherwise participate in, a school/departmental Exam Board.

#### **8.4.6 Role in reporting to the University**

##### *a. Reporting*

Examiners are asked, in their expert judgement, to report to the BoE and note in their report:

- whether the academic standards set for the University's awards, or part thereof, are appropriate;
- the extent to which the assessment processes are rigorous, ensure equity of treatment for students and have been fairly conducted within the University's regulations and guidance;
- the standards of student performance in the programmes or parts of programmes that they have been appointed to examine;
- where appropriate, the comparability of standards and student achievements with those in comparable higher education institutions;
- good/innovative practice they have identified.

##### *b. Procedure*

- Each External Examiner is required by the University to submit their written annual report to the Academic Quality Team within two months of completion of the annual examining process using



the standard report form. The form can be supplemented by additional correspondence if required. External Examiners' fees will only be authorised for payment after receipt of a signed report.

- Following submission of their report, External Examiners should expect to receive a written response from the school/department. If they have raised significant concerns or a matter to be more appropriately considered at University-level, these will be followed up as necessary and the examiner will receive further written correspondence.

### *c. Content*

External Examiners are asked to comment, as appropriate, on the following:

- The appropriateness of programme structure and content, including the appropriateness of the learning outcomes of the programme (and all its elements) to its educational aims and those of the students;
- For Foundation Degrees, the extent to which the programme meets the defining characteristics of such an award (namely, employer involvement, accessibility, articulation and progression, flexibility and partnership, as set out in the [QAA Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement \(2016\)](#), and the appropriateness of work-based learning elements;
- Teaching quality and methods as revealed in examination scripts and other assessed work;
- Assessment methods, coverage of learning outcomes and whether the assessment processes and marking schemes applied by Internal Examiners are appropriate and appropriately used;
- The administration of all assessed work by Internal Examiners, including the time available for marking and the impartiality with which the assessments were conducted;
- The standard of students' performances in terms of their knowledge, skills and understanding and comparison with those of students on similar programmes elsewhere;
- The standard of particular degree classifications awarded and comparison with similar awards at other institutions;
- The procedures followed by the BoE and the adequacy of the level of participation by External Examiners in the assessment process;
- The procedures for induction and preparation for their role and the time available to perform it;
- Where the External Examiner is providing their final annual report at the end of their period of office they should also make reference to observations covering the entire period examined.

### *d. Sharing of report*

- **Discussion:** External Examiners' reports are normally available for discussion widely within the University. In particular, they will be shared with students, so individual students or members of staff must not be named or otherwise be identifiable (for example through reference to dissertation titles) in the report. Schools/departments are responsible for amending or redacting any reports where they contravene the requirement not to identify individuals before sharing them with students and staff.
- **Confidential matters:** Exceptionally, an additional, separate and confidential report may be submitted directly to SCA, if an External Examiner considers this to be appropriate (for example, on highly confidential matters related to individual staff members or on any matter of serious concern).
- **Serious concerns:** If an External Examiner has a serious concern relating to systemic failings with the academic standards of a programme(s) that remain unsatisfied having submitted a confidential report to the VC, they may invoke the QAA's concerns scheme or inform the relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body (QAA Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and

Guidance: External Expertise). Guidance for External Examiners on QAA's concerns scheme is available at <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/how-to-make-a-complaint>.

## 8.5 Review of External Examiners Reports

- a. External Examiners' annual reports are submitted to the External Examiners Administrator working with the Academic Quality Team and to the school/department (directly as a duplicate by the External Examiner or by the External Examiners Administrator).
- b. External Examiners reports will be considered at meetings of Boards of Studies as part of their processes of review as set out in the [Quality Assurance](#) pages of the University website.
- c. The Academic Quality Team will collate a log of issues raised by a school/department's External Examiners in their reports and will require the school/department to provide its response to the log and the actions taken in response, to the Academic Quality Team. The logs shall include:
  - Actions taken in response to the External Examiners' comments;
  - An indication of those recommendations made by the External Examiner that will not be taken forward and the rationale for not implementing the External Examiners' suggestions;
  - Confirmation that the External Examiner has received a written response to their annual report which fully addresses their comments (including the reasons for not taking action in response to issues raised).
- d. The Academic Quality Team will review the undergraduate programmes log in Semester 1 and the postgraduate programmes log in Semester 2, in order to ensure that schools/departments are responding to External Examiners' feedback in a timely and appropriate manner.

The Academic Quality Team will write an External Examiner summary report (one for undergraduate programmes and one for taught postgraduate programmes) which will identify common themes arising from External Examiners' annual reports. This summary report will be considered by the Standing Committee on Assessment, Faculty Learning and Teaching Groups and UTC who will take forward any University-wide issues and issues of serious concern. Assessment Formats

## 9. Closed Examinations

'Closed examinations' refers to in-person written assessment taken under timed conditions. 9.1 Information about closed examinations for students. The central University Exams Office issues a 'Students' Guide to University Closed Examinations' for students sitting formal examinations at York for the first time. The Guide is available on the [Taking an Examination](#) page on the student study webpages.

### 9.1 Clarity of instructions and questions

Staff should make every effort to ensure that examination instructions and questions are clear and easily understood by the students.

## 9.2 Security of examination materials

The security of examination materials is of the utmost importance and schools/departments should have procedures in place to communicate with colleagues and External Examiners, as well as to store examination papers and scripts during the assessment process. Draft exam papers must be treated carefully to avoid compromising the security and validity of the paper before the examination. The use of computers to draw up examination papers means that careful attention must be paid to the security of the PC used to write questions or assemble the paper. Schools/Departments are encouraged to undertake regular reviews of their processes. The IT Service has provided user-friendly guidelines on encrypting sensitive Word documents, [available on the IT services webpage under Protecting confidential data](#).

Examination question papers should be delivered to the central University Exams Office via the Google Drive. Answer scripts must be collected from the designated collection venue by school/department representatives and delivered by hand to their destination within the University and a receipt obtained, or be sent by registered post or similar secure means to destinations outside the University. If completed examination scripts must be sent via mail before marking has been completed, copies of the original scripts (either hard copies or scans) should be taken to protect students in the event that scripts do not arrive safely at their destination. More detailed information about maintaining security in the preparation of examination papers is issued annually, and guidelines for staff and schools/departments, are provided in the 'Managing Assessment and Exams' section of the [Learning Design and Technology](#) webpages.

## 9.3 Examination scheduling and timetabling

- a University examinations for Undergraduate students are scheduled in Semester 1 Weeks 13, 14 and 15 and Semester 2 weeks 13, 14 and 15. The end of Semester revision and assessment periods will not apply to Foundation Certificate or pre-Masters programmes.

Examinations for Postgraduate Students should normally be scheduled during the end of Semester Assessment Periods (weeks 13, 14 and 15) but schools/departments may decide to hold examinations, particularly resit examinations, at school/department level in order to accommodate the quick turnaround periods required for PGT study. These exams must be invigilated to the required standard, and trained invigilators can be provided by the central University Exams Office at the school/department's expense.

### **Examinations will be timetabled according to the following:**

- Timetabled examinations will be held in one of three available 'slots' on each day of the Common Assessment Period:
  - 9.00am (with standard scheduled durations up to 3 hours)
  - 1.30pm (with standard scheduled durations up to 3 hours)
  - 6.00pm (with standard scheduled durations up to 2 hours)
- Students will not be required to sit more than two exams per day.

- Total exam duration for any individual student will not exceed 10 hours per day or 16 hours in 2 days (including extra time as adjustment for any disability).
  - Additional time in examinations under a SSP is added on to the end of the advertised time. This may impact on the break available between examinations if a student has more than one examination scheduled per day but reasonable attempts should be made to accommodate at least 1.5 hours between examinations.
- b Examinations may be timetabled for any day falling within semester time. Saturdays and Bank Holidays may be necessary where necessary due to the volume of examinations to be scheduled. Examinations are normally scheduled Monday to Saturday between 9.00am and 8.00pm.
  - c Centrally-administered closed examinations will have the following durations: one hour; one hour and thirty minutes; two hours; two hours and thirty minutes; three hours. Schools/Departments unable to comply with these examination lengths may arrange and invigilate their own examination sessions to the required standards. The durations for online examinations are in [section 18.2](#).

## 9.4 Establishing student identity

- a Students are required to display their legible University Card on their desks throughout an examination; photographs on the cards will be checked by invigilators in the first 30 minutes of each examination.
- b A candidate unable to produce their legible University Card will have this noted on their examination script before it is submitted. The candidate will be required to answer some security questions and provide a specimen signature in the examination room. In addition the candidate will be required to provide two forms of identification, one of which must be their legible University Card and one of which must evidence their signature, to their Schools/Department within one working day of the examination session. Except with the express permission of the SCA, students who do not provide suitable identification to their school/department within the specified time frame will be deemed not to have attended the examination and their script will not be marked.
- c Any person found to be impersonating a student in an examination and whose identity is unknown will be reported to the police. This will normally be done by the Academic Registrar, or, if the incident occurs out of normal working hours, by an appropriate deputy.

## 9.5 Invigilation

- a The agreed ratio of invigilators to students in University examinations is 1:50. Variation of these ratios is at the discretion of the central University Exams Office, in consultation with the Chair of SCA where appropriate.
- b Short training sessions for invigilators are offered by the central University Exams Office prior to the major examination periods. All new invigilators are required to attend a training session before being permitted to invigilate.
- c Invigilators are responsible for the enforcement of the regulations and policies that govern the conduct of invigilated examinations. A senior invigilator, appointed by the central University Exams Office for each examination session, takes overall responsibility for the conduct of the examination and the invigilation process, including ensuring that the number of examination scripts collected matches the total received by school/department representatives.

- d A full set of information on relevant policies and procedures is distributed to all invigilators in advance of their session. A copy is also available on the web on the [Information for Invigilators](#) page.
- e All invigilators should be present in the examination room at least fifteen minutes before the start of each session and are expected to give their undivided attention to the surveillance of students during examinations. Invigilators should patrol the examination room at intervals to minimise the risk of students cheating and to check that students are using only the additional materials permitted by Boards of Examiners for particular examinations.
- f Invigilators have the authority to require any candidate to leave the examination room for good cause and must submit a written report on the circumstances to the Registrar.
- g The exam-setter or a proxy must either be present or available by telephone throughout the relevant exam session unless specific permission to waive these requirements has been sought from the SCA in advance of the examination. Schools/departments must provide the central University Exams Office with a list of exam-setters or proxies who may be contacted for each examination and the means (telephone numbers, etc) by which they may be contacted.
- h It is important that the one-to-one relationship between the candidate and their script is maintained. Students who finish early should not be permitted to leave before their script has been collected by an invigilator. At the end of the examination, invigilators must ensure that students remain seated at the end of the examination until all the scripts are collected.

## 9.6 Use of the Professional Invigilation Team

- a The central University Exams Office appoints, trains and manages a team of professional invigilators drawn from suitably qualified persons not currently employed on the University's salary scales for Academic Research or Teaching staff including a team of professional Senior Invigilators. Schools/Departments may nominate invigilators if they wish.
- b Schools/Departments may be asked to meet the costs of using additional invigilators to support arrangements.
- c The central University Exams Office is responsible for the formal appointment and general briefing of the professional invigilation team.

## 9.7 Materials and resources permitted in examinations

### 9.7.1 Permitted materials

The following material is permitted on a candidate's desk in an invigilated examination:

- a A clear pencil case or clear plastic bag, which may contain:
  - Pens
  - Pencils
  - Rubber
  - Pencil sharpener
  - Ruler
- b A small (500ml max) clear bottle of still water
- c University Card
- d If permitted by the school/department, open books, dictionaries (see below), calculators (see below), other materials.

- e A watch (n.b. smart watches are not permitted); however, the watch must be removed from the wrist or pocket and placed on the corner of the desk.

Students must remove all items from their pockets before entering the examination. Invigilators may ask to check students' pockets. If students are found with any items in their pockets it will be considered to be academic misconduct, even if they are not items that could have provided them with an advantage during the examination.

### **9.7.2 Dictionaries**

Except where proficiency in a language other than English is being assessed, or an exemption has been permitted by SCA on the basis of the learning outcomes of the module concerned, students will not be permitted to bring individual dictionaries into examinations, nor will dictionaries be provided.

### **9.7.3 Calculators**

Schools/Departments should identify to the central University Exams Office, when submitting the relevant examination paper, whether the exam will require use of calculators. The permission to use calculators must be included in the examination rubric.

Calculator covers must be removed and placed under the candidate's chair.

Students are expected to provide their own calculators for closed examinations. The calculator brought to the exam must be either be one of those on the list approved by the central University Exams Office or a model specifically permitted by the department in line with the provisions below:

- The list of suitable calculators and details of how to use them is available on the central University Exams Office's [Taking an Examination webpage](#). Schools/Departments who wish to add a calculator to the approved list should send a request to the central University Exams Office with a rationale. The SCA will approve any new calculators following consultation with CBoEs from relevant schools/departments.
- Schools/Departments wishing to permit a different model of calculator must advise the central University Exams Office in advance of the examination. The school/department must provide a calculator of the type being proposed to the central University Exams Office in order to allow invigilators to ensure that the calculators students bring is of the appropriate model.

Schools/Departments should refer students to the central University Exams Office's [Taking and Examination webpage](#) in their school/departmental handbooks. It is the students responsibility to familiarise themselves with the calculator they intend to use in the examination. Invigilators will not provide assistance in using calculators during examinations.

Students who do not bring their own calculator, and for whom a calculator is necessary in the completion of particular examination papers, will have one provided for them in the examination room. This arrangement will end at the end of the academic year 2023/24, and so students whose courses end after that point will need to purchase their own calculator. The calculator provided by the central University Exams Office is currently the Casio FX-85GTPLUS.

Bringing a calculator which is not on the approved list, unless specifically authorised for that

examination, will be considered a breach of the rules of that examination under the Academic Misconduct Policy. Arrangements regarding calculators may differ slightly for distant examination centres; see [section 9.10](#).

#### **9.7.4 The use of electronic devices in examinations**

All schools/departments should ensure their students are aware of and understand the current regulations relating to academic misconduct, in particular that failure to comply with the instructions regarding electronic devices constitutes academic misconduct.

Students are not permitted to bring mobile telephones, electronic diaries, electronic dictionaries, smart watches or other data storage units into formal examinations. An announcement to this effect must be made at the beginning of each examination session. Invigilators should ensure that any such devices inadvertently carried into an examination room are made inaccessible to students during the examination session by ensuring they are switched off and placing them underneath the student's desk. If any electronic device capable of storing data is found to have been left switched on during an examination it will be treated as academic misconduct, regardless of whether the candidate accesses the device during the examination. If an alarm or any other noise (including that made by vibrations) is audible from such devices during examinations it will be treated as a case of academic misconduct.

Exceptions to this requirement will be permitted only if formal approval has been sought from and granted by the SCA in advance of the examination session(s) in question.

### **9.8 Behaviour in examinations**

- a. Students should be allowed to leave the examination room only for good reason and should always be accompanied by an invigilator.
- b. Any form of cheating or deception, including plagiarism, collusion and the fabrication of marks or data in relation to work submitted for assessment or examination at any stage of a student's programme, is academic misconduct, and will be treated as such.
- c. Students may not bring written or printed material or equipment, including calculators, into the examination room for a closed examination unless provision has been made for this and the items in question have been approved by the examiners (see sections [9.7](#) and [10.6](#)).
- d. Students found taking illicit material into closed examinations or possessing such material in a closed examination will receive a marks cap under the Academic Misconduct Policy. Illicit material is any material that is not permitted as part of the rubric and includes information stored on or accessible from electronic devices, paper notes and notes on the body.
- e. Students may use examination scripts or booklets for rough work but should be informed that it is their responsibility to cross out such rough work they do not want the examiner to mark before handing in their paper. Paper is not given out for rough notes. If students do need to make rough notes they may use their answer booklet. . All written work, including such notes, must be submitted. Extracting pages from bound examination answer booklets (even if they only contain rough work) is regarded as academic misconduct.
- f. Students may not communicate with anyone except the invigilator during a closed examination.
- g. Students may enter the examination room up to half an hour after the start of the examination (at 15 mins and 30 mins), and thereafter only in exceptional circumstances and with the permission of the invigilator. Except in exceptional circumstances such students should finish their examination at the scheduled time.

- h. No candidate may leave the examination hall less than three-quarters of an hour after the start of the examination except with the permission of the invigilator. Students may not leave the examination hall during the last 15 minutes of an examination.
- i. Smoking (including the use of electronic cigarettes) is not allowed during examinations.

## 9.9 Absence or illness from closed examinations

- a. It is the responsibility of students to present themselves for examination as required by [Regulation 5.5 \(e\)](#).
- b. A candidate taken ill prior to or during the period of an examination must follow the [Exceptional Circumstances Policy](#) in order to have this considered. This must happen before the examination results are considered by the appropriate BoE.
- c. Where students are taken ill during an invigilated examination, whether it is at school/department level or centrally administered, the "Illness During Examinations" form (available from Student Services) should be completed and a copy given to the candidate to take to the Unity Health. Actions taken should be recorded on the Examination Information Sheet, or equivalent in the case of an examination administered within a school/department.

## 9.10 Conduct of examinations away from the University

These provisions apply where a student who is scheduled to take an exam on the University campus (or similar venue under University supervision) but the student is unable to take the exam at that location and has been allowed to take the examination at some other location. In such circumstances, the University's procedures for security, conduct and invigilation must be adhered to.

- a. Unless other arrangements are approved by the SCA in advance, the timing of formal examinations must ensure that all examinations for the same module, no matter in which country they are taking place, begin at the same time GMT. Where this is not practical (eg the same examination taking place in the UK, USA and India), then the students at one or more overseas locations must be chaperoned so they are unable to make any contact with individuals at a different site who are sitting the examination at a different time GMT.
- b. Examiner availability during the distant examination is essential, even if the examination is conducted in a different time zone. A mechanism for immediate contact with York should queries arise during the examination must be established in advance.
- c. All examination practices with regard to special arrangements, toilet supervision, arrangements for the treatment of students who arrive late or wish to leave early, and the use of calculators and dictionaries, should follow the guidelines in the Guide to Assessment for the current year. Where appropriate, the SCA may approve the provision of a basic calculator (ie standard arithmetical operations only, and no memory retained at 'switch-off') in place of the standard University calculator.
- d. Special arrangements involving computer or reader or scribe support must be approved by the SCA in advance (see [section 4.4](#)), and an assurance received that proposed invigilators have been carefully selected and have received adequate training.
- e. Appeals from all students (including distance learning students) are covered by the Special Cases procedures.



## **10. Open Book Examinations**

Open book examinations is one in which students are allowed to bring certain specified papers/books into the exam.

### ***10.1 Procedures***

Where open book examinations are arranged as central examinations, the same procedures should be followed as for Closed Examinations ([see Section 9](#)) with the addition of the following:

### ***10.2 Pre-exam information regarding open book materials***

Students should have explicit information well before the exam about which materials they will be allowed to bring into the exam and about expectations for use of materials in the exam eg referencing.

Staff should take care to only specify materials to which all students will have access.

The materials allowed to be brought into an open book exam should be specified by the module leader clearly on the exam paper. Specifications should include:

- Specific texts/book titles/editions, if required
- Types of notes/formula sheets/revision sheets permitted
- Technical equipment, if required.

### ***10.3 Arrangements for the exam***

Consideration should be given to accessibility issues such as a student's ability to handle multiple books / papers in an exam, suitability of exam room furniture, spacing and time allowances for students allowed extra time.

### ***10.4 Failure to bring specified materials***

It is the student's responsibility to bring the correct materials to the exam. If a student has not brought materials for an exam, they should be allowed to take the exam without the materials.

Schools/departments may provide spare copies of texts, textbooks, books or technical materials if they wish. However, in order to maintain equity, notes or formula sheets should not be provided unless every student receives a copy.

### ***10.5 Invigilation in open-book examinations***

Invigilators should ensure that only those materials specified on the exam paper are allowed in the exam hall. Materials that are not specified on the exam paper must be left outside the exam hall.

Particular vigilance should be shown by invigilators during open book examinations to ensure that students have not concealed illicit material in approved materials eg pre-written paragraphs, possible answers, pages pasted into books.

### ***10.6 Open book examinations and Academic Integrity***

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that notebooks, texts or other approved books that they have been permitted to bring into the examination room do not contain illicit material. Illicit material would include texts not specified on the exam paper, pre-written possible exam answers or formulae. Students

found taking illicit material into closed examinations will be dealt with under the Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures.

## 11. Open examinations

An open examination means one of the following two assessment formats:

- a Students are given an assessment task to complete physically or online in a limited time (eg overnight or over one or two days) at home.
- b An assessment in which students are given the assessment topic OR assessment material to research, consider, or read about before the exam. After the research period (eg overnight or over one or two days), the students are given a precise task to complete under exam conditions.

For an online examination, an assessment format intended to replicate a close examination in an online format, [see section 18](#))

### 11.1 Purpose

Open examinations can be useful if the assessment aims to assess whether students have achieved learning outcomes which cannot normally be assessed in a limited time or under exam conditions. Such outcomes could involve reading and referencing from multiple specific texts or the ability to synthesise information from a number of sources.

### 11.2 Examination requirements

In order for the exam to be run equitably for all students, information needs to be very clear about:

- When and where the exam question/research material/exam task can be picked up or accessed. For large cohorts it is important to ensure that such material is distributed as quickly and fairly as possible.
- Which materials can be consulted or referenced or if there are particular limitations on resources to be used.
- How much time should be spent on the preparation as opposed to the task.
- Word limits and how work needs to be presented or formatted for submission.
- The deadline by which the exam has to be handed in and penalties thereafter.

### 11.3 Open examinations and Academic Integrity

As students will have access to exam materials, open information and be outside a closed exam environment, consideration needs to be given to the dangers of collusion. It should be assumed that students on the same course will discuss released materials, topics and questions so assessment designers need to take this into account and design tasks and plan accordingly.

## 12. Cumulative Assessment – multiple tasks throughout a module

In some instances multiple assessments may be used, for example, weekly class tests, lab reports or lab books, reflective journal entries or portfolio work.

## **12.1 Staff and student workload**

Multiple assessments can be time-consuming. For students, time taken to complete multiple tasks to a high standard should not exceed the credit limit for the module. Module leaders also need to plan carefully for the marking load associated with multiple task assessments – both during a module and once the completed assessments have been submitted.

## **12.2 Cumulative assessment and Academic Integrity**

Consideration needs to be given to how important it is that students undertake their own work. Where students cooperate during labs or to complete class problems, the boundaries between work that can be discussed and work that should be submitted as the student's own need to be clear.

## **12.3 Requirements for assessment**

Assessment information should make clear to students the following:

- a. What is required to be submitted in order for the assessment to be considered complete. This may relate to how many individual tests or reports are required to be submitted, the word length of a complete journal or the number of completed items in a portfolio.
- b. What exactly will be assessed. This may mean all the submissions are assessed or a proportion of submissions are assessed.
- c. Which elements are essential to meet the criteria for assessment. If certain elements of writing are necessary or certain types of approach then this should be made clear to students beforehand.
- d. When the work must be submitted, how submission will take place and what the penalties are for late submission.

## **12.4 Non-completion and reassessment**

Consideration needs to be given to what happens if the requirements of the assessment are not met i.e. a student does not submit the required elements. If unusual and unpredictable circumstances have prevented the student from completing all the tasks then the Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment Policy can be applied. Failure to complete or submit an assessment without a successful exceptional circumstances claim will normally result in a zero for that assignment, with reassessment opportunities commensurate to those available in the event of any other failure on that assessment.

# **13. Coursework (e.g essays/reports in non-examination conditions)**

Coursework is used more frequently as a form of assessment.

## **13.1 Staff and student workload**

Consideration should be given to whether students are given opportunities for tutorials and/or feedback on drafts during the writing process. Such support has implications for staff time and for ensuring equity of input for students. To counter these issues, the amount and type of support offered to students can be outlined beforehand.

Consideration should also be given to how working on essays may distract students from other learning within the module.

## **13.2 Module essays and Academic Integrity**

As students are not under exam conditions, assessing by coursework can create risks of particular forms of academic misconduct. To reduce these risks, departments should consider taking the following steps in designing coursework tasks:

- a. Ensuring that students are asked to answer a very specific questions rather than addressing vague topic areas;
- b. Linking assessment tasks to current affairs/topical issues/specific cases or examples;
- c. Avoiding providing the same titles to students year after year;
- d. Having a draft or formative feedback stage to address integrity issues early;
- e. Including submission of evidence of the research process (and awarding marks for it) as part of the assessment task.
- f. Checking assignments may not easily be completed using Generative AI.

## **13.3 Requirements for assessment**

Information provided to students in relation to coursework tasks should make clear:

- a. the standards criteria and/or weightings which will be used to assess the essays;
- b. the reference format which will be expected (this should be specified in the published criteria and consistently applied across markers);
- c. any other formatting requirements that are particular to the school/department or the assessment;
- d. when the work must be submitted, how extensions can be arranged, how submission will take place and what the penalties are for late submission.
- e. if at least one submission is made before the deadline and another is made afterwards, then the last version before the deadline is the one accepted.

## **13.4 Marking and feedback**

Schools/departments should ensure that sufficient staff time is allocated to the process of marking coursework tasks in order to provide students with useful, timely and effective feedback that is detailed enough to encourage learning ([see Feedback Policy](#)). Module leaders with larger cohorts and/or inexperienced markers should consider producing a clear marking schedule.

## **13.5 Resubmission and reassessment**

For reassessment, consideration needs to be given to how the same learning outcomes can be assessed in a shorter period. Students should not be asked to answer the same question or complete the exact same assessment task as for the first assessment unless there are strong pedagogic reasons for doing so.

## 14. Capstone Projects

### 14.1 Definition

Capstone modules act as the culmination of a programme and typically lead to a substantial piece (or pieces) of independent work, such as dissertation, performance, report etc. They may be greater than 20 credits and cross semesters: upper limits on project size are defined in the undergraduate/postgraduate policy frameworks. 'Capstone project module' is an internal term only: modules do not have to be named by this title<sup>3</sup>.

### 14.2 Requirements

#### 14.2.1 Clarity of expectations and criteria

As the capstone project may be a new assessment format for many students, expectations need to be made as clear as possible. Preparation modules or workshops need to ensure students know what an acceptable capstone project looks like. A useful activity, to familiarise students with expectations and criteria, is to provide students with an opportunity to mark a few capstone projects themselves and discuss the results. Students also need to receive clear information about submission procedures, formats and deadlines.

#### 14.2.2 Supervision – staff and student workload

It is important that both students and staff are fully aware of their responsibilities in relation to the conduct of the work, the time management of the work and the degree of support and guidance to be offered. Schools/departments should aim for consistency of practice in the supervision of capstone projects. Care should be taken to avoid over-supervision and under-supervision. Supervision and feedback could be at various stages:

- a. Proposal/project focus stage
- b. Literature review
- c. First draft.

Allocating marks to parts of dissertations or projects needs careful consideration. Although this can ensure students stay on target with regard to managing their time, breaking up a large mark may mean the production of more criteria. Also, allocating numerous marks for numerous pieces of work at different stages can also lead to mark inflation if students automatically receive marks for handing in work.

### 14.3 Capstone projects and Academic Integrity

A capstone project may be the first piece of extended writing a student may have undertaken for some time – especially in subject areas that are more reliant on examinations. Even for taught postgraduate students, this is often the first piece of independent primary research a student has undertaken, and almost certainly the longest piece of academic work they have been asked to produce.

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<sup>3</sup> Adapted from [Institutional Framework for Programme Design](#).

To support students, , clear guidance needs to be given regarding what constitutes plagiarism, how students can manage their sources and how they should reference and cite clearly. Where primary research is expected, clear guidance should also be provided on appropriate research practice to help students to avoid other forms of academic misconduct. The University policy on proofreading should be brought to the attention of such student from the start.

#### **14.4 Marking and feedback of capstone projects**

As with all other assessments, marking of capstone projects should **not** rely solely on the judgement of a single marker. Given the contribution to the final award, it's important that Departments/Schools ensure that there are agreed standards for marking and/or moderation. This does not necessarily require double blind marking or second marking as long as moderation processes are robust. Feedback should also be provided in a timely manner.

#### **14.5 Submission, extensions and penalties**

Students should be fully and clearly informed about:

- a. when their capstone project has to be submitted (time/date);
- b. how their capstone project should be submitted – eg front cover/format/required pages/presentation;
- c. where their capstone project should be submitted and to whom.

Procedures for granting extensions to submission dates and the procedures followed for late submission of capstone projects should be made as clear as possible to students. Such procedures should be outlined clearly in module information, briefings, on posters in schools/departments and in supervision meetings.

#### **14.6 Reassessment and resubmission**

Reassessment through resubmission on capstone project modules is allowed under the following circumstances:

- Capstone project modules on undergraduate programmes and on Integrated Masters Programmes where the capstone is worth no more than 40 credits are treated the same as for other undergraduate modules: entitlement to reassessment and will be determined using the standard award rules (ie eligible for compensation and reassessment subject to the overall number of credits passed in other modules).
- Undergraduate Capstone project modules where PSRB or other approved requirements do not permit compensation are only reassessable if the fail is marginal (30-39). In such circumstances, students should be required to revise and resubmit within a specified timeframe (usually in time for grading the resubmitted work by the resit exam board).
- Taught postgraduate programmes and Integrated Masters capstone project modules with capstone worth more than 40 credits, can only be reassessed where the capstone project receives a marginally failing mark between 40 and 49.

In all cases where a student is being reassessed on a capstone project module, the resubmission should be set so that they have to make changes to the original project in order for it to be marked in time for the

reassessment Exam Board. Students should not be required to complete a different research activity or change the original research question.

### **14.7 Capstone Project Module: ‘marginal fail’**

Where a student on any taught postgraduate Capstone project module or on a non-compensatable Undergraduate or Integrated Masters Capstone project module has failed by a margin of more than 10 marks (ie an outright Fail), the student will have no opportunity for reassessment. If, however, a student has failed by a margin of 10 marks or fewer (ie a marginal fail), they will have an opportunity to make amendments which would enable a passing threshold to be reached. The overall Capstone Project module mark after resubmission will be capped at the pass mark.

When awarding a ‘marginal fail’, the feedback should ensure that the student is able to identify work required to bring the project up to pass level:

- a. without further supervision
- b. with no more than two weeks full-time equivalent effort.

The sort of revisions that are likely to be considered suitable would include:

- c. editorial corrections, for example
  - o use of English
  - o style
  - o spelling
  - o grammar
  - o word limit
  - o restructuring
  - o referencing
- d. further theoretical analysis/better argumentation
- e. better critical reflection on the work itself (eg research methods)
- f. better use of literature in ways that are compatible with potentially limited physical access to the University library.

If it is thought that the work required to bring this up to a pass would require more time or support, taking into consideration the above requirements, then an outright fail should be awarded.

In awarding a marginal fail there is no expectation that there will be further:

- a. data collection
- b. experiments
- c. extended literature reviews.

If a student is required to undertake any of the above in order to pass, then an outright fail should be awarded.

For Capstones Project Modules with component assessments (eg a dissertation proposal, practical, viva in addition to a dissertation or report) reassessment is only possible if it is a marginal fail for the module as a whole. In such a case, only the dissertation or equivalent component can be reassessed. The (uncapped) mark for the reassessed dissertation replaces the original mark for that component and the Capstone Project Module mark is re-calculated. If a pass is achieved, the overall module mark is capped at pass.

When resubmitting their Capstone Project students will be required to include a cover sheet detailing the changes they have made.

School/Departments should set a firm deadline for resubmission, taking into account the variation in personal circumstances. It is expected that no more than two weeks' full-time effort will be required, and all resubmissions should be submitted within two months at the latest.

## **15. Posters and Presentations**

### **15.1 Arranging posters and presentations**

Posters and presentations are increasingly used as assessment types and enable students to demonstrate a wide range of skills. However, the arrangements need careful consideration, in particular.

- a. Resources – material and technical resources necessary need to be ordered well in advance. It is advisable that limits on how students use resources should be made clear to ensure equity.
- b. Rooms/Space – suitable spaces for poster displays, concurrent presentations or performances need to be booked well ahead of time. Also, technical resources in rooms need to be checked.
- c. Timing – for presentations, a schedule is necessary and needs to be distributed well in advance. The schedule should, as far as possible, ensure equity for students, ie presentations should not happen too far apart. The schedule should take account of how much time is needed to set-up each presentation, how much time is allowed for each presentation (including Q&A if called for) and how much time is needed for marking each presentation. The schedule should allow time for breaks to counter marker fatigue and be flexible enough to allow for some over-run of presentations.
- d. Markers – if presentations are to be jointly marked, arrangements need to be made for enough markers to be available and to be ready to mark consistently.
- e. The original poster and a copy of any recording should be retained by the department.

### **15.2 Standards**

It is important to provide a clear sense of expectations as early as possible to students and markers. If possible, exemplar posters or videos of exemplar presentations should also be available for establishing standards between markers and orienting students about the expectations.

If criteria are used for assessment related to elements of communication such as “pace/tone” in a presentation or “Graphic design” in a poster, students should have had learning and in relation to these skills and some opportunities to practise them and receive feedback.

As presentations cannot be reviewed again (unless recorded) it is recommended that the number of criteria is limited. This allows markers to focus on a few agreed factors during the presentation.

### **15.3 Feedback and learning**

In order for students to have an opportunity to develop skills and learn from the experience of producing posters and presentations, it is recommended that students receive feedback as quickly as possible and that they are allowed to keep an image or copy of their poster or a recording of the their presentation in order to have the opportunity to review their work after receiving feedback.



As the marking of posters and presentations is very immediate, it is important that markers have had the opportunity to use any criteria to mark samples and to discuss the standards expected for different marks beforehand.

## **15.4 Moderation and Marking**

The presentation of work – either as a poster or presentation – does not allow for student anonymity. As a result, having two markers, is recommended to ensure equity. To single mark performance-based assessment worth more than 10% of any module, a recording **MUST** be made to allow for later moderation. Whilst marking, markers should be allowed enough time to make reasoned judgements, agree marks and to make written comments.

## **15.5 Reassessment**

Consideration needs to be given as to how a poster or presentation can be reassessed. Unless there are strong pedagogic reasons for doing so or doing so would be inappropriate as a means of assessing the module learning outcomes, reassessment posters and presentations should relate to a new task or question. Students should have sufficient notice of the new subject area to complete the reassessment (ie at least 5 weeks for undergraduate students and 3 weeks for postgraduate students).

## **16. Group Projects**

### **16.1 Planning**

The purpose of group projects should be clearly identified during module planning, including why it is appropriate for the assignment to be completed in groups and how the process and content of the project will help to achieve the stated learning objectives in the module. If group process skills (eg team-working, communication) are to be developed and assessed during the module then group process learning objectives and assessment criteria need to be clearly defined. This information should be explicitly communicated to students from the outset.

### **16.2 Clarity of information**

Students, and all staff involved in the module, should receive information regarding the requirements for the assessment, including details of procedures relating to:

- a. the task to be undertaken;
- b. the necessity for group work to complete the task;
- c. the basis for group membership;
- d. rules that cover the operation of groups;
- e. task allocation within the group;
- f. what to do if a group loses a member, cannot continue to function as a group or needs to adjust/adapt to events which arise in the group (ie exceptional circumstances). Guidance should include how the students can value and acknowledge this experience as part of their learning;
- g. the conduct of group meetings – expectations regarding frequency, timing and group contact outside scheduled class times;
- h. feedback stages during the assignment period to report group progress and final outcomes;

- i. the weighting of the assessment in the overall module;
- j. due dates for assessment completion;
- k. penalties for late submission etc.;
- l. the procedure and criteria for assessing the group;
- m. the procedure and criteria for assessing individual contributions, if such contributions are to be assessed;
- n. how marks will be allocated between the collaborative process (ie the way individuals collaborated during the project) and the collaborative product (ie the final group document and/or presentation);
- o. who will carry out the assessment (eg, individual lecturers, panel of lecturers, peers);
- p. how the contribution of each member to the group project will be assessed (eg using individual process diaries, peer/external assessment of collaborative process and assignment content).

### **16.3 Group work and academic integrity**

Module leaders should ensure that students understand the difference between legitimate cooperation through group work and collusion. This can be achieved using scenario activities to exemplify to students where grey areas can occur and delineating very clearly what is to be assessed – collaborative process elements, the products of group work or individual products – or all three.

### **16.4 Feedback on progress**

In order for learning related to working in groups to occur, it is important that groups have an opportunity to reflect on the group processes they encounter as they encounter them. Formative feedback and group monitoring can therefore be very valuable tools to reinforce essential learning points.

### **16.5 Assessing group projects**

There are numerous ways to assess group projects, and it is important that the assessment approach matches the stated learning outcomes. Examples are provided below. :

#### ***16.5.1 Group assessment***

The work of the group, can be assessed and then the same mark awarded to each member of the group. This rewards effective collaboration but more dedicated students may feel it is unfair if ‘freeloaders’ are similarly rewarded. A group mark might also be calculated by students in a group individually evaluating each other’s contribution using a predetermined list of criteria. The final mark is an average of all marks awarded by members of the group and is ratified or moderated by the acknowledged academic marker to ensure that marks are appropriate.

#### ***16.5.2 Divided group mark***

The product can be awarded a single mark, and the group can then agree on the number of those marks gained by each individual. This allocation of marks to individuals is best done against previously agreed methods and criteria. Use of a divided group mark can disproportionately reward assertiveness or negotiating skills, although the requirement that marks are justified (with evidence and with reference to criteria) reduces this danger.

Methods that might be adopted to distribute marks to individual students include:

### **1. Student distribution of a pool of marks**

The marker awards a set number of marks and lets the group decide how to distribute them.

- a. For example, the product is marked 80 (out of a possible 100). There are four members of the group. Four by 80 = 240 so there are 240 marks to distribute to the four members.
- b. No one student can be given less than zero or more than 100. If members decide that they all contributed equally to the product, then each member would receive a mark of 80. If they decided that some of the group had made a bigger contribution, then those members might get 85 or 90 marks and those who contributed less would get a lesser mark.

### **2. Students allocate individual weightings**

The marker gives a shared group mark, which is adjusted according to a peer assessment factor.

The individual student's mark comes from the group mark multiplied by the peer assessment factor (eg X 0.5 for 'half' contribution or X 1 for 'full' contribution).

## **16.5.3 Individual and group marks**

Students can each receive the same mark for the product of the project and an individual mark for their contribution to the project. Their contribution can be assessed by observations of the group at work, and/or from a brief, individual critical reflection by each group member on the project and what they learned from it.

Individual marks might be distributed in one of the following ways:

- a. Individual mark – based on records/observation of process  
Each individual group member is awarded a mark for their contribution (as defined by predetermined criteria) using evidence based upon some or all of the following:
  - team log books
  - minutes sheets and/or
  - direct observation of process.
- b. Individual mark – for paper analysing process: Marks are awarded for an individual paper from each student analysing the group process, including their own contribution and that of student colleagues.
- c. Peer Evaluation – average mark, using predetermined criteria.

## **16.5.4 Individual interview**

A short interview with each group member will provide a good idea of the nature and extent of each student's contribution to the work of the group. The mark for the project could then be moderated up or down by up to 10% on the basis of this interview.

## **16.5.5 Project exam**

A short written exam can be set in which students are asked to describe and analyse specific aspects of the project process and their contribution to it. This exam mark can be used as an individual mark which moderates the group mark.

## 16.6 Criteria for assessing groups

It is advisable that if the group work and group process are both going to be assessed, each has separate criteria. The criteria for the group work would most probably be similar to criteria for other assessment tasks (ie essay/report/presentation criteria). The criteria for group processes however may need more consideration to ensure learning outcomes relating to work in groups are properly assessed and should include such areas as:

- a. meeting attendance;
- b. contribution to the task;
- c. degree of cooperative behaviour/ability to work with others;
- d. time and task management;
- e. efficiency at problem-solving;
- f. evidence of capacity to listen;
- g. responsiveness to criticism;
- h. contribution to group discussion;
- i. ability to organise own work vs degree of supervision needed;
- j. ability to motivate/guide others;
- k. adaptability to new situations.

## 16.7 Reassessment

As it may not be possible to recreate a group in order to reassess a student where the group process is part of the assessment, consideration needs to be given to how such aspects of assessment will be reassessed by an alternative assessment method. The alternative method must, however, assess the same learning objectives. This could include examining the student regarding their understanding and analysis of the group tasks and processes that were undertaken during the original task. Where the reassessment instrument differs from the original, the reassessment instrument should be clearly stated in the module information.

If the group processes constitute a significant part of the learning objectives and assessment for the module, making the assessment non-reassessable may be approved by the UTC if it is clear that no alternative approach to assessing the module is more appropriate or that less group work cannot form a less significant proportion of the modules assessment

## 17. *Viva voce* and oral examinations in taught programmes

For the purposes of this guidance, 'a viva voce examination' is defined as 'one student being interactively examined by examiners'. These examinations may not be used in determining degree classifications.

Where the item of assessment contributes more than 10% of the total mark for the module the following applies:

- a) The assessment must be conducted with at least two Internal Examiners present. External Examiners may or may not be present. The final decision on what questions should be asked rests with the Internal Examiners.

- b) The consequence of non-attendance is a mark of zero for that element of the assessment for the module.
- c) It must be audio/video recorded for two reasons:
  - i) The audio-recording will be used by further Internal Examiners not present at the examination in case the Internal Examiners present cannot agree a mark for it.
  - ii) The audio-recording may be used by the student to appeal against inappropriate bias in the viva. The audio-recording will be treated in just the same way as an examination paper and will be destroyed by the school/department confidentially after one year.

## 18. Online examinations

This does not apply to York Online programmes.

### 18.1 Definition

An online examination is any assessment requiring the student to complete an examination outside of an exam hall in a remote setting within a short nominal timeframe and then submit their answer by the specified online medium.

### 18.2 Time constraints

The standard online examination format is:

- a. **Recommended timeframe:** Students provided with a 24hr window to complete an examination within a recommended timeframe, for example 1-3hrs (in line with closed examinations). The recommended timeframe should reflect the period a student would be given to complete the assessment if this were a closed or open exam (the 'exam length');
- b. **Limited timeframe\*:** Students provided with 24hr window to complete the examination, however once they start the examination they must complete within the limited timeframe, for example 1-3hrs (in line with closed examinations)
- c. **Specific Timeframe:** Students provided with a shorter window for the exam, closer to the nominal length of the exam, but inclusive of time to submit the examination (for example start 9am, finish 1pm).

\*Due to technological, support and administrative capacity limitations, Specific Timeframe examinations need approval by SCA in coordination with Digital Education Team and timetabling. Guidance on making requests for these examinations should go to [SCA@york.ac.uk](mailto:SCA@york.ac.uk).

### 18.3 Nominal timeframe, Total timeframe and Extra-time allowance

For Recommended Timeframe online examinations, the extra time allowance is in line with 4.3.2 of the Guide to Assessment. The extension is applied in terms of an 8 hour working day, rather than the total time of the exam (eg 25% extension = 2 hours). This extra time is added on immediately to the end of the standard hand-in time.

For limited and specific timeframe examinations, extra time allowance is added to the length of the exam, as it would be for closed examinations.

Nominal timeframe (How long the exam <i>should</i> take)	Total timeframe (Time from release to deadline for most students)	25% Extra time	50% Extra time
=<2 hours	3 hours	3 hours 45 mins	4 hrs 30 mins
2-3 hours	4 hours	5 hours	6 hours
3-4 hours	5 hours	6 hours 15 mins	7 hrs 30 mins

Therefore, all online examination submission points should be open for submission for a period long enough to cater for the longest expected SSP adjustment. Examination submission deadlines should be set so that all students with SSP adjustments taking the exam will be able to submit during the working day. It should be made very clear at the submission point what the standard submission deadline is, and that submission after that deadline will be subject to the [late penalties](#) unless the student has extra time in examinations as an agreed adjustment in their SSP.

#### 18.4 General principles relating to online examinations

- Online examinations should comply with the principles on question design and clarity, security of exam questions and anonymity as set out in section 9 of this Guide ('Closed Examinations') of the Guide to Assessment.
- It is best practice to design online assessments as open examinations with no restrictions on materials. Restrictions on the use of materials or software may be specified for some online examinations. It should be remembered that students will have access to the internet, study notes, learning materials, calculators and other materials and it may not be possible to prevent or detect student's use of them. Any restrictions on the use of materials should be clearly communicated to students as part of the assessment instructions.

#### 18.5 Examination Scheduling and Timetabling

- Online exams will normally be scheduled during the assessment period. If not all examinations can be accommodated, additional days may be required. No standard submission deadline for an online examination should be outside of working hours: 9.00 am to 5 pm Monday to Saturday.
- Students will not be scheduled for more than one exam at the same time

#### 18.6 Release of Exam

Exam papers will be released to students at school/departmental level. All students (including those on joint and combined programmes) should get the paper. Exam papers should be set for timed release on the VLE at the time specified on the timetable. VLE submission points should be set up for each online examination by school/department administrators (and allowance should be made for extra time allowance for students on support plans in line with [4.4.2](#) of this policy). All exams should be distributed in PDF form using accessible formatting features (eg using appropriate styles in the original source file before converting to pdf).

### **18.6.1 Dummy submission points**

It is advisable that students have an opportunity to practise submission in this format before the summative assessment, so that they practise submitting a target file, with a specified file type, and are comfortable with the technical requirements and can flag any problems way before the examination. This may be best achieved by providing a formative assessment opportunity.

### **18.6.2 Anonymity**

The same degree of anonymity as used for closed examinations should be applied to this online examination process.

## **18.7 Submission requirements**

- Online examinations are to be submitted to an anonymous submission point on the VLE (unless an alternative method has been approved by SCA in consultation with Digital Education Team).
- The location of the submission point and the time and date of submission should be clearly indicated to students as part of the assessment instructions.
- Requirements for valid submission and restrictions on what can be submitted should be made clear to students.
- Submission points should be configured to allow multiple submissions - in this case, students should be told that the last submission (before the deadline) will be the one marked.
- Files up to 30MB may be submitted to the VLE.
- If schools/departments anticipate the submission of files greater than 30MB, they can consult Digital Education Team ([vle-support@york.ac.uk](mailto:vle-support@york.ac.uk)) on making arrangements for alternative submission (such as Dropbox).

## **18.8 Handwritten Script Upload Requirements**

In some cases, it may be necessary to require that students hand-write the examination script (eg in mathematical subjects). Students must comply with the upload requirements used for that assessment. Schools/departments should ensure guidance on handwritten requirements are clear and accessible to students. [See 19.11](#) for guidance on Transcription of illegible scripts.

## **18.9 Word limits**

Schools/Departments may apply word limits to questions, sections or the exam as a whole, and penalties may be applied for exceeding word limits in line with standard practice for that programme. The word limits and penalties must be carefully considered, with the latter being proportionate. Limits and penalties must be clearly communicated to students prior to the examination and in the examination information received at the start of the examination.

## **18.10 Exam Errors and Clarifications**

The same practice and approach to requests for clarification or correction of the exam paper as applies in closed examinations will apply subject to the following modifications:

- a. Announcements about exam errors or clarification should only be made within the first hour of the submission window.
- b. There should be a single clear method for communicating any clarification or correction to all students taking the assessment (eg by email, by a VLE discussion forum).

- c. The exam-setter or a proxy must be available to respond to queries and questions during this hour.
- d. This process and the limitations on reporting errors should be clearly communicated to all students taking the assessment.
- e. Any errors or areas of ambiguity that are identified after the first hour of the submission window should not result in communication to students taking the assessment but should rather be taken into consideration as part of the marking of the examination.

### 18.11 Academic Integrity and misconduct

Online examination is a time-limited open assessment. Therefore students are permitted to refer to written and online materials unless any restrictions are specified. Students, however, must ensure that the work submitted is entirely their own, and while the assessment is live must not:

- a. communicate with other students on the topic of this assessment;
- b. communicate with school/department staff on the topic of the assessment (other than to highlight an error or issue with the assessment which needs amendment or clarification);
- c. seek assistance with the assessment from academic support services, such as the Writing and Language Skills Centre or Maths Skills Centre, or from Disability Services (unless the student has been recommended an exam support worker in a SSP);
- d. seek advice or contribution from any other third party, including proofreaders, friends, or family members; or
- e. use Generative AI unless it is specifically permitted in the assessment specifications.

Where evidence of academic misconduct is evident this will be addressed in line with the Academic Misconduct Policy and if proven be penalised in line with the appropriate penalty table. Given the nature of these assessments, any collusion identified will normally be treated as cheating/breach of assessment regulations and penalised using the appropriate penalty table (see [AM3.3](#)).

Consideration should be given, while setting assessments, to the extent to which the full use of good referencing practice (including expectations of citations, reference list and use of quotations) is realistic given the length of the examination. Any variation in the expectation of good referencing practice should be clearly communicated to students and to assessment markers.

When setting an online examination, it should be recognised that students will be taking such an assessment away from any control or oversight and that students will have full access to their learning and revision materials, which may therefore create the impression of collusion even where it has not occurred.

Each online assessment point should contain the same generic text about academic integrity and misconduct in relation to online examinations. This text is as follows:

*We are treating this online examination as a time-limited open assessment, and you are therefore permitted to refer to written and online materials to aid you in your answers. However, you must ensure that the work you submit is entirely your own, and for the whole time the assessment is live you must not:*

- a. *communicate with other students on the topic of this assessment.*
- b. *communicate with school/departmental staff on the topic of the assessment (other than to*



- highlight an error or issue with the assessment which needs amendment or clarification).*
- c. *seek assistance with the assessment from academic support services, such as the Writing and Language Skills Centre or Maths Skills Centre, or from Disability Services (unless you have been recommended an exam support worker in a SSP).*
  - d. *seek advice or contribution from any other third party, including proofreaders, friends or family members.*
  - e. *use Generative AI to contribute to your assessment unless it is specifically permitted in the assessment specifications.*

*We expect, and trust, that all our students will seek to maintain the integrity of the assessment, and of their award, through ensuring that these instructions are strictly followed. Where evidence of academic misconduct is evident this will be addressed in line with the Academic Misconduct Policy and if proven be penalised in line with the appropriate penalty table. Given the nature of these assessments, any collusion identified will normally be treated as cheating/breach of assessment regulations and penalised using the appropriate penalty table (see AM3.3.Academic Misconduct Policy).*

## **18.12 Late submission and non-submission of online examinations**

The submission deadline should be made very clear for each assessment at the submission point.

- a. **Late submissions:** The timeframe provided for an online examination is inclusive of time to upload work, therefore submissions after the deadline (unless the student has extra time as an agreed adjustment in their SSP) will be treated as follows
  - Submissions up to 30 minutes late are accepted with a 5 mark penalty (which may be waived in the event of a successful exceptional circumstances claim).
  - Submissions beyond 30 minutes after the deadline are treated as non-submissions. If a student submits a successful exceptional circumstances claim, they would receive a sit as if for the first time.
- b. **Non-submission:** Failure to complete or submit an assessment without a successful exceptional circumstances claim will normally result in a zero for that assignment, with reassessment opportunities commensurate to those available in the event of any other failure on that assessment.

## **18.13 Exceptional Circumstances**

Each online assessment point should contain the same generic text about exceptional circumstances (ECA) claims in relation to online examinations. Students may submit a claim if they believe their online examination assessment is being impacted by exceptional circumstances. If a student has submitted the online examination, they may still apply for exceptional circumstances before the end of the exam submission window. If a student is unable to submit an examination a student can submit an ECA claim any time up to 7 days after the online examination window.

In deciding on the appropriate exceptional circumstances adjustment, schools or departments should consider the overall length of the examination when deciding whether an extension or some other form of adjustment (such as an opportunity to sit the assessment as if for the first time) is more appropriate.

Exceptional circumstances adjustments should not generally be such as to significantly change the nature of the assessment.

Online examination assessments should also generally be open to deferral under the self-certification process rather than 4-day extension.

## **19 Standards and Marking**

### **19.1 Principles of standards and marking**

Clear shared standards for the marking of work:

- exemplify the expectations of particular disciplines and professions;
- provide students with clear guidance on, and so enable deeper understanding of, the standards expected of them during assessment;
- are acknowledged by the national and international academic community;
- provide modules, programmes and degrees with legitimacy; and
- are the basis of professional judgement and confidence in such judgement.

As such, standards – and the marking practices which apply and uphold those standards – are the foundation of a fair and respected assessment system. As part of the assessment system of the University, the standards and marking practices implemented by schools/departments should be consistent with University policy and abide by its principles of assessment: equity, openness, clarity and consistency.

### **19.2 Establishing standards**

#### ***19.2.1 School/Departmental responsibility***

It is the responsibility of the school/department to ensure that colleagues who teach and/or mark on the same programme have a shared understanding of the standards expected of students. This shared understanding should relate to expectations of student achievement within modules and between levels. schools/departments should also be aware that they must be able to justify their procedures for establishing this shared understanding to UTC and its representatives (eg at periodic review), to External Examiners, to external quality assurance agencies (including PSRBs, where relevant), and to possible appeals by students to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education](#).

#### ***19.2.2 Assessment design***

Schools/Departments should spend significant effort agreeing on ways in which learning will be assessed and the criteria which will be used for each form of assessment. Agreement should be reached on such areas as core criteria, level criteria, marking approach and marking procedures for different assessment formats. This process should be repeated regularly in order to review whether criteria are fit for purpose, to embed understanding of the criteria into practice and to educate new staff.

#### ***19.2.3 Reflection on practice***

Following assessment and marking, Boards of Examiners should reflect on module results and identify modules that appear to have results that are consistently lower or higher than the school/departmental average for the level. The expectation should be that the academics and GTAs involved in teaching/marking

those modules meet to examine the calibration of their marking practices to those of the wider school/department.

### 19.3 Deciding on marking processes

It is the responsibility of the school/department to ensure that all of their marking practices and procedures follow the principles of standards and marking outlined above and the marking requirements outlined below. In deciding how to arrange marking for each assessment in each module, schools/departments should take account of the following aspects:

#### 19.3.1 Matching assessment formats to appropriate marking processes

It is important that students are provided with timely marking and feedback. If factors such as the number of students, number of marking staff, type of assessment or time available for marking impose particular restrictions, consideration should be given to which type of assessment format is most appropriate for the module and which marking process is the most appropriate to provide fair and meaningful marks and feedback.

### 19.4 Definitions of Marking Processes

Process	Definition	How is it used
Single Marking	Single marker marks to criteria/ key	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only used for formative assessments - any level</li> </ul>
Electronic assessment and marking	Absolute right/wrong item tests (true/false; matching; multiple choice) delivered and marked automatically on the VLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be used for formative assessments - any level</li> <li>Small student group (dependent on the capacity of a computer lab)</li> </ul>
Answer Key Marking	Single marker or multiple single markers marking to a single specific answer key	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exam-type assessments where items lead to limited possible answers (eg mathematics, facts, information)</li> <li>Answer key has been piloted or used before</li> <li>Moderator appointed to oversee marking procedures, address problems, update the answer key and update the marking team</li> </ul>
Standardised marking	Marking is divided between a team of single markers following a standardisation session in which sample papers are marked and discussed to establish a shared understanding of acceptable answers/ unacceptable answers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Test-type assessment that involves answers that cannot be covered sufficiently by an answer key (eg. longer written answers to specific questions)</li> <li>Moderator appointed to run standardisation session, oversee marking procedures, be available for consultation re: problematic answers</li> <li>Marking is completed within a very limited time to ensure consistency</li> </ul>

Moderated Marking	Initial marking (possibly combined with ‘tuning-in’ marking to establish standards by examination of a sample) completed by single markers, followed by analysis of mark distributions and by sample marking by appointed moderator or by a number of members of the marking team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Any form of assessment where a clear standard has been established through stringent assessment design, criteria design, School/Departmental marking activities and sample building</li> <li>● May include ‘tuning in’ marking: the moderator, prior to marking commencing, has the responsibility for identifying a sample of assessments to be used for a pre-marking moderation meeting with all the markers (or all the inexperienced markers) to establish the standard that is expected/acceptable</li> <li>● Distribution of marks is analysed once marking has been completed by all markers. If a particular set of marking is identified as being unusual in its distribution of marks, the set must be checked through sampling and potentially remarked or scaled</li> </ul>
Second Marking	1 <sup>st</sup> markers mark and comment/ 2 <sup>nd</sup> markers see the marks and comments and confirm or challenge. Markers agree on a final mark based on criteria and reasoned discussion based on evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● As for moderated marking, above, the moderator may identify scripts for pre-marking moderation to be used to establish standards.</li> <li>● Moderator analyses distribution of marks and deals with borderline or contentious cases and sample checks 10% of all new markers’ papers</li> <li>● Samples of work at each criteria level are retained to provide an example of standards for subsequent offerings of the module</li> </ul>
Blind, double marking	Two markers mark the work without access to each other’s marks or comments. Markers meet to discuss and agree on a final mark through reference to the criteria and reasoned argument based on evidence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● where the anonymity of the student may be lost and where it is not reasonably possible to address such concerns through significant use of moderated or second marking processes.</li> <li>● Very clear criteria are published beforehand to students and staff</li> </ul>
Joint Marking	Marking is completed by two (or more) markers at the same time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Where the student anonymity is lost and a written or recorded record is kept</li> <li>● Student and staff have very clear criteria well beforehand</li> <li>● Markers have time following each performance to make reasoned judgements with reference to the criteria</li> <li>● All agreed marks and comments are recorded for each performance within the same day</li> <li>● A percentage of performance is always recorded for later standards development and moderation</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To single mark performance based assessment, a recording <b>MUST</b> be made to allow for later moderation.</li> </ul>
Peer Marking	Students use criteria to judge the formative work of other students (on the same module or at the same level). This practice helps them to internalise standards through making critical judgements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Formative work: Any level for any assessment where appropriate and carefully considered.</li> <li>● Group work: appropriate where the process of working in a group is assessed.</li> <li>● Presentations: appropriate where peers constitute the audience and are therefore able to judge delivery and content.</li> </ul>

## 19.5 Marking requirements

### 19.5.1 Ensuring equity and consistency in marking

Schools/Departments should consider and agree on a consistent approach to and procedures for marking different assessments. How the approach and procedures work should be clearly stated in Programme Handbooks and communicated to students to ensure equity and consistency. In particular, all work contributing to progression decisions or a final award must be marked using an approach and procedure which is subject to analysis and scrutiny of marks to ensure they have been awarded appropriately.

Such approaches may include:

- Full scale marking with associated criteria (0-100)
- Stepped marking
- Answer key marking

Such procedures might include:

- standardised marking in which acceptable answers are discussed and agreed by markers before marking commences;
- moderated marking in which marks awarded are scrutinised and samples reviewed by an appointed moderator or by members of the marking team;
- second marking in which first markers mark papers and these are checked by second markers;
- blind double marking in which two markers both mark the assessed work independently then come together to agree on the final mark;
- joint marking in which two markers, working at the same time, mark live assessments;
- answer key marking in which assessed work is marked according to a specified answer key.

For guidance regarding which procedure is suitable for different types of assessment, please see [19.4](#).

### **19.5.2 Blind, double marking**

Department should consider whether blind, double marking is a proportionate way of ensuring assessment quality and, particularly, whether moderated marking with robust moderation processes is a more effective way of ensuring assessment fairness. If schools/departments do use blind, double marking, they should pay attention to the procedures necessary to ensure that markers arrive at their judgements independently of one another. This may require guidance to first markers on the nature of annotations that should be written on scripts before they are second marked.

### **19.5.3 Marking to the Full Range**

Schools/Departments should pay particular attention to ensuring that their marking procedures and practice support the use of the full range of marks by markers. It is important that this matter is given due consideration as a limited mark allocation in a module can have a significant effect on a student's final degree classification.

### **19.6 Resolving differences between markers**

Schools/Departments should have guidelines on how differences in marks between second or blind, double markers are resolved, based on the following principles:

- a. The margin of difference that is regarded as a significant discrepancy should be stated clearly. This margin might simply be the difference in the number of marks, or might occur whenever the markers assign a different class to the work, or be a combination of these factors.  
Schools/Departments may wish to give particular attention to critical borderlines eg pass/fail or 2:1/2:2.
- b. Where the difference between the two markers is not regarded as significant, an agreed mark can be returned by the markers without further documentation; this agreement might be obtained by negotiation between the markers or by a systematic process of taking the rounded mean.
- c. In all cases where a significant discrepancy has occurred, the markers should engage in discussion based around the relevant mark scheme or criteria to determine an agreed mark. The rationale for any agreed mark should be documented, and be detailed sufficiently to permit scrutiny by the BoE and the External Examiner(s).
- d. If the markers are unable to reach an agreement, a further internal marker or moderator should be appointed by the BoE. This individual should have access to the reports of the first two markers as well as the script and should determine the mark, documenting their rationale, which should be detailed sufficiently to permit scrutiny by the BoE and the External Examiner(s).
- e. External Examiners should not be asked to adjudicate between internal markers. However, the process by which marks are resolved should be open to their scrutiny and comment. In particular, External Examiners should have access to the original marks of the markers.

## **19.7 Supervisors**

A student's supervisor may also be the first marker of their student's capstone project provided that there are effective methods of ensuring the fairness and accuracy of the mark such as robust moderation or the use of a second marker who was not involved in the supervision of the project at any point.

## **19.8 Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) and inexperienced markers**

In relation to embedding shared understanding of standards among colleagues, specific consideration needs to be given to Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs). Whether these postgraduates are running tutorials, seminars, or labs, or marking formative work or summative work, they should have a clear understanding of the expectations of the school/department in terms of learning, assessment and achievement. If GTAs are involved in marking and providing feedback, it is especially important that they understand fully level-criteria and how to guide students toward improvement. Schools/departments should exercise caution in using GTAs to mark and give feedback on summative work, particularly at second year undergraduate level and above (where marks contribute to the calculation of the final degree result), and on work that requires considerable academic judgement (eg essays and reports where markers cannot be provided with a detailed mark scheme and model answers). For further details, including in relation to training and support for GTAs involved in marking and providing feedback please see the [University's Policy on GTAs](#). To promote shared understanding of standards among GTA markers and inexperienced markers, opportunities for peer involvement in critiquing and providing feedback on formative work can be very effective, as can table marking procedures for marking summative work.

## **19.9 Annotation of examination scripts**

### ***19.9.1 Initialled Scripts***

It is good practice for every page of an examination script to be initialled by at least one of the examiners. This practice can be useful if students query marks. University regulations do not permit the re-marking of scripts.

### ***19.9.2 GDPR Exemption***

Examination scripts are exempt from data subject access under data protection legislation because they are statements from the students, not data about them. However, Examiners' (Internal and External) comments on the content of scripts or dissertations are disclosable, whether recorded on the script or held separately. Students have the right of access to data consisting of the marks given, and any comments upon which they were based.

### ***19.9.3 Comments***

All comments committed to writing should be fair and defensible. They should relate to the written answer rather than the characteristics or personality of the student.

### ***19.9.4 Further Information***

Further information on the University's Data Protection Policy on Teaching and Examining may be found on the University's [Data Protection Legislation](#) page.

## **19.10 Examination scripts that deviate from the rubric**

School/Departments should have clear guidance, publicised to both students and markers, on how scripts will be marked where the student has answered the wrong number of questions, or has (in some other way) failed to comply with the exam rubric.

## **19.11 Transcription of illegible scripts**

### ***19.11.1 Basis for transcription request***

Scribes (also called amanuenses) are specifically provided for students with a contemporary formal diagnosis of a relevant disability but such a service is not automatically available for students who have no such diagnosis. Academic staff should not, however, feel obliged to spend time deciphering an illegible examination script. If they are unable to read a script, they can request that it be transcribed if the legibility of the work cannot be achieved by other means (such as enlargement of the written answer, etc).

### ***19.11.2 Maintaining equity***

Transcription needs to be carried out in such a way that students are not able to improve the quality of the answers they have given on the examination script; for this reason the transcription should be undertaken by an individual approved by SCA. This procedure ensures that this process is undertaken in controlled conditions, is accurate and that the student gains no material advantage.

### ***19.11.3 Costs***

The student must cover the costs involved. At the current level of support this would be the current rate of pay per hour for an assistant invigilator. This payment must be made before the transcribed script is released for marking.

### ***19.11.4 Disputes***

Any disputes between the transcriber and the student must be recorded by the transcriber and signed by the student. Disputes will be referred to the CBoE (or BoS if there is a conflict of interest) for resolution.

## **19.12 Marking work with exceptional circumstances claims**

In order to ensure equity between students, marking should be conducted without regard to exceptional circumstances.

## **19.13 Deadline for releasing results and feedback**

The maximum turnaround time for summative feedback and marks to students is usually twenty-five working days (see [section 20](#)). Furthermore, where students are required to resit assessments, they must be given adequate time to prepare: undergraduate students must be given at least 5 weeks between the notification of the need to resit and the resit itself and Postgraduates, this period must be at least 3 weeks.

## **19.14 Recording results**

All assessment marks that count towards an award, or a mark on an academic transcript, or a progression decision, must be recorded on the University's Student Record System (SITS).



## 19.15 Security of work submitted for assessment

Schools/Departments must ensure that all materials submitted for assessment are treated carefully to avoid materials going astray and to ensure students' personal information is not compromised. The permitted methods for sharing electronic files (e.g. scanned copies of exam scripts to be sent to a marker away from the institution) are:

- a. Via shared filestore, provided either by IT Services or by the school/department
- b. Via Google Drive with a University account
- c. Via an encrypted USB stick
- d. Via email with an encrypted document.

It is strongly recommended that you use either method a or b. Remember that email attachments are not secure and assessment materials should not be sent this way in case they are accidentally sent to the wrong person. Guidance on encryption of attachments can be found on the [Protecting Confidential Data](#) page.

It is expected that markers will take materials for assessment home. However, such materials should not be taken anywhere else unless a copy is retained in the school/department. Likewise, if hard copies must be sent through the post, they should be sent recorded delivery and a copy made prior to posting.

## 20 Feedback

“Feedback” means any part of the learning process which is designed to guide student progress. This guidance can involve many different elements such as helping to clarify what is expected (goals, criteria, expected standards), responding to learners' needs or providing guidance toward a deeper level of learning and understanding. Feedback is an essential part of the learning dialogue between student and lecturer and this dialogue should help the student not only to reflect on their own learning but also to feel more clear about their progress.

The nature of the feedback can also vary depending on, for example, discipline, level of study, nature of delivery, student numbers and learning outcomes.

### 20.1 Feedback principles

In developing and implementing processes and policies for providing feedback to students, schools/departments should adopt the principles that their assessment feedback:

- a. is acknowledged as an essential part of the learning process and as a major element in the relationship between lecturer and student;
- b. is accepted as the purpose of assessment for learning (formative assessment) and a valued benefit of assessment of learning (summative assessment);
- c. is planned into the curriculum and is linked to clear paths of progression;
- d. is related clearly to the stated learning outcomes and specific assessment criteria;
- e. is provided in a way that ensures it is useful, adequate, fair and timely.

## 20.2 Feedback requirements

In order for feedback to be effective as part of an on-going learning dialogue between student and tutor, the following four basic requirements need to be met.

### 20.2.1 Adequacy

Students should be provided with adequate feedback in order to facilitate improvement, and should not have to request it. Adequate feedback means:

- a. more than a mark or mark indication;
- b. the provision of feedback, in some form, on both formative and summative assessments;
- c. the provision of opportunities for further follow-up guidance, if necessary.

### 20.2.2 Timeliness

Feedback should be:

- a. received soon enough to ensure that it is understood in the context of the learning activities;
- b. allow students sufficient time to improve their performance before next being assessed in a similar way;
- c. received by the published deadline.

**Twenty-five Day Feedback Rule:** Timely feedback means that students should usually receive feedback within twenty-five working days of the submission deadline for the assessment. Working days exclude University closure days ('customary leave' days between Christmas and New Year and public holidays/statutory holidays.)

### 20.2.3 Usefulness

Students should receive that is useful in that:

- a. they can understand it as relevant to their learning and progression;
- b. it is provided in a format that is legible, focussed and relevant to the task;
- c. it is supported by clear information and direction as to the standards of performance expected ie linked explicitly with assessment criteria and mark descriptors;
- d. it provides clear information on the state of current achievement and indications of areas for improvement.

### 20.2.4 Fairness

Students should feedback that:

- a. is, as far as possible, unbiased and objective;
- b. provides guidance on future learning to students, irrespective of the student's level of achievement;
- c. relates to the specific assessment under consideration, not the student or the student's unrelated past work or achievements.

## **20.3 Roles**

University students and tutors are all part of a learning community in which individuals are assumed to have, or be developing, the ability and maturity to initiate and direct their own learning. In light of these differences, both tutors and students have certain responsibilities concerning learning and feedback.

### ***20.3.1 Students Responsibilities***

A student's responsibilities related to learning and feedback include:

- a. being a fully active participant in the learning dialogue between tutor and student;
- b. planning their own learning, consciously reflecting on their needs as a learner and actively accessing the assistance they need to improve, as necessary;
- c. being aware that it is their responsibility to take full advantage of all the learning and feedback opportunities provided to them.

### ***20.3.2 Staff Responsibilities***

A staff member's responsibilities related to learning and feedback include:

- a. providing a challenging, active learning environment;
- b. planning their teaching such that it is clear what is expected of students and what assistance is available to students to address student needs and support their learning;
- c. providing the best quality, most timely feedback possible on students' work.