

Changes to Guide to Assessment, Standards, Feedback and Marking 2020/21

Professor Mike Bentley, Chair of SCA

Additions and amendments approved by SCA 2019/20

A. 5.9 (c) Calculators - new policy

Students are expected to provide their own calculators for closed examinations. The calculator brought to the exam must be one of those on the list approved by the exams office. The list is available on the Exams Office's 'Taking an Examination' webpage. Departments are advised to refer students to this list in their departmental handbooks. Calculator covers must be removed and placed under the candidate's chair.

Students who do not bring their own calculator, and for whom a calculator is necessary in the completion of particular examination papers, will have one provided for them in the examination room. This arrangement will end in summer 2024, and so students whose courses end after that point will need to purchase their own calculator. The calculator provided by the Examinations Office is currently the Casio FX-85GTPLUS.

Bringing a calculator which is not on the approved list, unless specifically authorised for that examination, will be considered a breach of the rules of that examination - see section AM2.1.2iv.

Departments should advise the Examinations Office that students will require calculators at the time of submission of the relevant examination paper. If candidates require access to a calculator, this must be included in the examination rubric. Candidates will not be permitted to bring their own calculator, or request the use of a calculator, if this is not included in the rubric.

Details and instructions for the use of the calculator provided by the Examinations Office are available on the Taking an Examination webpage, and departments may wish to include this information in the relevant student handbooks. It is the candidates' responsibility to familiarise themselves with the calculator they intend to use in the examination. Invigilators will not provide assistance in using calculators during examinations.

Departments wishing to permit a different model of calculator must advise the Examinations Office in advance of the examination. The department must provide a calculator of the type being proposed to the Exams Office in order to allow invigilators to ensure that the calculators students bring is of the appropriate model.

Departments who wish to add a calculator to the approved list should send a request to the exams office with a rationale. The Standing Committee on Assessment will approve any new calculators following consultation with Chairs of Boards of Examiners from relevant departments. Arrangements regarding calculators may differ slightly for distant examination centres; see section 5.12.

Any questions or comments: **SCA Secretary:** Stephen Gow, sca@york.ac.uk,

B. P2.6.8 ISMs - resubmission, reassessment, compensation and distinction

- a. For the purpose of award, reassessment and progression rules, an ISM will be considered to be a single, self-contained module. Departments may designate one or more modules as an ISM, however resubmission and compensation will apply to these modules individually. Where departments have more than one ISM, reassessment for a marginal fail may only apply on one occasion. The calculation of ISM marks and the award of distinctions on Masters programmes must adhere to the criteria in P4.5¹

C. P.5. Marks from Partner Institutions on Joint and Dual Awards

- a. Where study at a partner institution is taken abroad, conversion tables must be available to students prior to their engagement on the programme to indicate how their marks from the partner institution will translate onto the York marks scheme. **Programme-specific grade conversion tables must be established at the appropriate level of study; they will be on different scales depending whether undergraduate or postgraduate studies are undertaken. The grade conversion tables must be approved by the Standing Committee on Assessment.**

D. 4.4 Assessment changes go to Faculty Learning and Teaching Groups rather than UTC:

*Any variation in the assessment regime described in module documentation available to students at the time module choices were made constitutes an 'exceptional' programme modification and must be approved **by the relevant Faculty Learning and Teaching Group (FLTG)**. Such variations include modifications to the timing of assessment as well as its nature (see 'Modifying Programmes and Modules' on the Quality Assurance webpage). Requests for such modifications will normally be approved only if either: 12 a) all students involved have been consulted and given their written consent for the change; or b) the department can provide evidence that no student on the module (including visiting students and any students taking the module as an elective) will be disadvantaged by the change. Requests may have to be considered at a full meeting of the relevant FLTG and departments are asked to allow for the timings of committee the group's meetings if they wish to propose changes of this type. The same principle applies to modifications to the published teaching timetable and to assessment regulations of a programme of study for an existing cohort of students.*

¹ n.b. - P4.5 specifies that for a distinction (b) a rounded credit weighted mean of at least 70 in the Independent Study Module(s) taken.

E. Academic Misconduct Policy

The following amendments have been approved by SCA and will be made to the Academic Misconduct Policy.

- a. **AM3 Penalty tables:** The plagiarism penalty table has been updated to provide better clarity for panels when agreeing the appropriate penalty. New penalty tables have also been approved for commissioning, collusion and fabrication (AM3.2 and AM3.4).

- b. **AM1.2 & AM1.3.17 Breach/Cheating definition revised to include:**
 - i. **Ethical breaches** - Cases of ethics breaches have been considered by the StAMP in the past year. While *Unethical Research Behaviour* is included under the *Disciplinary Offences* (AM1.2.2), it is also the case that a student may gain an unfair advantage in an assessment through breaching the ethical approval process. The definition of cheating (AM1.2.1) will be updated to clarify that ethical breaches in relation to assignments may be dealt with under the heading of cheating and/or breach of assessment rules (which may also be in addition to the disciplinary offence of unethical research behaviour).

 - ii. **Misleading/dishonest word limits:** Where students misrepresent or are blatantly dishonest in presenting word limits, that the panels may apply the cheating/breach penalties. This will be specified in AM2.1.2.

- c. **AM2.1.7 Whistleblowing:** In response to recent cases of academic misconduct reported by students and third parties (*whistleblowing*), SCA has clearly articulated the university's approach to addressing reports of academic misconduct by students and external third parties. This has been written in coordination with the existing policy on anonymous reporting of complaints.

Further changes approved by Special SCA in August - already circulated but now added to the Guide to Assessment.

F. 15 Online Assessment

As part of our response to the Covid-19 outbreak and subsequent UK lockdown (13th March 2020), all examinations (that did not move to coursework) were run as "online" examinations, with significant adaptations being made to assessments and policy due to the new format. It is now expected that closed examinations will not take place in 2020/21 and it is planned that "online examinations", in a similar form, will form part of the assessment strategy for a number of programmes. In addition, the Covid-19 crisis also accelerated a shift to online methods of assessment which would have occurred in time. It is therefore

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important to define this type of examination more carefully and review the rules that were introduced with these rules being published in the Guide to Assessment.

G. EC11 COVID-19 - Changes to Exceptional Circumstances process

It is now clear that the Covid-19 pandemic circumstances will continue for the foreseeable future and the exceptional circumstances policy has therefore been updated to account for the full circumstances of the pandemic, since it will be the principal mechanism through which we protect the assessments of our students. The new EC11 section of the Guide includes:

- A revised list of acceptable exceptional circumstances for the ECA policy and to include anticipated consequences of the pandemic and the lockdown.
- The re-introduction of the requirement for evidence for all ECA claims - unless a good reason is provided to explain why this evidence cannot be obtained.