1. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS

Coursework performance is primarily assessed through written examinations.

Examples of previous examination papers can be obtained from the Morrell Library or from the Department’s Web site – http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/econ/courseware/pgm/index.html. Whenever there is to be a change in the structure of a paper, students will be notified in writing in advance. If the change is of any substance, a specimen paper, in the new form, will be made available to students free of charge. Unless stated otherwise, each question carries equal weight within a paper.

In the Examination Hall

Students must obey the instructions of the invigilators during examinations. In particular, they must not try to gain an unfair advantage over other students by continuing to write after they have been told to stop by the invigilator at the end of an examination. Students who disobey the invigilators and continue writing after the end of an examination will be identified, brought to the attention of the external examiners, and an appropriate reduction of mark will be determined at the meeting of graduate examiners.

No notes, papers or books may be taken into the examination. For some mathematical and statistical papers an official handout may be provided in the examination room giving details of key formulae. Where this is to happen, a specimen will be made available to students so that candidates know what they may expect to receive in the examination itself. Calculators may be used in some examinations. The University will supply a calculator for such examinations and you must not take your own calculator into the examination room. The standard calculator for university examinations is the Casio fx-85ES; see – http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/eto/exams/calculator/

Prior to the start of examinations, each candidate is given an examination number. To preserve anonymity, this number, not the candidate’s name, should be written on the cover of the answer book and each page of the script. Examiners do not know the number given to a candidate and so each candidate remains anonymous in the marking process.

The University takes a very serious view of academic misconduct and penalties will be applied to students who are found to have attempted to mislead examiners. Section 2 provides further details.

Marking

The candidate’s answers are marked by an internal marker and moderated by a second internal marker. All marks are in percentage form. The internal examiners’ marks and a selection of scripts are then sent for review to an external examiner from another university. Marks are rounded to the nearest integer with 0.5 being rounded up, e.g., the raw marks 53.2, 52.5 and 49.8 are rounded to 53, 53 and 50 respectively. The marks emerging from this process are then assembled for consideration at the examiners’ meeting, which is attended by both the internal and external examiners.
The coursework examination for a module that has a weight of 10 credits forms one assessment unit and the examination for a module that has a weight of 20 credits forms two assessment units. For each MSc degree, the coursework examinations combine to form ten assessment units where the ten constituent units involved vary by MSc and the student’s choice of options (see Section 5 of MSc Handbook).

The examinations marks are used to obtain a set of ten rounded marks in descending order after including the mark of each double assessment unit twice. For example, suppose the marks for a candidate are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module Credit Weight</th>
<th>Examination Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>53</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>52</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

then the corresponding ordered sequence is (53, 53, 53, 52, 51, 50, 50, 40, 37, 32).

The rules used for classification involve the consideration of average marks. Averages will be calculated by rounding the raw average of the rounded marks to the nearest integer with 0.5 being rounded up, e.g., if the ordered sequence of rounded marks is (53, 53, 53, 52, 51, 50, 50, 40, 37, 32) then the raw average is 47.1 and the rounded average is 47.

**Classification of Candidates for MSc Degrees**

The possible levels of performance in the examination overall are as follows: MSc level pass, Postgraduate Certificate level pass, and Fail. There is also the possibility that the University may recognise outstanding performance by officially awarding the MSc degree with Distinction.

(a) In order to be recommended for the MSc with Distinction, a candidate must satisfy the following conditions:

1. the average of the ten marks must be at least 67;
2. there must be no marks below 40;
3. at least 5 marks must be equal to or greater than 70;
4. an appropriate dissertation must be submitted.

(b) If the average of the ten marks is 50 or more, the candidate is deemed to have passed the written examinations at the MSc level.

Students who pass at the MSc level can decide to write a short dissertation over the summer vacation which, if it is of sufficient quality, will qualify them for the award of the degree of MSc. If students who pass at the MSc level decide not to write the dissertation, they may qualify for a Postgraduate Certificate and their programme of study finishes at this point.

(c) If the candidate’s marks do not satisfy the condition in (b) but the average of the best six marks in the ordered sequence is 50 or more, the candidate is judged to have passed at the Postgraduate Certificate level.
Students who pass the coursework examinations at the Postgraduate Certificate level are not required to submit a dissertation and their programme of study at York finishes at this point.

(d) **If the candidate's marks do not satisfy the condition in (c), the candidate is judged to have failed.**

After candidates have been classified on the basis of the examinations marks, medical and compassionate evidence that has been submitted is considered. Section 3 provides further details. The examiners will decide what weight such evidence should be given and whether they wish to revise their earlier decisions in any way.

The Examinations Committee then submits the results to the Departmental Graduate School Board to be ratified. This Board will also receive comments from the external examiners (then or later) concerning the conduct of the examinations, the standards achieved, etc.

After ratification by the Departmental Graduate School Board, the results are released to students, but are not official until ratified by the University itself. This is normally a formality, but could be substantive if any irregularity were discovered in the examination procedure. Candidates have the right to appeal against the outcome of the examination to the University, but this would have to be on the grounds of irregularity, since the examiners' decisions on matters of substance are final.

**Resit Examinations**

Resit examinations in 2009/10 will take place in the week beginning 16th August 2010. The Examinations Committee is not responsible for selecting papers to be retaken. The candidate makes this decision in consultation with her/his supervisor. The final mark after the resit is the higher of the two subject to the condition that the final mark is at most 50. So candidates should not resit papers on which their mark exceeded 50.

Candidates who are classified as passing at the Postgraduate Certificate level have the automatic right to resit examinations to obtain a pass at MSc level. If the resit marks, when combined with relevant original marks according to university regulations, imply a pass at MSc level, the candidate can qualify for the MSc by presenting a satisfactory dissertation by the end of September in the year in which resit examinations are taken, or by a specified later date if an extension has been obtained. A fee for resit examinations is payable by candidates to the University.

Candidates who fail the examinations have the automatic right to resit to obtain a pass at Postgraduate Certificate level only. If the resit marks, when combined with relevant original marks according to university regulations, imply a pass at Postgraduate Certificate level, the candidate will receive a Postgraduate Certificate and her/his programme of study at York finishes at this point. A fee for resit examinations is payable by candidates to the University.

The Examinations Committee submits the results of resit examinations to the Departmental Graduate School Board for ratification. This Board will also receive comments from the external examiners (then or later) concerning the conduct of the resit examinations, the standards achieved, etc.

The results of resit examinations are released to students, but are not official until ratified by the University itself. This is normally a formality, but could be substantive if any irregularity were discovered in the examination procedure. Candidates have the right to appeal against the outcome of the examination to the University, but this would have to be on the grounds of irregularity, since the examiners' decisions on matters of substance are final.
2. ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT AND PLAGIARISM

Candidates are responsible for ensuring that their work does not contravene the University’s rules on academic misconduct, which are set out in Regulation 5.4 of the University’s Ordinances and Regulations. Regulation 5.4 reads as follows:

(a) The University regards any form of academic misconduct as an extremely serious matter. Candidates must not, in relation to assessed work in any stage of their course:

**cheat** i.e. fail to comply with the rules governing examinations e.g. by making arrangements to have unauthorised access to information;

**collude** i.e. assist another candidate to gain an advantage by unfair means, or receive such assistance;

**fabricate** i.e. mislead the examiners by presenting work for assessment in a way which intentionally or recklessly suggests that factual information has been collected which has not in fact been collected, or falsifies factual information;

**personate** i.e. act, appear, or produce work on behalf of another candidate in order to deceive the examiners, or solicit another individual to act, appear or produce work on their own behalf;

**plagiarise** i.e. incorporate in their work without appropriate acknowledgment material derived from the work (published or unpublished) of another.

(b) Candidates may not bring written or printed material, or equipment, including calculators, into the examination room for an invigilated examination unless provision has been made for this and the items in question have been approved by the examiners.

(c) Candidates shall not communicate with anyone except the invigilator during an invigilated examination.

(d) The examiners will take account of any breach of the requirements in (a) - (c) above in determining a mark for the work affected. This may result in a mark of zero with consequent effects on the evaluation of the candidate’s overall performance. This may in turn lead to failure in the examination as a whole.

The University’s procedures for investigating and penalising instances of academic misconduct in taught programmes of study are contained in the booklet Academic Misconduct: Policies, Guidelines and Procedures for taught programmes of study [http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/eto/exams/AcademicMis.htm] also available from the Student Administrative Services.

If the examiners believe that the case is of particular gravity, they may also recommend that further disciplinary penalties be applied to the candidate.

(e) Any student found to have committed plagiarism and who is continuing on a programme of study will be required to take or retake the University Online Plagiarism Tutorial and successfully complete it.
To reiterate, candidates must not by implication or otherwise represent the work of others as their own. All sources, books, articles, etc, must be explicitly acknowledged, and quotations and close paraphrases clearly attributed. Candidates must not represent work done in collaboration with others as their own unaided work; nor may any member of the University whether or not he or she is a candidate in the examination, knowingly allow his or her work to be used without acknowledgement by examination candidates.

Candidates with any queries about what constitutes academic misconduct, and in particular about the proper attribution of material derived from another’s work, should seek advice from supervisors or tutors.

3. NATURE AND USE OF MEDICAL AND COMPASSIONATE EVIDENCE IN EXAMINATIONS

Responsibility for Providing Medical, Compassionate and other Mitigating Evidence

The onus is on the student, who wishes medical and compassionate evidence to be taken into account, to provide that evidence in written form to the Chair of the Graduate Examinations Committee in advance of the committee’s meeting, i.e. before the end of June. Students taking resit examinations in August should present any such evidence by the end of that month. Those in any doubt whatsoever should err on the side of caution and obtain the evidence and present it to the Chair.

Purpose of Medical, Compassionate and other Mitigating Evidence

Medical and compassionate evidence is intended to show that a student’s examination performance may not adequately reflect his or her ability in the relevant area. Thus there are two stages to the consideration of such evidence. Firstly, a prima facie case must be established that a student was suffering from medical, compassionate or other mitigating circumstances that might have affected examination performance. Then the Graduate Examinations Committee must be satisfied by other academic evidence that the student was capable of a better performance. In general, compassionate circumstances in the case of completed examinations will only be taken into account in determining borderline classifications. Finally the examiners must be satisfied that there is no more appropriate method laid down in the University regulations for dealing with the problem.

Please note that the term ‘examination’ as used in this context covers all forms of assessment including essays and projects.

Nature of Medical, Compassionate and other Mitigating Evidence

All evidence must show that the student suffered from medical, compassionate or other mitigating circumstances while taking the exam and/or during the study period immediately before it. In the case of exams taken during the May/June period, the “study period” will normally be interpreted as the Summer Term. For other exams the study period will normally be interpreted as the period of one week preceding the date on which the examination is taken. In the case of pieces of assessment written over an extended period of time (e.g. assessment essays, projects) the whole period allowed for writing the essay or project may be regarded as the examination and study period. In weighing the significance of medical, compassionate or other mitigating evidence in such cases, however, the Graduate
Examinations Committee will take into account the proportion of the whole examination period during which the candidate suffered.

Where medical grounds are cited, the case must be supported, wherever possible, by a medical certificate (or similar) from a qualified practitioner. The medical certificate needs to state that the student was unable to work effectively during the relevant period.

In the case of compassionate or other mitigating evidence, the event concerned (e.g. family bereavement) must normally have occurred within one month of the start of the study period, or during the study period itself (as prima facie evidence that the candidate suffered such circumstances during the period immediately before the exam). Compassionate evidence must be of a compelling nature if it is to have any significant effect on the assessment of a candidate’s performance, or if it is to be considered sufficient grounds for an assessment essay/project draft extension. Moreover, it must, wherever possible, be reported before the Graduate Examinations Committee considers the examination results.

The following cases will not be considered:-

(i) medical circumstances for which compensation can be provided in the form of special examination arrangements (e.g. dictation facilities, extra time).

(ii) compassionate or other mitigating circumstances or disturbances which the candidate could, by the exercise of reasonable prudence, have avoided.

(iii) deficiencies which are the result of the candidate’s academic or linguistic background or experience (e.g. lack of familiarity with English).

Medical, compassionate or mitigating circumstances which have affected the candidate’s examination performance only by affecting his or her ability to do coursework (as opposed to pre-examination revision) will be considered only in very special circumstances. (If a student suffers any serious disability of this kind, the appropriate procedure is to seek leave of absence before the examinations begin.)

Supporting academic evidence

After satisfying themselves that the nature of medical, compassionate or other mitigating circumstances were such that a candidate’s performance might have been affected, the Graduate Examinations Committee will consider whether there is supporting academic evidence to show that he/she was capable of a better performance. This supporting academic evidence would include performance in assessments taken at other times and tutorial and supervisory reports.