

UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT POLICY

Yellow highlighted text identifies the most recent revisions to the document/ regulations. If you require these revisions to be identified in an alternative format, please contact the **Academic Quality Unit**.

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1 Purpose

- 1.1 This Policy sets out principles, processes and good practice for the design and management of student assessment at course and module level. It also explains the quality assurance requirements for the approval and verification of assessment items, and the requirements for standardisation and moderation of student work. The Appendices to the Policy provide guidance on effective practice.
- 1.2 All University awards and courses are subject to this Policy. Some courses, such as those with professional, statutory, or regulatory body requirements, may have approved variations to assessment regulations or policy, which will be clearly set out in the Programme Specification and Course Handbook.
- 1.3 The Policy should be read with the Taught Courses Regulatory Framework (TCRF). On matters of interpretation or application, queries should be made to the Academic Registrar or **Academic Quality Unit**, as appropriate.

2 Terminology

Academic Integrity: is behaving in a way that is honest, trustworthy, fair, respectful and responsible in assessment practice. This includes, for example, identifying all sources used through referencing, using accurate data, clearly stating if work has been submitted elsewhere, meeting ethical requirements, and making sure work represents individual or group effort (where relevant).

Assessment: any activity which evaluates student learning and performance against learning outcomes and criteria for that activity. Assessments can be formative (mainly for giving feedback on performance and is not included in the mark for a module) or summative (contributes to a module mark). Assessments can be practical or live (such as laboratory tests or performances) or written (such as coursework or examinations).

Assessment Boards: there are two levels of assessment boards (Subject Assessment Boards, and Board of Examiners):

Subject Assessment Board is the first level of Board responsible for:

- a) Acting in line with Regulations and Procedures, meeting as needed after each period of assessment.
- b) Checking and approving assessment items and marking.
- c) Confirming standards for modules.
- d) Reviewing students' module assessment performance.
- e) Agreeing students' module grades.
- f) Receiving Mitigating Circumstances Committee decisions.
- g) Receiving Academic Misconduct Committee decisions.
- h) Recommending action to the appropriate Board of Examiners when a student has failed an assessment.

Board of Examiners: is the second level of Board, responsible for:

- a) Reviewing each student's full profile of module results.
- b) Making decisions about student progression.
- c) Agreeing awards based on completed academic credit.
- d) Ensuring requirements for awards have been met
- e) Agreeing each student's award and (where relevant) classification.

Assessment Brief: guidance for students on how to complete an assessment, what the task is, how to present the work, the assessment criteria, and the marking scheme (where used).

Assessment Criteria: explains the standards and qualities of student work to successfully complete the assessment item linked to the course and module learning outcomes. These may be generic or assessment specific.

Assessment Item: a task such as an essay, project, coursework assignment or examination. Assessment items should be valid, reliable and authentic:

- a) Validity ensures the assessment task measures student achievement of the learning outcomes.
- b) Reliability ensures assessment is accurate and can be repeated.
- c) Authenticity means assessments ask students to demonstrate skills and capabilities from problems and situations in the 'real' world.

Assessment Literacy: knowledge and understanding of the principles of sound assessment practice, including the design and management of assessment to encourage engagement with learning.

Assessment Rubric: a marking grid on Blackboard or Turnitin® to give students feedback from standard options.

Formative Assessment: any activity that leads to developmental feedback (or feedforward) for students about their learning. It is not graded; this means that it is not used in the mark for a module.

Grade Descriptors: are linked to assessment criteria and explain the usual standard needed for a band of marks or class of degree at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Course and/or subject teams use the University generic grade descriptors in setting criteria and grade descriptors for courses, subjects or assessments.

Marking Scheme: a way of assigning marks to features of an assessment. Marking schemes are optional but may be used by courses or subjects.

Moderation: a way of checking the application of assessment criteria (and related feedback) to be sure that the standard of awards (known as academic standards) are consistent, reliable and fair. Summative assessment is moderated internally and externally:

Internal Moderation: is done by academic staff to check: the quality of feedback given to students; and that the mark for assessment work is fair and reliable. Internal

moderation is usually done on a sample of assessment work and can be unseen (sometimes called 'blind') or seen ('non-blind') double marking.

External Moderation: is done by experienced academic staff ('external examiners') that work at other higher education providers and so are independent of the University. External examiners check that the level of assessments and students' work meets the required academic standards and is in line with similar programmes nationally. They comment on the quality of feedback and how well assessments are managed.

Reassessment: the opportunity to complete an assessment again following a failed summative assessment.

Standardisation: ensures everyone on a course or module team understands the expected standards of marking and feedback.

Summative Assessment: is any assessment that contributes to the module mark.

Verification: ensures assessments and related briefs are fair, valid and challenging in terms of academic standards.

3 Principles of Assessment and Feedback

3.1 Assessment is an important part of the course design process to ensure course and module learning experiences are effectively aligned and sector-recognised standards are maintained. It is expected that:

- Module assessments are informed by a planned and integrated approach to course design to enable academic progression
- Assessments align with course aims and learning outcomes
- Assessment strategies and course design include opportunities for formative assessment linked to summative assessment
- Assessment tasks are checked for validity and reliability and are verified to confirm academic standards and fairness
- Marking and grading of student work (including any classification) is informed by sector-recognised standards, to ensure that the awards are trusted and credible
- Students are assessed on technical proficiency in English language in a way that links to the level and content of the course or module
- The possibility of academic misconduct (for example plagiarism, unauthorised collaboration or use of unauthorised materials) by students is minimised.

3.2 Understanding academic requirements and academic integrity is established through the development of staff and student 'assessment and feedback literacy'. It is expected that:

- Opportunities for students to develop assessment literacy are part of module and course learning activities
- Learning activities develop a shared understanding of academic standards and assessment criteria

- Student induction includes activities that develop student understanding of academic integrity
- Students are made aware of University guidance on proofreading and editing (see appendix 8)
- Peer assessment and self-assessment are used to help students understand the assessment process
- Developing assessment literacy means students become self-regulating and effectively understand and use feedback to develop confidence
- Staff engage with professional development opportunities to further develop assessment literacy
- Annual evaluation processes provide opportunities to monitor, evaluate and develop assessment and feedback processes.

3.3 Assessment and feedback are inclusive. This means that they meet the requirements of equality legislation and good practice, and develop students' learning through partnership and dialogue. It is expected that:

- Assessments are inclusive by design, and where needed, reasonable adjustments are made
- Assessment design takes into account the range of student backgrounds, experiences, identities and aims
- Assessment is planned and co-ordinated at a course level to provide appropriate elements of choice and flexibility for students
- Assessments, assessment criteria, and assessment rubrics are accessible, clear, and understandable for students
- Feedback on assessments is accessible, constructive and timely
- Students have opportunities to discuss assessment feedback with tutors
- Course teams monitor attainment outcomes and gaps between different social groups and take appropriate action to reduce gaps.

3.4 Formative and summative assessments are planned, so that students can use feedback for summative assessments. This means that assessment and feedback includes:

Assessment as learning:

- Assessment should enable students to learn about themselves as learners and to reflect on their learning

Assessment for learning:

- Assessment should engage students in purposeful and positive learning

Assessment of learning:

- There should be a balance of formative and summative assessments throughout a course so that assessment tasks are valid and reliable tests of student learning
- Assessment outcomes should also provide information on how effective the course is and how well the content, learning, teaching, and assessments meet the aims and learning outcomes of the course.

4 Assessment Scheduling and Loading

4.1 Each module specification explains (as shown below) its summative assessments including what is needed to pass the module (such as having to pass each assessment item). Module assessments must be formally approved.

Assessment item	Word or time length	Weighting	Learning outcomes to be assessed	Anonymous marking

4.2 Course and module assessments should consider the guidance in Appendix 1 on assessment design, organisation and timing which aims to ensure similar experience of the volume of assessment across different modules and courses.

4.3 End-of-module examinations take place in the last week of the semester, or at scheduled times in the academic year as described in the Course Handbook.

4.4 All formal examinations, including in-class tests must be well-planned, accurate and fair, and securely carried out. This includes arrangements for:

- Reasonable adjustments for disabled students.
- Verification of test papers/activities, including security at all times.
- Students unable to attend the assessment, for example because of mitigating circumstances.
- Arrangements for internal and external moderation.
- How results are recorded.
- For multiple choice tests, how the pass mark is decided (see Appendix 3).

4.5 Course teams should regularly check assessment scheduling across modules to avoid 'bunching' of hand-in dates (where possible). Assessment deadlines are normally during scheduled assessment weeks in semester/term dates.

4.6 Course teams should tell students when and where assessment information will be published (e.g. at the start of the module, in the module outline, or on the virtual learning environment (VLE) X weeks before the submission deadline). Students should be given a schedule of assessment deadlines and feedback dates.

5 Word Count Policy

5.1 Word counts show the maximum length of an assessment item. Where relevant, assessment briefs should state a maximum word count, with a +10% margin. This means that work more than 10% over the word count will not be marked.

5.2 The word count normally applies to the main body of the text (including tables in the main text). Everything before and after the main body is excluded (such as, where relevant, abstract, acknowledgements, contents, executive summaries, references, bibliographies, appendices etc.). Any different approach than this should be clearly explained in the module brief. Students should be given clear information on the use of appendices etc.

- 5.3 There is no penalty for going over the word count, but it should be made clear that the marker will not consider work more than 10% over the word count. Students are encouraged to write concisely and within the word count.
- 5.4 A similar +10% time limit approach is used for **live or** pre-recorded presentation assessments.

6 Academic Referencing

- 6.1 It is recognised that accurate referencing using a defined style is an academic skill. At undergraduate level the focus should be on students understanding and application of the principles of referencing to demonstrate:
- when and why to quote others and use references
 - identify citations
 - consistency in use of a referencing style.
- 6.2 Undergraduate assessment criteria should focus on accurate and consistent citation and use of references. It should not focus on, for example, stylistic accuracy or use of a particular version of Harvard referencing.
- 6.3 For undergraduate students a single referencing style for their subject should be identified. For most subjects this will be Harvard (Cite Them Right version) but may be (for example) APA for Psychology, OSCOLA for Law, MHRA for History and English Literature, Vancouver for medical subjects. Library Services' referencing webpages include a list of the referencing style used by each subject: <https://library.worc.ac.uk/guides/study-skills/referencing>.
- 6.4 The referencing styles for each subject will be identified for Joint Honours students, although in practice most Joint Honours students will be studying two subjects that use the same style. The expectation is that, by level 6, Joint Honours students will be able to use the style/s appropriate to their subjects. Library Services provide support for students using different styles.
- 6.5 Unless otherwise agreed by the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee, only the official Worcester styles should be used. Course Handbooks, including module outlines, should clearly state the referencing style that is used by the School/subject and direct students to the official guidance for that style on the Library Services webpages
- 6.6 There is no set referencing system for postgraduate and research students as they are expected to have an in-depth understanding of academic referencing. Schools and supervisors should give guidance on expected referencing style.

7 Formative Assessment

- 7.1 All courses should have formative assessments, and all modules should include some element of formative assessment.

- 7.2 Formative assessments are not graded which means they are not used in the mark for a module. They are used to improve student learning and can include peer-assessment and self-assessment as well as tutor-assessment.
- 7.3 Formative assessment feedback given by tutors early in a module is particularly important at level 4, when students may be new to higher education. Early assessment can be helpful in identifying students who require support in developing their academic writing.
- 7.4 Within the first four to six weeks of semester one of level 4, all courses should set a formative assessment linked to a mandatory module. This will normally be a written assessment submitted using Turnitin®. Students should receive written feedback on the formative assessment, including on their technical proficiency in English and given the opportunity to review and discuss the Turnitin originality report. Further information is available in the [Turnitin Policy](#).
- 7.5 Staff should make sure feedback on formative assessments is given well before summative assessment deadlines.

8 Feedback to Students and Return of Student Assessments

- 8.1 Feedback should be given on all formative and summative assessments, including examinations. To be effective and timely, feedback on student work should identify strengths and where improvements could be made in future.
- 8.2 Feedback may be given before assessment items are returned to students. This includes giving general feedback in class or via the VLE, to make sure students have speedy feedback (taking account of the seven days post-deadline period) whilst assessments are still fresh in their mind. General feedback can include model answers, anonymised student work from previous years, exemplars, reports on what was done well and common errors/ weaknesses, peer discussions etc.
- 8.3 Feedback on assessments should:
- support learning and improve future assessment performance by identifying areas for development and/or setting targets or goals
 - clearly link to learning outcomes and assessment criteria
 - provide students with an understanding of how their grade was decided and how well they met the learning outcomes
 - be consistent with the course team approach for assessment feedback
 - be provided electronically and within twenty working days of the submission deadline.
- 8.4 For fairness and equity, there should be a course team approach to giving feedback, so that all students receive a similar volume and style of feedback. Guidance on establishing a course team approach to feedback is in Appendix 7.
- 8.5 Assessments should usually be marked, moderated, and returned to students with personalised feedback, and the grade entered onto the student record system, within **twenty working days** of the date of submission. Where this is not

possible, the course leader should inform the relevant students of the delay and the expected date the assessment will be returned.

- 8.6 Examination feedback should be given and may be general (such as an 'examiner's report' on each question or similar). Additionally (or as an option) students may be given the opportunity to discuss their examination script to get individual feedback: module briefs should set out if this is possible. Except for multiple-choice examinations and tests where questions are taken from a question bank, students can see their marked examination script. Completed examination scripts, however, are the property of the University.

9 Assessment Briefs and Assessment Criteria

- 9.1 For each assessment item students should be given an assessment (or assignment) brief which includes written guidance that explains the nature of the assessment item, how it should be presented, and the assessment/grade criteria.
- 9.2 Assessment briefs include:
- a) How the assessment links to the module learning outcomes and skills required
 - b) Any requirements such as word limits and referencing style and the need for good English
 - c) Assessment criteria used to judge the quality of a student's work
 - d) Any marking scheme and/or grade descriptors
 - e) Submission instructions and deadlines, including what happens if work is incomplete, submitted late, or not submitted
 - f) arrangements for standardisation and/or moderation if these are specific to the course/subject or assessment.
- 9.3 Course/subject teams should decide how they will specify and use assessment criteria and grade descriptors, so that a consistent approach is used. Criteria may be specified for each individual assessment item or for different types of assessments (such as essays, laboratory reports, presentations). Criteria should always be shared with students as part of the assessment brief.
- 9.4 Course teams should make sure assessment criteria are benchmarked to the University's grade descriptors, and take account of [sector-recognised standards](#), the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) and [subject benchmark statements](#) as appropriate.
- 9.5 Assessment criteria should be verified internally to assure academic standards.
- 9.6 Assessment criteria should be discussed with students, and assessment feedback given to students should be in line with assessment criteria.
- 9.7 Subject Assessment Boards are formally responsible for reviewing and verifying all summative assessment items (including reassessments), and assessment criteria, before they are made available to students. The Subject Assessment Board may delegate this task to the course/subject team.

- 9.8 Internally verified assessment items and assessment criteria (and, where appropriate, assessment briefs) including examination papers should be shared with the external examiner for comment. Course/subject teams should agree with external examiners whether external consideration of assessment items and assessment criteria (including marking schemes/grids or model answers or similar) will be done before assessment briefs are given to students, or alternatively done alongside the external moderation of student work.
- 9.9 Internally and externally verified assessments, including examination papers for both first and reassessments, must be completed prior to induction for semester 1 assessments, and by the end of November for semester 2 assessments.

10 Anonymous Marking

- 10.1 Where possible student work should be marked anonymously to reduce the possibility of conscious or unconscious bias. This means that markers and examiners do not know the identity of the student whose work they are considering. To do this only a reference number (usually the student number) is on the submitted work. Work remains anonymous until the assessment mark (as a provisional mark) has been entered on the student record system.
- 10.2 It is recognised that some types of assessment, such as presentations or practical examinations cannot be marked anonymously as the students can be identified. Assessments that should be marked anonymously include most written assignments such as essays or reports, and formal written examinations and tests.

11 Verification, Standardisation and Moderation of Marking

- 11.1 Verification, standardisation and moderation are used to ensure academic standards are appropriate and consistent across modules and courses (see guidance in Appendix 5). They also make sure markers adhere to agreed assessment policies and assessment criteria, including the agreed approach to provision of feedback, and that the assessment outcomes for students are fair and reliable. For some courses (such as those leading to medical qualifications), standards-setting applies to identify the pass/fail requirements for an assessment.

Minimum requirements for internal standardisation and moderation of marking

- 11.2 Assessments must be verified internally before being shared with students.
- 11.3 Course/subject teams must include a statement of their standardisation and moderation procedures in the Student Course Handbook. The statement should explain how decisions are made about the validity and reliability of marking and grading, and the quality of feedback for different types of assessment, e.g. written assignments, formal examinations, presentations, group work, etc.
- 11.4 The statement of standardisation and moderation procedures must explain how differences between markers are resolved (e.g. discussion between markers, using a third marker). For sample double marking, normally the process will agree

the standard of marking but where this is not agreed, the statement must provide for the review of student work and/or the cohort marks.

- 11.5 The statement of standardisation and moderation procedures must explain how the moderation process will be recorded and what the outcome of the moderation was (see Appendix 6 for a standard moderation report).
- 11.6 Where a course is taught at different sites or at different partner organisations, the statement must specify the arrangements for assuring standards across the sites and /or partnerships.
- 11.7 Minimum requirements apply for standardisation and for internal moderation of summative assignments and examinations as follows:
- a) Standardisation on an annual basis where modules are delivered across different sites or partnerships and for large teaching teams
 - b) Work that is first marked by new inexperienced staff will be double marked
 - c) Standardisation to make sure there is consistency between markers must take place before marking begins on an assessment that has multiple markers
 - d) Projects and dissertations weighted 30 credits or more must be blind double marked
 - e) Assessments marked in the pass/fail boundary (all grade E and a sample of grade D-) must be non-blind double marked
 - f) Fails must be sampled through non-blind marking
 - g) A sample of assessments from across all passing grade bands (to include the highest graded assessment), must be moderated as follows –

Number of assessment pieces that have passed	Minimum sample size for moderation (excluding failed work)
< 7	All pieces of work
7 - 59	6 pieces of work across all grade bands including work in the highest category
60 - 199	10% of work across all grade bands including work in the highest category
200 or more	20 pieces of work across all grade bands including work in the highest category

- 11.8 Internal moderation should be completed within the 20-working day assessment feedback period and before provisional marks are shared with students. External moderation can take place after the 20-working day period.
- 11.9 Assessed work, feedback and provisional marks may be shared with students before external moderation is finished, as marks must be agreed by the relevant assessment board. The 'subject to confirmation by the Exam Board' status of marks must be made clear to students.

Minimum requirements for external moderation of marking

- 11.10 After the first year of delivery, assessments for level 4 modules in three-year degree courses are not normally externally moderated.

- 11.11 Course teams should consult with external examiners to agree a schedule for standardisation and internal and external moderation of assessments, so that this is not all done at the end of the semester/year.
- 11.12 For each module they examine, external examiners must be given:
- A sample of student work (in line with minimum requirements – see below)
 - The module outline
 - Examination papers and/or assessment briefs
 - Assessment and grade criteria
 - Provisional statistical marks profile for the modules they are responsible for
 - Records of internal moderation.
- 11.13 External examiners are not expected to settle disagreement between first and second markers. Unless the internal markers agree there has been an error that must be corrected, external examiners are not expected to change individual marks for student work.
- 11.14 Where student work is made available to external examiners electronically, it is good practice to give them access to all pieces of work, so they can choose their own sample for moderation. For cohorts with large numbers of students or modules, the arrangement for sampling should be agreed with the external examiner, for example a pre-selected/recommended sample. To help do this a list of all students and provisional grades should be given to the external examiner.
- 11.15 Where a sample is selected or recommended to the external examiner, this must be a minimum sample of 15% student assessment work for each module they examine. The sample should cover all grade bands, and student work in the highest and fail categories. For cohorts with less than 6 students all work should be given to the external examiner. Normally the sample size for an item of assessment will be between 9 and 25 pieces of work.

Number of pieces of work	Minimum sample size for external moderation (including failed work)
< 10	All pieces of work
10 - 59	9 pieces of work across all grade bands including work in highest and fail categories
60 – 166	15% of work across all grade bands
167 or more	25 pieces of work across all grade bands

- 11.16 The external examiner should use the sample to make sure marking standards are appropriate, feedback is consistent and of appropriate quality, and internal moderation has been effective. The sample should not be the same that has been internally moderated.
- 11.17 Where a course or module is taught at more than one site, the external examiner should be provided with the provisional statistical marks profile for each site, so they can comment on the marking and student achievement standards for each site. If the provisional marks profile shows significant differences, the external

examiner and/or the Board of Examiners may require a review or re-marking to be done.

- 11.18 In relation to reassessment, external moderation of students' work is normally unnecessary and internal moderation provides the necessary confirmation of standards. Exceptions include, for example, where there was a high number of failed assessments at the first sit; in these circumstances the sample submitted for external moderation should be proportionate. External examiners may also be given a sample of reassessments for moderation purposes on request.

12 Reassessment

- 12.1 The decision on whether a student has passed a given assessment and a module, and whether they have an opportunity for reassessment or to retake the modules can only be confirmed by a properly constituted Subject Assessment Board and Board of Examiners.
- 12.2 The reassessment requirements for failed assessments can be shared with students before a Board of Examiners has confirmed grades and module results, but students should be reminded that grades are provisional until confirmed. This means that a provisional 'fail' grade can be turned into a 'pass' grade or the other way round by the Board of Examiners. Students should be given guidance about completing reassessments along with studying for new modules.
- 12.3 The TCRF expects reassessment to normally involve a new task, and to take place at the end of the academic year during the summer reassessment period. The exception to this relates to Level 4 modules only.
- 12.4 For level 4 modules only, the following applies:
- a) Reassessment should, where appropriate, be a re-working of the original piece of work and also include a short reflective statement on how feedback from the first attempt was used
 - b) Where reassessment is a new assessment item, this should be given to students when the original marked assessment is returned
 - c) The deadline for reassessment submission is normally the end of year summer reassessment period, but students can submit reassessment work earlier to plan their submission to manage their workload
 - d) Reassessment work will be marked after the July reassessment submission deadline.
 - e) In 2024/25 for level 4 only, reassessment of failed semester 1 modules will take place in early March 2025.
- 12.5 Courses should review fail rates for all modules at first sit and following reassessment annually as part of the annual evaluation process. Where fail at first sit rates are 20% or above, module leaders are required to complete a 'module review' template to: identify the pass/fail rate at first sit and at reassessment for the current and the previous year; provide a commentary on the reasons for the fail rate; and set actions for improvement. Forms should be reviewed by Head of Department, and progress on actions should be reviewed in January and March, by updating the template.

13 Dissertation and Project Modules

- 13.1 Most undergraduate Honours degree courses, including Integrated Masters courses, have a 30 credit (or larger) Dissertation or Project module. Rules apply to these modules/assessments regarding the submission of the final assessments (normally the report).
- 13.2 Final assessments for all Dissertations and Project modules have a standard deadline for submission, as identified in the University calendar. This deadline may be varied for courses that have students on professional placements at this time. To do this course leaders should contact the Academic Registrar and the **Academic Quality Unit**.
- 13.3 Final assessments for all Dissertations and Project modules will be submitted electronically via Turnitin®.
- 13.4 Students with mitigating circumstances can request an extension to the submission deadline for their Dissertation or Project final assessment. The procedure for requesting an extension can be found on the Registry Services webpages <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/649.htm>.
- 13.5 The University has developed good practice principles for management of Dissertation and Project modules that explain the responsibilities of supervisors and students. This is at Appendix 2.

14 Ownership and Archiving of Students' Assessed Work

- 14.1 Students hold the intellectual property in all assessment work they do, but the assessment material they produce (essays, projects, examination scripts, dissertations, artworks, computer disks, etc) is the property of the University. This means that assessment work can be kept by the University while marks are being considered by assessment boards and during appeals and quality reviews. Except for examination scripts, the University generally makes assessed work available for collection and/or tries to return assessed work when this has been asked for. Tutors are responsible for returning assessed work.
- 14.2 Assessed work not collected by the student will be kept for six months after the relevant Examination Board, when it will be confidentially destroyed by the School.

15 Provision of information on assessment results for students to external bodies

- 15.1 On occasion students or staff may be requested to provide information on assessment results by, for example, employers or admissions staff at other higher education providers, in terms of an overall % mark achieved for the degree.
- 15.2 Students or staff requested to provide information on achievement outcomes in terms of % marks, for example, postgraduate study courses, employment opportunities or references, should contact the Academic Registrar for a statement.

Related Policies, Documents or Webpages

[Taught Courses Regulatory Framework](#) [accessed on 12.10.2022]

[Generic Grade Descriptors \(Levels 4 - 7\)](#) [accessed on 12.10.2022]

[Grade Descriptors - Level 8](#) [accessed on 12.10.2022]

Mitigating circumstances via [Registry Services webpages](#) [accessed on 12.10.2022]

[Assessment Criteria Working for All: Guiding Staff to Support Students](#) [accessed on 12.10.2022]

Approval/Review Table

Item	Notes
Version Number	Version 2.4
Date of Approval	12 th October 2022
Approved by	Academic Board
Effective from	Immediate
Policy Officer	Head of AQU
Department	Academic Quality Unit
Review date	Annual – July 2025 – A review is in progress to update this policy and incorporate our “Policy and procedures on inclusive assessment, reasonable adjustments and alternative assessment arrangements for students with impairments or disabilities”. The existing version of both policies remain in force until the review is completed and a new version is approved.
Last reviewed	July 2024
Policies superseded by this version	Assessment Policy dated July 2021, v1.5
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)	July 2022
Accessibility Checked	July 2024

Recent changes

Committee	Date	Change
n/a	November 2025	Appendix 7 Section 4 amended to reference correct Policy section (formative assessment). Policy now under review.
ASQEC	September 2024	Early reassessment at level 4 during 2024/25. Link to retention of work removed. Reference to Director of QED removed.
UEB	July 2024	Item 12.5 amended to bring into line with Student Outcomes document taken to UEB
ASQEC	June 2024	Item 5.4 amended to include “live” or pre-recorded presentation assessments.
ASQEC	March 2024	Updated proforma for internal moderation (Appendix 6); clarification of responsibilities of internal moderators; inclusion of opportunity for External Examiners to comment on moderation at module level.
LTSEC	June 2023	Addition of appendix 8; clarification that external moderation of reassessments not normally required, reference to mid-year reassessment for semester 1 15 credit module fails, and minor recalibration of grades to % marking table in appendix 3, typo correction in 11.13.
Academic Board	October 2022	Assessment Policy subject to a comprehensive review and update, with a focus on the use of plain English. Sections 3.1-3.3 revised and document checked for currency. Full details of changes to be found in ASQE paper 21/69 (meeting on 13.7.2022). Section 15 added.
LTSEC	September 2021	Para 13.5 – reference to a specific academic year removed.
n/a	July 2021	9 - Feedback to Students and Return of Student Assessments – para 9.4 added to take account of new Appx 7
LTSEC	June 2021	Appx 7 Providing feedback on student formative and summative assessments: guidance for establishing a course team approach – new section
LTSEC	June 2020	5 - Word Count Policy – para 5.3 minor revision

Appendix 1

Guidance on designing module and course assessment strategies

1 Taking a course overview

The assessment for an individual module or unit must be aligned with the learning outcomes. However, it is also essential that an overview is taken of the design, scheduling and loading of assessment across modules at each level and for the course as a whole. Assessment should be seen as an integral part of learning, and thus particular consideration must be given to how students develop skills in relation to the various forms of assessment required by a course. Learning opportunities, formative assessment and feedback, and progression through and between levels should all be aligned and planned strategically. The following should be considered:

- a) the balance, integration and scheduling of formative and summative assessments
- b) an appropriate diversity of assessment modes and tasks are integral to good assessment practice (but note too much diversity or unplanned diversity can be counter-productive; for this purpose the approval of courses will require an assessment map showing assessment types and weightings associated with modules at each level of the course)
- c) the assessments taken together should ensure that all of the course learning outcomes are tested at the level of the final qualification
- d) students following different pathways or specialist routes through courses should not be able to avoid certain assessment modes/tasks if these are essential for testing course level learning outcomes
- e) where courses have significant choice between modules, consideration should be given to the role of such modules in the overall assessment strategy
- f) the balance of assessment over the course of a semester/academic year should be carefully planned – and for this purpose, the approval of courses will require an assessment calendar/schedule
- g) at level 4 students should benefit from early (within the first 4-6 weeks) formative feedback on assessment
- h) arrangements should be in place for verification of assessments to ensure equivalence in terms of demand (both academically and in terms of student effort) across modules; this should include consideration of assessment requirements for mandatory modules and also for optional modules
- i) the overall word count required for a level/year of a course should be reviewed, to ensure it is reasonable, with generally a maximum of 10,000 words being required at Levels 4 and 5, and 16,000 in the final year of an Honours degree.

2 Taking the module view

In designing the assessment details for a module or course unit, account should be taken of the following:

- a) the total student effort hours represented by the credit weighting of the module, and the proportions of this total available for formal taught sessions, independent study and assessment (for example, low contact and high independent study may require more staged assessment)
- b) although students' motivation, background, skills and abilities will make any assessment task more difficult and time-consuming for some than others, as a rough guide a 2,000 word essay might represent a minimum of 30 hours of

- student effort time for the 'average' student (taking into account research, planning, drafting, editing and proofreading)
- c) reliance on a single assessment for a module (e.g. a single examination or one piece of course work) will mean that a student's fate in the module depends on that single item of assessment; in such cases the teaching and learning strategy for the module should be designed so that students can benefit from formative feedback before the single summative assessment
 - d) alternatively, and particularly for larger modules, it may be more appropriate for 2 or 3 items of assessment (both/all of which contribute to the overall module grade), and that these are scheduled such that the student can receive feedback on the first assessment before they complete the second assessment
 - e) there are many innovative approaches to assessment that do not fit either of the above alternatives; innovation is encouraged, and teams/individuals who wish to do something different are encouraged to explore this with advice from AQU and Registry Services as appropriate
 - f) careful consideration must be given to the alignment of the assessment task(s) with the learning outcomes and any rules for passing the module:
 - where the assessments each assess different learning outcomes, it may be appropriate to specify that students must achieve a minimum pass grade in each assessment – however, this means that there are additional points at which a student may fail the module
 - it may be appropriate to test the learning outcomes through more than one assignment – to permit a student to redeem an initial failure by an improved performance in a second task
 - g) in the light of the above, consideration might be given to assessment strategies that:
 - are staged to permit students to benefit from feedback to re-work/develop further aspects of an assignment
 - permit students to engage in multiple learning assignments and submit for summative assessment their best e.g. two out of three pieces of work
 - require students to submit a portfolio of work with a commentary on how the learning outcomes have been met (NB this does not all have to be marked at the end)
 - h) the weighting of an individual assessment item should normally reflect its value as contribution to the total amount of assessment for the module as indicated in the assessment table and guidance below
 - i) normally no single summative assessment task should contribute less than 25% to the overall mark
 - j) normally there should be no more than two summative assignments for 15 credit modules, and a maximum of four assignments for a 30 credit module.

3 Assessment load: guidance on equivalence and weighting

- 3.1 The assessment table below is intended to provide guidance for course teams and Schools, in constructing and approving assessment strategies for modules. It should be interpreted flexibly, taking account of the general principles outlined above.
- 3.2 The guidance is **indicative** and should not be regarded as prescriptive in relation to either word/time limits or weightings. It is provided only as a reference point in order to have some benchmark within which module assessment design can take place. It relates to summative assessment, and it is expected that all modules provide opportunities for formative assessment in some form. It should not be

assumed that the assessment for a 30 credit module is inevitably double that of a 15 credit module.

- 3.3 The table is based on the principle of equivalence, where a 2-3,000 word essay or report is regarded as equivalent to a 2 hour formal examination, or a 4,000 word reflective learning journal, or a set of laboratory reports representing practical work over a semester. **Please remember this is guidance only, and should not be interpreted mechanistically;** it is not recommended that assignments are set with word length indicators other than rounded numbers of 1,000, 1,500, 2,000, 2,500 etc. i.e. it is not expected that the table below is followed precisely in terms of word counts etc.
- 3.4 It is expected that shorter word limits will be used in the early stages of a course, and selective use of longer word limits for later stages.

Indicative guidance on module summative assessment loadings

Assessment type	Indicative weighting 15 credit modules	Indicative weighting 30 credit modules
Examinations		
3 hour formal examination	n/a	75/100%
2 hour formal examination	75/100%	40/50%
1 hour formal examination or test	40/50%	25/30%
Essays/Reports		
2,000 - 3,000 words essay/report	75/100%	60/70%
1,500 - 2,000 words written assignment	50/60%	40/50%
1,000 - 1,500 words written assignment	40/50%	25/30%
Reflective journals/logs		
4,000 words/12 week reflective journal/learning log	100%	50%
2,000 words/6 week reflective journal/learning log	50%	25/30%
Laboratory/practical reports		
12 week equivalent Laboratory/practical report file	100%	50%
6 week equivalent Laboratory/practical report file		25/30%
Oral presentations		
15-20 minute individual oral/poster presentation and written summary/account/research	100%	50%
10-15 minute individual oral/poster presentation	40/50%	25/30%
Group presentation + report or poster	50%	30%

Appendix 2

Good Practice Principles for the management of Project and Dissertation modules

General Principles

- 1 Dissertation and Project modules should normally include a small number of taught sessions (minimum of four) for the whole cohort to cover practical matters associated with the Dissertation or Project, including refreshers on research methods, ethical approval, supervision, time management, responsibilities etc.
- 2 Arrangements for the management and supervision of undergraduate final year Dissertation or Project modules must:
 - a) provide guidance and constructive feedback to enable students to develop feasible and manageable projects against the learning outcomes for the module
 - b) foster in students independence in the analysis and/or application of knowledge, and a willingness to take responsibility for their own learning
 - c) ensure student progress is effectively monitored.
- 3 Management and supervisory arrangements should be transparent and made available in written form via a module, Project, or Dissertation handbook to all staff and students. This could be in the form of a learning agreement, and in all cases should include:
 - a) nature, number and frequency of supervisory meetings
 - b) who has primary responsibility for initiating meetings
 - c) arrangements for approving the project/dissertation topic/title
 - d) requirements for securing ethical approval
 - e) arrangements for feedback on draft text.
- 4 There should be clear and published procedures for the choice/allocation of project/dissertation topics and staff supervisors.
- 5 Students should be allocated to supervisors who have a generally appropriate academic background and/or research interests.
- 6 There should be explicit mechanisms for addressing any problems or concerns raised by students which cannot be resolved within the framework of the supervisory relationship, for example, referral to the module leader or the course leader.
- 7 There should be a clear policy adhered to by all members of a course team engaged in supervision of undergraduate final year Projects or Dissertations regarding frequency of regular meetings, in the order of, for example, 30 minutes every six weeks (or more frequently if a student is completing over one semester).
- 8 There should be clarity across the course team and for all parties about the relative responsibility of the student and the supervisor for initiating supervisory

meetings, follow-up, and recording of meetings.

- 9 All text-based work must be word processed and submitted electronically in accordance with University policy.

The Student's Responsibilities

- 1 Reading and putting into practice the guidance in the handbook (noting in particular information on record-keeping and assessment).
- 2 Observing health and safety, data protection and ethical protocols, including completion of documents related to ethics approval.
- 3 Planning and managing the time commitment required of the module/Project/Dissertation.
- 4 Initiating and agreeing a written plan of work and a timetable of meetings with their supervisor.
- 5 Keeping a Project diary or log-book as a means of monitoring progress and recording the outcomes of meetings.
- 6 Discussing progress with their supervisor and responding to guidance and constructive criticism, and understanding that the supervisor should not be expected to predict the grade for the Dissertation or Project.

The Supervisor's Responsibilities

- 1 Advising on the student's work plan and agreeing a schedule of meetings (which can be virtual or face-to-face), and responsibilities in initiating and recording the outcome of meetings.
- 2 Ensuring that students are aware of the role of the supervisor and the anticipated extent of support in terms of providing direction, time allocated to meetings, reading and commentating on drafts, etc.
- 3 Monitoring student progress and providing timely, honest and constructive feedback, and following up non-attendance at scheduled meetings, if necessary, using the University referral mechanisms.
- 4 Seeking to ensure that the work is being conducted within agreed protocols (including those relating to ethics and to health and safety).
- 5 Keeping a brief record of meetings and student progress, which can be stored on SOLE.
- 6 Complying with policy on providing feedback on draft text, which is normally that a supervisor will read and comment on one draft of specific sections of the Dissertation /Project provided it is submitted for comment within a reasonable time ahead of the submission deadline or by the published deadline for commenting on drafts, or deadlines if submitted in part/s.

- 7 Being familiar with the formal assessment procedures and criteria.
- 8 Avoiding giving the student premature or potentially misleading information on marks or grades.

Dissertation or Project Handbooks

The handbook (which is normally provided electronically via Blackboard) should provide the key source of information for students and staff. Module leaders may find useful the suggested list of contents below (but this is not intended to be prescriptive or comprehensive).

Contents:

- Module aims and learning outcomes.
- Assessment requirements, criteria and procedures.
- Schedule for any taught sessions.
- Topic choice (or allocation) and approval.
- Advisory/supervisory arrangements.
- Securing ethical approval and ethics protocols, including data protection where appropriate.
- Staff and student responsibilities.
- Notes on progress meetings.
- Plan of work, timetable and submission dates(s).
- The characteristics of a good project.
- Structure, format and length.
- Referencing, academic integrity and avoidance of plagiarism.
- Alternative forms of presentation.
- Health and safety: risk assessment.
- Arrangements for extensions and mitigating circumstances.

Appendix 3

Guidance on using numeric marks for assessment of student work

Rationale for the use of marking in grades rather than percentages

The generic undergraduate or postgraduate grade descriptors apply to all summatively-assessed work. They are set out according to the grade system used at University of Worcester and mapped on to the conventional categories or sub-divisions of the honours degree in UK Higher Education, or other classification systems as appropriate. It should be noted that the grade system is represented by letters rather than numbers (numbers are only used to calculate an overall grade from two or more weighted assessments).

The grade descriptors are built on the acknowledgement that grading student work is not an exact science. It is a matter for professional academic judgment. This means that the category descriptions indicate the general characteristics of different types of work which lead to their assignment to particular categories. There is a reasonable argument that it is not realistic to indicate that such fine-grained decisions as those between awarding 67 or 68 percent are objectively defensible but that broad descriptive bands of B+, B and B- are as specific as it is appropriate to operate.

The implication of these points is that, in most circumstances it is inappropriate to use precise numerical grading on student work.

Approaches to marking multiple choice tests and examinations and similar

Colleagues may find it appropriate and helpful as part of their assessment diet, to use assessment approaches which have traditionally used numeric grading, such as multiple question exams, multiple choice tests and computer-based tests. The use of numerical grades in these cases is largely to arrive at an overall grade based on numerous small responses to assessment questions. Staff may also wish to allocate percentages to each individual sub-question to indicate their relative importance or value. The question then is whether the use of numerical grading can be avoided for these assessment types or, if not, how these numbers should be related to the generic grade descriptors. The following examples may be helpful to illustrate different approaches:

1. Make a qualitative judgment on the overall work rather than the individual pieces – in Ecology a traditional exam is set with a number of individual questions. However, rather than awarding individual percentage points for each question and then adding them together, a qualitative judgment is made against the learning outcomes and criteria on the overall set of responses and an appropriate alphabetic grade awarded.
2. Structure the test to work through the grade descriptors – Biggs & Tang (2007) suggest the possibility of setting a multiple question test which builds through the levels of grade descriptors. So, for example, some data is provided and the first group of questions ask for a factual or descriptive responses [grade D], the next group of questions require some analysis and grouping of the data [grade band C], the next questions asks for synthesis and evaluation of the data [grade B] and the final question(s) ask the student to relate this evaluation to external themes and make recommendations for policy and practice [grade band A]. Again, an overall decision can be taken on the grade based on how well the student

performs at the different levels. A similar approach could be adopted by combining multiple choice questions to identify knowledge in grade bands C & D with more evaluative open questions which allow students to demonstrate performance at grade bands B & A.

3. Establish numerical equivalents to the alphabetic grades - it is important to note that this should be done on a case-by-case basis and appropriate guidance to students included in the module outline as there is no assumption in the generic grade descriptors that they represent any particular numeric or percentage figure. For example, there are cases where a professional body requires students to achieve e.g. 70% on a factual examination. It is clear that this requirement for factual knowledge only equates to our broad D grade descriptor. Therefore 70% is set as equivalent to a pass for a piece of work, and the assessment operates on a purely pass/fail basis.
4. In the case of examinations or tests where assessment is based on a percentage scale and the pass mark is deemed to be 40%, the University has introduced a standardised methodology/conversion table. Departures from the standard may be acceptable but must be specifically approved and must be communicated to students in the module outline or equivalent.

% Mark awarded	Item grade
79.5 – 100	A+
74.5 – 79.49	A
69.5 – 74.49	A-
66.5 – 69.49	B+
63.5 – 66.49	B
59.5 – 63.49	B-
56.5 – 59.49	C+
53.5 – 56.49	C
49.5 – 53.49	C-
46.5 – 49.49	D+
43.5 – 46.49	D
39.5 – 43.49	D-
34.5 – 39.49	E
20.0 – 34.49	F
0.01 – 19.99	G
0	H

Where tests or examinations are deemed to require some element of numerical marking, then the whole examination/test should be marked in percentage terms out of 100%, and the conversion to grade should be made using the table above.

It will, however, be appropriate in many cases to mark an examination or an assessment item with multiple parts in grades and then calculate an overall grade for the assessment item to enter into the student record.

Determining an item grade from component parts

The following table can be used to calculate an overall grade for a multiple part assessment, e.g. an examination paper with a small number of equally or differentially

weighted questions.

Item grade	Grade Points	Overall points
A+	19	19 - 20
A	18	18 - 18.9
A-	17	17 - 17.9
B+	16	16 - 16.9
B	15	15 - 15.9
B-	14	14 - 14.9
C+	13	13 - 13.9
C	12	12 - 12.9
C-	11	11 - 11.9
D+	10	10 - 10.9
D	9	9 - 9.9
D-	8	8 - 8.9
E	7	7 - 7.9
F	5	5 - 6.9
G	2	2 - 4.9
H	0	0

The individual assessment questions should have the grade points calculated, and then the total for the assessment item should be rounded to one decimal point when appropriate (e.g. a total of 5.55 becomes 5.6). A worked example is set out below.

The following example uses the table to determine the overall grade for an examination paper made up of 4 equally weighted (25%) questions, for a student who has achieved the following:

Qu 1 = C+
Qu 2 = B-
Qu 3 = E
Qu 4 = B+

C+ for Qu 1 will be awarded 25% of 13 grade pts = 3.25
B- for Qu 2 will be awarded 25% of 14 grade pts = 3.5
E for Qu 3 will be awarded 25% of 7 grade pts = 1.75
B+ for Qu 4 will be awarded 25% of 16 grade pts = 4.0

The assessment total is $(3.25 + 3.5 + 1.75 + 4.0) = 12.5$

12.5 (as indicated in the right-hand column) equates to C for the examination overall.

Appendix 4

Guidance on course closures, major changes and implications for student progression

Guidance

- 1 This guidance establishes principles for dealing with the situation where students are required to re-take modules but the module is no longer running. It is important that there are clear shared principles to ensure clarity, transparency and equity. Students may be required to re-take modules because they have failed two assessment opportunities, whether as a consequence of non-submission or academic failure in the relevant assessments.
- 2 Where a student is required through application of the TCRF regulations, to re-take a module which is not running in the next academic year, the following decisions are open to an examination board:
 - a. to determine that the student should follow a specified alternative equivalent module (this should be the expected normal outcome)
 - b. to determine that the student should follow a personalised programme of supported, directed study, based on the module learning outcomes and leading to appropriate assessments
 - c. to offer the student the opportunity to transfer to a new or alternative equivalent course, (particularly where the student may have failed a number of modules)
 - d. to exceptionally offer the student one further final reassessment opportunity.
- 3 The Subject Assessment Board should make recommendations to the Board of Examiners in relation to each module failed. This means that the Board of Examiners can, if necessary, review the recommendation in the light of the full profile of student results. In the event that decisions made by the Subject Assessment and Examination Boards require amendment as a result of a late decision not to run a specific module, a revised decision must be made via Chair's action, if necessary, involving the external examiner, and reported to the next meeting of the Board(s).
- 4 The Chair and officers of the Board of Examiners should be mindful of issues of transparency and equity (for students in relation to equality of opportunity and cost) in reaching decisions.
- 5 The Academic Registrar should specifically report on this matter in the report to ASQEC on examination board minutes.

Management of course closure/suspension/major change by Schools

- 6 College Learning, Teaching and Quality Enhancement Committees should review at their first meeting in each academic year, any courses that have suspended recruitment, are planned for closure or major review, and identify whether there are implications for continuing students. Processes set out in the [Course Closure, Suspension and Significant Change Policy and Procedures](#) should be followed.
- 7 Where courses are undergoing major change, the approval process must explicitly address transition arrangements for continuing students.

Appendix 5

Guide to Verification, Standardisation and Moderation

1 Verification

What is verification?

Verification is the process used to ensure that the form and content of assessment tasks and briefs are appropriate, fair and valid in terms of reflecting the learning outcomes and presenting an appropriate level of challenge to students.

When do I do verification?

Assignment tasks and briefs should be verified before being given to students.

How do I do verification?

The verification of briefs should consider the consistency of the assignment task in relation to other modules at the same level in the same discipline, check that the learning outcomes will be fully addressed by the task and that the assessment criteria and grade descriptors reflect the learning outcomes and the level of the assessment.

Internally verified assessment items and related assessment criteria (together, where appropriate, with assessment briefs) to include all examination papers must be provided to the External Examiner for comment.

Course/subject teams must agree with External Examiners whether external scrutiny of assessment items and assessment criteria (including marking schemes/grids or model answers or similar) should take place before publication of assessment briefs to students, or alternatively may be carried out as part of the process of external moderation of student work.

Verification checklist

- All assessment tasks must be verified internally before being published to students.
- Must be agreement with the External Examiner on what they wish to see before publication to students – e.g. examination papers only, examination papers and all L6 coursework assignment briefs, or other similar arrangement.

2 Standardisation

What is standardisation?

Standardisation is the process used to ensure that all members of the course or module teaching team are familiar with, and have a common understanding of, the marking standards and conventions in relation to the provision of feedback.

When do I do standardisation?

Whilst this list is not definitive, instances where standardisation might be recommended include: the introduction of new or revised assessment items, multiple markers for an assessment, a number of new or sessional markers, and the involvement of partner institutions or multiple delivery sites.

How do I do standardisation?

Standardisation is completed in advance of marking and involves a group of assessors all independently marking a sample of student work and assigning grades using agreed criteria.

Following individual grading, the team meets, discusses and agrees a grade, which serves as a benchmark for the module run. The meeting should also confirm and clarify other issues concerning marking and feedback, for example penalties for omitting key items. Arrangements for moderation and method and quality of feedback should also be discussed so that it is as consistent as possible.

Where the same assessment item has been used before, previously submitted work can be used for the standardisation activity. Where the assessment item is new, a sample from submitted work can be used. In this instance, the meeting will need to be arranged to take place shortly after submission. If possible, a range of quality of work should be used, with particular attention being paid to the boundary between a pass and a fail grade.

All members of the module marking team must be involved in the standardisation activity. Where members cannot attend a meeting, alternative means of communicating should be used. At the minimum, all members should grade the piece(s) of work and be informed of the result of the exercise prior to grading submitted work.

Where the assessment does not involve written work (e.g. presentations, OSCEs), film of previous assessment should be used. Where this is not available, other methods to ensure consistency of approach should be used.

Standardisation checklist

- Standardisation exercises must take place on an annual basis where modules are delivered across different sites and for large teaching teams
- Where there are new and/or multiple markers for a defined assessment, a standardisation exercise must be undertaken before marking begins to ensure consistency between markers
- A standardisation exercise must be undertaken for all items of summative assessment.
- The date of the standardisation exercise must be documented on the Internal Moderation Report Template and returned to the School's Quality Administrator.
- External Examiners must be informed of the outcome of the standardisation exercise, and the pieces of work must be made available to them.

3 Double Marking

Double marking is the process by which a piece of work is marked by two assessors, who agree a final grade.

What is blind double marking?

Blind double marking is when two separate assessors each independently assess a piece of student work, assigning a grade and providing comments to justify the grades in

relation to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Both examiners record their grades and comments separately, and then compare grades and resolve differences to produce an agreed grade and feedback.

When do I do blind double marking?

Blind double marking is normally carried out as a universal exercise, that is, every piece of student work is considered by two assessors. The University requires all Independent Studies/Projects and Dissertations of 30 credits or more to be blind double marked.

What is non-blind double marking?

Non-blind double marking is when an assessor grades a piece of student work, assigning a grade and providing comments to justify the grade, and then a second assessor also assigns a grade and provides comments, having seen the grades and comments of the first assessor. An agreed grade and feedback is provided for the student.

When do I do non-blind double marking?

Non-blind double marking is normally carried out as a universal exercise. Non-blind double marking should be used to confirm the pass/fail boundary, and may be appropriate in the case of new staff members, or in relation to new partners, or new and innovative assignments, or where as a result of initial moderation, a re-mark of the whole set of assignments is required.

Double Marking checklist

- Specific arrangements to double mark assessments, first marked by new inexperienced staff, must be in place
- All independent studies, projects and dissertations weighted 30 credits or more must be blind double marked
- All assessments falling into the pass/fail boundary (all grade E and a sample of grade D-) must be non-blind double marked
- Fails must be sampled through non-blind marking

4 Moderation

Moderation is the process to assure assessment criteria have been applied consistently and that assessment outcomes are fair and reliable. There are two kinds of moderation:

4.1 Internal moderation

What is internal moderation?

Internal moderation is undertaken by UW staff to demonstrate that the grades awarded are reliable and consistent. The purpose of internal moderation is to ensure that academic standards are appropriate and consistent across course/subject teams and that feedback reflects agreed assessment policies and assessment criteria, and therefore the assessment outcomes for students are fair and reliable.

How do I do internal moderation?

A UW assessor marks the set of student assignments, providing a grade and comments to justify the grade, and a second UW assessor (the moderator) then reviews a sample of marked assignments (normally through blind or non-blind double marking) from

across the grade profile. The moderator's role is to confirm (or not) the grades awarded by the first marker, and the quality of the feedback, in the light of course/University protocols and expectations. An internal Moderation Report must be compiled for each module run and sent to the External Examiner

Moderation is normally undertaken using double marking of a sample of assessments in accordance with the University Assessment Policy; other methods of moderation are detailed in the Policy.

Allocation of moderators can be undertaken in a variety of ways;

- Allocation in pairs, where markers moderate each other's work
- Allocation where each marker has an identified moderator
- Random allocation where a moderator is assigned or self-assigned.

Moderation can occur electronically between identified pairs or at a single event where team members meet and moderate together.

Where a module is run as part of collaborative provision, it must include representation from all relevant partners.

When do I do internal moderation?

Internal moderation is normally carried out on a sample basis, to corroborate the accuracy of the marking standards and quality of feedback applied by the first marker. It is the most usual form of moderation activity and should be used for all assessments where other forms of moderation do not apply. Internal moderation should be completed within the 20 working days assessment feedback period and before provisional grades are made available to the students. All summative assessments should be subject to internal and external moderation.

What do I do if the first and second grades are different?

Differences between markers should be resolved by discussion and agreement in the first instance. This should involve the module leader and should consider the implications for the whole cohort. In general, grades should not be changed for work in the sample only. Where agreement cannot be reached, the assessment should be third marked, usually by the module leader.

The module leader should review the moderation process as recorded on the form, assessing the levels of disagreement between markers, the agreed grades and the discussions to date. Where levels of disagreement are consistently above one whole grade band, they can consider a range of further measures including:

- No further action
- Additional use of blind or non-blind moderation for assessments marked by a specified marker where there is more than one marker
- Remarking of assessments for the whole cohort.

Justification for decisions should be reported on the internal Moderation Report.

4.2 External moderation

What is external moderation?

External moderation is undertaken by experienced academic peers (External Examiners), independent of the University, to ensure that the level of achievement of students reflects.

How do I do external moderation?

A minimum sample of 15% of the work for each item of assessment for individual modules must be made available to the External Examiner(s), as described in section 11.15 of the Assessment Policy. External Examiners are not expected to arbitrate in the event of disagreement between first and second markers, and are not expected to change grades for individual items of student work.

When do I do external moderation?

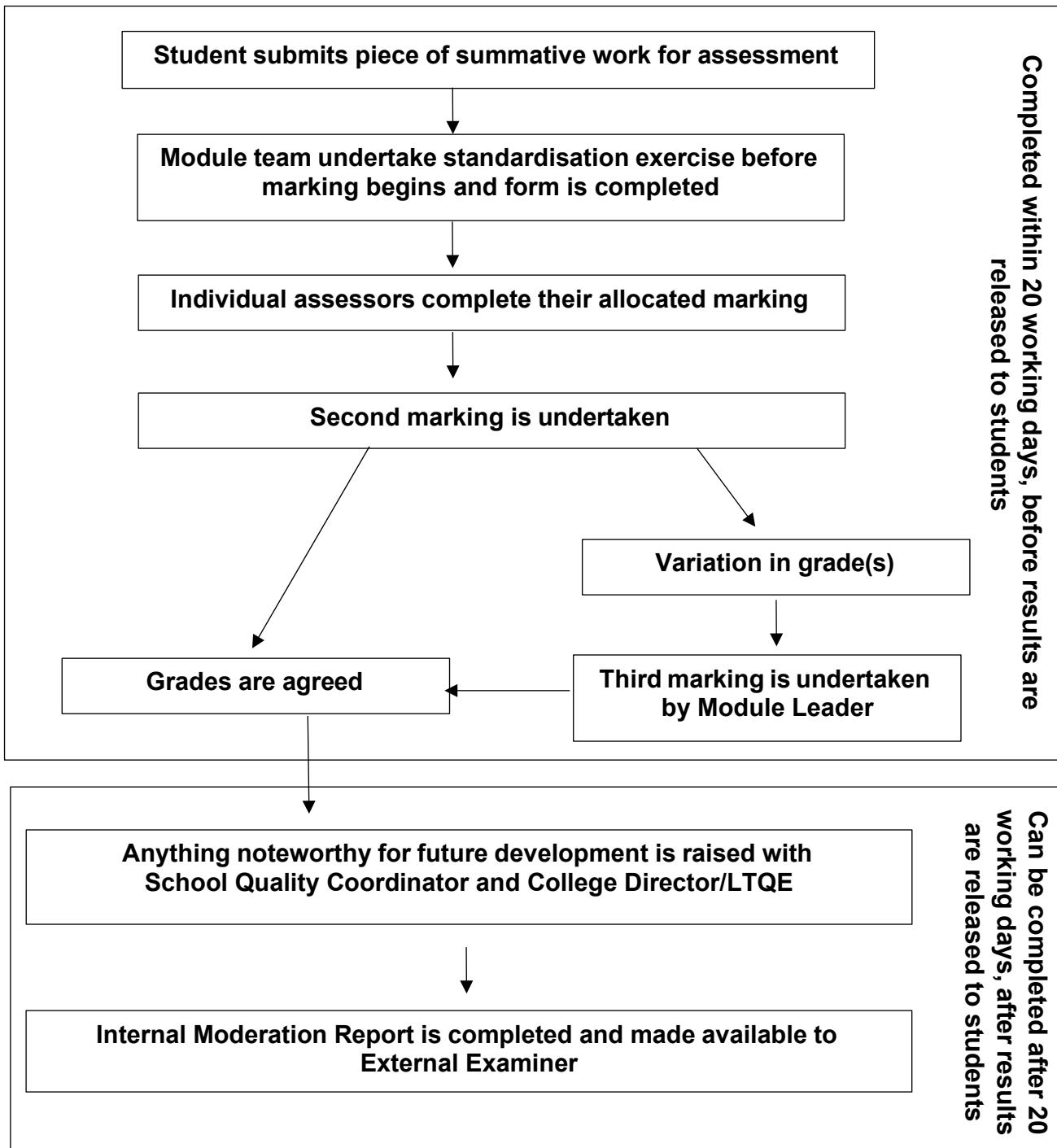
External moderation can take place after the 20 working days assessment feedback period and after provisional grades are made available to the students. Assessment relating to level 4 modules in three-year degree courses is not normally subject to external moderation after the first year of delivery. External moderation is not usually necessary for work marked in the reassessment period, since external moderation should have confirmed marking standards for first sit students work.

Moderation checklist

- A formal published statement of standardisation and moderation procedures should be included as an annexe to the Student Course Handbook. The statement must specify how differences between markers are to be resolved
- Where a course is taught across different sites or through different partnerships, the course management team must specify in the formal statement the moderation arrangements across the sites or partnerships
- Minimum requirements apply to the internal moderation of all summative student assessments, as described in section 11.7 of the Assessment Policy
- Where a course or module is delivered at more than one site, the External Examiner should be provided with the provisional statistical profile of grades for each site of delivery, so that they are able to comment on the marking and student achievement standards for each delivery site.
- The Internal Moderation Report must be completed and sent to the External Examiner

Process of standardisation and moderation

If the same assessment task, learning outcomes, and criteria, previous work could be used and standardisation exercise can be completed in advance of submission date



Appendix 6

Proforma for internal standardisation and moderation of marking



Assessment Moderation Report
 (please see [UW Assessment Policy](#) for definitions and details of moderation)

Confidential: for UW staff and external examiner(s) only

Module Code:			
Module Title:			
Module Leader:			
Academic Year:		Semester:	S1 / S2 / AS
Assessment No/Title:		Assessment choice (if applicable):	
Date of submission:			

Marking and Moderation team	
Name	Initials

Date of Standardisation (if applicable):		Date of Moderation:	
Nature of Standardisation (Guidance – Please Delete) Describe how any standardisation activity was undertaken – see guidance in Appendix 5 of University Assessment Policy		Describe how moderation was undertaken (Guidance – Please Delete) Typically internal moderation or double marking (blind or non-blind) - see Appendix 5 of University Assessment Policy	

Comments from module leader

Please comment on any issues that the internal moderator should be aware of for this assignment, if necessary.

(Guidance – Please Delete) Please comment on any issues that the internal moderator should be aware of for this assignment, including for example number of AI cases.

<p>Agreement of grades Please indicate any significant discussions and/or actions taken to agree final marks. <i>(Note that it is not appropriate to adjust the grades of submissions in the sample, without reviewing the grades awarded to all submissions.)</i></p>

<p>Comments from Moderator Moderators are expected to use the space below to provide commentary that marking and internal moderation has taken place in accordance with University Assessment Policy. <i>(Note that comments from Moderator are expected regardless of agreement of marks.)</i></p>	
<p>Are marking standards appropriate?</p>	<p>Please comment on the validity of grades assigned by initial marking to the sample of submissions</p>
<p>Is the quality of feedback consistent with course team agreed approach?</p>	<p>Please comment on the quality of feedback given to the sample of submissions</p>
<p>Is the marker commenting appropriately on the use of English language by the student?</p>	<p>Please comment on proficiency in English language demonstrated in the student work, and marker comment on this</p>
<p>Comments for the module leader and/or course leader to consider for future practice</p>	<p>Recommendations for enhancing practice and/or student outcomes</p>

To be completed by internal moderator.

Internal moderator	
Date sample received	
Date moderation completed	

I confirm that moderation has taken place in accordance with University policy and that the final grades have been agreed following the discussions and actions specified above.

Module Leader	
Date	

This form should be provided to the External Examiner as confirmation of completion of the moderation process.

Comments from External Examiner Generally, External Examiners are expected to comment by exception and to provide overall comments in the Annual Report. Space is provided below if External Examiners wish to provide comment on individual modules and samples of students' assessed work and outcomes	
Is the marking accurate and fair, aligned with the grading criteria?	Please comment on the validity of grades assigned by to the sample of submissions
Is feedback clear? Does feedback identify key strengths and areas for improvement?	Please comment on the quality of feedback given to the sample of submissions
Has internal moderation taken place effectively?	Please comment on the process and recording of internal moderation
Comments for the module leader and/or course leader to consider for future practice	Recommendations for enhancing practice and/or student outcomes

External Examiner	
Date	

Please return completed report to the module leader. Where External Examiner comments have been provided, the module leader and/or course leader should provide a written response to these.

Appendix 7

Providing feedback on student formative and summative assessments: guidance for establishing a course team approach

A course team approach to assessment and feedback for learning

- 1 The University Assessment Policy is based on a number of core principles that make clear:
 - assessment is an integral part of the curriculum design process
 - assessment and feedback are inclusive and dialogic in nature to develop students' learning
 - understanding academic requirements, judgements, standards and processes is established through the development of assessment literacy
 - formative and summative assessment strategies are planned, so that feedback and related learning processes provide opportunities for students to prepare for summative assessment items.
- 2 The application of these principles means course teams should have an agreed, consistent and planned approach to providing feedback to students which includes developing assessment literacy, ie understanding the process of making academic judgements.
- 3 This guidance sets out suggested lines of action for course teams to consider in formulating a position on the provision of feedback on assignment drafts and plans as part of a broader course assessment for learning strategy. Suggestions are also made for a consistent approach to feedback on summative assignments. The course team's approach to formative assessment, feedback on plans and drafts and on summative assessments should be clear for, and made available to, students via Blackboard or similar. The key principle as stated above should be about the development of student learning.
- 4 Learning activities to develop understanding of academic standards are an important element of student development, especially in the early stages of a course. It is a matter of University policy ([Assessment Policy section 7.4](#)) that all Level 4 students should have the opportunity for an early (within the first 4/6 weeks) formative assessment linked to a mandatory module. This may have a clear diagnostic purpose, for example in identifying any gaps or weaknesses in academic writing style and referencing etc. This should preferably be submitted through Turnitin® and students should be invited to discuss the similarity report with their Personal Academic Tutor (PAT).
- 5 Learning activities that also facilitate the development of assessment literacy such as applying assessment criteria to anonymised examples of completed assessments from the previous year, to support understanding of grading can be helpful. Formative learning activities that underpin summative assessments, (eg constructing a visual summary of line of argument for a summative essay or discussing the merits of different lines of argument) can

also help students to structure the process of tackling an assignment in manageable ways.

- 6 It is likely that a course team already has a position on drafts/plans for major assessment items such as projects and dissertations and other specialist assignments, in order to ensure equity for students. Consideration should be given to the full range of assignments used in the course and its constituent modules, with students being given structured opportunities to receive formative feedback. This may include providing comment on plans or drafts and ensuring appropriate consistency of approach across the course team. Course teams should consider how approaches to providing formative feedback might be structured over the early and later stages of the course. For example, in the early stages directed learning tasks can be linked to summative assessments and a class session may focus on peer review of work with the tutor pulling together key learning points.
- 7 It is anticipated that the course team's approach, with details relating to how formative assessment and feedback and other learning opportunities, including where appropriate commentary on drafts or plans, will be set out in the Course Handbook and/or on Blackboard and in module outlines. This should include reference to how students are expected to act on the feedback. It is important to provide a clear rationale for students about the approach taken by the course team, so that students understand the reasons for different approaches, eg between levels, or between different modules or subjects.

Considerations for formulating a course team position on developing assessment literacy and commenting on formative assessment (eg drafts and plans)

- 8 Be clear about what will be commented upon, with what purpose in mind and within what timescale – for example:
 - will it be acceptable for a student to seek feedback on a plan or a draft (not both)?
 - it may be helpful to establish for students the purpose of a 'draft' or a 'plan'; will it be to check the planned structure, referencing, written style etc, or the overall quality of the proposed line of argument in terms of the assessment criteria for the assignment? Or something else?
 - will there be agreed parameters regarding the length and format of plans and drafts, and also on the volume and style of feedback; will it, for example, directly address the student – eg 'you should ...'?
 - how will students get feedback on drafts/plans; will it be written or given in person, or is this a matter of staff preference or student choice?
 - should there be different approaches formative assessment and feedback at different levels of the course, (or in different modules) eg plans at Level 4 and draft introduction and conclusion at Level 6?
 - will work submitted in the week before the assignment deadline be commented upon?
 - will feedback encompass broader student development and challenge in addition to specific assessment task feedback?

- 9 Generally, it is not appropriate, when commenting on work in progress or plans, for staff to predict or give information about a likely grade, or to comment on full drafts or multiple versions. The course team may consider limiting the volume or nature of feedback and/or asking students (particularly in the later stages of a course) to specify what they would like feedback on.
- 10 Teams should be mindful of the dialogic nature of feedback so that students can develop assessment literacy and become confident in self-regulating and self-assessing the quality of their work. PATs may have a key role in this, as may activities designed to develop assessment literacy.

Suggested framework for a consistent approach to provision of feedback on student summative assessments

- 11 A consistent approach to feedback on summative assessments (and indeed on many forms of formative assessment) is considered by students and by external examiners to be good practice. More fundamentally it is central to student perceptions of 'fairness' and equity.

Establishing a feedback framework will help produce appropriate consistency; it could be developed and agreed at course, subject, departmental or even School level, and should be shared with external examiners.

1. The purpose of feedback is to engage and motivate students in the learning process, to support reflection and self-assessment, and to clarify expected standards.
2. Feedback should have an explicit relationship to learning outcomes/assessment criteria.
3. Focused (not copious) annotations with a balance of generic and personally directed comments should normally be provided on the text of an assignment.
4. Summative comments should be structured in terms of an agreed maximum of 2/3 positive and 2/3 developmental comments – for example:
 - 2/3 strengths/things done well and why
 - 2/3 weaknesses/things for improvement and why
 - 2/3 targets for development in future assignments.
5. The moderation process should assure the quality of feedback provided within any agreed framework.

APPENDIX 8

Guidance on Proofreading

Overview

The skill of proofreading is an important part of the writing process. Students are expected to take responsibility for proofreading assignments prior to submission. However, the University recognises that students may wish to ask a third party to proofread work; this might be a family member, friend, or colleague. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that third-party proofreaders are aware of this guidance. Proofreading usually involves checking work for grammar, spelling, punctuation, syntax, and formatting. This guidance sets out what the University considers appropriate in terms of proofreading and advises how to guard against unintentional academic misconduct

(Further information on Academic Misconduct can be found here <https://www2.worc.ac.uk/registryservices/681.htm>)

Key principles

1. Students are authors of their work and responsible for proofreading completed assessments.
2. Students are responsible for accessing support with proofreading where necessary.
3. The University supports students in developing academic writing skills and proficient use of spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Support is available from the [Centre for Academic English and Skills](#).
4. The University does not permit the use of professional third-party services (unless agreed as part of a reasonable adjustment). This may result in an academic misconduct investigation.

Please note that the Library Services, the Centre of Academic English, and the Writers in Residence do not offer proofreading as a service.

Definition

Proofreading – the careful checking of text for errors prior to submission; specifically, those related to grammar, punctuation, and syntax.

Editing – the process of amending, changing, or adapting text which substantially changes the academic content of the work.

Peer review – working with peers to discuss and evaluate ideas, offer opinions, and gain feedback.

Process

A proofreader may:

- identify spelling and typographical errors.
- identify errors in punctuation.
- identify poor grammar and sentence structure.
- highlight vocabulary errors
- highlight unclear syntax/sections of text which appear ambiguous to the reader.
- indicate inconsistencies in the layout of the document; for example, use of headings; referencing conventions, etc.

A proofreader should not:

- author an essay or any other type of a written assignment for a student.
- edit, change, rearrange or rewrite paragraphs.
- provide additional content.
- Make suggestions about what to add or leave out of the work.
- correct mistakes where the original intended meaning is not clear.
- carry out any translations.
- correct factual errors, calculations, formulae.
- alter diagrams, charts, or figures.

Academic Integrity

In submitting assignments to the University, students are confirming that they are the author of the submission and have been responsible for editing and proofreading which considers this guidance. If a tutor suspects that the work presented is not the student's own work, it may be referred to an Academic Integrity Tutor for investigation as set out in the Academic Integrity policy.

FAQs

Can I use tools such as Grammarly?

There are a number of suggested writing tools to support academic writing which can be found on the [Study Skills Portal](#).

I am a student with a registered disability (including a specific learning difference such as dyslexia), does this guidance apply to me?

Yes. Students who received Disabled Students' allowance (DSA) funded 1:1 study skills support can use this support to develop their proofreading skills, but they cannot ask their study skills tutor to proofread their work for them.

I am an international student, does this guidance apply to me?

Yes. For further information contact the Centre for Academic English and Skills.

Can I use a third-party to write my assignment?

No, the use of third parties, including generative artificial intelligence sites to write assignments is not permitted and may lead to an academic misconduct investigation.

Can my supervisor proofread my dissertation?

It is your responsibility to proofread any work before submission. Your supervisor may signpost you to tools that will support proofreading and editing if appropriate but will not routinely correct your spelling, punctuation, or grammar.

How do I proofread my work?

There are a number of ways to proofread your work:

- Read your work aloud.
- Look for one type of error at a time; for example, spelling, missing words, use of synonyms.
- Check for common errors identified in previous work.
- Take a break from your work and revisit a few hours/days later.
- Use the Immersive Reader function on Microsoft word to help develop your proofreading skills. There are some useful [YouTube videos](#) to support this.