



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

## **2022/23**



# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	3
<b>Assessment: Principles, Policies and Requirements</b>	4
<b>Assessment Formats</b>	22
<b>Standards and Marking</b>	54
<b>Feedback</b>	62
<b>Examiners for Taught Programmes</b>	69
<b>Rules for Assessment, Progression and Award</b>	84
<b>Foundation Certificate Programmes</b>	90
<b>Undergraduate Programmes</b>	95
<b>Graduate Programmes</b>	114
<b>Pre-Masters Programmes</b>	126
<b>York Online Programmes</b>	131
<b>Postgraduate Programmes</b>	139
<b>Appendices</b>	150

# Introduction

The University's formal procedures relating to the conduct of assessment for taught programmes are embodied in the Ordinances and Regulations, principally Ordinance 6, and Regulation 5. This booklet sets out supplementary policies and procedures that have been established through decisions taken in committee and through case law. It should be read in conjunction with the Ordinances and Regulations. Also included are summaries of the more important administrative procedures, although detailed information on specific procedures is circulated from time to time by Student Services.

Unless stated otherwise, these procedures should be taken to apply to all assessments leading to awards of the University.

Each edition of the Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback incorporates amendments to policies approved by the University Teaching Committee, the Special Cases Committee, the Standing Committee on Assessment and Senate during the previous academic year. The revised Guide is available to academic and administrative staff, students and external examiners.

This edition is for the 2022/23 Academic Year.

This Guide is also available online: [Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback](#)

All staff are advised to check this site throughout the year for a list of any further revisions to the Guide.

## Navigation

### *Reading PDF*

Contents pages are hyperlinks

Use ctrl+f to open the finder box and you can search for specific terms.

Document has Document Outline in top left corner.

### *Reading Hard Copy*

Use the contents pages to help locate specific areas.

**Cover:** Stephen Gow

# Assessment: Principles, Policies and Requirements

## Contents

<b>1. Assessment Principles</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 University assessment principles	5
1.2 Linking principles to policies	5
<b>2. Definitions</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 Defining purposes of assessment	5
2.2 Defining terms	6
<b>3. Assessment Policies</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1 Oversight of assessment policies	6
3.2 Departmental rules on assessment	7
3.3 Scope of policies	7
3.4 Planning assessments, marking and feedback	7
3.5 Policy approval	8
3.6 Policy review	8
<b>4. Assessment Requirements</b>	<b>8</b>
4.1 Language of assessment	8
4.2 Conflicts of interest	9
4.3 Individual assessment arrangements	9
4.4 Abiding by announced assessment programme	11
4.5 Non-written or non-recorded work	12
4.6 Assessment governing 'mixed student' modules	12
4.7 Agreed penalties	12
4.8 Academic Integrity	13
4.9 Notification of results	15
4.10 Conduct of assessment administered at departmental level	15
4.11 Retention of assessment papers/evidence	15
4.12 Assessment of study away from York	17
4.13 Assessment of visiting students	17
4.14 Assessment and student engagement: attendance, formative work and participation	19
4.15 Support in preparation for reassessment or sits-as-if-for-the-first-time	20
4.16 Peer marking of summative student work	21
4.17 Repeat Study	21

# 1. Assessment Principles

## 1.1 University assessment principles

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

- Equity
- Openness
- Clarity
- Consistency

## 1.2 Linking principles to policies

Working within these principles, departments are responsible for developing their own policies and procedures to meet the aims and objectives of the department. In addition, in keeping with the aims of the York Pedagogy, assessment must be linked explicitly to the teaching and learning aims and outcomes of the academic programme concerned. They must be designed to ensure that students are treated equitably and that they have the opportunity to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes of a programme of study. They must provide a clear framework within which examiners can make judgements on the comparative performance of students.

# 2. Definitions

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

“Assessment is a complex topic since it involves two distinct aspects. First, it forms an essential element of the learning process. Students learn both from assessment activities and from their interaction with staff about their performance in those activities. This interaction has two elements: a focus on their learning and the extent to which that has been demonstrated in the assessment, and a focus on furthering their learning, which may itself subsequently be assessed. The later element is often referred to as ‘feedforward’. Second, it is the means by which academic staff form judgements as to what extent students have achieved the intended learning outcomes of a programme, or of an element of a programme. These judgements form the bases for the grading of student performance through the allocation of marks, grades, and (where applicable) classification, and (provided the learning outcomes have been met) for the award of the credit or qualification to which the programme leads.”

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

---

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

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

## 2.2 Defining terms

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

- diagnostic assessment is used to show a learner's preparedness for a module or programme and identifies, for the learner and the teacher, any strengths and potential gaps in knowledge, understanding and skills expected at the start of the programme, or other possible problems. Particular strengths may lead to a formal consideration of accreditation of prior learning;
- formative assessment has a developmental purpose and is designed to help learners learn more effectively by giving them feedback on their performance and on how it can be improved and / or maintained. Reflective practice by students sometimes contributes to formative assessment;
- summative assessment is used to indicate the extent of a learner's success in meeting the assessment criteria used to gauge the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme.

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

## 3. Assessment Policies

### 3.1 Oversight of assessment policies

Assessment leading to university awards is governed by a regulatory framework, in the University Regulations, and by a set of guidelines, in this Guide. The implementation of the framework and set of guidelines is the responsibility of departments. The monitoring and development of this framework and set of guidelines is the responsibility of the University Teaching Committee and its related sub-committees.

In implementing this framework and set of guidelines, departments are responsible for creating their own local policies and procedures regarding assessment leading to university awards for particular programmes of study. These local policies and procedures must be consistent with the regulatory framework described in the university regulations and this Guide. In particular, they must

be consistent with the principles of assessment described in Section 1.1. Local policies and procedures regarding assessment and the making of a University award for a particular programme of study should be linked explicitly to the teaching and learning outcomes for that programme of study, and they should allow students the opportunity to demonstrate that they have achieved these learning outcomes. Furthermore, they must provide a clear framework within which examiners can make judgements on the comparative performance of students.

### **3.2 Departmental rules on assessment**

Departments must comply with University policies on assessment. Where additional departmental policies exist, they must be clearly documented in a durable format (e.g. PDF). This information can form part of a departmental or programme specific handbook, but it must be clear which policies and procedures will apply to a given student. Care should be taken when developing departmental policy to ensure that they are consistent with the University's assessment principles of equity, openness, clarity and consistency. Issues to consider for departmental policy can be found in Appendix A.

Departments are responsible for ensuring that documentation about assessment is made available to all staff, students and External Examiners. Heads of Departments must ensure that new members of staff receive appropriate induction to departmental assessment policies and procedures. Documents about programmes, including any assessment policies, should be kept available until at least a year after all students on a cohort have completed their studies.

### **3.3 Scope of policies**

Departmental assessment policy must cover all assessments which formally contribute to an award of the University of York, whether undertaken by students on campus or under other conditions (e.g. distance learning, placement, exchange). Each department that contributes to a combined programme of study must consider the performance of combined programme students with the same rigour as for students on a single-subject programme.

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

In order to ensure assessment policy and good practice are maintained, departments should give as much consideration to the planning of assessment, marking and feedback procedures as they do to the planning of timetabled teaching sessions. Such planning should take into consideration relevant variables, including:

- the need to set appropriate assessment tasks for different programmes/ modules/ levels;
- consideration of a range of assessment tasks to support development of a range of skills and to balance marking demands across a programme;
- the dangers of over-assessing and therefore creating unmanageable marking and feedback loads;
- the availability of resources needed for assessment;
- timing of assessment: the assessment for a module should take place during the next available assessment period;

- the need to provide clear information to students about the support available to them in advance of assessment;
- staff availability/ allocation to assessment and marking duties;
- workload balance involved (for staff and students);
- time constraints (including completing marking and feedback within twenty-five working days);
- arrangements for marking (i.e. ensuring marking and feedback are planned appropriately for all students and staff).

### 3.5 Policy approval

Policies and procedures concerning assessment must be approved by the University Teaching Committee in the first instance. Any subsequent changes to these policies and procedures are subject to the approval of the Committee. The University Teaching Committee may, at its discretion, require revisions to a departmental assessment policy in the light of the University's requirements on assessment and good practice in higher education.

### 3.6 Policy review

Departments are required to review policies and procedures concerning assessment on a regular basis, in the light of the reports of External Examiners. They must ensure particularly that policies and procedures have been implemented consistently, have contributed to the achievement of the outcomes of the degree programmes concerned, and continue to be appropriate to the aims and objectives of the department.

## 4. Assessment Requirements

### 4.1 Language of assessment

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

### 4.2 Conflicts of interest

All personnel involved in the assessment of students, or in administering assessment, are expected to act with the highest standards of probity in this regard. Potential conflicts of interest



should be declared at the earliest opportunity to the Chair of the relevant Board of Examiners, who will decide on the appropriate course of action. Serious conflicts of interest affecting External Examiners or the Chair of the Board of Examiners should be notified at the earliest opportunity to the Examinations Office. In determining whether a set of circumstances amounts to a conflict of interest, the test should be whether an outsider, aware of the facts, could reasonably consider that the assessment process might be compromised by the potential conflict of interest.

## 4.3 Individual assessment arrangements

### 4.3.1 Procedure

Recommendations for any variation of the standard examinations procedures must be approved by the Standing Committee on Assessment. In the event of dispute, cases may then be referred to the Special Cases Committee.

Requests for individual arrangements may need to be considered by several members of the committee, and students and departments are asked to submit requests in good time to allow thorough consideration. If requests are submitted within six weeks of an examination period it may not be operationally possible to implement the arrangements for the forthcoming examination(s). In such cases, students should refer to the Exceptional Circumstances Affecting Assessment policy. In the case of individual assessment arrangements, a recommendation on behalf of the Board of Studies should be submitted to the Examinations Office, supported by a Student Support Plan and any appropriate documentation. Detailed guidelines on the process for accessing individual arrangements in University examinations are available on the [Taking an Exam](#) university webpage.

The process of applying for individual arrangements for assessment for elective modules is the same as that for other academic study. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the department in which they are undertaking study – particularly in the case of an elective module – receives the appropriate information in a timely manner so that it can consider the recommendation for an individual arrangement on the student's behalf.

The above procedures also apply to the rescheduling of examinations in individual cases. Students requiring individual assessment arrangements whilst studying abroad should work with the Centre for Global Programmes to ensure that they follow the appropriate procedures at their host institution.

### 4.3.2 Extra time allowance

Students with a contemporary formal diagnosis of relevant disabilities, who request extra time in examinations and who have the support of the appropriate Board of Studies, will normally be permitted up to 25% extra time on the standard time allowed on any closed University examination of up to three hours' duration and for open assessments of up to 72 hours duration. In the case of open assessments of up to 72 hours, the extension is applied in terms of an 8-hour working day, rather than the total time of the exam (e.g. 25% of a 72-hour assessment = 6 hours). This extra time is added on immediately to the end of the standard hand-in time. It is recommended that the release and hand in times of open assessments be standardised across all relevant departments to 11:00 on any day. This gives the majority of students who have been recommended extra time the opportunity to hand in their assessments during the same working day as their non-disabled

peers. Where this extra time would mean the student working beyond 17:00 that day, the clock stops and restarts again at 09:00 the next working day until extra time allowance is used (e.g. a standard 72-hour paper with 50% extra time recommended would result in an extra 12 hours. The first 6 hours will be applied to the original hand-in deadline day with the clock stopping at 17:00. The clock then re-starts again at 09:00 the following working day with an additional 6 hours applied. The new hand-in deadline would then be 15:00 on the fourth day). It is advised that departments release open examinations at the start of a week to facilitate this process and where a deadline (including extra time) falls over a weekend, it is recommended that alternative forms of assessment are considered.

The recommendation for extra time allowance to the Standing Committee on Assessment, on behalf of the Board of Studies, should be submitted to the Examinations Office supported by a Student Support Plan. Applications relating to students following combined programmes should come from the Board of Studies of the Department in which the Programme Leader is based. Where it is considered that an exceptional case exists for extra time beyond these limits, Boards of Studies must make a specific recommendation for each paper based on quantitative assessments of the amount and intensity of reading and writing involved in the particular paper, together with various contributing factors (e.g. the candidate's writing speed), and demonstrating compatibility with the learning outcomes being assessed. Boards may wish to consider alternative assessments that may be appropriate for individual students as an alternative to extra time.

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

A student with a contemporary diagnosis of a disability which may occasionally interfere with the student's ability to plan their time on assessments may have a recommendation included in their Student Support Plan (SSP) for occasional extensions without necessary recourse to the Exceptional Circumstances Affecting Assessment Policy. This adjustment can only be made with the explicit recommendation by the student's disability advisor within their Student Support Plan, and with the Chair of Board of Examiners, who must assure the SCA that timekeeping or the ability to meet deadlines is not a professional competency or formal learning outcome of the course. The procedure for allowing these extensions must adhere to the following principles:

- a. Wherever possible students should be encouraged to meet the advertised deadlines. Students cannot be offered 'blanket extensions' to all work on a programme. To allow a set amount of extra time on all assessments would de facto set a new deadline, which the student is equally likely to struggle with in the event of an unforeseen flare-up or deterioration in their condition.
- b. Each extension must be requested in writing by the student to the department's disability contact where the disability contact is an academic member of staff. (Where the disability contact is an administrative member of staff, the extension must be requested from the Chair of Board of Examiners). The request must include the reason for the request (which must relate to their disability) and where appropriate, include the duration to date of the period of particular difficulty.
- c. In approving extensions under this policy, the department should be mindful of the other assessment obligations the student is under, and avoid overloading the student wherever possible. A discussion with the student to identify a reasonable timeframe for any extension may well be appropriate at this point. Extensions will not be considered grounds for future

mitigation claims, and where a student's workload is being pushed back on a large scale, the potential value of a Leave of Absence should be discussed with the student.

- d. In the event that the department or the student become concerned that either this policy is no longer effective, is being misused by the student, or suspect that additional support may be required to allow the student to continue with their studies, they should contact the disability adviser and the SSP can be revisited to ensure adequate support is available. The disability adviser or the Department may escalate concerns to the Head of the ODT/ Disability Services and the CBoE to determine adequate support mechanisms.

#### **4.3.4 Spelling / grammar stickers**

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

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

## **4.4 Abiding by announced assessment programme**

Throughout their programme of study, students should be subject to the broad principles of assessment that were in place at the time they began the programme. Where individual students interrupt their period of study (for example, through leave of absence) departments are not expected to maintain particular assessment procedures. This recommendation does not preclude changes during a programme of study, but these should be the exception rather than the rule.

All students are expected to undertake the assessment as outlined in module documentation unless they have been formally notified otherwise by the Board of Studies or by Student Services. 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:

- 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 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.

## 4.5 Non-written or non-recorded work

Assessment that is not based on written or recorded work should not comprise in total more than 12.5% of the weighted contribution to the final award. Any divergence from this principle requires the approval of the University Teaching Committee. Programmes that include practice elements are exempt from this rule. In the case of combined programmes the Boards of Studies of the Department in which the Programme Leader is based must ensure that the 12.5% principle is not violated in a combined programme as a whole.

## 4.6 Assessment governing 'mixed student' modules

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

Chairs of Boards of Studies of the home department should ensure that marks will be available in good time for the Board of Examiners meeting before approving an elective request.

## 4.7 Agreed penalties

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

Deadlines for assessed work must be published in a format that is accessible to students. All work submitted late, without valid exceptional circumstances, will have marks deducted. The deadline for work is on the hour, i.e. if the deadline is 16:00:00, work submitted at 16:00:01 is late.

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

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

- (a) Departments must not set Friday deadlines for these submissions (the same principle applies to the Thursday prior to a Friday bank holiday, e.g. Easter Bank Holiday weekend).
- (b) Deadlines for such submissions should be set within office hours and the facilities for

handing in student work should be open for a minimum of three hours prior to the deadline for submission. Any students in a queue to hand in work at the deadline should be able to hand in the work without penalty. A record of submission time must be kept.

For electronic submissions, deadlines may be set on any working day, including Fridays. Care should be taken with Friday deadlines to ensure that there is sufficient time for any required administrative or technical support. See [14.3 Electronic Submissions of Assessments](#) for further information on electronic submission.

#### **4.7.2 Other penalties**

Any other penalties (e.g. for over-long essays) must be published in a format that is accessible to students in the relevant programme information.

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

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

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

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

## **4.8 Academic Integrity**

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

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

- a) students registered on Foundation certificate programmes, to be able to achieve their award;
- b) undergraduates at the end of their first year, in order to be able to progress;
- c) students registered on pre-Masters programmes, to be able to achieve their award;
- d) students on postgraduate taught programmes before their first assignment is marked, although submission of the assignment will be accepted regardless of whether the student has completed the tutorial;
- e) candidates for the degrees of MPhil and MA/MSc by research, when the thesis is submitted for examination;
- f) Doctoral students, when confirmation of enrolment is submitted.

Student Services will not process a student's results, or their confirmation/progression decisions, or send any thesis they submit for a research degree to the examiners, until this confirmation has been received.

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

#### **4.8.2 Academic Misconduct**

Policies, guidelines and procedures are available on the [Academic Misconduct](#) webpage. These should be read in conjunction with the Regulations, and include guidance on advice to students and departmental responsibilities. Departments must ensure that students are aware of all issues relevant to academic misconduct before they undertake or prepare work for assessment. In particular they should draw students' attention to the requirement to complete successfully the Online Academic Integrity Tutorial. Students must be provided with explicit written guidance as to where the boundary lies between permissible mutual assistance and inappropriate collusion in open assessments. Boards of Studies should:

- a) include specific statements in student handbooks about how to avoid committing academic misconduct while maintaining the pedagogical value of legitimate collaboration in electronic and other environments;
- b) take steps to ensure that all members of the Board of Studies and all those involved in the marking process are aware of the University's guidelines on academic misconduct;
- c) consider modifying assessment practices to reduce opportunities for academic misconduct;
- d) require students to maintain appropriate, verifiable hard-copy records of progress on empirical research projects (e.g. a bound Lab Book) which a party other than the candidate can verify, and to be able to make this available at any point to supervisors and internal or External Examiners;
- e) review annually their academic misconduct guidelines to their students, e.g. at the first meeting of the Board;
- f) designate members of staff responsible for ensuring compliance with the University's expectations regarding students and academic misconduct and to serve on the faculty's Standing Academic Misconduct Panels.

#### **4.8.3 Staff submission of student work to SafeAssign® or Turnitin®**

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

- a) clearly state their policy regarding the use of SafeAssign® or Turnitin® to all students in programme and module information;
- b) follow the VLE guidance available at 'Setting up the TurnitinUK® assignment tool' OR 'Setting up a SafeAssignment® submission point'.

## 4.9 Notification of results

Departments should publish their policies for timing of notification of results to students in programme documentation. Undergraduate students should be notified at least five weeks prior to the date of a resit period that they will need to resit an assessment. Postgraduates need to be informed at least three weeks prior to the reassessment. Where a taught postgraduate programme requires students to pass the taught component in order to progress to a research project, resit or other arrangements of compensation should normally be such as to allow successful students to graduate with their cohort.

## 4.10 Conduct of assessment administered at departmental level

### 4.10.1 *Assessment conditions*

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

### 4.10.2 *Record-keeping*

A record should be maintained indicating receipt by the department of all essays, reports, projects and similar written work. Departmental and student handbooks should make it clear that students must keep Laboratory Books or other appropriate records of project work until their degree is complete.

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

Departments should decide how assessed work submitted electronically and without an identical paper-based version is to be receipted and assessed. They must also ensure that the work can be retained as submitted for a minimum of one year and a maximum of six years.

Departments allowing or requiring students to submit assessed work by email should note that the IT Service is unlikely to be able to resolve a claim made by a student to have submitted work which the department believes not to have received. Fail-safe procedures must be implemented for any such system, e.g. the named member of staff responsible for receiving the work must email each student to acknowledge their submission, and students must be warned to enquire further if they do not receive such an electronic 'receipt' within a given period of time.

## 4.11 Retention of assessment papers/evidence

### 4.11.1 *Assessment contributing to an award*

All material relating to assessment contributing to an award of the University should be kept for at least one year after the relevant examinations have been completed, that is to say, after the

meeting of the Senate or (for undergraduate Certificates and Diplomas) the Standing Committee on Assessment at which the results were confirmed.

#### **4.11.2      *Written or recorded work***

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

#### **4.11.3      *Retaining samples***

Where such marked work is returned to students, departments should consider retaining photocopies of a sample of scripts for quality assurance purposes, and advising students that they do so.

#### **4.11.4 *Access to answer scripts***

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

- the possibility of access should be advertised to all students to whom it is open;
- no fee should be charged for access to scripts;
- students may not photograph or copy their answers during access;
- alteration of an exam script constitutes academic misconduct, with the possible penalty of a zero mark for the exam;
- access may be supervised by research students, administrative staff, or academic staff, bearing in mind the requirements of anonymity;
- individual requests for access to the exam scripts should not be granted unless the department has agreed to grant access as part of the feedback strategy.

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



## 4.12 Assessment of study away from York

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

- Study Abroad – exchanges should have clear statements of particular arrangements for assessment and how these relate to proposed incorporation within a programme of study. These statements should be available before any exchange is undertaken and will differ depending on whether the study abroad is for replacement or additional credit.
- Placement – Placements rarely involve closed assessment. Any external organisation involved in assessment should receive full written guidance on the conduct and requirements of assessment in advance of the placement beginning. It is good practice for any open assessment from a placement to be second-marked from within the University, however it is recognised that in some cases a component of assessment will be within the hands of the placement organisation (e.g. conduct) and then second marking is not possible. In such cases there should be an inspection visit.
- Distance Learning – Consideration should be given to an appropriate balance between open and closed assessments to guard against the possibility of academic misconduct. For information on the conduct of distance examinations, see [section 5.12](#).

## 4.13 Assessment of visiting students

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

- a) Visiting students are required to submit all required assignments and written work and/or to attend any examinations which constitute the normal assessment regime for the module(s) for which they are registered. A fail mark will usually be issued for a module if the student has not met this requirement, but see also 4.13.b and 4.13.c.
- b) The above expectation should normally only be varied in cases where:
  - i) the standard assessment is an examination scheduled for a time after the student has left the University, or
  - ii) a module has been shortened in order to allow a student to take elements of the module without completing the full module requirements.

In the case of examinations, departments should substitute some other form of assessment designed to establish whether the expected learning outcomes of the module have been met. This may be a special examination to be sat by the student prior to leaving the University, or some equally rigorous written assessment. Because of the inherent logistical difficulties, every effort should be made to avoid students sitting examinations after leaving York. Where this is unavoidable, the principle outlined in paragraph 5.12 must be adhered to. However, the examination may be scheduled to take place at a later time than the examination at York if the student's home University states in writing that it is willing to accept the risk of collusion.

For a student to be allowed to take a module of shortened length, the department should ensure that the Board of Studies has approved a new module form detailing the module

credits, learning outcomes and methods of assessment as a minimum. This form should then be forwarded to Student Services for set up in SITS.

- c) Where it is not possible to meet the requirements in 4.13.a or 4.13.b, and where students are unwilling to submit to the normal assessment regime for a module, the student should be informed that they will be deemed to have failed the module and a fail mark will be recorded on the student's academic transcript. Exceptions may be made in the following circumstances:
- subject to the agreement of the department concerned, a student may take a module on an 'audit' basis provided that he or she requests to do so by the end of the third week of the term in which the module begins;
  - such requests should only be agreed to if the student provides a written statement from his or her home University approving the request;
  - requests to audit modules received after the third week of term will not be accepted;
  - students will not receive credit for any modules taken on an audit basis.
- d) Visiting students are required to register for modules which constitute the normal full credit load for the period they are at York. Exceptions may be made in the following circumstances:

where a student is required to undertake academic work for his or her home university, subject to the agreement of the department(s) concerned, or where a student is studying at York for the equivalent of one semester at his or her home institution, a student may take fewer credits than the normal full load providing:

- i) the student requests to do so by the end of the third week of his or her first term;
- ii) the student's home University provides written permission and a clear statement confirming the proportion of the student's annual credit load which this work represents
- iii) the combined credit load of home and host University is approximately a normal full credit load.

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

Subject to the agreement of the department(s) concerned, a student may take more credits than the normal full load (normally up to a maximum of 60 credits in a term, 110 credits in two terms or 140 credits in three terms, excluding credit for Languages for All courses and modules) provided that he or she requests to do so by the end of the third week of his or her first term. Such requests should only be agreed to if the student provides a written statement from his or her home University approving the request. Requests received after the third week of term to add modules should not be agreed to.

- e) In order that academic transcripts for visiting students can be issued in a timely manner, work submitted by visiting students should normally be marked as soon as possible after it is received even if this is in advance of the normal submission deadline. For the same

reason, the Standing Committee on Assessment has agreed that marks for non-award-seeking (visiting) students need not be ratified by an External Examiner, but will be ratified internally (by the Chair of the Board of Studies, the Chair of the Board of Examiners or the Head of Department) prior to submission for academic transcript production.

- f) Opportunities to retake modules are not available to visiting students after leaving York, and it is important that home institutions have ensured that alternative arrangements to deal with any assessment results that do not meet the requirements of a student's degree programme at their home University (e.g. arrangements for the gaining of credit) are in place before study is undertaken at York.
- g) Any variations in the above requirements for the assessment of visiting students must be approved in advance by the Standing Committee on Assessment.

#### **4.14 Assessment and student engagement: attendance, formative work and participation**

According to the York Pedagogy, challenging student work coupled with appropriately designed staff-student contact are the primary factors which should drive student learning and progress. This approach is reliant on students engaging fully in formative opportunities in which they can test out ideas, practise skills and rehearse subject knowledge before summative assessment. To ensure an appropriate level of engagement in formative work from all students, certain approaches have been suggested:

- awarding marks for attendance
- awarding marks for formative work or the submission of formative work
- blocking access to assessment for poor attendance or failure to complete /submit formative work.

These approaches to addressing student engagement are not considered good practice because:

- a. they run counter to the stated aim of the University to foster independent learning and to develop autonomous learners;
- b. they perpetuate a focus on marks rather than learning amongst students;
- c. they often lead to grade inflation;
- d. they result in more appeals for exceptional circumstances affecting assessment and staff being asked to make ever more complex judgments concerning absences and work;
- e. they can lead to disproportionate penalties for non-attendance and have a significant effect on a student's results;
- f. they serve to mask the level to which students need to or are intrinsically motivated to attend sessions, making underlying issues in modules or programmes more difficult to detect and address.

Therefore, the guidance regarding student engagement and assessment is as follows:

**4.14.1 Attendance**

Marks or grades should not be awarded to students purely to incentivise or reward attendance (i.e. giving marks to students for showing up), and lack of attendance should not prevent students from accessing summative assessment.

**4.14.2 Formative work**

Formative work or the submission of formative work should not be awarded module marks – this makes the work summative. In addition, non-completion of formative work should not prevent students from accessing summative assessment or completing the module.

**4.14.3 Participation**

If providing marks for participation is unstructured it may contribute to grade inflation and may be perceived as unfair – if more confident students are seen to be benefitting disproportionately. Care should therefore be taken to structure the assessment appropriately.

In order to encourage the progressive development of ‘participation’ skills such as asking challenging questions; listening and turn-taking; summarising points and defining ways forward; and leading discussions, student achievement in such skills should be assessed as part of summative assessment.

Where summative assessment of student participation is included in modules, the following aspects should be clarified and published:

- what constitutes ‘participation’ i.e. the specific aspects to be judged need to be clearly defined beforehand (criteria);
- the expectation for participation at different levels (i.e. Stage 1; Stage 2; Stage 3; Stage 4) needs to be specified and fully understood by staff and students;
- students should have formative opportunities to perform and receive specific feedback (oral or written) on improving their performance.

Appendix Q outlines techniques and approaches which can be used to address student engagement issues in a more productive manner. In addition, please contact the [sca@york.ac.uk](mailto:sca@york.ac.uk) if you require any further guidance.

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

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

office hours or bookable appointments but at least via email, to discuss both the feedback and strategies for the preparation for any repeated assessments.

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

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

#### **4.17 Repeat Study**

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

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

Repeating students should note that they may use their previously submitted work for their own learning and reference, in the same way they would use third-party information, but that they may not re-submit work for assessment. Such self-plagiarism will be regarded with the same severity as plagiarism in general in submitted work (see AM.3.10).

## Assessment Formats

<b>5. Closed Examinations</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>6. Open Book Examinations</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>7. Open examinations (Take-home examinations)</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>8. Cumulative Assessment – multiple tasks throughout a module</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>9. Essays (non-examination conditions)</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>10. Dissertations / Individual Projects / Independent Study Modules</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>11. Posters and Presentations</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>12. Group Projects</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>13. Viva voce and oral examinations in taught programmes</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>14. VLE and delivery of summative assessment</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>15. Online Examinations</b>	<b>47</b>

## 5. Closed Examinations

### 5.1 Information about closed examinations for students

The Examinations Office issues a 'Students' Guide to University Closed Examinations' for students sitting formal examinations at York for the first time. The Guide is available on the [Taking an Examination](#) page on the student study webpages.

### 5.2 Clarity of instructions and questions

Staff should make every effort to ensure that examination instructions and questions are clear and easily understood by the students. For guidance in this area – see [Appendix L](#).

### 5.3 Security of examination materials

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

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

Advice can also be provided by Dr Arthur Clune, Assistant Director (Infrastructure), in IT Services (01904 328470, [arthur.clune@york.ac.uk](mailto:arthur.clune@york.ac.uk)).

### 5.4 Examination scheduling and timetabling

- a) University examinations for Undergraduate students are scheduled in Spring Week 1 and Summer Weeks 5-7.

Examinations for Postgraduate Students should normally be scheduled during the Common Assessment Periods but departments may decide to hold examinations, particularly resit

examinations, departmentally in order to accommodate the quick turnaround periods required by the intense nature of PGT study. These exams must be invigilated to the required standard, and trained invigilators can be provided by the Examinations Office at the department's expense.

- b) The Common Assessment Period will not apply to Foundation Certificate or pre-Masters programmes. This reflects the fact that these may have non-standard start points in the academic year.

Examinations will be timetabled according to the following restrictions:

- i) timetabled examinations will be held in one of three available 'slots' in each day of the Common Assessment Period. These are normally:
    - 1) 9.00am (with standard scheduled durations up to 3 hours)
    - 2) 1.30pm (with standard scheduled durations up to 3 hours)
    - 3) 6.00pm (with standard scheduled durations up to 2 hours)
  - ii) students will not be required to sit more than two exams per day
  - iii) total exam duration for any individual student will not exceed 10 hours per day or 16 hours in 2 days (including extra time as adjustment for any disability)
  - iv) additional time in examinations is added on to the end of the advertised time, which may impact on the break available between examinations if a student has more than one examination scheduled per day, though reasonable attempts will be made to accommodate at least 1.5 hours between examinations.
- c) Examinations may be timetabled for any day falling within term time. Saturdays are regularly used, and the use of Bank Holidays may also be necessary depending on the volume of examinations to be scheduled. Examinations are normally scheduled Monday to Saturday between 9.00am and 8.00pm.
- d) Centrally-administered examinations will have the following durations: one hour; one hour and thirty minutes; two hours; two hours and thirty minutes; three hours. Departments unable to comply with these examination lengths may arrange and invigilate their own examination sessions to the required standards.

## 5.5 Examination candidate numbers

- a) As part of the operation of the University's anonymous marking policy students are identified only by their examination candidate number until marking has been completed. Examination candidate numbers are the only 7-digit number appearing on the student's University Card, are automatically generated from the student records system at enrolment and are carried forward from year to year.
- b) It is important to ensure that examination candidate numbers remain secure. All staff involved in the examining process must maintain the confidentiality of students' examination numbers. Students should be advised that they must keep them confidential and the importance of not entering their name in addition to their number on any closed or open assessment should be emphasised.



## 5.6 Establishing student identity

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

## 5.7 Invigilation

- a) The agreed ratio of invigilators to students in University examinations is 1:50. For example: two invigilators for 2-100 students; three invigilators for 101-150 students; four invigilators for 151-200 students and five invigilators for more than 200 students. Variation of these ratios is at the discretion of the Examinations Office, in consultation with the Chair of the Standing Committee on Assessment where appropriate.
- b) Short training sessions for invigilators are offered by the Examinations Office prior to the major examination periods. All new invigilators are required to attend a training session before being permitted to invigilate.
- c) Invigilators are responsible for the enforcement of the regulations and policies that govern the conduct of invigilated examinations. A senior invigilator, appointed by the Examinations Office for each examination session, takes overall responsibility for the conduct of the examination and the invigilation process, including ensuring that the number of examination scripts collected matches the total receipted by departmental representatives.
- d) A full set of information on relevant policies and procedures is distributed to all invigilators in advance of their session. A copy is also available on the web on the [Information for Invigilators](#) page.
- e) All invigilators should be present in the examination room at least fifteen minutes before the start of each session and are expected to give their undivided attention to the surveillance of candidates during examinations. Invigilators should patrol the examination room at intervals to minimise the risk of candidates cheating and to check that candidates are using only the additional materials permitted by Boards of Examiners for particular examinations.
- f) Invigilators have the authority to require any candidate to leave the examination room for good cause and must submit a written report on the circumstances to the Registrar.
- g) The exam-setter or his/her proxy must either be present or available by telephone throughout the relevant exam session unless specific permission to waive these requirements has been sought from the Standing Committee on Assessment in advance of the examination.

- h) It is important that the one-to-one relationship between the candidate and their script is maintained. Candidates who finish early should not be permitted to leave before their script has been collected by an invigilator. At the end of the examination, invigilators must ensure that students remain seated at the end of the examination until all the scripts are collected.

## 5.8 Use of the Professional Invigilation Team

- a) The Examinations Office appoints, trains and manages a team of professional invigilators drawn from suitably qualified persons not currently employed on the University's salary scales for Academic Research or Teaching staff including a team of professional Senior Invigilators. Departments may nominate invigilators if they wish.
- b) Departments may be asked to meet the costs of using additional invigilators to support arrangements such as those outlined in 5.9.
- c) The Examinations Office is responsible for the formal appointment and general briefing of the professional invigilation team.

## 5.9 Materials and resources permitted in examinations

### a. Permitted materials

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

- a) A clear pencil case or clear plastic bag, which may contain:
  - Pens
  - Pencils
  - Rubber
  - Pencil sharpener
  - Ruler
- b) A small (500ml max) clear bottle of still water
- c) University Card
- d) If permitted by the department, open books, dictionaries (see below), calculators (see below), other materials.
- e) It is the student's responsibility to ensure that approved books that they are permitted to bring into an examination room do not contain illicit material (see section 6.2.5)
- f) A watch (n.b. smart watches are not permitted); however, the watch must be removed from the wrist or pocket and placed on the corner of the desk.

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

### b. Dictionaries

Except where proficiency in a language other than English is being assessed, or a special case has been made to the Standing Committee on Assessment on the basis of the learning outcomes of the module concerned, University Teaching Committee has agreed that candidates will not be permitted to bring individual dictionaries into examinations, nor will dictionaries be provided.

**c. Calculators**

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.

**d. The use of electronic devices in examinations**

Departments should be aware of the potential misuse by examination candidates of small data storage units capable of holding large quantities of text, as well as numerical and scientific data.

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

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

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

## 5.10 Behaviour in examinations

- a. Candidates should be allowed to leave the examination room only for good reason and should always be accompanied by an invigilator.
- b. Any form of cheating or deception, including plagiarism, collusion and the fabrication of marks or data in relation to work submitted for assessment or examination at any stage of a student's programme, is academic misconduct, and will be treated as such.
- c. Candidates may not bring written or printed material or equipment, including calculators, into the examination room for a closed examination unless provision has been made for this and the items in question have been approved by the examiners (see sections 5.9 and 6.2.5).
- d. Candidates found taking illicit material into closed examinations or possessing such material in a closed examination will, at a minimum, receive a mark of zero for the paper. Illicit material is any material that is not permitted as part of the rubric and includes information stored on or accessible from electronic devices, paper notes and notes on the body. Students found to have had such material in their possession will receive a penalty under the Academic Misconduct policy.
- e. Candidates may use examination scripts or booklets for rough work but should be informed that it is their responsibility to cross out such rough work before handing in their paper. Paper is not given out for rough notes. If candidates do need to make rough notes they may use their answer booklet. It is their responsibility to cross out any notes they make that they do not want the examiner to mark. All written work, including such notes, must be submitted. Extracting pages from bound examination answer booklets (even if they only contain rough work) is regarded as academic misconduct.
- f. Candidates may not communicate with anyone except the invigilator during a closed examination.
- g. Candidates may enter the examination room up to half an hour after the start of the examination (at 15 mins and 30 mins), and thereafter only in exceptional circumstances and with the permission of the invigilator. Except in exceptional circumstances such candidates should finish their examination at the scheduled time.
- h. No candidate may leave the examination hall less than three-quarters of an hour after the start of the examination except with the permission of the invigilator. Candidates may not leave the examination hall during the last 15 minutes of an examination.

- i. Smoking (including the use of electronic cigarettes) is not allowed during examinations.

## 5.11 Absence or illness from closed examinations

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

## 5.12 Conduct of distant examinations

The University's procedures for security, conduct and invigilation must be adhered to during examinations taking place at a distance.

- a. Unless other arrangements are approved by the Standing Committee on Assessment in advance, the timing of formal examinations must ensure that all examinations for the same module, no matter in which country they are taking place, begin at the same time GMT. Where this is not practical (e.g. the same examination taking place in the UK, USA and India), then the candidates at one or more overseas locations must be chaperoned so they are unable to make any contact with individuals at a different site who are sitting the examination at a different time GMT.
- b. Examiner availability during the distant examination is essential, even if the examination is conducted in a different time zone. A mechanism for immediate contact with York should queries arise during the examination must be established in advance.
- c. All examination practices with regard to special arrangements, toilet supervision, arrangements for the treatment of candidates who arrive late or wish to leave early, and the use of calculators and dictionaries, should follow the guidelines in the Guide to Assessment for the current year. Where appropriate, the Standing Committee on Assessment may approve the provision of a basic calculator (i.e. standard arithmetical operations only, and no memory retained at 'switch-off') in place of the standard University calculator.
- d. Special arrangements involving computer or reader or scribe support must be approved by the Standing Committee on Assessment in advance (see section 4.3), and an assurance received that proposed invigilators have been carefully selected and have received adequate training.
- e. Appeals from all students (including distance learning students) are covered by the Special Cases Committee procedures.

## 6. Open Book Examinations

### 6.1 Purpose

Open book examinations (where students are allowed to bring certain specified papers / books into the exam) aim to reduce reliance on memorising information which in life is often very accessible e.g. formulae, law statutes. This allows more time in the exam for higher level tasks e.g. displaying understanding through using basic information available to solve problems; choosing and applying appropriate formulae to specific tasks. Open book examinations are more suitable where the aim is to test what students can do with the information to which they have access, rather than whether they can recall basic information.

### 6.2 Procedures

Where open book examinations are arranged as central examinations, the same procedures should be followed as for Closed Examinations (see Section 5) with the addition of the following:

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

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

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

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

- specific texts / book titles / editions, if required
- types of notes / formula sheets / revision sheets permitted
- technical equipment, if required.

#### 6.2.2 *Arrangements for the exam*

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

#### 6.2.3 *Failure to bring specified materials*

It is the student's responsibility to bring the correct materials to the exam. If a student has not brought materials for an exam, they should be allowed to take the exam without the materials. Module leaders may provide spare copies of texts, textbooks, books or technical materials if they wish. However, in order to maintain equity, notes or formula sheets should not be provided unless every student receives a copy.

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

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

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

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

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that notebooks, texts or other approved books that they may be permitted in an examination room do not contain illicit material. Illicit material would include texts not specified on the exam paper, pre-written possible exam answers or formulae. Candidates found taking illicit material into closed examinations will, at a minimum, receive a mark of zero for the paper.

## **7. Open examinations (Take-home examinations - for Online examinations see section 15.)**

Examples:

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

### **7.1 Purpose**

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

### **7.2 Examination requirements**

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

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

### **7.3 Open examinations and Academic Integrity**

As students will have access to exam materials, open information and be outside a closed exam environment, consideration needs to be given to the dangers of collusion. It should be assumed

that students on the same course will discuss released materials, topics and questions so assessment designers need to take this into account and design tasks and plan accordingly.

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

Examples: weekly class tests, lab reports or lab books, reflective journal entries or portfolio work.

### 8.1 Purpose

The intended purpose of multiple assessment tasks throughout a module should be clear for all staff and students beforehand. Purposes for such assessments may be:

- a. to aid engagement with work throughout the module;
- b. to aid reflection on learning throughout a module;
- c. to practise skills in order to improve performance.

Consideration needs to be given to how undertaking the tasks involved is linked to feedback input on performance during the module.

### 8.2 Staff and student workload

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

### 8.3 Cumulative assessment and Academic Integrity

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

### 8.4 Requirements for assessment

Staff and students should be clear:

- what is required to be submitted in order for the assessment to be considered complete. This may relate to how many individual tests or reports are required to be submitted, the word length of a complete journal or the number of completed items in a portfolio;
- what exactly will be assessed. This may mean all the submissions are assessed or a proportion of submissions are assessed. Whatever rules govern the body of work to be assessed, all students should understand this clearly beforehand;
- which elements are essential to meet the criteria for assessment. If certain elements of writing are necessary or certain types of approach then this should be made clear to students beforehand;



- when the work must be submitted, how submission will take place and what the penalties are for late submission.

## 8.5 Non-completion and reassessment

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

# 9. Essays/Coursework (non-examination conditions)

## 9.1 Purpose

Purposes for assigning an essay (completed over time) may be to encourage students to:

- a. study a topic in greater depth through reading about and evaluating different viewpoints and perspectives;
- b. come to a better understanding of theories and concepts through internalising them in order to construct and sustain an academic argument;
- c. display the extent of their synoptic thinking and understanding of the module or a module topic;
- d. develop their ability to analyse and apply new ideas / theories to their experience and practice.

## 9.2 Staff and student workload

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

Consideration should also be given to how working on essays may distract students from other learning within the module. If students start to work on a module essay too early, this can mean that they ignore the rest of the module materials.

## 9.3 Module essays and Academic Integrity

As students are not under exam conditions, assessing via module essays can open the door to Academic Integrity questions. To avoid this and deter plagiarism, the following approaches can be helpful:

- ensuring students are asked to answer a very specific essay question rather than addressing vague topic areas;
- linking essay questions to current affairs / topical issues / specific cases or examples;

- avoiding providing the same titles to students year after year;
- having a draft or formative feedback stage to address integrity issues early;
- including submission of evidence of the research process in the final mark.

## 9.4 Requirements for assessment

Staff and students should be clear about:

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

## 9.5 Marking and feedback

Marking and providing feedback on essays can be time-consuming, especially if the essays are double-marked. In order to meet the expectation of marking and feedback turnaround in twenty-five days (see Feedback Policy, particularly Section 16.1.3) and providing students with feedback that is detailed enough to encourage learning, module leaders with larger cohorts should consider producing a clear marking schedule.

## 9.6 Resubmission and reassessment

In the criteria for marginal fail, clear guidance needs to be given concerning which parts of an essay can be developed for resubmission and which cannot. For reassessment, consideration needs to be given to how the same learning outcomes can be assessed in a shorter period.

# 10. Dissertations / Individual Projects / Independent Study Modules

## 10.1 Purpose

Writing a dissertation or undertaking a project provides taught students (including undergraduates and taught postgraduates) with the opportunity to undertake a piece of individual research / investigation and examine an aspect of the subject they have been studying in more depth. Such tasks can therefore assess such skills as the ability to:

- work independently;
- narrow / define / focus a research area of their choice;
- read widely and critically reflect on written research in an appropriate and thorough manner;
- think through varying methodological approaches and adopt the necessary approaches suitable to the topic being researched;

- conduct research;
- manage a challenging, extended piece of work.

## 10.2 Requirements

### ***10.2.1 Clarity of expectations and criteria***

As the project or dissertation may be a new assessment format for many students, expectations need to be made as clear as possible. Preparation modules or workshops need to ensure students know what an acceptable dissertation / project looks like. A useful activity, to familiarise students with expectations and criteria, is to provide students with an opportunity to mark a few dissertations / projects themselves and discuss the results. This can highlight common problem areas such as failing to sufficiently define a research question / inappropriate structure / failure to include enough theory or literature / “storytelling” / lack of critical analysis. Students also need to receive clear information about submission procedures, formats and deadlines.

### ***10.2.2 Choice of topic***

As the choice of topic and / or narrowing of a topic can be the first major hurdle students face when completing their own research, consideration needs to be given to how much guidance students are given at this stage. Module leaders need to ensure students have equal opportunities in selecting their research themes and what mechanisms will be employed to ensure equity of projects available to students.

### ***10.2.3 Supervision – staff and student workload***

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

- Proposal / project focus stage
- Literature review
- First draft.

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

## 10.3 Dissertations, projects and Academic Integrity

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

asked to produce. The pressure and stress this produces can make accidental or deliberate academic misconduct a real possibility.

To counter this danger, clear guidance needs to be given regarding what constitutes plagiarism, how students can manage their sources and how they should reference and cite clearly. Where primary research is expected, clear guidance should also be provided on appropriate research practice to help students to avoid other forms of academic misconduct.

The University policy on proof reading should be brought to the attention of such student from the start.

## 10.4 Marking and feedback of dissertations

### 10.4.1 Marking of Undergraduate dissertations

As dissertations and projects often warrant a high weighting (e.g. 80%) in high credit modules (e.g. 40 credits or more) in the final year of a programme (higher stage weighting for final stage marks), the marks for such assessments are extremely significant for a students' degree classification. As a result, extreme care needs to be taken with marking such significant pieces of assessment (see Appendix E). Establishing agreed standards between markers, double-blind marking and moderation should be considered.

Also, as students invest significant time and energy into these pieces of assessment, equal thought should be given to the quality of response and feedback provided.

### 10.4.2 Marking of Taught postgraduate dissertations

Dissertations for taught postgraduates often constitute around a third of a Master's student's work whilst they are studying with the University, and they are often handed in as the student leaves York. It remains of the utmost importance however, that students receive meaningful and timely feedback on their ISM projects. It is also important, given the weight of the work towards award marks, that care be taken with marking such significant pieces of assessment (see Appendix E). Establishing agreed standards between markers, double-blind marking and moderation should be considered.

## 10.5 Submission, extensions and penalties

Students should be fully and clearly informed about:

- when their dissertations / projects have to be submitted (time / date). (See section 4.7.1);
- how their dissertation / project should be submitted – e.g. front cover / format / required pages/binding and presentation;
- where their dissertation / project should be submitted and to whom.

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

## 10.6 Reassessment and resubmission

Reassessment through resubmission on Independent Study Modules is allowed under certain circumstances. For students on taught postgraduate courses or those on Integrated Masters Programmes (where the ISM is worth more than 40 credits), reassessment is only possible where the ISM receives a marginally failing mark between 40 and 49. In these cases, the credit value of the reassessment exceeds the normal reassessment limits. The student will then have an opportunity to make amendments (as specified in [Appendix N](#)) which would enable a passing threshold to be reached. The overall ISM module mark after resubmission will be capped at 50. Students on Integrated Masters Programmes with ISMs worth up to or exactly 40 credits may be reassessed on ISMs, if the volume of reassessment is available to them within the normal reassessment and compensation rules. In each case, consideration should be given to what is realistically possible in terms of revising a substandard dissertation/ project within a limited time frame.

## 11. Posters and Presentations

### 11.1 Purpose of assessment

The purpose of assigning a poster or presentation as an assessment should be clear for staff and students beforehand. Purposes for assigning such assessment may be to encourage students to:

- a. analyse / synthesise information from a variety of sources;
- b. study / revise topics in depth to gain a firm grasp of key arguments and evidence, key themes, or key conclusions;
- c. consider a topic thoroughly in order to decide how best it can be summarised and presented interestingly to an audience – thereby making considered judgments about content, organisation and focus;
- d. develop their visual and oral communication skills;
- e. develop self-confidence and confidence as professional participants in their discipline;
- f. think more creatively about their subject area.

### 11.2 Logistics

The arrangements necessary for assessment via posters and presentations need considerable thought. In particular,

- Resources – material and technical resources necessary need to be ordered well in advance. It is advisable that limits on how students use resources should be made clear to ensure equity.
- Rooms / Space – suitable spaces for poster displays, concurrent presentations or performances need to be booked well ahead of time. Also, technical resources in rooms need to be checked.
- Timing – for presentations, a schedule is necessary and needs to be distributed well in advance. The schedule should, as far as possible, ensure equity for students i.e. presentations should not happen too far apart. The schedule should take account of how much time is needed to set-up each presentation, how much time is allowed for each

presentation (including Q&A if called for) and how much time is needed for marking each presentation. The schedule should allow time for breaks to counter marker fatigue and be flexible enough to allow for some over-run of presentations.

- Markers – if presentations are to be joint marked, arrangements need to be made for enough markers to be available and to be ready to mark consistently.

### 11.3 Standards

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

If criteria are used for assessment related to elements of communication such as “Pace / tone” in a presentation or “Graphic design” in a poster, it is reasonable for students to expect some input on these skills or some opportunity to practise the skills and receive feedback.

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

### 11.4 Feedback and learning

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

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

### 11.5 Moderation and Marking

The presentation of work – either as a poster or presentation – does not allow for student anonymity. As a result, joint marking is recommended to ensure equity. To single mark performance-based assessment worth more than 10% of any module, a recording **MUST** be made to allow for later moderation.

Whilst marking, markers should be allowed enough time to make reasoned judgements, agree marks and to make written comments.

It would be advisable, for future moderation purposes, for a percentage of posters to be kept and a percentage of performances to be recorded each time the assessment is run.

### 11.6 Reassessment

Consideration needs to be given as to how a poster or presentation can be reassessed.

## 12. Group Projects

### 12.1 Purpose

It is very important that work assigned to group work actually needs to be accomplished by groups. Without a clear purpose for convening a group and working together, groups may produce several individual end products which do not work together. Therefore, the purpose of group projects should be clearly identified during module planning, including why it is appropriate for the assignment to be completed in groups and how the process and content of the project will help to achieve the stated learning objectives in the module. If group process skills (e.g. team-working, communication) are to be developed and assessed during the module then group process learning objectives and assessment criteria need to be clearly defined. This information should be explicitly communicated to students from the outset.

### 12.2 Clarity of information

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

- the task to be undertaken;
- the necessity for group work to complete the task;
- the basis for group membership;
- rules that cover the operation of groups;
- task allocation within the group;
- what to do if a group loses a member, cannot continue to function as a group or needs to adjust/ adapt to events which arise in the group (i.e. exceptional circumstances).  
Guidance should include how the students can value and acknowledge this experience as part of their learning;
- the conduct of group meetings – expectations regarding frequency, timing and group contact outside scheduled class times;
- feedback stages during the assignment period to report group progress and final outcomes;
- the weighting of the assessment in the overall module;
- due dates for assessment completion;
- penalties for late submission etc.;
- the procedure and criteria for assessing the group;
- the procedure and criteria for assessing individual contributions, if such contributions are to be assessed;
- how marks will be allocated between the collaborative process (i.e. the way individuals collaborated during the project) and the collaborative product (i.e. the final group document and/or presentation);
- who will carry out the assessment (e.g., individual lecturers, panel of lecturers, peers);
- how the contribution of each member to the group project will be assessed (e.g. using individual process diaries, peer/external assessment of collaborative process and assignment content).

## 12.3 Group work and academic integrity

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

## 12.4 Feedback on progress

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

## 12.5 Assessing group projects

There are numerous ways to assess group projects. It is important that the assessment approach matches the stated learning outcomes. Here are some possible alternatives:

### 12.5.1 *Group assessment*

The work of the group (i.e. the product), can be assessed and then the same mark awarded to each member of the group. This rewards effective collaboration but more dedicated students may feel it is unfair if 'freeloaders' are similarly rewarded.

### 12.5.2 *Divided group mark*

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

### 12.5.3 *Individual and group marks*

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

### 12.5.4 *Individual interview*

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



### 12.5.5 *Project exam*

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

## 12.6 **Methods for assessing individual contribution to group work**

There are various ways to allocate individual marks for work conducted in groups – see Appendix C. These methods can mean that students learn to reflect on their contribution to the group product and students who have worked harder in a group have the opportunity to get the credit they deserve.

## 12.7 **Criteria for assessing groups**

It is advisable that if the group product and group process are both going to be assessed, each has separate criteria. The criteria for the group product would most probably be similar to criteria for other assessment tasks (i.e. essay / report / presentation criteria). The criteria for group processes however may need more consideration but could include such areas as:

- meeting attendance;
- contribution to the task;
- degree of cooperative behaviour / ability to work with others;
- time and task management;
- efficiency at problem-solving;
- evidence of capacity to listen;
- responsiveness to criticism;
- contribution to group discussion;
- ability to organise own work vs degree of supervision needed;
- ability to motivate / guide others;
- adaptability to new situations.

## 12.8 **Reassessment**

Reassessment of a group-based product may be possible by an alternative assessment instrument as long as the alternative instrument assesses the same learning objectives.

As it will probably not be possible to recreate a group in order to reassess a student where the group process is part of the assessment, consideration needs to be given to how such aspects of assessment will be reassessed.

If the group processes constitute a significant part of the learning objectives and assessment for the module, making the assessment non-reassessable may be considered. However, departments should appreciate that such a decision could have serious consequences for students. To mitigate this risk, departments should consider how groups will be monitored throughout the original assessment to ensure all students are on track.

Where the group processes constitute a less significant part of the learning objectives and assessment, alternative assessment instruments may be possible for reassessment. This could include examining the student regarding their understanding and analysis of the group tasks and process that were undertaken during the original task. Where the reassessment instrument differs from the original, the reassessment instrument should be clearly stated in the module information.

## 13. Viva voce and oral examinations in taught programmes

For the purposes of this guidance, 'a viva voce examination' is defined as 'one student being interactively examined by examiners'. These examinations may not be used in determining degree classifications but only as an assessment for a module where all students registered for the module are so examined.

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

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

## 14. VLE and delivery of summative assessment

### 14.1 Virtual Learning Environment (Yorkshire)

The University's centrally supported virtual learning environment, Yorkshire, is designed to support formative assessment activities through its assessment engine. In addition to this, it can also support the submission of students' assignments for summative marking through its anonymous file submission tool, which is a resilient application.

There is always some chance of system downtime, however, and the VLE team cannot always track system problems when they happen out of standard office hours, and cannot correct the system when outages happen out of hours until the following working day. For this reason, it is recommended that online submission deadlines follow the same guidelines as hard copy

submissions in terms of timing: deadlines should be set during normal working hours, and early in the week to keep late submitting students from accumulating multiple penalty points over a weekend.

## **14.2 Use of the VLE for closed summative assessment (exams)**

The Programme Design and Learning Technology Team (PDLT) has established a protocol for delivering online closed examinations using a dedicated instance of the University's centrally supported virtual learning environment Yorkshire – VLE Exam – for examinations only. VLE Exam is most appropriate for the delivery of examinations, comprising mainly multiple-choice style and short answer questions, with up to 20 different question types supported. VLE Exam can be used to assess cohorts of up to 200 students sitting an examination at the same time.

Departments wishing to use the VLE for closed summative assessments are responsible for ensuring a PC classroom is available for the examination, bearing in mind that access may be restricted during the common assessment period (CAP). The PC classroom should be booked for the examination prior to the start of teaching in order to ensure the department can abide by the announced assessment programme. The Examinations Office and IT Services should be notified in advance of the booking being made so that demand can be monitored (see 14.2.3 below).

### **14.2.1 Guidance to students**

Staff coordinating the examination should ensure that their students are familiar with the VLE exam environment prior to undertaking a summative assessment. It is recommended that opportunities for students to familiarise themselves with the examination environment be provided through the provision of a formative assessment of a similar format, incorporating question types and content relevant to the specific module of study. (The provision and delivery of a formative exam should be arranged with the PDLT, following the same protocol for summative exams, as outlined below.)

Students should be clear about the format of the assessment, the number and type of question items to be used, the time limit they will be facing in the actual exam. Special arrangements for students that require additional requirements should also be addressed prior to the exam taking place (e.g. extra time or a separate workstation environment with accessibility controls).

### **14.2.2 Preparation of the exam questions and configuration of the test environment**

Academic staff must ensure that examination questions are prepared so that they are suitable for the examination platform that they will be presented in. For VLE exams, the question-set should be shared with the Programme Design and Learning Technology Team (PDLT) at least four weeks in advance of the date of the examination, so that the appropriate checks can be performed to ensure that the question items are fully compatible with the examination environment and that there are no usability issues (e.g. problems with the rendering of images or challenges with navigation between question items) which might impact on the running of the examination and adversely affect students in their completion of the exam. Consideration should also be given to accessibility requirements for the examination and any reasonable adjustments for students with special requirements should be made in advance of the examination. The PDLT should be informed if students require additional time to complete the exam, which will need to be factored

into arrangements on the day of the exam, regarding the cut-off point at which the VLE Exam test site will be made unavailable to staff and students.

### **14.2.3 Mitigation of performance risks**

It is of the utmost importance that the platform used to deliver online examinations is technically reliable and robust and that the examination environment (PC classroom) is correctly set up for the delivery of a computer-based examination. To ensure that adequate preparations are in place, it is the responsibility of the staff coordinating the examination to:

- Book the PC classrooms that will be used for the examination, ensuring that rooms are also booked an hour before and after the examination duration, so that IT Services staff have control of the room to prepare it for the examination and then return it to its original state;
- Notify IT services of the date of the examination and the PC classrooms that will be used, requesting that the classrooms be prepared so that individual work stations are locked down and with browser controls presented to students in examination mode with restricted access to the test environment.

IT Services will also need to ensure that no major maintenance work on the IT network is scheduled to run during the examination, which might affect the performance of the examination environment and connectivity between individual work stations and the test environment. The PDLT may also need to apply updates to the VLE Exam environment in the weeks before the examination, as well as run a range of stress tests and checks to the hardware and software that will be used.

Whilst these measures should address most performance issues and ensure that the exam runs smoothly, it should be recognised that no computer-based system is 100% reliable and technical failure either at the network level or with the examination software may still occur. An individual computer or hardware associated with an individual computer may fail, and in the worst case the network may go down. Spare keyboards should therefore be provided in each examination room – as a rule of thumb 10% of the machines in each examination room should be reserved for contingency use – to allow candidates to be moved to another machine if an individual computer fails. Back-up paper copies of the examination should also be provided by paper setters via the Examinations Office in case of widespread network or electrical failure.

### **14.2.4 Security of examination materials**

The security of examination materials is of the utmost importance. Examinations are therefore delivered using a separate dedicated version of Yorkshare (VLE Exam). VLE Exam can only be accessed from university supported machines on campus. The test site which is used to deliver a specific examination is only made available to students for the one/two hour duration of the examination.

Outside that time, the test site can only be accessed by tutors involved in setting and marking the examination. Students cannot access the examination questions until they have entered the unique password for the examination. This unique password, which is only known to the tutors setting the examination and the PDLT, is only released to students immediately before the start of the examination.

In the week leading up to the examination, the examination coordinator should ensure that a spreadsheet of students who will be taking the exam is shared with the PDLT, so that the PDLT can enrol them on the test site within the VLE Exam environment. Student accounts are created by the PDLT, based on a list of usernames and Exam IDs provided by the Department.

The PDLT will ensure that the test site remains unavailable until the exact date and time of the examination, when it will be released – with invigilators then guiding students through the log in process to the VLE Exam environment and providing students with the correct password to access the test.

Immediately after the examination has been completed and all submissions have been received and verified by the PDLT's VLE Application Manager, the examination site will be made unavailable to all users. Should the exam include open answer question types, which require manual marking, a copy of the exam will be prepared for the marking and moderation activities with Exam IDs removed and then shared with the exam coordinator. Otherwise marking is automated and the VLE Application Manager will prepare a spreadsheet of marks which will then be shared with the exam coordinator.

#### **14.2.5 Materials and resources permitted in examinations**

Online delivery of closed examinations opens up the possibility of students accessing other materials and resources through collaboration, communication and discovery. This includes the use of email and social networks to communicate and collaborate, and the use of search engines such as Google to locate materials. Computers used to deliver online closed examinations are therefore 'locked-down' before the start of the examination, that is, access to the internet and non-permitted software is blocked – in fact, normally access is provided to the test site within the VLE Exam environment only.

#### **14.2.6 Behaviour in examinations**

Regulations for online closed examinations are the same as those for standard closed examinations with the following exceptions:

1. Candidates must arrive 15 minutes before the published start time of the examination
2. Candidates are not permitted to leave the examination room before the end of the examination

Further information

- Summary checklist of key responsibilities that need to be addressed in the preparation and delivery of a computer-based exam: can be found in [the Learner Engagement with e-Assessment framework](#) [pdf]
- A video case study of a VLE exam design approach: [VLE Exam video](#)
- Information on the technology set-up that is used to support the VLE Exam service: available as a [powerpoint presentation](#)
- Information on item analysis techniques for reviewing question-items (screen cast): [Running Item Analysis on a Test](#)

For more information and consultation over examination plans, please contact the E-Learning Development Team at [vle-support@york.ac.uk](mailto:vle-support@york.ac.uk)

### 14.3 Electronic Submissions of Assessments

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

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

If the student submits in error to the wrong submission point but within the relevant deadline and identifies the problem, they should submit late to the right submission point or email the department with the originally submitted document. The Chair of Board of Examiner (or delegate thereof) may, if convinced as specified above, conclude that the on-time submission was submitted to the wrong site by reason of a genuine error, and the on-time submission may be marked without penalty. If the Chair of Board of Examiners or delegate is not convinced it was a genuine error then the late submission to the correct submission point will be marked subject to the standard late penalties. The work marked must be the version submitted in error to the wrong place.

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

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

- e. VLE submission points should normally be configured to allow multiple submissions of the same assignment. If more than one version is submitted, then the latest version before the deadline should be the one marked, unless no versions are submitted on time or the student submits the wrong file - in which case work submitted after the deadline may be marked at the discretion of the Chair of the Board of Examiners (or delegate thereof). If the Chair of Board of Examiners (or delegate thereof) is convinced the error was genuine having taken all the circumstances into account including the nature of the work submitted and any evidence the student has been able to submit, the assessment can be marked with the appropriate late penalty. Chairs of Boards (delegate thereof) should be mindful that students should not be able to submit incomplete pieces of work simply to gain more time to complete an assessment and therefore that such waiver of the standard rule should only be made in what appear to be cases of genuine error.

Students should be aware that a submission is only successfully completed when a time-stamped receipt has been issued to them. Submissions with images will take longer than plain text files. We advise that a submission should be attempted no later than 30 minutes before the official deadline and should be done using [recommended technology](#),<sup>2</sup> in order to ensure that the work is received in time and does not incur a [lateness penalty](#). Where students do not use the recommended technology as suggested they should allow more time for potential troubleshooting and pay extra attention when double-checking the functionality and readability of the file they have submitted. We strongly advise against trying to submit assignments on a mobile device, smart TV or gaming console.

- f. Standard [lateness penalties](#) should be applied, as for any other open assessment submission. The time returned on the receipt should be used to determine whether a submission is late, with no 'margin of error' at all. Please note that the time stamp on the final receipt issued by the VLE when a submission has been successfully completed is the one that is used to determine whether a submission is late or not – irrespective of when the submission process was actually initiated. There is no margin for error when determining whether a submission is on time – the date and time stamp on the final receipt is the only evidence that will be taken into account

## 15 Online examinations

This does not apply to York Online programmes.

### 15.1 Definition

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

### 15.2 Purpose

Where it is necessary to test the depth and quality of student achievement of learning outcomes through immediate or time limited responses to unfamiliar questions, scenarios or content. Online examinations may seek to achieve the aims of a closed or open examination as defined in sections

---

<sup>2</sup> This links to the document in the appendix

5 and 6 of the Guide to Assessment but where closed/open book examinations may not be possible. Consideration should be given, however, to whether the relevant learning outcomes can be as effectively tested by use of either short-turnaround or standard coursework assessments instead.

### 15.3 Time constraints

The standard online examination format (other than for York Online or distance programmes) is:

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

\*Due to technological, support and administrative capacity limitations, Limited Timeframe examinations need approval by SCA in coordination with PDLT and timetabling. Only a very small number of alternative duration examinations can be supported. Department Guidance on making requests for these examinations should go to [SCA@york.ac.uk](mailto:SCA@york.ac.uk).

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

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

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

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



Therefore, all online examination submission points should be open for submission for a period long enough to cater for the longest expected SSP adjustment. Examination submission deadlines should be set so that all students with SSP adjustments taking the exam will be able to submit during the working day. It should be made very clear at the submission point what the standard submission deadline is, and that submission after that deadline will be subject to the late penalties (in 15.13) unless the student has extra time in examinations as an agreed adjustment in their SSP.

## 15.5 General principles relating to online examinations

- Online examinations should comply with parts 5.2, 5.3, 5.5 of the Guide to Assessment.
- It is best practice to design online assessments as open examinations with no restrictions on materials. Restrictions on the use of materials or software may be specified for some online examinations. It should be remembered that students will have access to the internet, study notes, learning materials, calculators and other materials and it may not be possible to prevent or detect student's use of them. Any restrictions on the use of materials should be clearly communicated to students as part of the assessment instructions.

## 15.6 Examination Scheduling and Timetabling

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

## 15.7 Release of Exam

Exam papers will be released to students at departmental level. All students (including those on joint and combined programmes) should get the paper. Exam papers should be set for timed release on the VLE at the time specified on the timetable. VLE submission points should be set up for each online examination by departmental administrators (see 7.4 for students with SSPs). All exams should be distributed in PDF form using accessible formatting features (e.g. using appropriate styles in the original source file before converting to pdf).

### 15.7.1 Dummy submission points

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

### 15.7.2 Anonymity

The same degree of anonymity as used for closed examinations should be applied to this online examination process. The University of York anonymous submission tool on the VLE is ideal for this purpose, though there is a file-upload limit of 30MB. The anonymous submission tool can be configured to accept multiple submissions.

## 15.8 Submission requirements

- Online examinations are to be submitted to an anonymous submission point on the VLE (unless alternative has been approved by SCA in consultation with PDLT).

- The location of the submission point and the time and date of submission should be clearly indicated to students as part of the assessment instructions.
- Submission requirements should be made clear to students.
- Submission points should be configured to allow multiple submissions - in this case, students should be told that the last submission (before the deadline) will be the one marked.
- Files up to 30MB may be submitted to the VLE.
- If departments anticipate the submission of files greater than 30MB, they can consult PDLT ([vle-support@york.ac.uk](mailto:vle-support@york.ac.uk)) on making arrangements for alternative submission (such as Dropbox) (see also 14.3b pg.46 of the Guide to Assessment)

## 15.9 Handwritten Script Upload Requirements

In some cases, it may be necessary to require that students hand-write the examination script (e.g. in mathematical subjects). These special upload requirements should already have been approved as part of the “special open exam” approval process. Where this kind of upload is necessary, and where it has been approved, it will be necessary to ask students to photograph/scan the script pages and upload these as a pdf. Guidance on uploading hand written scripts can be found here [link to follow], including the procedure for dealing with illegible handwritten scripts.

### 15.10 Word limits

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

### 15.11 Exam Errors and Clarifications

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

- Announcements about exam errors or clarification should only be made within the first hour of the submission window;
- There should be a single clear method for communicating any clarification or correction to all students taking the assessment (e.g. by email, by a VLE discussion forum);
- The person responsible for setting the examination must be available to respond to queries and questions during this hour.
- This process and the limitations on reporting errors should be clearly communicated to all students taking the assessment.
- Any errors or areas of ambiguity that are identified after the first hour of the submission window should not result in communication to students taking the assessment but should rather be taken into consideration as part of the marking of the examination.

### 15.12 Academic Integrity and misconduct

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

- communicate with other students on the topic of this assessment.
- communicate with departmental staff on the topic of the assessment (other than to highlight an error or issue with the assessment which needs amendment or clarification)
- seek assistance with the assessment from academic support services, such as the Writing and Language Skills Centre or Maths Skills Centre, or from Disability Services (unless the student has been recommended an exam support worker in a Student Support Plan)
- seek advice or contribution from any other third party, including proofreaders, friends, or family members.

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

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

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

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

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

- *communicate with other students on the topic of this assessment.*
- *communicate with departmental staff on the topic of the assessment (other than to highlight an error or issue with the assessment which needs amendment or clarification).*
- *seek assistance with the assessment from academic support services, such as the Writing and Language Skills Centre or Maths Skills Centre, or from Disability Services (unless you have been recommended an exam support worker in a Student Support Plan).*
- *seek advice or contribution from any other third party, including proofreaders, friends, or family members.*

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

regulations and penalised using the appropriate penalty table (see AM3.3. of the Guide to Assessment).

### 15.13 Late submission and non-submission

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

- **Late submissions:** The timeframe provided for an online examination is inclusive of time to upload work, therefore submissions after the deadline (unless the student has extra time an agreed adjustment in their SSP) will be treated as follows
  - Submissions up to 30 minutes late are accepted with a 5 mark penalty (which may be waived in the event of a successful exceptional circumstances claim).
  - Submissions beyond 30 minutes after the deadline are treated as non-submissions. If a student submits a successful exceptional circumstances claim, they would receive a sit as if for the first time.
- **Non-submission:** Failure to complete or submit an assessment without a successful exceptional circumstances claim (see 15.14) will normally result in a zero for that assignment, with reassessment opportunities commensurate to those available in the event of any other failure on that assessment.

### 15.14 Exceptional Circumstances

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

## 16 Standards and Marking

<b>16. Standards and Marking</b>	<b>53</b>
16.1 Principles of standards and marking	54
16.2 Establishing standards	54
16.3 Deciding on marking processes	55
16.4 Marking requirements	55
16.5 Supervisors	56
16.6 Resolving differences between markers	57
16.7 Annotation of examination scripts	58
16.8 Examination scripts that deviate from the rubric	58
16.9 Transcription of illegible scripts	59
16.10 Exceptional circumstances	59
16.11 Deadline for releasing results and feedback	59
16.12 Recording results	60
16.13 Security of work submitted for assessment	60

## 16.1 Principles of standards and marking

Clear shared standards

- exemplify the expectations of particular disciplines and professions,
- are acknowledged by the national and international academic community,
- provide modules, programmes and degrees with legitimacy, and
- are the basis of professional judgement and confidence in such judgement.

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

## 16.2 Establishing standards

### 16.2.1 *Departmental responsibility*

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

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

### 16.2.2 *Assessment design*

Departments should spend significant effort agreeing on ways in which learning will be assessed and the criteria which will be used for each form of assessment. Agreement should be reached on

such areas as core criteria, level criteria, marking approach and marking procedures for different assessment formats. This process should be repeated regularly in order to review whether criteria are fit for purpose, to embed understanding of the criteria into practise and to educate new staff.

### **16.2.3 Reflection on practice**

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

## **16.3 Deciding on marking processes**

It is the responsibility of the department to ensure that all of their marking practices and procedures follow the Standards and Marking Principles outlined above and the marking requirements outlined below (16.4; see also 16.2.1).

In deciding how to arrange marking for each assessment in each module, departments should take account of the following aspects:

### **16.3.1 Balancing the impact of marks, the fairness of marking and the efficiency of marking**

Departments should be aware that the methods used to ensure fairness and adherence to standards in marking will depend partly on the risk of error due to the nature of the assessment task (e.g. how complex the task is, how much interpretation is required of the marker, and how much evidence is available for later moderation) and the potential consequences of error. The higher the risk and potential consequence of error, the greater should be the degree of scrutiny. For examples of balancing the impact of marks and the fairness of marking to decide on a marking approach, please see Appendix D and Appendix R.

### **16.3.2 Matching assessment formats to appropriate marking processes**

In addition, the degree of scrutiny should also be balanced with considerations of the learning-value of the assessment with regard to providing students with timely marking and feedback. If factors such as the number of students, number of marking staff, type of assessment or time available for marking impose particular restrictions, consideration should be given to which type of assessment format is most appropriate for the module and which marking process is the most appropriate to provide fair and meaningful marks and feedback.

For guidance on the types of marking process which can be used with different types of assessment formats, please see Appendix E.

## 16.4 Marking requirements

### 16.4.1 *Ensuring equity and consistency in marking*

Departments should consider and agree on a consistent approach to and procedures for marking different assessments. How the approach and procedures work should be clearly stated in Programme Handbooks and communicated to students to ensure equity and consistency. In particular, all work contributing to progression decisions or a final award must be marked using an approach and procedure which has in-built monitoring capabilities.

Approaches may include:

1. Full scale marking with associated criteria (0-100)
2. Stepped marking (see Appendix R)
3. Answer key marking

Such procedures might include:

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

For guidance regarding which procedure is suitable for different types of assessment, please see Appendices D and E.

### 16.4.2 *Anonymous marking*

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

- i. Students are allocated a random examination candidate number when they first enrol at the University. The number is shown on each student's University Card. Student Services is responsible for these arrangements. Candidate numbers should be used in place of names in all assessment that is marked anonymously.
- ii. Departments should devise schemes which ensure that, as far as is practicable, markers do not know which examination number corresponds to which candidate when assessments are marked. However, once marking is concluded, anonymity should not interfere with effective feedback to students.
- iii. Marks under consideration by a Board of Examiners should remain anonymous.



- iv. An individual's module marks contributing to a degree classification, progression decision, or final result may have been released during the course of a year but are provisional until recommendation has been confirmed by a Board of Studies.
- v. Preserving the anonymity of a student's marks may not in fact preserve the anonymity of the student, especially in small departments and some smaller postgraduate programmes. Nevertheless, it is important that all departments attempt to preserve anonymity as far as possible by adopting the practice given above.
- vi. Departments should include in their student handbooks a section describing their own procedures for anonymous marking; they should also emphasise to students the importance of using the correct examination candidate number.
- vii. Members of staff having access to students' examination candidate numbers through the student records system should ensure that this information is treated in strict confidence.

### **16.4.3 *Blind, double marking***

Where departments practise blind, double marking, they should pay attention to the procedures necessary to ensure that markers arrive at their judgements independently of one another. This may require guidance to first markers on the nature of annotations that should be written on scripts before they are second marked.

### **16.4.4 *Marking to the Full Range***

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

## **16.5 Supervisors**

A student's supervisor may also be the first marker of their student's project or dissertation provided that the second marker is not involved in the supervision of the project or the dissertation at any point.

## **16.6 Resolving differences between markers**

Departments should have guidelines on how differences in marks between markers are resolved, based on the following principles:

- a. The margin of difference that is regarded as a significant discrepancy should be stated clearly. This margin might simply be the difference in the number of marks, or might occur whenever the markers assign a different class to the work, or be a combination of these factors. Departments may wish to give particular attention to critical borderlines e.g. pass/fail or 2:1/2:2.
- b. Where the difference between the two markers is not regarded as significant, an agreed mark can be returned by the markers without further documentation; this agreement might be obtained by negotiation between the markers or by a systematic process of taking the rounded mean.
- c. In all cases where a significant discrepancy has occurred, the markers should engage in negotiation to attempt to determine an agreed mark. The rationale for any agreed mark

- should be documented, and be detailed sufficiently to permit scrutiny by the Board of Examiners and the External Examiner(s).
- d. If the markers are unable to reach an agreement, a further internal marker or moderator should be appointed by the Board of Examiners. This individual should have access to the reports of the first two markers as well as the script and should determine the mark, documenting their rationale, which should be detailed sufficiently to permit scrutiny by the Board of Examiners and the External Examiner(s).
  - e. External Examiners should not be asked to adjudicate between internal markers. However, the process by which marks are resolved should be open to their scrutiny and comment. In particular, External Examiners should have access to the original marks of the markers.

## 16.7 Annotation of examination scripts

### 16.7.1 *Initialled Scripts*

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

### 16.7.2 *GDPR Exemption*

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

### 16.7.3 *About Comments*

All comments committed to writing should be fair and defensible. It is recommended that they should relate to the script rather than the student. Minutes of Boards of Examiners Meetings are also disclosable under the Data Protection Act 1998 where they are mentioned by name or candidate number.

### 16.7.4 *Retaining Copies*

All material relating to assessment contributing to an award of the University should be kept for at least one year after the relevant examinations have been completed, that is to say, after the meeting of the Senate or relevant committee at which the results were confirmed.

### 16.7.5 *Further Information*

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

## 16.8 Examination scripts that deviate from the rubric

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

## 16.9 Transcription of illegible scripts

### 16.9.1 *Scribes*

As scribes (also called amanuenses) are specifically provided for students with a contemporary formal diagnosis of a relevant disability, such a service cannot be used for students with illegible handwriting who have no such diagnosis.

### 16.9.2 *Basis for transcription request*

Academic staff should not feel obliged to spend time deciphering an illegible examination script. If they are unable to read a script, they can request that it be transcribed.

### 16.9.3 *Maintaining equity*

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

### 16.9.4 *Costs*

There are no resources available to provide this service and the student must cover the costs involved. At the current level of support this would be the current rate of pay per hour for an assistant invigilator. This payment must be made before the transcribed script is released for marking.

### 16.9.5 *Disputes*

Any disputes between the transcriber and the student must be recorded by the transcriber and signed by the student.

Disputes will be referred to the Chair of the Board of Examiners (or Board of Studies if there is a conflict of interest) for resolution.

## 16.10 Exceptional circumstances

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

## 16.11 Deadline for releasing results and feedback

The maximum turnaround time for summative feedback and marks to students is twenty-five working days. Where students are required to resit assessments, they must be given adequate time to prepare.

Undergraduate students must be given at least 5 weeks between the notification of the need to resit and the resit itself. For Postgraduates, this period must be at least 3 weeks.

## 16.12 Recording results

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

## 16.13 Security of work submitted for assessment

Departments must ensure that all materials submitted for assessment are treated carefully to avoid materials going astray and to ensure students' personal information is not compromised.

The permitted methods for sharing electronic files (e.g. scanned copies of exam scripts to be sent to a marker away from the institution) are:

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

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

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

## 17. Feedback

<b>17. Feedback</b>	<b>61</b>
17.1 Feedback policy	62
17.1.1 Roles	62
17.1.2 Purposes and forms	62
17.1.3 Principles underlying the meaningful provision of feedback	63
17.2 Procedures concerning feedback	63
17.2.1 Department Statements on Feedback	64
17.2.2 Module Design and Feedback	64
17.2.3 Feedback on Formative Assessment (assessment that does not count toward the final module mark or degree classification)	65
17.2.4 Feedback on Summative Assessment – Non-exam based	65
17.2.5 Feedback on Summative Assessment – Examinations	66
17.2.6 Marking procedures and feedback	66
17.2.7 Supervisory feedback	67
17.2.8 Taught Masters programmes	67

## 17. Feedback

- is acknowledged as an essential part of the learning process and as a major element in the relationship between lecturer and student;
- is accepted as the purpose of assessment for learning (formative assessment) and a valued benefit of assessment of learning (summative assessment);
- is planned into the curriculum and is linked to clear paths of progression;
- is related clearly to the stated learning outcomes and specific assessment criteria;
- is provided in a way that ensures it is useful, adequate, fair and timely (see 17.1.3).

### 17.1 Feedback policy

#### 17.1.3 Principles underlying the meaningful provision of feedback

The university believes that in order for feedback to be effective as part of an on-going learning dialogue between student and lecturer, the following four basic principles need to be met.

**Adequacy:** Students should be provided with adequate feedback in order to facilitate improvement, and should not have to request it. Adequate feedback is understood to mean:

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

**Twenty-five Day Feedback Rule:** Students should receive feedback **within twenty-five working days**. Working days exclude University closure days ('customary leave' days between Christmas and New Year and public holidays/statutory holidays.)

**Timely feedback** is understood to mean feedback that:

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

**Usefulness:** Students should receive useful feedback. Useful feedback is understood to mean feedback that:

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

**Fairness:** Students should receive fair feedback. Fair feedback is understood to mean feedback:

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

### 17.1.1 Roles

An important factor to clarify regarding the learning process at University is that it involves an end to the basic “learner – teacher” relationship of secondary education. The relationship between the student and the lecturer is essentially different, just as the University environment is different. University students and lecturers are all part of a learning community in which individuals are assumed to have, or be developing, the ability and maturity to initiate and direct their own learning. In light of these differences, the University believes that both lecturers and students have certain responsibilities concerning learning and feedback.

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

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

A lecturer’s responsibilities related to learning and feedback include:

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

### 17.1.2 Purposes and forms

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

The nature of the feedback can also vary depending on, for example, discipline, level of study, nature of delivery, student numbers and learning outcomes. For examples of possible forms of feedback, please see Appendix F.

## 17.2 Procedures concerning feedback

### 17.2.1 Department Statements on Feedback

- a. Departments are responsible for providing feedback to students on all assessments in all modules.
- b. Each department, as a whole, should discuss and agree an approach to learning, assessment and feedback that is effectively integrated and how the four principles outlined above will be effectively implemented throughout the department.

- c. Once an agreement on an approach has been reached, departments should produce a clear Statement on Feedback which corresponds to the purposes, principles and good practice outlined in this document and makes clear what students can expect from the department. For a model framework, see Appendix G.
- d. Clear information about expectations can make all the difference for students and can significantly improve their understanding of the part assessment and feedback play in their learning. Therefore, consultation with students regarding the design and composition of the Statement on Feedback is recommended.
- e. The Statement on Feedback to students should be consistent with the departmental policies on assessment.
- f. Departments should be aware that feedback practices will be subject to a variety of legal rules or policies. For guidance relating to these policies, please see Appendix I.
- g. The departmental statement should be published in departmental handbooks for staff, postgraduates who teach and students. Students should also be actively alerted to opportunities for feedback throughout their programme of study.
- h. It is the responsibility of individual departments to arrange support for staff and students regarding feedback where necessary and undertake their own review of practice as part of their regular evaluation of programmes. The University Teaching Committee will monitor department practices through periodic review and Annual Programme Reviews, and by following up on the outcomes of the NSS and other surveys.
- i. The departmental statement should be updated in response to any changes in policy set out in future editions of the University Guide to Assessment.

### **17.2.2 Module Design and Feedback**

During the design of new or adaptation of existing modules, consideration should be given to planning for effective feedback for learning. Consideration should be given to such factors as the:

- likely number of students taking the module;
- length of the module;
- level of the module;
- timing of assessment, marking and feedback periods;
- relationship of the module to other modules (i.e. learning connections);
- availability of teaching / learning support;
- possible use of technology (VLE);
- the balance of regular, low stakes opportunities to practise with feedback against sparing, rigorous, high stakes assessment and feedback opportunities.

The published information for each module should include clear indication of:

- the student's responsibilities in the feedback system;
- in what format students will receive feedback;
- exactly when students will receive feedback following assessments;
- on what basis (ie. criteria / mark descriptors) they will be assessed and given feedback.



### **17.2.3 Feedback on Formative Assessment (assessment that does not count toward the final module mark or degree classification)**

- a. Formative assessment and feedback are often dealt with by multiple staff members – module leaders; other lecturers; GTAs – therefore, it is important that there is clarity and coordination between staff members working on the same module regarding, for example, task objectives, how tasks relate to the module as a whole, how formative tasks relate to summative tasks, task criteria and agreed feedback approaches. This coordination is the responsibility of the module leader.
- b. It is recognised that a wide range of summative assessment methods are used by departments, many of which may be new to students. It is therefore good practice for departments to use formative assessments to provide students with the opportunity to experience / practice any given assessment method prior to its use towards summative assessment which contributes to the degree award, and to provide formative feedback on the exercise.
- c. Where seminar or tutorial performance constitutes a substantial part of the subject, departments should have mechanisms in place to give qualitative feedback on performance, although this need not involve an indicative mark.
- d. Where drafts of essays or stages in a process are used as formative assessment, clear information needs to be given about the degree and type of feedback available, especially relating to the responsibility of the student for their own work.
- e. Where problem sheets are used, departments should either provide students with a worked solution, or clarify to students on an individual or small group basis where they have made mistakes.
- f. Where practical work is being assessed, departments should provide students with sufficient feedback to enable them to reflect on and improve their performance.

### **17.2.4 Feedback on Summative Assessment – Non-exam based**

In relation to extended essays, dissertations, performances and projects:

- a. Departments should specify a minimum amount of opportunities for formative feedback to be given in support of coursework assessments and consider equity between students in this provision. For example, tutors may agree that each extended essay for a module can be submitted once for feedback during the preparation period.
- b. Feedback on drafts of assessments should be frank, constructive and not misleading i.e. writing “a great start” as a comment on a draft essay could lead the student to expect a good final mark.
- c. Although staff commenting on such assessments may well refer to mark descriptors in the course of providing feedback on drafts, it is unwise to comment directly on the likely mark of a specific piece of work. Staff should clarify to students that they may not be an examiner or will not be the sole examiner. The member of staff can only offer feedback and advice, and cannot guarantee that following the advice will ensure success. The advice usually takes the form of general guidance, possibly with some detailed illustrative examples. It need not be exhaustive. The student’s ability to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning

outcomes is being assessed, not the member of staff's: the quality of the final piece is the responsibility of the student.

- d. Following marking, sufficient feedback should be made available to students in either oral or written form to fully communicate the rationale for the mark which has been awarded. See Section 17.1.3.

### **17.2.5 Feedback on Summative Assessment – Examinations**

- a. Departments need to clearly specify how feedback (over and above a mark) will be provided on their examinations. For suggestions of approaches to providing feedback on examinations, please see Appendix H.
- b. Where closed examinations are made up of several distinct sections, as a minimum, marks for each section should be provided, in addition to overall feedback.
- c. Feedback to a cohort on general performance in an exam can be provided before double marking / collation / External Examiner procedures are finalised. This can be done online or in specific exam feedback sessions.
- d. Student access to marked examination scripts: Following successful pilot schemes which allowed students limited and supervised access to marked examination scripts, the Standing Committee on Assessment and the Chairs of Boards of Examiners forum recommends that all students are given access to marked progressional examination scripts, where departments can facilitate the process. This is particularly helpful for students on programmes which rely heavily on examination as an assessment format and are therefore often feedback-light.

Departments need to consider how to administer such access in a fair, efficient, economical and professional manner.

### **17.2.6 Marking procedures and feedback**

- a. The marking procedures engaged in by departments should be arranged to balance the need for fairness with the need to support learning. This means that marking, collating marks and checking mark distribution should be arranged so that feedback is still timely and useful.
- b. Where single marking is used, it is especially important that marks and feedback are linked to explicit marking schemes or criteria.
- c. Where multiple markers are involved in marking assignments, it is important that feedback is fair and consistent across the cohort. Holding standardisation meetings, using agreed criteria and using standard feedback sheets can be helpful.
- d. Where second or double marking is used and feedback is provided, students should only be supplied with the mark and feedback as agreed by both markers.
- e. Provisional marks: Departments should, wherever possible and reasonable, provide students with feedback and provisional marks with a clear and appropriate proviso as to their marks being provisional only, prior to confirmation by the Board of Examiners.

Provisional marks should be communicated to students as an integer on the appropriate University mark scale.

- f. Resits / capping marks: Marks achieved at resit examinations should be fed back to students – even though these marks won't count towards award marks or degree classifications.

### **17.2.7 Supervisory feedback**

Supervisions (i.e. meetings which take place between a student and their academic/personal supervisor, at least once per term) should provide students with the opportunity to discuss and reflect on their overall performance with reference to such feedback as is available to the supervisor and the student. Procedures which allow students time to consider performance reports and feedback before discussing these with the supervisor should be considered in order to make the meeting meaningful for both student and supervisor.

### **17.2.8 Taught Masters programmes**

For taught Masters programmes, the principles and procedures above apply. Prompt and detailed feedback is particularly important due to the relatively short nature of taught Masters programmes. Modules should be arranged such that students have the opportunity to be involved in a useful and meaningful feedback process before the submission of another significant piece of assessment.

# Examiners for Taught Programmes

<b>18. Board of Examiners for Taught Programmes</b>	<b>69</b>
18.1 Constitution of the Board of Examiners	69
18.2 Role and powers of the Board of Examiners	69
18.3 Procedures of the Board of Examiners	70
<b>19. Internal Examiners</b>	<b>72</b>
19.1 Permanent contract, limited contract and casual staff	72
19.2 Responsibilities	72
19.3 Internal examiner lists	72
<b>20. External Examiners</b>	<b>72</b>
20.1 Purpose	73
20.2 Nomination and appointment	73
20.3 The responsibilities of the department	76
20.4 The responsibilities of External Examiners	77
20.5 Review of External Examiners Reports	81

## 18. Board of Examiners for Taught Programmes

### 18.1 Constitution of the Board of Examiners

#### 18.1.1 Ordinances

University Ordinances 1.4 and 6 are relevant to this section of the Guide.

#### 18.1.2 Members

All teaching members of the Board of Studies are members of the Board of Examiners, as are the External Examiners; also any members of the academic and academic-related staff of the University who have assessed any of the students under consideration, and any other individuals recommended by the Board of Studies to, and approved by, the Standing Committee on Assessment may be members of the Board of Examiners. (See also section 19 Internal Examiners).

#### 18.1.3 Quorum Requirements

The quorum for a Board of Examiners for all taught programmes is a minimum of three, at least one of whom must be an External and one an Internal Examiner. For Combined Programmes, this must include at least one internal from each department. For PGT progression boards only (section 18.3), the Board of Examiners may meet without the External Examiner, though the quorum remains three.

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

#### 18.1.4 Combined Programmes

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

#### 18.1.5 Research Students

For procedures for the Board of Examiners for research students, please consult the Policy on Research Degrees.

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

#### 18.2.1 Ordinance

University Ordinance 6 is relevant to this section of the Guide.

### **18.2.2 Functions of the Board of Examiners**

The functions of the Board of Examiners include:

- ensuring the University's principles of assessment underpin assessment processes and decisions;
- taking an overview of the array of marks in relation both to performance of individual students and to mark distribution from individual modules, in the presence of the External Examiner(s) (see also section 20);
- ratifying provisional marks;
- making recommendations to Senate, on behalf of the Board of Studies, on awards, progression and reassessment;
- ensuring documentation is completed.

### **18.2.3 Progression Decisions**

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

### **18.2.4 Award Decisions**

Boards of Examiners are also required to convene at the end of each programme for which they are responsible in order to make award decisions. This meeting must be attended by at least one External Examiner (see sections 18.1.3 and 20).

### **18.2.5 Records of Meetings**

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

### **18.2.6 Timing**

Exam boards must be held in time for results to be entered into SITS in time for graduation and progression deadlines. For undergraduates, this requires that boards considering finalists meet by the end of Summer Week 10, other boards for undergraduates meet by the end of Tuesday of Summer Week 11, and the postgraduate boards meet by the end of November at the latest.

## **18.3 Procedures of the Board of Examiners**

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

- **Scrutiny Panel**

When: late week 9, summer term

Who: Chair of Board of Examiners, administrative staff, other examiners as  
Appropriate

Purpose/ powers: the job of the Scrutiny Panel is to prepare the ground for the main Departmental Exam Board, by checking that marks have been received and

processed for all modules and that any penalties (lateness or academic misconduct) have been applied. They should also give initial consideration to any issues raised by External Examiners on particular modules, and to check for any further inconsistencies or irregularities which might be brought to External Examiners' attention.

- **Departmental Exam Board (or Module Board)**

When: early week 10, summer term

Who: Chair of Board of Examiners, as many members of teaching staff as possible, External Examiner(s)

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

- **Programme Exam Board (or Ratification Panel<sup>3</sup>)**

When: late week 10, summer term, at least 2-3 days after Departmental Exam Board

Who: Chair of Board of Examiners, other teaching staff as appropriate, External Examiner(s) (minimum: three people including at least one External for single-subject programmes; for combined degrees, at least one representative of each department). However, the External does not need to be physically present, but may take part by phone or Skype, provided they have access to full documentation.

Purpose/powers: the Programme Exam Board's role is to confirm that module marks have been correctly entered into SITS and to ratify the stage and award marks which are then calculated from the module marks, and the progression and award decisions generated. The meeting will receive overall runs of marks for candidates and will formally recommend (to Senate) degree results. This meeting will not expect to change any marks, either at module level, or at stage or award level. There may be a discussion of the overall award profile for the degree(s), but this will feed into future discussion, rather than resulting in changes for the current cohort.

### **18.3.1 Procedure for Combined Degree Programmes**

For Combined degree programmes, a similar structure is followed to that outlined above, but there will be as many Departmental Exam Board meetings as there are departments involved in the combined programme. When all relevant departments have finalized marks for their own modules, progression and award decisions are generated and confirmed by a Combined Ratification Panel, which will involve representatives from all departments as well as an external examiner, either in person or online.

---

<sup>3</sup> Referred to as Board of Studies Executive Committee in Ordinance 2.3.

### **18.3.2 Procedure for Taught Postgraduate Programmes**

The structure is identical to that outlines for undergraduate programmes, but the timescales are different, since postgraduate programmes tend to finish in late summer, with less pressure on marking and board meetings from imminent graduation deadlines.

## **19. Internal Examiners**

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

#### **19.1.1 Categories**

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

The departmental Examinations Secretary or other person appointed by the Board of Studies should be given formal responsibility for ensuring that appropriate marking procedures have been properly carried out.

#### **19.1.2 Definition of 'Academic Staff'**

For the purpose of Ordinance 6.4 'academic staff' includes not only teaching, but also research, library, careers and computing staff with appropriate levels of expertise and training. Staff who are also students of the University are eligible to be Internal Examiners provided they are on permanent or limited-term contracts with the University as outlined in section 19.1.1 above.

### **19.2 Responsibilities**

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

### **19.3 Internal examiner lists**

Departments will be asked to confirm lists of Internal Examiners annually for approval by the Standing Committee on Assessment. These should also indicate separately, for information, the names and status of persons covered by section 19.1.2.

## **20. External Examiners**

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



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

## 20.1 Purpose

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

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

Ordinance 6.5 outlines the University's formal position on External Examiners.

## 20.2 Nomination and appointment

- a. Departments are responsible for considering the number of external examiners required for the examination of a programme and the modules contributing to it to ensure the appropriate coverage of subject content and with consideration for the volume of work that will be covered by the External Examiner(s)
  - i. If a programme is accredited by a PSRB departments must ensure that any additional external examining requirements are adhered to, for example, the appointment of a chief/ lead external examiner who has responsibility for all accredited programmes awarded by the University or for reporting to the PSRB on the award standards.
  - ii. In the case of complex provision, for example, an award with multiple subject pathways, departments should give consideration to the appointment of a chief external examiner to ensure suitable oversight of the programme.

The Academic Quality Team is responsible for:

- processing the nominations for External Examiners for new programmes approved by University Teaching Committee following the nomination by the Department:
- for notifying departments that an External Examiner's period of appointment is nearing its end and that a replacement examiner needs to be nominated.

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

Nominations are approved by the Standing Committee on Assessment on behalf of Senate.

- b. Departments should not nominate as external examiners anyone in the following categories or circumstances:

- i. Individuals that do not live and work in the United Kingdom;
  - ii. A member of a governing body or committee of the appointing institution or one of its collaborative partners, or a current employee of the appointing institution or its collaborative partners;
  - iii. Anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme of study;
  - iv. Anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study;
  - v. Anyone who is, or knows that they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study;
  - vi. Anyone significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme(s) or modules in question
  - vii. Associate staff employed for teaching or supervision (even on a casual or temporary basis), former staff or students of the institution unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the external examiner have completed their programme(s);
  - viii. A reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another institution;
  - ix. The succession of an external examiner by a colleague from the examiner's home department and institution;
  - x. The appointment of more than one external examiner from the same department of the same institution;
  - xi. Anyone who holds more than one other concurrent substantial External Examinership during the relevant period;
  - xii. Any former External Examiners of the Department unless an intervening period of at least five years has elapsed.
- c. When submitting a nomination, departments should provide a CV for the nominee indicating that they meet the required person specification and appropriately evidencing the following:
- i. knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality;
  - ii. competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study, or parts thereof;
  - iii. relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate;
  - iv. competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks and assessment procedures appropriate to the subject;
  - v. credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command the respect of academic peers and, where appropriate, professional peers;
  - vi. familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed;
  - vii. fluency in English and where programmes are delivered and assessed in languages other than English, fluency in the relevant language(s) (unless other secure arrangements are in place to ensure that external examiners are provided with the information to make their judgements);

- viii. meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies;
- ix. awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula;
- x. competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

Where an examiner does not meet one or more of the criteria under sections 20.2.b or 20.2.c, the department must include an explanation on the nomination form of how the nominee does not meet the normal required criteria and provide a rationale for why the department is proposing the appointment, and for consideration by the SCA.

- d. In line with the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education the duration of an external examiner's appointment will normally be for four years, achieving a balance between the need to bring in a fresh perspective with the need to benefit from the external's knowledge and insight gathered over a period of time.. Once approved, the Academic Quality Team will confirm the appointments in writing to the nominee.

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

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

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

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

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

## 20.3 The responsibilities of the department

### 20.3.1. *Provision of Documentation*

Departments are responsible for ensuring that External Examiners are provided with all necessary information for the effective fulfilment of their role as outlined in Section 20.4, and that they are consulted at appropriate stages of the assessment process. This will include:

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

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

- c) Practical and meeting arrangements
  - i) ensuring that they check with new External Examiners if they have any special needs and arranging for any required reasonable adjustments.
  - ii) liaising with External Examiners to arrange meetings of the Board of Examiners.
  - iii) considering ways in which Examiners might have an opportunity to meet with students on the programmes they are examining, so that they might reflect on the student experience of the provision in their reports.
  - iv) ensuring that, within a reasonable time, the Chair of the Board of Examiners provides the External Examiners with a written response to the comments and recommendations made in their annual report to the Board of Examiners and the VC, including information on the detailed consideration of their reports, and an indication of any action taken as a result of the report, or clear reasons for not accepting any recommendations or suggestions.
  
- d) Student engagement

- i) including the name, position and institution of their external examiners in module or programme information provided to students. Departments should caveat this information however with a statement indicating that “it is inappropriate for students to make direct contact with external examiners, in particular regarding their individual performance in assessment. There are appropriate mechanisms available to students, such as appeal or complaint”. Departments should advise any External Examiners who are contacted by students to forward the relevant communication directly to the Chair of Board of Studies without replying to the student.
- ii) making the external examiners’ reports available to all students on the programme, with due consideration to student and staff member anonymity and the redaction of any potentially identifying information, such as dissertation titles or student numbers. Departments may, for example, make external examiners reports available to students through a VLE site or departmental webpage on their intranet.
- iii) providing students with the opportunity to be fully involved in the external examining process, to understand all the issues raised and the department or university’s response, for example through inclusion of student representatives at Board of Studies, and the wider student body in Annual Programme Review and Staff Student Forums.

### **20.3.2. Marking Recommendations**

External Examiners should not be asked to change marks agreed by the Board of Examiners for an individual piece of work under any circumstances, but they can make recommendations that marks be changed to the Board of Examiners. Where an external examiner on reviewing the sample (Section 20.4.3) of student work considers that the sample reveals evidence of significant over or under-marking they may recommend to the Board of Examiners the rescaling of the marks for the cohort. The final decision remains with the Board of Examiners and must be applied to all marks for the assessment task in question and not just those seen by the external examiner. If the recommendation to rescale is not accepted, both the recommendation and the reasons for its refusal should be minuted in the Board of Examiners minutes.

### **20.3.3. Marking Changes**

Departments may ask External Examiners to provide an opinion to inform their decisions on changes to marks on individual pieces of work, but the external examiner should only be asked to do this following review of the full range of marks from all the pieces of work in the cohort, not just a sample, and with the understanding that the full Board is responsible for making a final decision on the mark to be awarded.

## **20.4 The responsibilities of External Examiners**

### **20.4.1 Expectations**

In broad terms, External Examiners are asked to:

- a. attend the University induction for External Examiners;
- b. comment and give advice on programme content, balance and structure;
- c. comment on draft examination papers and other forms of assessment and reassessment;

- d. assist in the ongoing calibration of academic standards through the review and evaluation of completed examinations and other forms of assessment and assessment practices (including assessment of work-based learning, where relevant), particularly in relation to any work which contributes to progression decisions or to the final award;
- e. be a member of, and attend, Boards of Examiners, where their signature is required to support the Board's recommendations for awards and recommendations of failure to progress, and ensure fairness and consistency in the decision-making process;
- f. submit a written report on an annual basis to the VC including commentary and judgments on the validity, reliability and integrity of the assessment process and the standards of student attainment.

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

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

- the suitability of the task set in assessing the learning outcomes of the module (or part thereof);
- the level of challenge presented by the task for the credit level of the module;
- the volume of work expected to successfully complete the assessment in relation to the proportion of the module it assesses;
- the ease to which students should be able to understand what they are required to do as explained by the assessment brief and/ or questions presented.

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

#### **20.4.3 After internal marking of assessments**

- a. Following completion of internal marking of students' examinations and other forms of assessment external examiners should review a sample of work, particularly in relation to any work which contributes to progression decisions or to the final award. Where a sample of work is scrutinised, the principles for selection should be agreed in advance between the external examiner and the Chair of the Board of Examiners. These principles should ensure that External Examiners see a sample of work from the top (including work assessed internally as first class), middle and bottom (including fails) of the range, and borderlines of each classification, and have enough evidence to determine that internal marking and classifications are of an appropriate standard and are consistent.
- b. External Examiners have the right to see all examination scripts and other pieces of written or recorded formative or summatively assessed work (for example, Internal Examiners' comments on oral performance in seminars where participation is formally assessed), completed by students on the relevant programme of study for which the examiner is appointed to review.
- c. In relation to Section 20.3.3, External Examiners may provide an opinion to the Department to inform their decisions on changes to marks on individual pieces of work, but the external

examiner should only provide such an opinion following review of the full range of marks from all the pieces of work in the cohort, not just a sample, and with the understanding that the full Board is responsible for making a final decision on the mark to be awarded.

- d. Where a student undertakes a module as an elective or option in a department other than their 'home' department, the Board of Examiners and its External Examiner for the 'non-home' department is responsible for the mark awarded to the student for that module. The Board of Examiners and the External Examiner of the 'home' department is responsible for the incorporation of that mark into the mark profile of the student and approval of the student's overall degree classification.

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

External Examiners can provide valuable expertise and insight to Departments when changes are being considered to programmes and modules they examine. External Examiners may be asked to provide comments on proposed modifications to modules and programmes as a critical friend to the Department. This consultation will be proportionate to the nature, complexity and potential implications to the student experience of the proposed modifications.

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

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

- a. The role of the External Examiner at meetings of Boards of Examiners is particularly important both for providing an independent opinion on the maintenance of quality and standards in assessment and in advising on appropriate resolutions to concerns about the marks to be awarded for a particular piece of assessment for all students taking the assessment. Meetings also provide a valuable opportunity for External Examiners to comment and advise on more general aspects of the programme of study.
- b. External Examiners should declare any conflicts of interest to the Chair of the Board of Examiners at the earliest opportunity (section 20.2.c).
- c. External Examiners are expected to attend meetings of the Board of Examiners when their signature is required to support recommendations for awards or progression. If, for good reason, an External Examiner cannot attend a Departmental Exam Board meeting in person, they may participate by Skype, video or telephone conferencing (with the approval of the Standing Committee on Assessment). The External Examiner must have access to all relevant paperwork in order to be able to fully participate in such a meeting.
- d. The External Examiner should be able to approve award decisions where the award of a qualification (i.e., an exit award) is an automatic consequence of a failure without the need to be physically present at, or otherwise participate in, a Departmental Exam Board.
- e. The External Examiner shall provide at the Departmental Exam Board meeting an oral and/or written report on their main findings which will then be minuted. (This is in addition to the External Examiner's annual written report to the VC which can be used for the Annual Programme Review).

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

#### a. Reporting

Examiners are asked, in their expert judgement, to report to the Board of Examiners and in their report the VC upon:

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

#### b. Procedure

Each External Examiner is required by the University to submit their written annual report to the VC within two months of completion of the annual examining process.

The standard report form provided should be completed and submitted to the Academic Quality Team. The form can be supplemented by additional correspondence if required .

External Examiners' fees will only be authorised for payment after receipt of a signed report.

Following submission of their report, External Examiners should expect to receive a written response from the Department. If they have raised significant concerns or a matter to be more appropriately considered at University-level, these will be followed up as necessary and the examiner will receive further written correspondence (section 20.4.6).

#### c. Content

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

- i. the appropriateness of programme structure and content, including the appropriateness of the learning outcomes of the programme (and all its elements) to its educational aims and those of the students;
- ii. for Foundation Degrees, the extent to which the programme meets the defining characteristics of such an award (namely, employer involvement, accessibility, articulation and progression, flexibility and partnership, as set out in the [QAA Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement \(2016\)](#), and the appropriateness of work-based learning elements;
- iii. teaching quality and methods as revealed in examination scripts and other assessed work;



- iv. assessment methods, coverage of learning outcomes and whether the assessment processes and marking schemes applied by Internal Examiners are appropriate and appropriately used;
- v. the administration of all assessed work by Internal Examiners, including the time available for marking and the impartiality with which the assessments were conducted;
- vi. the standard of students' performances in terms of their knowledge, skills and understanding and comparison with those of students on similar programmes elsewhere;
- vii. the standard of particular degree classifications awarded and comparison with similar awards at other institutions;
- viii. the procedures followed by the Board of Examiners and the adequacy of the level of participation by External Examiners in the assessment process;
- ix. the procedures for induction and preparation for their role and the time available to perform it;
- x. where the External Examiner is providing their final annual report at the end of their period of office they should also make reference to observations covering the entire period examined.

#### d. Sharing of report

##### i. Discussion

External Examiners' reports are normally available for discussion widely within the University (Section 20.5). In particular, they will be shared with students, so individual students or members of staff must not be named or otherwise be identifiable (for example through reference to dissertation titles) in the report. Departments are responsible for amending or redacting any reports where they contravene the requirement not to identify individuals before sharing them with students and staff.

##### ii. Confidential matters

Exceptionally, an additional, separate and confidential report may be submitted directly to the VC, if an External Examiner considers this to be appropriate (for example, on highly confidential matters related to individual staff members or on any matter of serious concern).

##### iii. Serious concerns

If an External Examiner has a serious concern relating to systemic failings with the academic standards of a programme(s) which remains unsatisfied having submitted a confidential report to the VC, they may invoke the QAA's concerns scheme or inform the relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body (QAA Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance: External Expertise). Guidance for External Examiners on QAA's concerns scheme is available at <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/how-to-make-a-complaint>.

## 20.5 Review of External Examiners Reports

- a. External Examiners' annual reports are submitted to the External Examiners Administrator working with the Academic Quality Team and to the Department (directly as a duplicate by the External Examiner or by the External Examiners Administrator).
- b. External Examiners reports will be considered at meetings of Boards of Studies. In addition, the University requires all departments to carry out an Annual Programme Review of their

taught (and research) provision, which includes reflection on external examiners' comments and reports (where available), and to report to University Teaching Committee chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Students, on the outcomes of the review. Details of Annual Programme Review are available on the [Quality Assurance](#) page of the University website.

- c. The Academic Quality Team will collate a log of issues raised by a department's external examiners in their reports and will require the department to provide its response to the log and the actions taken in response, to the Academic Quality Team. The logs shall include:
  - i. actions taken in response to the External Examiner's comments;
  - ii. an indication of those recommendations made by the External Examiner that will not be taken forward and the rationale for not implementing the External Examiners' suggestions;
  - iii. confirmation that the External Examiner has received a written response to their annual report which fully addresses their comments (including the reasons for not taking action in response to issues raised).
- d. The Academic Quality Team will review the undergraduate programmes log in the Autumn term and the postgraduate programmes log in the Spring term, in order to ensure that departments are responding to External Examiners' feedback in a timely and appropriate manner.
- e. The Academic Quality Team will write an External Examiner summary report (one for undergraduate programmes and one for taught postgraduate programmes) which will identify common themes arising from External Examiners' annual reports. This summary report will be considered by the Standing Committee on Assessment, Faculty Learning and Teaching Groups and University Teaching Committee who will take forward any University-wide issues and issues of serious concern. As part of their consideration of the External Examiner summary reports all members of the Standing Committee on Assessment, Faculty Learning and Teaching Groups and members of University Teaching Committee have access to the log of issues arising from External Examiner annual reports.

# Rules for Assessment, Progression and Award

<b>Rules for Assessment, Progression and Award</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>21. Introduction</b>	<b>84</b>
21.1 Applicable programmes	84
21.2 Further Details	84
21.3 Glossary of Terms	84
<b>22. Overview of the Modular Scheme</b>	<b>84</b>
22.1 Expectations	84
22.2 Stage Requirements	85
22.3 Exceptions	85
22.4 Individual Cases	85
22.4.1 Multi-cohort modules	85
<b>23. Completion of Degrees</b>	<b>86</b>
23.1 Recommendations to SCA - undergraduate	86
23.2 Recommendations to SCA - postgraduate	86
23.3 Conveying results	86
23.4 Parchments and certificates	86
23.5 The role of Senate	87
23.6 Progression and academic misconduct	87
<b>24. University Award Requirements</b>	<b>87</b>

## 21. Introduction

### 21.1 Applicable programmes

This section sets out the rules relating to assessment, progression and award under the modular scheme. The rules apply to all undergraduate programmes (including Integrated Masters) commencing in or after the academic year 2010/11, Graduate Programmes from 2012/13, any postgraduate programmes commencing in or after 2011/12 (with the exception of programmes in the electronics department, which adopted modularisation in 2012/13) and programmes offered by the International Pathway College from 2016/17.

Sections follow which outline the specific requirements for Foundation Certificate (FC), Undergraduate (U), Graduate (G), Pre-Masters (PM) and Taught Postgraduate (P) programmes.

### 21.2 Further Details

Details of the scheme's award, stage and module requirements for those involved in programme design, approval and review are available on the [Programme Design Policy](#) page (Quality Assurance section).

### 21.3 Glossary of Terms

A glossary of terms can be found in [Appendix B](#).

## 22. Overview of the Modular Scheme

### 22.1 Expectations

The University operates a modular scheme for taught programmes. The modular scheme requires academic programmes to comprise of modules, which are allocated a certain credit value based on notional student workload, and are assigned to levels based on their academic content and outcomes.

To be eligible for an award of the University of York a student must undertake an approved programme of study, obtain a specified number of credits (at a specified level(s)), and meet any other requirements of the award as specified in the Award Regulations and Programme Specifications, and other University regulations (e.g. payment of fees). Credit will be awarded upon passing a module's assessment(s). Some credit may be awarded where failure has been compensated by achievement in other modules. Some opportunities for reassessment are available.

## 22.2 Stage Requirements

A student must satisfy the requirements for each stage of his/her programme (a stage is equivalent to a year's full-time study) before progressing to the next stage. If a student does not meet the stage requirements s/he will be required to leave the University; s/he may be eligible for a lower volume award. Students undertaking an integrated masters who do not meet the stage requirements, may be eligible to transfer to the related bachelor's programme. Students who undertake study abroad or a work placement as additional credit and do not achieve that credit, will be permitted to transfer to the relevant variant of the programme. Students who undertake study abroad or a work placement as replacement credit and do not achieve that credit may either be able to retake the year at York, or may be required to leave the University or may be eligible for a lower volume award.

## 22.3 Exceptions

Exceptions to the award regulations are permitted in order to meet non-negotiable requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). Exceptions require University Teaching Committee approval and are recorded in the Programme Specifications.

## 22.4 Individual Cases

Individual student cases of exceptional circumstances affecting assessment are dealt with by the appropriate departmental and University committees.

### 22.4.1 Multi-cohort modules

22.4.1a There must be a clear statement of learning outcomes for each cohort of students where there are students from two (or more) different years of study in the same module. These learning outcomes may or may not be different for different years of study but, either way, the assessment and mark descriptors need to be appropriate for the learning outcomes.

- a. If the learning outcomes are the same for the two cohorts then work should be marked to the same criteria and without reference to the cohort in which an individual student may lie.
- b. If the learning outcomes differ for the cohorts then there will be different assessments and/or mark descriptors for each cohort.
- c. Where the programme specification permits it, and a student elects to take a Languages for All (LFA) module as an elective, they may do so at a lower level than their stage would normally permit, so long as the total weight of the lower-level module does not exceed 20 credits. This would allow a student to begin language study without previous experience, or further develop language skills for use after university or during a period of study abroad. Any lower level study of this nature will be reflected on the student's transcript as pass/fail only, and marks achieved will not impact on degree classifications.

22.4.1b Sometimes it may be academically appropriate for combined programme students to attend a module in one of their disciplines (i.e. not an elective) that is aimed at single-subject students from an earlier year. Modules should not be shared between first-year undergraduate students and students from other years without the approval of University Teaching Committee, except where they have been chosen as electives. The Chair of the Board of Studies has the

responsibility of approving, or otherwise, students' choices of elective modules. Explicit approval of the University Teaching Committee is required for taught postgraduate programmes to share modules with undergraduate programmes. Weightings for the individual student should be determined by the cohort to which they belong.

22.4.1c Where the programme specification permits it, and a student elects to take a Languages for All (LFA) module as an elective, they may do so at a lower level than their stage would normally permit, so long as the total weight of the lower-level module does not exceed 20 credits. This would allow a student to begin language study without previous experience, or further develop language skills for use after university or during a period of study abroad. Any lower level study of this nature will be reflected on the student's transcript as pass/fail only, and marks achieved will not impact on degree classifications.

## 23. Completion of Degrees

### 23.1 Recommendations to SCA - undergraduate

Recommendations from Boards of Studies for undergraduate awards are submitted to the Standing Committee on Assessment for approval on behalf of Senate. Special Cases Committee normally holds two meetings at about this time to deal with recommendations from Boards of Studies (for example, to consider recommendations for classified degrees where students have special circumstances) and possible student appeals. It is essential that departments complete the official results lists supplied by the Examinations Office and return these, with the signatures of the Chair of the Board of Studies and the External Examiner(s), immediately after their Board of Studies has approved the results. Full details of the deadline dates and procedures are circulated annually to departments by the Examinations Office.

### 23.2 Recommendations to SCA - postgraduate

Recommendations from Boards of Studies for the award of taught postgraduate and research degrees are submitted to the Standing Committee on Assessment who approve the awards on behalf of Senate. Departments should complete and return appropriate results lists to Registry, signed by the Chair of the Board of Studies and the External Examiner(s), as soon as possible after their Board has approved the results.

### 23.3 Conveying results

Results should be conveyed to students stating clearly that they are provisional until ratified by the Standing Committee on Assessment on behalf of Senate.

### 23.4 Parchments and certificates

Parchments or other certificates are issued when enrolment is terminated at the end of a qualification. If a student subsequently re-registers for a higher stage of a programme (e.g. from Certificate to Diploma-level) there is no requirement to surrender the previous award document.

## 23.5 The role of Senate

Senate delegates the authority to the Standing Committee on Assessment, to ratify the recommendations of Boards of Studies or Graduate School Boards. Ordinance 6.7 provides additional information.

## 23.6 Progression and academic misconduct

Academic Misconduct penalties under the current policy are applied at the component level. Failure of components or modules resulting from caps applied in response to academic misconduct will be treated the same way as any other failure. This may result in failure of the intended programme. Final penalties arising from academic misconduct under the policy prior to the academic year 2014/15 are subtracted at the point of award; it is recognised that a student may meet the award requirements but nonetheless fail the award for this reason.

## 24. University Award Requirements

Award	Min Credit Volume	Credit levels	Max elective credit volume	Combined degree: credit distribution	
				Main/Subsidiary (A with B)	Equal Combinations (A and B)
Master's Degree	180	At least 150 credits at level 7 (M)			
Postgraduate Diploma	120	At least 90 credits at level 7 (M)			
Postgraduate Certificate	60	At least 40 credits at level 7 (M)			
Integrated Master's Degree <sup>4</sup>	480	At least 120 credits at level 7 (M) taken over stages 3 and 4	80	Variation permitted between 360:120 and 310:170	240:240 regarded as the norm, variation up to 290:190 permitted
LLM in Law (Juris Doctor)	400	At least 160 credits at level 7 (M) taken in stage 3			
Pre-Masters	80	At least 70 credits at level 6 (H)			

<sup>4</sup> Students may be awarded these qualifications with a higher credit volume (for example, where study abroad or work placements are undertaken as additional credit or further credit is required to accommodate PSRB practice requirements).

Bachelor's Degree with Honours	360	At least 100 credits at level 6 (H)	60	Variation permitted between 270:90 and 230:130	180:180 regarded as the norm, variation up to 220:140 permitted
Ordinary Degree	300	At least 60 credits at level 6 (H) (over stages 2 and 3)	60		
Senior Status LLB <sup>5</sup>	240	At least 100 credits at level 6 (H) with no more than 100 at level 4 (C)	0		
Graduate Diploma	120	At least 100 credits at level 6 (H)			
Graduate Certificate	60	At least 40 credits at level 6 (H)			
Foundation Degree <sup>67</sup>	240	At least 90 credits at level 5 (I) or higher	60		
Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)	240	At least 90 credits at level 5 (I) or higher	60		
Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)	120	At least 90 credits at level 4 (C) or higher	40		
University Certificate <sup>8</sup>	60	60 Credits at level 4 (C) or higher	n/a		
Foundation Certificate	80 or 120	At least 70 credits at level 3	n/a		

<sup>5</sup> Not available as an early exit award.

<sup>6</sup> Students who have successfully completed a Foundation Year (Stage 0) as part of their programme will have achieved an additional 120 credits at level 3/ HE level 0.

<sup>7</sup> Not available as an early exit award.

<sup>8</sup> Not available as an early exit award.



# Foundation Certificate Programmes

<b>Foundation Certificate Programmes</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>FC1. Marking Scheme for Foundation Certificate Programmes</b>	<b>91</b>
FC1.1 Summative Assessment	91
FC1.2 Numerical Marking	91
FC1.3 University marking scale	91
FC1.4 English language modules	91
FC1.5 Recalibrating marks	91
FC1.6 Pass/fail modules	92
FC1.7 Non-compensatable modules	92
<b>FC2. Progression</b>	<b>92</b>
FC2.1 Foundation Certificate award	92
FC2.2 Calculation of progression	92
<b>FC3. Compensation and Reassessment</b>	<b>93</b>
FC3.1 Compensation	93
FC3.1.1 Possible credit	93
FC3.2 Reassessment	93
FC3.2.1 Re-assessable modules	93
FC3.2.2 Limit to re-assessment opportunity	93
FC3.2.3 Re-assessment marks cap	94
FC3.2.4 Non-credit reassessment	94
FC3.2.5 Single reassessment opportunity	94
FC3.2.6 Exceptional Circumstances	94

# FC1. Marking Scheme for Foundation Certificate Programmes

## FC1.1 Summative Assessment

Every module should be summatively assessed in order to obtain an indication of a student's success in meeting the assessment criteria used to gauge the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme. Credit will be awarded upon passing a module's assessment(s).

## FC1.2 Numerical Marking

Each module should carry one numerical mark rounded to the nearest integer on the relevant University mark scale, unless the module is designated as pass/fail.

Where a module assessment is made up from a number of components, the normal expectation is that the fixed weightings to be applied to each component mark should be specified in advance and made known to the students. Module marks are then calculated as the weighted mean of the component marks. Departments who would like to apply an alternative approach must obtain the permission of the Chair of the SCA, and should expect to undertake any non-standard administration associated with the alternative.

## FC1.3 University marking scale

The University mark scale applied at foundation certificate level (for modules level 3/HE level 0) will be in the range 0-100. The pass mark for any given module is 40. A fail mark of 30-39 is potentially compensatable (see below), and marks of 0-29 and fails on pass/fail modules are outright fails.

## FC1.4 English language modules

Foundation Certificate programmes may include English language modules, whose level shall be mapped to the Common European Framework of Reference. Foundation Certificate programmes shall include a module to be used to determine whether a student has met any specified English Language requirements for progression. Due to the specific nature of the marking scheme for English Language modules, the marks for this module will not be used for the calculation of overall award or progression marks. This module must, however, be passed in order to achieve the award of Foundation Certificate.

## FC1.5 Recalibrating marks

Where a Board of Examiners has reason to believe that the raw marks arising from a particular module do not provide an adequate reflection of student performance on the appropriate University scale, the marks should be recalibrated to the University scale, either by remarking or by a rescaling procedure. If rescaling is undertaken it must be performed in the following way.

A number of points of correspondence between the original marking scale and the University scale should be identified. In particular the minimum and maximum marks on the original scale should be placed in correspondence with 0 and 100 respectively on the University scale. Points of correspondence should be located using academic judgement, bearing in mind any relevant descriptors. A sample calculation is presented in Appendix K. The same principle is to be followed, pro rata, if only part of a module assessment is affected.

It is important that the marks of all students taking the module are rescaled in the same way. If the module is shared between programmes the department taking formal responsibility for the module should take the lead in the process. The External Examiners should be informed of any rescaling and the process and its outcome(s) must be formally documented. Any rescaling must be completed before the reports are produced for the final Board of Examiners Meeting.

## **FC1.6 Pass/fail modules**

Modules may only be marked on a pass/fail basis with the permission of University Teaching Committee. Approval of such modules will only be granted where there is a convincing rationale for this approach (for example, competency based modules in professional/vocational subjects). Such modules cannot be compensated (see sections on Compensation below).

## **FC1.7 Non-compensatable modules**

In exceptional circumstances (e.g., relating to PSRB requirements) a case may be made to University Teaching Committee for modules to be denoted as non-compensatable and/or for which reassessment opportunities cannot be provided. The risks related to such modules, and possible alternatives must be fully considered (see the Framework for Programme Design).

# **FC2. Progression**

## **FC2.1 Foundation Certificate award**

In order to progress to a Bachelors with Honours or integrated Masters programme at the University, students must achieve the award of Foundation Certificate (i.e. must pass all modules outright or via compensation or reassessment) in addition to achieving any specified progression requirements.

## **FC2.2 Calculation of progression**

Pass/fail modules will not be used in the numerical calculation of whether the student has met requirements for progression to Bachelors with Honours or Integrated Masters programmes. However, any pass/fail module must be passed for progression.

## FC3. Compensation and Reassessment

### FC3.1 Compensation

In defined circumstances credit may be awarded for failed module(s) where the failure is compensated by achievement in other module(s). The rounded credit weighted mean in each case will be calculated based on first attempt marks in the first instance, but will be calculated based on the lesser of the resit mark and the pass mark should the student be successful at resit.

Please note: Modules which are marked as pass/fail cannot be compensated and failure of a non-compensatable module is always regarded as an 'outright fail'

#### ***FC3.1.1 Possible credit***

If a student fails one or more modules (i.e. achieves a module mark below 40) on a Foundation Certificate Programme s/he may still receive credit for the failed module provided that:

- i. s/he has not been compensated more than 30 credits, with this total including both any modules previously compensated and the module to be compensated; and,
- ii. no module marks are lower than 30; and,
- iii. the rounded credit-weighted mean over all modules taken thus far (including failed modules) is at least 40.

#### ***FC3.2 Reassessment***

Reassessment is an opportunity for students to redeem failure for the award of credit to meet progression or award requirements. It should be noted that failure in pass/fail modules are always counted as outright fails and cannot be compensated, and consequently any fails of pass/fail modules must be redeemed by reassessment.

##### ***FC3.2.1 Re-assessable modules***

Re-assessment will be offered in all failed modules which are not designated as non-reassessable (thus a student could potentially re-assess all 80 credits of an 80-credit programme). This reflects the particular nature of the Foundation Certificate and the associated progression to Bachelors with Honours or Integrated Masters programmes.

##### ***FC3.2.2 Limit to re-assessment opportunity***

If a student elects not to take a reassessment opportunity when it is offered, the original module mark will be carried forward for the purposes of calculating the award and progression to Bachelors with Honours or Integrated Masters programmes. It is not possible subsequently to choose to take the re-assessment for the purposes of award / progression calculation at a later date.

**FC3.2.3 Re-assessment marks cap**

For students who need to undertake reassessment for a module in order to redeem failure for the award of credit, re-assessment marks will be capped at the module pass mark. The capped mark will be used in calculations for the award of the Foundation Certificate and will be recorded on the transcript. Should students fail to achieve the module pass mark by reassessment, the better of the original or re-sit mark will be recorded on the transcript. The uncapped re-sit mark will be used for the purposes of calculating progression decisions on a non-credit, non-award bearing basis.

**FC3.2.4 Non-credit reassessment**

All students who have not previously undertaken a reassessment for a module may be offered the opportunity to undertake a reassessment of the module on a non-credit, non-award-bearing basis if their module mark does not meet the progression requirement. Such a reassessment might be needed because the module is specifically mentioned in the student's progression requirement, or because the overall mark needs to be improved, and may be offered regardless of the original module mark (i.e. this opportunity may be offered to students who have already received a passing mark on the module or who have passed the module via compensation).

This is designed to provide reassessment opportunities for students who have met or are likely to meet the requirements for the award of a Foundation Certificate but not the requirements for guaranteed progression. The final mark used for determining progression will be the better of the original or reassessment. Reassessment offered on this basis does not affect the mark used for calculating the award of a Foundation Certificate. The original mark will be recorded on the student's transcript. If the progression requirement is explicit about the mark needed on a particular component of a module, then a reassessment for progression may be offered on a component basis, rather than for a whole module.

**FC3.2.5 Single reassessment opportunity**

A student may only be reassessed in a particular module on one occasion. This applies to both reassessment for the purposes of award and reassessment for the purposes of progression.

**FC3.2.6 Exceptional Circumstances**

Where there are exceptional circumstances, a student may be offered the opportunity to take an assessment 'as if for the first time', as opposed to a reassessment. Further information is contained within the University's Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment (ECA) policy.

# Undergraduate Programmes

<b>Undergraduate Programmes</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>U1. Marking Scheme for Undergraduate Programmes</b>	<b>96</b>
U1.1 Summative assessment	96
U1.2 Numerical marking	96
U1.3 Marking scale	96
U1.4 Recalibration of Marks	97
U1.5 Pass mark	97
U1.6 Pass/fail marks	97
U1.7 Non-compensatable marks	97
U1.8 Credit-weighted total mark	98
<b>U2. Progression in Undergraduate Programmes</b>	<b>98</b>
U2.1 Progression requirements	98
U2.2 Compensation	99
U2.3 Reassessment	102
U2.4 Thresholds for Reassessment	104
<b>U3. Degree Classification (for Undergraduate Awards)</b>	<b>106</b>
U3.1 Eligible degrees	106
U3.2 Calculating degree classifications	106
U3.3 Pass/fail Marks	107
U3.4 Degrees that are not classified	107
U3.5 Classification and foundation degrees	107
U3.6 First-class degrees with distinction	107
<b>U4. Study Abroad and industrial placements for additional credit</b>	<b>108</b>
U4.1. Calculating Study Abroad and industrial placements	108
U4.2 Incorporating study abroad and work placements	110
U4.3 Marks from Student Exchange Programmes for replacement credit	111

# U1. Marking Scheme for Undergraduate Programmes

## U1.1 Summative assessment

Every module should be summatively assessed in order to obtain an indication of a student's success in meeting the assessment criteria used to gauge the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme. Credit will be awarded upon passing a module's assessment(s).

## U1.2 Numerical marking

Each module should carry one numerical mark rounded to the nearest integer on the relevant University mark scale, unless the module is designated as pass/fail. Where a module assessment is made up from a number of components, the normal expectation is that the fixed weightings to be applied to each component mark should be specified in advance and made known to the students. Module marks are then calculated as the weighted mean of the component marks. Departments who would like to apply an alternative approach must obtain the permission of the Chair of the SCA, and should expect to undertake any non-standard administration associated with the alternative.

## U1.3 Marking scale

i. The University mark scale applied at undergraduate level (for modules level 3/HE level 0 to level 6 (H)) is as follows:

- |                              |        |
|------------------------------|--------|
| ● First-class Honours        | 70-100 |
| ● Upper second-class Honours | 60-69  |
| ● Lower second-class Honours | 50-59  |
| ● Third-class Honours        | 40-49  |
| ● Fail                       | 0-39*  |

\* Note that in stages 1 and 2, a fail mark of 30-39 is potentially compensatable (see below). In stage 3, a fail mark of 10-39 is potentially compensatable. Lower marks and fails on pass/fail modules are outright fails.

ii. The University mark scale applied for masters level modules used in undergraduate programmes, including integrated master's programmes (level 7/M) is as follows:

- Distinguished performance at postgraduate level 70-100
- Good performance at postgraduate level 60-69
- Satisfactory performance at postgraduate level 50-59
- Fail 0-49\*

\* Note that in stage 3 of an integrated master's programme a fail mark of 40-49 is potentially compensatable (see below). In stage 4, a fail mark of 10-49 is potentially compensatable. For students taking M level modules on stage 3 of a Bachelors programme, marks of 10-49 are potentially compensatable. Lower marks and fail marks on pass/fail modules are outright fails.

## U1.4 Recalibration of Marks

Where a Board of Examiners has reason to believe that the raw marks arising from a particular module do not provide an adequate reflection of student performance on the appropriate University scale, the marks should be recalibrated to the University scale, either by remarking or by a rescaling procedure. If rescaling is undertaken it must be performed in the following way. A number of points of correspondence between the original marking scale and the University scale should be identified. In particular the minimum and maximum marks on the original scale should be placed in correspondence with 0 and 100 respectively on the University scale. Points of correspondence should be located using academic judgement, bearing in mind any relevant descriptors. A sample calculation is presented in Appendix K. The same principle is to be followed, pro rata, if only part of a module assessment is affected.

It is important that the marks of all students taking the module are rescaled in the same way. If the module is shared between programmes the department taking formal responsibility for the module should take the lead in the process. The External Examiners should be informed of any rescaling and the process and its outcome(s) must be formally documented.

Any rescaling must be completed before the reports are produced for the final Board of Examiners Meeting.

## U1.5 Pass mark

The pass mark for a given module will be determined by the standard of the module, rather than by the programme on which the student is enrolled. The pass mark for any Masters-level modules is 50, and Honours-level modules is 40, regardless of the programme to which it is contributing or the year in which they are taken.

## U1.6 Pass/fail marks

Modules may only be marked on a pass/fail basis with the permission of University Teaching Committee. Approval of such modules will only be granted where there is a convincing rationale for this approach (for example, competency based modules in professional/vocational subjects). Such modules will not contribute to the calculation of the final degree classification and failure in these modules cannot be compensated (see section U2.2).

## U1.7 Non-compensatable marks

In exceptional circumstances (e.g., relating to PSRB requirements) a case may be made to University Teaching Committee for modules to be denoted as non-compensatable and/or for which reassessment opportunities cannot be provided. The risks related to such modules, and possible alternatives must be fully considered (see the Framework for Programme Design).



## U1.8 Credit-weighted total mark

Every stage of a programme generates, alongside the profile of module marks, a credit-weighted total mark that is carried forward to degree classification, as appropriate (see Section U3 below). This process occurs only if a student has met the progression requirements for each stage (see Section U2 below).

## U2. Progression in Undergraduate Programmes<sup>9</sup>

### U2.1 Progression requirements

To progress from one stage to the next a student must achieve 120 credits as specified for their registered programme at the appropriate level(s) for the stage (see the relevant programme specification and the Framework for Programme Design). These credits can be obtained by passing modules; by compensating failure in a limited number of modules with marks between 30 and 40%, or 10 and 40% in the award year (see “Compensation”); or by reassessment in a limited number of modules.

#### *U2.1.1 Progression processes*

The progression processes are run in the following order: assessment, compensation, reassessment, compensation. If a student achieves 120 credits after any one of these processes, they will progress to the following stage. If, however, they fail to qualify for compensation or reassessment after failure due to the high load of failed credits, or due to not meeting the compensation rules even after reassessment, they will be deemed to have failed the stage.

#### *U2.1.2 Supplementary progression requirements*

In addition, any supplementary progression requirements specified for their registered programme must be met.

U2.1.2a Progression at the end of stage 2 of integrated masters programmes requires that students meet a stage average higher than the pass mark for the modules contained in the stage. This stage average must be attained as the average of first attempt module marks and is set at 55. Progression at the end of stage 3 requires a stage average of 40 and additionally the rounded credit-weighted (not stage-weighted) mean over all stage 2 and 3 modules must be at least 50. These averages must be attained as the average of first attempt module marks. Students who do not meet these progression requirements will be considered for transfer to non-integrated masters programmes, subject to them having met the progression requirements for the Bachelor's alternative.

U2.1.2b Programmes subject to accreditation by Professional Standards and Regulatory Bodies may have additional requirements, such as higher pass marks and lower thresholds

---

<sup>9</sup> Appendix M provides an overview of progression for undergraduate awards and integrated masters.

of compensation. Programme documentation should make it clear what the consequences are if a student meets normal UoY progression rules but fails to meet the PSRB requirements. These consequences may include transfer to a non-accredited programme of study or termination of the student's study.

### ***U2.1.3 Transfers***

A student should only be considered for transfer to a different programme, if s/he has met the progression requirements plus any additional programme requirements relating to the new programme of study. This may entail having made particular module selections to meet PSRB or later pre-requisite requirements, where these are essential to meet the overall programme learning outcomes. Requests to transfer must be approved by the receiving department and by the Special Cases Committee.

### ***U2.1.4 Additional Credit***

A student may only register for additional credit (more than 120 credits per year for UG and 180 for PGT) where this is expressly approved as part of the programme specification, or with explicit permission from the Special Cases Committee. Where additional credit is taken, it cannot be included in the calculation of any progression decisions or degree classifications, and as such it must be clear to both the student and the department which credit is additional and which is core.

### ***U2.1.5 Exceptional circumstances and progression***

If an Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment claim is accepted on assessments at the end of a stage, but the student has met the necessary progression requirements using the affected attempts, the ECA Committee may allow a student to sit the assessments as if for the first time at the next available opportunity whilst pursuing the next stage. This is permitted in a maximum of 40 credits in a given stage. In this case only, the student will retain the better of the affected mark and the 'sit as if for the first time' mark for the sake of progression and award.

## **U2.2 Compensation**

In defined circumstances credit may be awarded for failed module(s) where the failure is compensated by achievement in other module(s).

Note: Modules which are marked as pass/fail cannot be compensated and failure of a non-compensatable module is always regarded as an 'outright fail'

### ***U2.2.1 Compensation in foundation years (stage 0)***

If a student fails one or more modules (i.e., achieves a module mark below 40) in stage 0 s/he may still receive the credit for the failed module(s) and progress to stage 1 of the programme provided that:

- i. s/he has failed no more than 40 credits; and,
- ii. no module marks are lower than 30; and,

- iii. the rounded credit-weighted mean over all modules taken in stage 0 (including the failed module(s)) is at least 40.

### **U2.2.2 Compensation in foundation degrees**

- a. In stage 1, if a student fails one or more modules (i.e., achieves a module mark below 40) in the stage s/he may still receive the credit for the failed module(s) and progress provided that:
  - i. s/he has failed no more than 40 credits; and,
  - ii. no module marks are lower than 30; and,
  - iii. the rounded credit-weighted mean over all modules taken in the stage (including the failed module(s)) is at least 40.
  
- b. In stage 2, if a student fails one or more modules (i.e., achieves a module mark below 40) in the stage s/he may still receive the credit for the failed module(s) and progress to award provided that:
  - i. s/he has failed no more than 40 credits; and,
  - ii. no module marks are lower than 30; and,
  - iii. the rounded credit-weighted mean over all modules taken in the stage (including the failed module(s)) is at least 40.

### **U2.2.3 Compensation in a University Certificate**

- a. If a student fails one or more modules (i.e., achieves a module mark below 40) s/he may still receive the credit for the failed module(s) and progress to the Certificate of HE 'top-up', or to award, provided that:
  - i. s/he has failed no more than 20 credits; and,
  - ii. no module marks are lower than 30; and,
  - iii. the rounded credit-weighted mean over all 60 credits (including the failed module(s)) is at least 40.

### **U2.2.4 Compensation in Bachelors Programmes<sup>10</sup>**

- a. In stage 1, if a student fails one or more modules (i.e., achieves a module mark below 40) in the stage s/he may still receive the credit for the failed module(s) and progress provided that:
  - i. s/he has failed no more than 40 credits; and,
  - ii. no module marks are lower than 30; and,
  - iii. the rounded credit-weighted mean over all modules taken in the stage (including the failed module(s)) is at least 40.

---

<sup>10</sup> For students registered on a Certificate of Higher Education the stage 1 rules apply. For students registered on a Diploma of Higher Education the stage 1 and stage 2 rules apply. Centre for Lifelong Learning students who have undertaken a University Certificate of Lifelong Learning and are 'topping-up' to a Certificate of Higher Education are subject to the same overall rules for a Certificate of Higher Education but the rules will be applied in stages. A maximum of 20 credits-worth of compensation is permitted for the 60 credits of the University Certificate of Lifelong Learning (see above) and 20 credits-worth may be permitted (subject to meeting the other criteria) on the 60 credits of the Certificate of Higher Education 'top-up'.

b. In stage 2, if a student fails one or more modules (i.e., achieves a module mark below 40) in the stage s/he may still receive the credit for the failed module(s) and progress provided that:

- i. s/he has failed no more than 40 credits; and,
- ii. no module marks are lower than 30; and,
- iii. the rounded credit-weighted mean over all modules taken in the stage (including the failed module(s)) is at least 40.

c. In stage 3, if a student fails one or more modules s/he may still receive the credit and progress to classification provided that:

- i. s/he has failed no more than 40 credits; and,
- ii. no module marks are lower than 10; and,
- iii. the rounded credit-weighted mean over all modules taken in the stage (including the failed module(s)) is at least 40.

d. In the event that a student fails more than 40 credits in Stage 3 of a Bachelors programme, they may still be considered for the award of an Ordinary degree, in which case they will be eligible for compensation in a maximum of 20 credits provided that:

- i. They have passed a minimum of 40 credits without compensation; and,
- ii. The rounded credit-weighted mean of the 60 credits taken in the stage with the highest module marks is at least 40; and,
- iii. No stage three module mark being counted towards the award is below 10.

### ***U2.2.5 Compensation in integrated masters programmes***

a. In stage 1, if a student fails one or more modules (i.e., achieves a module mark below 40) in the stage s/he may still receive the credit for the failed module(s) and progress provided that:

- i. s/he has failed no more than 40 credits; and,
- ii. no module marks are lower than 30; and,
- iii. the rounded credit-weighted mean over all modules taken in the stage (including the failed module(s)) is at least 40.

b. In stage 2, if a student fails one or more modules (i.e., achieves a module mark below 40) in the stage s/he may still receive the credit for the failed module(s) and progress provided that:

- i. s/he has failed no more than 40 credits; and,
- ii. no module marks are lower than 30; and,
- iii. the rounded credit-weighted mean over all modules taken in the stage (including the failed module(s)) is at least 55.

Where a student has not met the criteria for stage 2 of the integrated master's programme but has met the criteria for the Bachelors programme, the student will be transferred to the Bachelors programme for continuing study.

c. In stage 3, if a student fails one or more modules s/he may still receive the credit and progress provided that:

- i. s/he has failed no more than 40 credits; and,

- ii. no module mark falls below the threshold for compensation appropriate for its level<sup>11</sup>; and,
- iii. the rounded credit-weighted mean over all modules taken in the stage (including the failed module(s)) is at least 40; and,
- iv. the rounded credit-weighted mean over all modules taken in stages 2 and 3 (including the failed module(s)) is at least 50.<sup>12</sup>

Where a student has not met the criteria for stage 3 of the integrated master's programme but has met the criteria for the Bachelors programme, the student will be eligible for the award of a Bachelors degree on the basis of their results in stages 1 to 3.

d. In stage 4, if a student fails one or more non-ISM modules or an ISM module worth up to 40 credits, s/he may still receive the credit and progress to classification provided that:

- i. s/he has failed no more than 40 credits; and,
- ii. no module mark is lower than 10; and,
- iii. the rounded credit-weighted mean over all modules taken in the stage (including the failed module(s)) is at least 50.

Where a student has not met the above criteria for the award of an integrated masters, students will be eligible for the award of a Bachelor's degree on the basis of their results in stages 1 – 3.

## U2.3 Reassessment

Reassessment is an opportunity for students to redeem failure for the award of credit to meet progression or award requirements. It should be noted that failure in pass/fail modules are always counted as outright fails and cannot be compensated, and consequently any fails of pass/fail modules must be redeemed by reassessment if the student is to progress.

### **U2.3.1 Reassessment Limitations**

A student may only be reassessed in a particular module on one occasion. If a student elects not to take a reassessment opportunity when it is offered, the original module mark will be carried forward into the progression calculation at that time. It is not possible subsequently to choose to take the reassessment at a later date.

### **U2.3.2 Modules without reassessment**

Any modules for which reassessment opportunities cannot be provided should be clearly identified in the Programme Specifications and approved by University Teaching Committee. Departments may determine whether to reassess a module at the module level or at the component level in light of the nature of the assessment(s) but must make clear to the students in the module specification

<sup>11</sup> For level C/4, I/5 and H/6 modules, the threshold for compensation is 30. For level M/7 modules, the threshold is 40.

<sup>12</sup> Note that this condition does not include the application of stage weighting. If the marks from stages 2 and 3 are such that stage weighting is significant when degree classification occurs, then the borderline rules will allow consideration of alternative weightings, including 1:1:1.

what the parameters of reassessment are, including whether there are any circumstances in which a student might be permitted to be reassessed on a passed component of a failed module. (This is expected normally only to be permitted in cases where the failed component is non-reassessable).

### **U2.3.3        *Marks after re-assessment***

The following conditions should apply to the treatment of marks after reassessment:

- a. progression decisions following reassessment should be made using the better of the original and reassessment marks for each failed module;
- b. following progression, however, where the original credit-weighted mean did not meet the progression requirement, the credit-weighted total mark for the stage should be capped to the lowest value consistent with the mean mark criterion for that stage;
- c. following progression, where the original credit-weighted mean has already met the progression requirement, the original credit-weighted total mark for the stage should be allowed to stand;
- d. original 'first sit' marks, rather than resit marks, will be used in degree classification calculations. Resit marks will appear, uncapped, on transcripts, but will not be used in degree calculations. In the event that the credit weighted mean of first attempt marks does not meet the minimum requirement for the award, but all credits were awarded through reassessment or compensation, the award mark will be set at the lowest value consistent with passing the award.<sup>13</sup>
- e. for stages 2, 3 and 4 of integrated masters programmes, the original stage total mark stands after progression onto the next stage within the integrated masters programme.

### **U2.3.4        *Discontinuation of Registration***

Where a student is not permitted a reassessment opportunity (i.e., cannot meet the specified progression requirements through reassessment as defined above) and there are no exceptional circumstances the student's registration will be discontinued. S/he may be eligible for a lower credit-volume award (see Section F).

### **U2.3.5        *Timing of Re-assessment***

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

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

---

<sup>13</sup> For more information on the calculation of degrees, see Section U.3.

- students taking the reassessment have an outright fail for the module for which they are being reassessed;
- it is in the interest of the student's learning not to be reassessed in the August resit period and for no other reason;
- the reassessment does not impinge on teaching and other assessments;
- the student is given five-weeks' notice of reassessment;
- the reassessment does not require a University administered examination.

### ***U2.3.6 Resits for overseas students***

All candidates are normally expected to attend resit examinations in York on the scheduled dates. Departments may be given the opportunity, however, to make a special case for overseas students to take resit examinations at a later date, or for visiting students to take resit examinations at an earlier date than other candidates, provided they are prepared to produce special question papers for the late resits and provided the arrangements are approved in advance by the Chair of the Standing Committee on Assessment.

## **U2.4 Thresholds for Reassessment**

### ***U2.4.1 Reassessment in foundation years (stage 0)***

Where a student fails modules and the progression requirement for stage 0 cannot be met by application of the compensation rules, the student is entitled to reassessment in a maximum of 90 credits-worth of failed modules provided that they have failed no more than 90 credits with no more than 50 credits worth of outright fail marks (i.e., module marks less than 30) in that stage.

### ***U2.4.2. Reassessment in foundation degrees (stages 1,2,3)***

In each stage, where a student fails modules and the progression or award requirements for the stage cannot be met by application of the compensation rules, the student is entitled to reassessment in a maximum of 90 credits worth of failed modules (per stage) provided that they have failed no more than 90 credits in that stage with no more than 50 credits-worth of outright fail marks (i.e., module marks less than 30) in that stage.

### ***U2.4.3 Reassessment in a University Certificate of Lifelong Learning***

Where a student fails modules and the progression (to the Certificate of Higher Education 'top-up') and/or award requirement cannot be met by application of the compensation rules, the student is entitled to reassessment in a maximum of 50 credits-worth of failed modules provided that they have failed no more than 50 credits with no more than 30 credits-worth of outright fail marks (i.e., module marks less than 30) in that stage.

**U2.4.4 Reassessment in bachelors programmes<sup>14</sup>**

- a. In stages 1 and 2, where a student fails modules and the progression requirement for the stage cannot be met by application of the compensation rules, the student is entitled to reassessment in a maximum of 90 credits-worth of failed modules (per stage) provided that they have failed no more than 90 credits in that stage with no more than 50 credits-worth of outright fail marks (i.e. module marks less than 30) in that stage.
- b. In stage 3, where a student fails modules and the award requirements for the stage cannot be met by application of the compensation rules, the student is entitled to reassessment in a maximum of 40 credits-worth of failed modules provided that they have failed no more than 40 credits. A student who has failed more than 40 credits can be considered for an Ordinary Degree, but is not eligible for reassessment to obtain this award
- c. If, following the application of the compensation rules, a student has not met the overall progression or award requirements then they may be reassessed in modules for which potentially compensatable marks (see U1.3) have already been achieved. This will simply be an opportunity, not a requirement.

**U2.4.5 Reassessment in integrated masters programmes<sup>15</sup>**

- a. In stage 1, where a student fails modules and the progression requirement for the stage cannot be met by application of the compensation rules, the student is entitled to reassessment in a maximum of 90 credits-worth of failed modules provided that they have failed no more than 90 credits with no more than 50 credits-worth of outright fail marks in that stage (i.e., module marks less than 30 or failures on non-compensatable modules).
- b. In stage 2, where a student has met the required stage average, the student is entitled to reassessment in a maximum of 90 credits-worth of failed modules provided that they have failed no more than 90 credits with no more than 50 credits-worth of outright fail marks (i.e., module marks less than 30). Where a student has not achieved the stage average for progression on the integrated master's programme, reassessment opportunities will only be provided for continuation on the bachelors programme.
- c. In stages 3 and 4, where a student has met the required stage average for progression or award, reassessment opportunities will be limited to a maximum of 40 credits-worth of failed modules provided that they have failed no more than 40 credits, except in the case of a marginal failure of an ISM worth more than 40

---

<sup>14</sup> For students registered on a Certificate of Higher Education the stage 1 rules apply. For students registered on a Diploma of Higher Education the stage 1 and stage 2 rules apply. Centre for Lifelong Learning students who have undertaken a University Certificate of Lifelong Learning and are 'topping-up' to a Certificate of Higher Education are subject to the same overall reassessment rules for a Certificate of Higher Education but the rules will be applied in stages. See above regarding the rules relating to the 60 credits of the University Certificate of Lifelong Learning. For the 60 credits of the Certificate of Higher Education 'top-up' a student is entitled to reassessment in a maximum of 40 credits worth of failed modules provided that they have failed no more than 40 credits with no more than 20 credits-worth of outright fail marks (i.e., module marks less than 30).

<sup>15</sup> Reassessment opportunities within integrated masters programmes at stages 2, 3 and 4 are limited to students who have achieved the required stage average (see U2.2.4biii, ciii and diii above). Thus reassessment within integrated masters programmes is purely an opportunity to satisfy the credit criteria.



credits in Stage 4. For stage 3, where a student has not achieved the stage average for progression on the integrated master's programme, reassessment opportunities will only be provided for award of a bachelor's degree

d. **Independent Study Modules in Integrated Masters Programmes**

Where a student has failed an ISM worth more than 40 credits on an integrated master's programme with a mark below 40, there will be no opportunity for reassessment. However, where a student has been awarded a 'marginal fail' mark of between 40 and 49 they will have an opportunity to make amendments which would enable a passing threshold to be reached. The mark after resubmission will be capped at 50. See Appendix N for guidance in relation to the criteria for awarding a marginal fail.

## U3. Degree Classification (for Undergraduate Awards)

### U3.1 Eligible degrees

The Bachelors with Honours and Integrated Masters awards are classified degrees.

### U3.2 Calculating degree classifications

The mechanism for calculating degree classifications is as follows:

- Stage 1 (and stage 0 if applicable) marks are excluded from the classification calculation;
- Stage averages are calculated based on the credit-weighted mean of the first attempt marks. Only where the credit weighted mean of first attempt marks would not have met the progression criteria for the stage, the stage average will be calculated based on the credit weighted mean of best attempts and capped at the lowest value consistent with progression at that level.
- For Bachelors Programmes, the mark, rounded to the nearest integer, is computed with the credit-weighted total marks for stages 2 and 3 weighted in the ratio of 2:3;
- For Integrated Masters Programmes, the mark, rounded to the nearest integer, is computed with the credit-weighted total marks for stages 2, 3 and 4 weighted in the ratio 2:3:3;
- For all programmes, classification will be determined by the position of this mark on the University scale unless it lies in the borderline region, defined as the two points below a classification boundary;
- In borderline cases, the next higher classification will be awarded if, and only if, the mark, rounded to the nearest integer, with the credit-weighted total marks for stages 2 and 3 weighted in the ratio 1:1 OR 1:2 (for Bachelors Programmes) and 1:1:1 OR 1:2:2 (for Integrated Masters Programmes) lies in a higher classification

band. No further second order conditions will be applied;

- Final penalties arising from academic misconduct investigated prior to the implementation of the 2014/15 misconduct policy are subtracted at the point of degree classification; it is recognised that a student may meet the progression requirements for all stages but nonetheless fail the award for this reason.

### **U3.3 Pass/fail Marks**

Pass/fail marks do not contribute to the degree classification.

### **U3.4 Degrees that are not classified**

Ordinary degrees, Certificates and Diplomas of Higher Education are not classified.

### **U3.5 Classification and foundation degrees**

Foundation degrees are awarded on a pass/fail basis, and the final result is calculated on marks from stage 2 modules only. The final degree classification of a student who progresses to a University of York Bachelors with Honours programme, from a Foundation degree programme, is based solely on marks from stage 3 modules.

### **U3.6 First-class degrees with distinction**

#### **A. Principles**

The decision to award first class degrees with distinction is based only and always on:

- The final award mark, as recorded in the student record system, rounded to the nearest integer.
- Individual module marks, rounded to the nearest integer, as recorded in the student record system.

#### **B. Governance and decision making**

- Board of Studies decides on criteria and publishes them.
- Board of Examiners applies criteria once module marks have been finalised.
- External examiners are asked to confirm that the Board of Studies published criteria have been used in the awards and approve that the process followed is rigorous and fair.
- SCA approves the decision on behalf of Senate having sight of the module marks, the award mark and the published criteria.

#### **C. Criteria**

**Compulsory criterion:**

A minimum final award mark specified by the Board of Studies. The expectation is that this minimum should be set at around 80% but must be at least 75%.

**Optional criteria\*<sup>16</sup>**

- a. A module mark of at least 70 in a specified minimum number of credits (counting only modules contributing to the final award mark).
- b. For a bachelor degree, no more than 30 credits with a module mark below 65. For an integrated masters degree, no more than 40 credits with a module mark below 65. Only modules contributing to the final award mark should be considered.
- c. A specified minimum mark in the ISM.

**No other criteria will be permitted.**

***U3.6.1 Supporting statement***

Any Board of Studies wishing to recommend the award of a first-class Honours degree with distinction should submit a supporting statement together with the programme's published criteria for such awards, to the Examinations Office for submission to the Standing Committee on Assessment/Senate. These recommendations must be submitted attached to the standard pass list, which should also indicate the recommendation of a distinction for the candidates affected.

## U4. Study Abroad and industrial placement

### U4.1 Calculating Study Abroad and industrial placements

U4.1.1 For the purposes of establishing the weighting in degree classifications only, study abroad and work placements should be designated as part of a stage within a programme. The study abroad or work placement should contribute to the degree classification in accordance with the formula specified for that stage, based on a credit-weighted mean.

**Illustrations:**

- **Example 1:** a student takes a year abroad as 120 additional credits (lengthening a full-time bachelor's degree to four years), designated as part of stage 2. The year abroad is marked on a pass/fail basis. The mark derived for stage 2 would still be based on the credit-weighted mean across 240 credits, but would of necessity exclude the pass/fail element, giving the year abroad a zero weighting in the overall degree classification (although whether it is passed or failed would be reflected in the final programme title awarded). The same would also apply to a year in industry programme.

---

<sup>16</sup> \*Departments may include one or more of these options, or none at all, in addition to the compulsory criterion.

- **Example 2:** A student takes a year in industry for which assessment is divided into two parts: the placement itself, worth 60 credits, and designated as pass/fail, and 60 credits-worth of assessed material including reflective logs and an essay. In this case, the mark for stage 2 would still be based on the credit weighted mean of the two years with the pass/fail material necessarily removed, meaning that the additional year has half the weight of the year at York.

U4.1.2 Study abroad and work placements should be incorporated into programmes as either 'replacement' or 'additional' credit. Where it is 'additional', this will lengthen the normal period of study required for an award.

U4.1.3 Where study abroad or work placements are taken as 'additional' credit, Boards of Studies should give consideration to whether, or what proportion of, the credit should be designated as pass/fail or given a mark on the University mark scale (see the Framework for Programme Design).

U4.1.4 Students should be made aware that reassessment opportunities in relation to study abroad or work placements are not normally available. The nature of any reassessment opportunities should be set-out in the Programme Module Catalogue (PMC) for additional credit. There is no University limit on the credit volume that can be reassessed in an additional year but departments must set out the details of reassessment opportunities in advance in programme information (including the credit volume that can be reassessed and the nature of the reassessment task). Reassessment is only available where it is available at the host institution, and no work should be reassessed or remarked out of context upon the student's return to York, as the home department will not have access to the teaching materials or the work of the rest of the cohort.

U4.1.5 Progression decisions should take place prior to a student embarking on any period of study abroad or work placement. Students who fail the preceding or 'normal' credit-load stage (taking into account the outcome of any reassessment) will not be allowed to embark on study abroad or work placement. This should be reflected in student work placement contracts. A credit weighted mean at York of at least 60% in the year prior to exchange is required for study abroad.

U4.1.6 Students taking study abroad or work placements as additional credit will receive the credit if:

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

U4.1.7 Students who do not meet the above criteria may be eligible for reassessment in the failed components of the additional credit for which reassessment is available (see U4.E.5 above).

U4.1.8 After reassessment, if the above criteria (U4E.7) are met, the student receives the additional credit and a capped total mark for the additional credit given by the lowest mark consistent with a passing credit-weighted mean (appropriate to the stage). In other cases, the student will transfer to a variant of the programme that does not include the additional credit. Marks for the failed credit will appear on the student's academic transcript but will not contribute to the calculation of the final award.

## U4.2 Incorporating study abroad and work placements

U4.2.1 For the purposes of establishing the weighting in degree classifications only, study abroad for replacement credit should be designated as part of a stage within a programme. The study abroad should contribute to the degree classification in accordance with the formula specified for that stage, based on a credit-weighted mean.

- Example: a student takes a year abroad as 120 replacement credit (keeping a full-time bachelor's degree to three years), designated as part of stage 2. The mark derived for stage 2 would be the credit-weighted mean across 240 credits, giving the year abroad a value of 20% in the overall degree classification (based on the 2:3 weighting for marks from stages 2 and 3; note that this gives equal weighting to the replacement credit in relation to the 'normal' stage 2 for the bachelors programme).

U4.2.2 Study abroad should be incorporated into programmes as either 'replacement' or 'additional' credit. Where study abroad or work placements are taken as 'replacement' credit, these should usually be given marks on the University mark scale.

U4.2.3 Students should be made aware that reassessment opportunities in relation to study abroad are not normally available. The nature of any reassessment opportunities should be set-out in the grade conversion and academic recognition checklist for students on replacement credit exchange. Departments must set out the details of reassessment opportunities in advance in programme information (including the credit volume that can be reassessed and the nature of the reassessment task). Reassessment is only available where it is available at the host institution, and no work should be reassessed or remarked out of context upon the student's return to York, as the home department will not have access to the teaching materials or the work of the rest of the cohort.

U4.2.4 Progression decisions should take place prior to a student embarking on any period of study abroad or work placement. Students who fail the preceding or 'normal' credit-load stage (taking into account the outcome of any reassessment) will not be allowed to embark on study abroad or work placement. This should be reflected in student work placement contracts. For study abroad an average at York of at least 60% in the year prior to exchange is required.

U4.2.5 Students taking study abroad or work placements as replacement credit will receive the credit if:

- a. all pass/fail components in the replacement credit are passed, and

- b. the credit-weighted mean mark of any numerical marks on the University scale meets the mean mark criterion for the stage in which the additional credit is situated (e.g., for replacement credit designated as part of stage 2 a mean mark of 40 is required).

U4.2.6 Students who do not meet the above criteria may be eligible for reassessment in the failed components of the replacement credit for which reassessment is available (see U4.10 below).

U4.2.7 After reassessment, if the above criteria (U4.7) are met, the student receives the replacement credit and a capped total mark for the replacement credit given by the lowest mark consistent with a passing credit-weighted mean (appropriate to the stage).

### **U4.3 Marks from Student Exchange Programmes for replacement credit**

University Teaching Committee has confirmed that an important principle of the University's exchange agreements and Boards of Studies' agreement to permit students to participate in these schemes was an acceptance of the academic content of programmes, workload and assessment methods operated at the partner institution. Work produced whilst on exchange should not be assessed outside the context within which it has been produced.

- a. University Teaching Committee has noted that departmental practices must be standardised regarding the conversion of worldwide marks, to ensure parity for students across departments. Conversion tables, approved by the Standing Committee on Assessment, are provided by the Centre for Global Programmes online. These tables provide single integer mark equivalencies for each national grade or classification. Marks above the top integer can only be awarded where the Department can justify this with additional evidence beyond the transcript of study.
- b. Only in exceptional circumstances should work completed whilst on exchange be re-marked, and then only with the explicit approval of the Special Cases Committee.
- c. Departmental examinations officers must use the approved conversion tables to convert grades provided on official exchange institution transcripts in line with the department's procedure for dealing with study abroad marks. The same procedure must be applied to all students in an outgoing cohort from that department. Departments should provide External Examiners with a clear statement of how study abroad marks have been treated.
- d. Departments may use their discretion when awarding marks above the top integer in a table for students who receive the top available mark in the local grading system. The Centre for Global Programmes will encourage students to check with their Department at York to find out what, if any, supplementary evidence may be required before they start their time abroad. For example; rankings in class, tutor reports, assessment sheets, exam papers or test marking sheets. The Department should ensure discretionary marks are justified and evidenced.
- e. A range of marks is possible for fail grades. The minimum passing grade at a partner institution must be converted to a passing mark at York. If the partner institution has a

range of failing grades, Departments should use their discretion to award an equivalent grade between 0% and 39%.

- f. Departments may appeal to the Standing Committee on Assessment to make amendments to a specific conversion table in advance of student departure should they feel that it does not provide a fair representation of student performance. Evidence should be provided as to why the amendment is required, as well as an updated conversion table for review.
- g. Study Abroad marks for replacement credit should be converted into the largest module possible which aligns with the student's time abroad. For example, if a student has been on a full-year placement, their marks should be averaged into a single 120 credit module. For a student studying abroad for one term, their marks should be averaged into a 40 credit module. Students on joint degrees will have two marks —appropriate to the proportion of studies taken into each subject during the time abroad. For example, History/English (equal) students would have two 60 credits modules if studying abroad for the full academic year.
- h. Departments are responsible for ensuring that meaningful study abroad modules are set up within SITS to input converted marks for each student.
- i. Departments may choose to calculate a student's study abroad mark from the full credit load shown on the transcript or by discounting a proportion of the credit up to a maximum of 25%. For example, if the full credit load was 16 credits per semester, making 32 for the full year, taken in eight four credit modules, then two whole modules could be discounted. However, if the full credit load was 15 credits per semester, making a total of 30 for the full year, taken in six five credit module, only one module may be discounted, as two would exceed 25% of the total credits taken. Departments can decide the circumstances in which marks will be discounted (including whether they will only discount failed modules, or will discount lowest passing marks in some or all circumstances) but must ensure that a fair and consistent approach is taken when choosing to award grades based on discounted marks including consideration of joint honours students and students studying abroad for less than a full year. This policy must be advertised to students in advance and be clearly explained during the completion of each students' grade conversion and academic recognition checklist.

### **U4.3.1 Marks from Student Exchange Programmes for replacement or additional credit**

- a. All departments are required to ensure that students embarking on an exchange have been informed of how their marks will be treated on returning to York, before the student departs. The Centre for Global Programmes will provide each student with a grade conversion and academic recognition checklist that should be used for this purpose. It is recommended that departments keep a signed copy of this checklist, along with any additional information discussed in order to respond to student queries about their grade conversions.

- b. Wherever possible, marks from exchanges should be converted and available in time to meet the normal progression deadlines for returning students. Where this is not possible, for example, when students are on placements of 12 months' duration, marks must be converted and student progression completed by the beginning of the autumn term.
- c. Students on study abroad placements may be able to take modules that are awarded a "pass with distinction", "pass" or "fail" mark by the partner institution. However, they should avoid taking large volumes of pass/fail modules for replacement credit wherever possible. For each "pass with distinction" result students receive they should be awarded the highest possible grade conversion for that institution's approved grade conversion table.
- d. In force majeure situations (for example severe civil unrest or natural disaster), depending on when the event occurs, the University of York may require students to terminate their placement early or withdraw them before starting their time abroad. In such circumstances, the University of York will discuss with students what options are available to them and assist those students wishing to continue to study abroad to find alternative placements if required. If students do not wish to take up an alternative placement, they may need to take a Leave of Absence until the beginning of the next academic year when they can continue their studies at the University of York.



## Graduate Modular Scheme<sup>17</sup>

<b>Graduate Modular Scheme</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>G1. Module requirements and marking schemes</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>G2. Compensation and reassessment</b>	<b>117</b>
<b>G3. Awards</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>G4. Module requirements and marking scheme for Graduate Senior Status Bachelors Programmes</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>G5. Progression in Graduate Senior Status Bachelors Programmes</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>G6. Degree Classification for Graduate Senior Status Bachelor's Degree Awards</b>	<b>124</b>

---

<sup>17</sup> Graduate programmes (Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas) are those usually undertaken by students who have completed a Bachelor's degree but wish to pursue further studies that are not necessarily at a higher level (i.e. the programmes are at Honours level (like a Bachelors) not Masters level (like a Masters or Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma).

# G1. Module requirements and marking schemes

## G1.1 Summative assessment

Every module should be summatively assessed in order to obtain an indication of a student's success in meeting the assessment criteria used to gauge the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme.

## G1.2 Numerical marking

Each module should carry one numerical mark on the relevant University mark scale, unless the module is designated as pass/fail (see below).

Where a module assessment is made up from a number of components, the normal expectation is that the fixed weightings to be applied to each component mark should be specified in advance and made known to the students. Module marks are then calculated as the weighted mean of the component marks. Departments who would like to apply an alternative approach must obtain the permission of the Chair of the SCA, and should expect to undertake any non-standard administration associated with the alternative.

## G1.3 University mark scale

The University mark scale applied at graduate level is as follows:

- Distinguished performance      70-100
- Good performance                      50-69
- Satisfactory performance          40-49
- Fail    0-39\*

\* Module marks of 0-29 are 'outright fails'. Module marks of 30-39 are potentially compensatable (see Section G2).

## G1.4 Standards of Attainment

Standards of attainment on the graduate mark scale should notionally be equivalent to those of undergraduate awards.

## G1.5 Level-7 modules

Where there are good pedagogic arguments, graduate programmes may exceptionally include a maximum of 20 credits-worth of level-7 (M) modules. The use of level-7 (M) credit must be approved by University Teaching Committee and will be recorded by the University and departments. Any Masters-level modules taken as part of a graduate programme are subject to the taught postgraduate mark scale (pass mark is 50).

## **G1.6 Pass/fail marking**

Modules may only be marked on a pass/fail basis with the permission of University Teaching Committee. Approval of such modules will only be granted where there is a clear and convincing rationale for this approach (for example, competency based modules in professional/vocational subjects). Such modules cannot be compensated.

## **G1.7 Non-compensatable modules**

Departments should give thought to the possibility of designating some modules in Graduate Certificates as non-compensatable,<sup>18</sup> given their small credit volume, to ensure that it is not possible for Graduate Certificates to be awarded to students who have achieved failing marks in key components of the discipline reflected in the intended outcomes for the award. The risks related to such modules, and possible alternatives must be fully considered (see Undergraduate Modular Scheme: Framework for Programme Design, Appendix VIII). The use of non-compensatable modules must be approved by University Teaching Committee and will be recorded by the University and departments.

## **G1.8 Recalibrating marks**

Where a Board of Examiners has reason to believe that the raw marks arising from a particular module do not provide an adequate reflection of student performance on the appropriate University scale, the marks should be recalibrated to the University scale, either by remarking or by a rescaling procedure. If rescaling is undertaken it must be performed in the following way:

A number of points of correspondence between the original marking scale and the University scale should be identified. In particular the minimum and maximum marks on the original scale should be placed in correspondence with 0 and 100 respectively on the University scale. Points of correspondence should be located using academic judgement, bearing in mind any relevant descriptors. A sample calculation is presented in Appendix K. The same principle is to be followed, pro rata, if only part of a module assessment is affected.

It is important that the marks of all students taking the module are rescaled in the same way. If the module is shared between programmes the department taking formal responsibility for the module should take the lead in the process. The External Examiners should be informed of any rescaling and the process and its outcome(s) must be formally documented.

## **G2. Compensation and reassessment**

### **G2.1 Compensation**

In defined circumstances credit may be awarded for failed module(s) where the failure is compensated by achievement in other module(s).

---

<sup>18</sup> Departments should note that, in any case, pass/fail modules are non-compensatable by definition.

**G2.1.1 Compensation in Graduate Certificates**

If a student fails one or more modules s/he may still receive the credit provided that:

- i. s/he has failed no more than 20 credits, and
- ii. no module marks fall below the threshold for compensation appropriate for its level,<sup>19</sup> and
- iii. the rounded credit-weighted mean over all modules taken in the programme (including the failed modules) is at least 40.

**G2.1.2 Compensation in Graduate Diplomas**

If a student fails one or more modules s/he may still receive the credit provided that:

- i. s/he has failed no more than 40 credits, and
- ii. no module mark falls below the threshold for compensation appropriate for its level, and
- iii. the rounded credit-weighted mean over all modules taken in the programme (including the failed modules) is at least 40.

**G2.2 Reassessment**

Reassessment is an opportunity for students to redeem failure for the award of credit to meet award requirements. It should be noted that failure in pass/fail modules are always classified as outright fails and cannot be compensated, and consequently any fails of pass/fail modules must be redeemed by reassessment if the student is to progress.

**G2.2.1 Reassessment in Graduate Certificates**

Where a student fails taught modules and the award requirements cannot be met by application of the compensation rules, the student is entitled to reassessment in a maximum of 20 credits-worth of failed modules provided that they have failed no more than 30 credits, with no more than 20 credits-worth of outright fail (i.e. module marks less than 30 (or 40 for a level-7 (M) module)).

**G2.2.2 Reassessment in Graduate Diplomas**

Where a student fails modules and the award requirements cannot be met by application of the compensation rules, the student is entitled to reassessment in a maximum of 40 credits-worth of failed modules provided they have failed no more than 60 credits, with no more than 40 credits-worth of outright fail (i.e. module marks less than 30 (or 40 for a level-7 (M) module)).

**G2.2.3 Compensation and reassessment**

If, following the application of the compensation rules, a student has not met the overall progression or award requirements then they may be reassessed in modules for which potentially compensatable<sup>20</sup> marks have already been achieved. This will simply be an opportunity (not a requirement).

<sup>19</sup> For level-6 (H) modules, the threshold for compensation is 30. For level-7 (M) modules, the threshold is 40.

<sup>20</sup> By potentially compensatable marks we mean marks between 30-39 for level-H (6) modules and between 40-49 for level-M (7) modules, which could be compensated if, following reassessment, a student's profile of marks means the compensation criteria could be applied.

## **G2.3 All programmes**

A student may only be reassessed in a particular module on one occasion.

## **G2.4 Format of Reassessment**

Whilst reassessments need to be appropriate to measure the learning outcomes, they do not necessarily have to follow the same format as the first assessment. No assessment instruments with which students are unfamiliar should be introduced at the reassessment stage, however.

## **G2.5 Modules without reassessment opportunities**

Any modules for which reassessment opportunities cannot be provided should be clearly identified in the programme specification and approved by University Teaching Committee.

## **G2.6 Lower volume award**

Where a student is not permitted a reassessment opportunity (i.e., cannot meet the specified award requirements through reassessment as defined above) and there are no exceptional circumstances s/he may be eligible for a lower volume award (see Section C above).

# **G3. Awards**

## **G3.1 Non-classified awards**

Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas are not classified. However, a distinction could be awarded for a Graduate Diploma (see criteria below).

## **G3.2 Distinctions (Graduate Diplomas only)**

To be recommended to Senate for the award of a Graduate Diploma with distinction a student must achieve the following at the first attempt:

- i. a rounded credit-weighted mean of at least 70 over all modules, and
- ii. no failed modules.

## G4. Module requirements and marking scheme for Graduate Senior Status Bachelors Programmes

### G4.1 Summative assessments

Every module should be summatively assessed in order to obtain an indication of a student's success in meeting the assessment criteria used to gauge the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme. Credit will be awarded upon passing a module's assessment(s).

### G4.2 Numerical marking

Each module should carry one numerical mark rounded to the nearest integer on the relevant University mark scale, unless the module is designated as pass/fail.

### G4.3 University marking scale

The University mark scale applied at Graduate Senior Status Bachelor Level (HE level 4 to level 6 (H)) is as follows:

- First-class Honours 70-100
- Upper second-class Honours 60-69
- Lower second-class Honours 50-59
- Third-class Honours 40-49
- Fail 0-39\*

\* Note that a fail mark of 30-39 is potentially compensatable (see below), and marks of 0-29 and fails on pass/fail modules are outright fails.

### G4.4 Recalibrating marks

Where a Board of Examiners has reason to believe that the raw marks arising from a particular module do not provide an adequate reflection of student performance on the appropriate University scale, the marks should be recalibrated to the University scale, either by remarking or by a rescaling procedure. If rescaling is undertaken it must be performed in the following way.

A number of points of correspondence between the original marking scale and the University scale should be identified. In particular the minimum and maximum marks on the original scale should be placed in correspondence with 0 and 100 respectively on the University scale. Points of correspondence should be located using academic judgement, bearing in mind any relevant descriptors. A sample calculation is presented in Appendix K. The same principle is to be followed, pro rata, if only part of a module assessment is affected.

It is important that the marks of all students taking the module are rescaled in the same way. If the module is shared between programmes the department taking formal responsibility for the module

should take the lead in the process. The External Examiners should be informed of any rescaling and the process and its outcome(s) must be formally documented.

Any rescaling must be completed before the reports are produced for the final Board of Examiners Meeting.

## **G4.5 Pass mark**

The pass mark for any Masters-level modules taken as part of a Graduate Senior Status Bachelors Programme is 50.

## **G4.6 Pass/fail modules**

Modules may only be marked on a pass/fail basis with the permission of University Teaching Committee. Approval of such modules will only be granted where there is a convincing rationale for this approach (for example, competency based modules in professional/vocational subjects). Such modules will not contribute to the calculation of the final degree classification and failure in these modules cannot be compensated (see sections on Compensation below).

## **G4.7 Non-compensatable**

In exceptional circumstances (e.g., relating to PSRB requirements) a case may be made to University Teaching Committee for modules to be denoted as non-compensatable and/or for which reassessment opportunities cannot be provided. The risks related to such modules, and possible alternatives must be fully considered (see the Framework for Programme Design).

## **G4.8 Credit-weighted marks**

Every stage of a programme generates, alongside the profile of module marks, a credit-weighted total mark that is carried forward to degree classification, as appropriate (see Section G6 below). This process occurs only if a student has met the progression requirements for each stage (see Section G5 below).

# **G5. Progression in Graduate Senior Status Bachelors Programmes**

## **G5.1 Progression expectations**

To progress from one stage to the next a student must achieve 120 credits as specified for their registered programme at the appropriate level(s) for the stage (see the relevant programme specification and the Framework for Programme Design). These credits can be obtained by passing modules, by compensating failure in a limited number of modules with marks between 30 and 40% (see "Compensation") or by reassessment in a limited number of modules.

**G5.1.1 Progression processes**

The progression processes are run in the following order: assessment, compensation, reassessment, compensation. If a student achieves 120 credits after any one of these processes, they will progress to the following stage. If however, they fail to qualify for compensation or reassessment after failure due to the high load of failed credits, or due to not meeting the compensation rules even after reassessment, they will be deemed to have failed the stage.

**G5.1.2 Additional requirements**

In addition, any supplementary progression requirements specified for their registered programme must be met.

**G5.1.3 Accredited programmes**

Programmes subject to accreditation by Professional Standards and Regulatory Bodies may have additional requirements, such as higher pass marks and lower thresholds of compensation. Programme documentation should make it clear what the consequences are if a student meets normal UoY progression rules but fails to meet the PSRB requirements. These consequences may include transfer to a non-accredited programme of study or termination of the student's study.

**G5.1.4 Transferring programmes**

A student should only be considered for transfer to a different programme, if s/he has met the progression requirements plus any additional programme requirements relating to the new programme of study. This may entail having made particular module selections to meet PSRB or later pre-requisite requirements, where these are essential to meet the overall programme learning outcomes. Requests to transfer must be approved by the receiving department and by the Special Cases Committee.

**G5.1.5 Additional credit**

A student may only register for additional credit (more than 120 credits per year) where this is expressly approved as part of the programme specification, or with explicit permission from the Special Cases Committee. Where additional credit is taken, it cannot be included in the calculation of any progression decisions or degree classifications, and as such it must be clear to both the student and the department which credit is additional and which is core.

**G5.2 Compensation**

In defined circumstances credit may be awarded for failed module(s) where the failure is compensated by achievement in other module(s). Please note: Modules which are marked as pass/fail cannot be compensated.

**G5.2.1 Compensation in Graduate Senior Status Bachelors Programmes**

- a. In stage 1, if a student fails one or more modules (i.e., achieves a module mark below 40) in the stage s/he may still receive the credit for the failed module(s) and progress provided that:
  - i. s/he has failed no more than 40 credits, and



- ii. no module marks are lower than 30, and
- iii. the rounded credit-weighted mean over all modules taken in the stage (including the failed module(s)) is at least 40.

b. In stage 2, if a student fails one or more modules s/he may still receive the credit and progress to classification provided that:

- i. s/he has failed no more than 40 credits, and
- ii. no module mark falls below the threshold for compensation appropriate for its level,<sup>21</sup> and
- iii. the rounded credit-weighted mean over all modules taken in the stage (including the failed module(s)) is at least 40.

## G5.3 Reassessment

Reassessment is an opportunity for students to redeem failure for the award of credit to meet progression or award requirements. It should be noted that failure in pass/fail modules are always counted as outright fails and cannot be compensated, and consequently any fails of pass/fail modules must be redeemed by reassessment if the student is to progress.

### G5.3.1 Time limit

A student may only be reassessed in a particular module on one occasion. If a student elects not to take a reassessment opportunity when it is offered, the original module mark will be carried forward into the progression calculation at that time. It is not possible subsequently to choose to take the reassessment at a later date.

### G5.3.2 Modules without reassessment opportunities

Any modules for which reassessment opportunities cannot be provided should be clearly identified in the Programme Specifications and approved by University Teaching Committee. Departments may determine whether to reassess a module at the module level or at the component level in light of the nature of the assessment(s) but must make clear to the students in the module specification what the parameters of reassessment are, including whether there are any circumstances in which a student might be permitted to be reassessed on a passed component of a failed module. (This is expected normally only to be permitted in cases where the failed component is non-reassessable).

### G5.3.3 Post-reassessment

The following conditions should apply to the treatment of marks after reassessment:

- a. progression decisions following reassessment should be made using the better of the original and reassessment marks for each failed module;
- b. following progression, however, where the original credit-weighted mean did not meet the progression requirement, the credit-weighted total mark for the stage should be capped to the lowest value consistent with the mean mark criterion for that stage;
- c. following progression, where the original credit-weighted mean has already met the progression requirement, the original credit-weighted total mark for the stage should be allowed to stand.

<sup>21</sup> For level C/4, I/5 and H/6 modules, the threshold for compensation is 30.

**G5.3.4 Lower award**

Where a student is not permitted a reassessment opportunity (i.e., cannot meet the specified progression requirements through reassessment as defined above) and there are no exceptional circumstances the student's registration will be discontinued. S/he may be eligible for a lower credit-volume award.

**G5.3.5 Resits**

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

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

- students taking the reassessment have an outright fail for the module for which they are being reassessed
- it is in the interest of the student's learning not to be reassessed in the August resit period and for no other reason
- the reassessment does not impinge on teaching and other assessments
- the student is given five weeks' notice of reassessment
- the reassessment does not require a University administered examination

**G5.3.6 Resits for students overseas**

All candidates are normally expected to attend resit examinations in York on the scheduled dates. Departments may be given the opportunity, however, to make a special case for overseas students to take resit examinations at a later date than other candidates, provided they are prepared to produce special question papers for the late resits and provided the arrangements are approved in advance by the Chair of the Standing Committee on Assessment.

**G5.4 Thresholds for Reassessment in Graduate Senior Status Bachelors programmes**

- a. In stage 1, where a student fails modules and the progression requirement for the stage cannot be met by application of the compensation rules, the student is entitled to reassessment in a maximum of 90 credits-worth of failed modules (per stage) provided that they have failed no more than 90 credits in that stage with no more than 50 credits-worth of outright fail marks (i.e. module marks less than 30) in that stage.
- b. In stage 2, where a student fails modules and the award requirements for the stage cannot be met by application of the compensation rules, the student is entitled to reassessment in a maximum of 40 credits-worth of failed modules provided that they have failed no more than 40 credits.
- c. If, following the application of the compensation rules, a student has not met the overall progression or award requirements then they may be reassessed in modules for which potentially compensatable marks<sup>22</sup> have already been achieved. This will simply be an opportunity, not a requirement.

<sup>22</sup> By 'potentially compensatable' marks, we mean marks between 30-39 (for level C/4, I/5 and H/6 modules), which

## G6. Degree Classification for Graduate Senior Status Bachelor's Degree Awards

### G6.1 Classification Status

The Graduate Senior Status Bachelors award is a classified degree.

### G6.2 Calculating degree classification

The mechanism for calculating degree classification is as follows:

- Stage averages are calculated based on the credit-weighted mean of the first attempt marks.
- Only where the credit weighted mean of first attempt marks would not have met the progression criteria for the stage, the stage average will be calculated based on the credit weighted mean of best attempts and capped at the lowest value consistent with progression at that level. In this case, the lowest value consistent with progression will be used in place of the “credit weighted total” in all following processes.
- For Graduate Senior Status Bachelors Programmes, the mark, rounded to the nearest integer, is computed with the credit-weighted total marks for stages 1 and 2 weighted in the ratio of 2:3;
- The classification will be determined by the position of this mark on the University scale unless it lies in the borderline region, defined as the two points below a classification boundary;
- In borderline cases, the next higher classification will be awarded if, and only if, the mark, rounded to the nearest integer, with the credit-weighted total marks for stages 1 and 2 weighted in the ratio 1:1 OR 1:2 lies in a higher classification band. No further second order conditions will be applied;

### G6.3 Pass/fail marks

Pass/fail marks do not contribute to the degree classification.

### G6.4 First-class degrees with distinction

Boards of Examiners, when establishing final degree classifications, are entitled to give special consideration to the award of first-class degrees with distinction (“starred firsts”) and to establish criteria in line with their own marking schemes to allow them to do so.

---

could be compensated if, following reassessment, a student's profile of marks indicates the compensation criteria could be applied.

The following basic requirements for the award of first-class degrees with distinction should be adhered to by all Boards of Studies: award of a distinction requires the explicit approval of External Examiners;

- i. criteria must be expressed in terms of the University mark scale;
- ii. criteria must be specific (phrases such as 'the great majority' or 'substantial' should not be used) and state with precision what the criteria are and how they should be applied.

Candidates being considered for a first-class degree with distinction must meet the criteria for a first class degree under the Modular Scheme award rules. The criteria used to calculate distinctions should follow one of the following models:

- a. a minimum overall weighted average (usually 80%, but certainly over 70%) in all marks contributing to the final award, or
- b. a specified weighted proportion of marks over a minimum mark, and a maximum of 12.5% of the weighted contribution to the award below 65%, based on the University mark scale.

#### **G6.4.1      *Supporting statement***

Any Board of Studies wishing to recommend the award of a first-class Honours degree with distinction should submit a supporting statement together with the programme's published criteria for such awards, to the Examinations Office for submission to the Standing Committee on Assessment/Senate. These recommendations must be submitted attached to the standard pass list, which should also indicate the recommendation of a distinction for the candidates affected.

# Pre-Masters Programmes

<b>Pre-Masters Programmes</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>PM1. Marking Scheme for Pre-Masters Programmes</b>	<b>127</b>
PM1.1 Summative assessment	127
PM1.2 Numerical mark	127
PM1.3 University mark scale	127
PM1.4 English language requirements	127
PM1.5 Recalibrating marks	127
PM1.6 Pass/fail modules	128
PM1.7 Exceptional circumstances	128
<b>PM2. Progression</b>	<b>128</b>
PM2.1 Expectations	128
PM2.2 Pass/fail modules	128
<b>PM3. Compensation and Reassessment</b>	<b>129</b>
PM3.1 Compensation	129
PM3.2 Reassessment	129
PM3.2.1 Reassessment opportunity	129
PM3.2.2 Limited time to reassessment	129
PM3.2.3 Reassessment marks cap	130
PM3.2.4 Non-credit reassessment	130
PM3.2.5 Limitation to reassessment	130
PM3.2.6 Exceptional Circumstances	130

# PM1. Marking Scheme for Pre-Masters Programmes

## PM1.1 Summative assessment

Every module should be summatively assessed in order to obtain an indication of a student's success in meeting the assessment criteria used to gauge the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme. Credit will be awarded upon passing a module's assessment(s).

## PM1.2 Numerical mark

Each module should carry one numerical mark rounded to the nearest integer on the relevant University mark scale, unless the module is designated as pass/fail.

Where a module assessment is made up from a number of components, the normal expectation is that the fixed weightings to be applied to each component mark should be specified in advance and made known to the students. Module marks are then calculated as the weighted mean of the component marks. Departments who would like to apply an alternative approach must obtain the permission of the Chair of the SCA, and should expect to undertake any non-standard administration associated with the alternative.

## PM1.3 University mark scale

The University mark scale applied at pre-Masters level (for modules level 6/HE level H) will be in the range 0-100. The pass mark for any given module is 40. A fail mark of 30-39 is potentially compensatable (see below), and marks of 0-29 and fails on pass/fail modules are outright fails.

## PM1.4 English language requirements

Pre-Masters programmes may include English language modules, whose level shall be mapped to the Common European Framework of Reference. Pre-Masters programmes shall include a module to be used to determine whether a student has met any specified English Language requirements for progression. Due to the specific nature of the marking scheme for English Language modules, the marks for this module will not be used for the calculation of overall award or progression marks. This module must, however, be passed in order to achieve the award of Pre-Masters.

## PM1.5 Recalibrating marks

Where a Board of Examiners has reason to believe that the raw marks arising from a particular module do not provide an adequate reflection of student performance on the appropriate University scale, the marks should be recalibrated to the University scale, either by remarking or by a rescaling procedure. If rescaling is undertaken it must be performed in the following way.

A number of points of correspondence between the original marking scale and the University scale should be identified. In particular the minimum and maximum marks on the

original scale should be placed in correspondence with 0 and 100 respectively on the University scale. Points of correspondence should be located using academic judgement, bearing in mind any relevant descriptors. A sample calculation is presented in Appendix K. The same principle is to be followed, pro rata, if only part of a module assessment is affected.

It is important that the marks of all students taking the module are rescaled in the same way. If the module is shared between programmes, the department taking formal responsibility for the module should take the lead in the process. The External Examiners should be informed of any rescaling and the process and its outcome(s) must be formally documented. Any rescaling must be completed before the reports are produced for the final Board of Examiners Meeting.

## **PM1.6 Pass/fail modules**

Modules may only be marked on a pass/fail basis with the permission of University Teaching Committee. Approval of such modules will only be granted where there is a convincing rationale for this approach. Such modules cannot be compensated (see section PM3.1).

## **PM1.7 Exceptional circumstances**

In exceptional circumstances (e.g., relating to PSRB requirements) a case may be made to University Teaching Committee for modules to be denoted as non-compensatable and/or for which reassessment opportunities cannot be provided. The risks related to such modules, and possible alternatives must be fully considered (see the Framework for Programme Design).

# **PM2. Progression**

## **PM2.1 Expectations**

In order to progress to a Masters programme at the University, students must achieve the award of Pre-Masters (i.e. must pass all modules outright or via compensation or re-assessment) in addition to achieving any specified progression requirements.

## **PM2.2 Pass/fail modules**

Pass/fail modules will not be used in the numerical calculation of whether the student has met requirements for progression to Masters programmes. However, any pass/fail module must be passed for progression.

## PM3. Compensation and Reassessment

### PM3.1 Compensation

In defined circumstances credit may be awarded for failed module(s) where the failure is compensated by achievement in other module(s). The rounded credit weighted mean in each case will be calculated based on first attempt marks in the first instance, but will be calculated based on the lesser of the resit mark and the pass mark should the student be successful at resit.

Please note: Modules which are marked as pass/fail cannot be compensated.

#### **PM3.1.1 Possible Credit**

If a student fails one or more modules (i.e. achieves a module mark below 40) on a Pre-Masters Programme s/he may still receive credit for the failed module provided that:

- i. s/he has not been compensated more than 30 credits, with this total including both any modules previously compensated and the module to be compensated; and,
- ii. no module marks are lower than 30; and,
- iii. the rounded credit-weighted mean over all modules taken thus far (including failed modules) is at least 40.

### PM3.2 Reassessment

Reassessment is an opportunity for students to redeem failure for the award of credit to meet progression or award requirements. It should be noted that failure in pass/fail modules are always counted as outright fails and cannot be compensated, and consequently any fails of pass/fail modules must be redeemed by reassessment.

#### **PM3.2.1 Reassessment opportunity**

Re-assessment will be offered in all failed modules which are not designated as non-reassessable (thus a student could potentially re-assess all 80 credits of an 80-credit programme). This reflects the particular nature of the pre-Masters programme and the associated progression to Masters programmes.

#### **PM3.2.2 Limited time to reassessment**

If a student elects not to take a reassessment opportunity when it is offered, the original module mark will be carried forward for the purposes of calculating the award and progression to Masters programmes. It is not possible subsequently to choose to take the re-assessment for the purposes of award / progression calculation at a later date.



**PM3.2.3 Reassessment marks cap**

For students who need to undertake reassessment for a module in order to redeem failure for the award of credit, re-assessment marks will be capped at the module pass mark. The capped mark will be used in calculations for the award of pre-Masters and will be recorded on the transcript. Should students fail to achieve the module pass mark by reassessment, the better of the original or resit mark will be recorded on the transcript. The uncapped resit mark will be used for the purposes of calculating progression decisions on a non-credit, non-award bearing basis.

**PM3.2.4 Non-credit reassessment**

All students who have not previously undertaken a reassessment for a module may be offered the opportunity to undertake a reassessment of the module on a non-credit, non-award-bearing basis if their module mark does not meet the progression requirement. Such a reassessment might be needed because the module is specifically mentioned in the student's progression requirement, or because the overall mark needs to be improved, and may be offered regardless of the original module mark (i.e. this opportunity may be offered to students who have already received a passing mark on the module or who have passed the module via compensation).

This is designed to provide reassessment opportunities for students who have met or are likely to meet the requirements for the award of a pre-Masters but not the requirements for guaranteed progression. The final mark used for determining progression will be the better of the original or reassessment. Reassessment offered on this basis does not affect the mark used for calculating the award of a pre-Masters. The original mark will be recorded on the student's transcript. If the progression requirement is explicit about the mark needed on a particular component of a module, then a reassessment for progression may be offered on a component basis, rather than for a whole module.

**PM3.2.5 Limitation to reassessment**

A student may only be reassessed in a particular module on one occasion. This applies to both reassessment for the purposes of award and reassessment for the purposes of progression.

**PM3.2.6 Exceptional Circumstances**

Where there are exceptional circumstances, a student may be offered the opportunity to take an assessment 'as if for the first time', as opposed to a reassessment. Further information is contained within the University's [Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment \(ECA\) policy](#).

# Progression and Award Rules for York Online Programmes

<b>Progression and Award Rules for York Online Programmes</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>YO1. Marking Schemes for York Online Programmes</b>	<b>132</b>
YO1.1 Summative assessment	132
YO1.2 Numerical marking	132
YO1.3 University mark scale	132
YO1.4 Passing mark	132
YO1.5 Pass/fail modules	133
YO1.6 Level 6 modules	133
YO1.7 Non-compensatable modules	133
YO1.8 Recalibrating marks	133
<b>YO2 Progression requirements in York Online Awards</b>	<b>134</b>
YO2.1 Optional Additional Credit	134
YO2.2 Compensation	134
YO2.3 Reassessment	135
YO2.3.1 Limited time for reassessment	135
YO2.3.2 Modules without reassessment opportunities	135
YO2.3.3 Non-reassessable modules	135
YO2.3.4 Potential re-assessment	135
YO2.3.5 Reassessment for lower credit	136
YO2.3.6 Transcript results and reassessment	136
YO2.3.7 Purpose of reassessment	136
YO2.3.8 ISM & non-ISM modules	136
<b>YO3 Merits and Distinctions for Postgraduate Degrees</b>	<b>136</b>
YO3.1 Classification terminology	136
YO3.2 Ineligible awards	136
YO3.3 Merits Masters	137
YO3.4 Postgraduate Diplomas	137
YO3.5 Distinctions Masters	137
YO3.6 Postgraduate Diplomas	137

## Postgraduate Programmes

### YO1. Marking Schemes for York Online Programmes

#### YO1.1 Summative assessment

Every module shall be summatively assessed in order to obtain an indication of a student's success in meeting the assessment criteria used to gauge the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme.

#### YO1.2 Numerical marking

Each module should carry one numerical mark, unless the module is designated as pass/fail (see below). The pass mark for level 7 (M) modules is 50. Where a module assessment is made up from a number of components, the normal expectation is that the fixed weightings to be applied to each component mark should be specified in advance and made known to the students. Module marks are then calculated as the weighted mean of the component marks.

#### YO1.3 University mark scale

i. The University mark scale applied at taught postgraduate level (level 7 (M) modules) is as follows:

- Distinguished performance at postgraduate level 70-100
- Good performance at postgraduate level 60-69
- Satisfactory performance at postgraduate level 50-59
- Fail 0-49\*

\* Note that a fail mark of 40-49 is potentially compensatable (see below), and marks of 0-39 and fail marks on pass/fail modules are outright fails.

ii. The University mark scale applied for components in H level modules included in taught postgraduate programmes is as follows:

- First-class Honours 70-100
- Upper second-class Honours 60-69
- Lower second-class Honours 50-59
- Third-class Honours 40-49
- Fail 0-39\*

\* Note that components on H level modules taught as part of taught postgraduate programmes will be combined into a single integer mark. This mark will be converted into a pass/fail mark, where marks greater than or equal to 40 will represent a pass.

#### YO1.4 Passing mark

In order to be awarded a postgraduate award, a student must achieve an award mark of at least 50% in one of two ways:

1. As a credit weighted mean of all first attempt taught module marks and any ISM
2. Where a student does not achieve at least 50% as the credit weighted mean of all first attempts, the credit weighted mean of all best attempts will be used, and this mean will be capped at 50%

## YO1.5 Pass/fail modules

Level 7 (M) modules may only be marked on a pass/fail basis with the permission of University Teaching Committee. Approval of such modules will only be granted where there is a convincing rationale for this approach (for example, competency based modules in professional/vocational subjects or where students are being introduced to a wide variety of techniques as part of an interdisciplinary programme). Such modules cannot be compensated, though reassessment is possible.

## YO1.6 Level 6 modules

All level 6 (H) modules taken as part of a postgraduate programme must be marked on a pass/fail basis. Compensation is not possible on these modules, though reassessment is possible where credit loads permit.

## YO1.7 Non-compensatable modules

Boards should also give thought to the possibility of designating some modules as non-compensatable, particularly within Postgraduate Certificate programmes given their small credit volume, to ensure that it is not possible for Postgraduate Certificates to be awarded to students who have achieved failing marks in key components of the discipline reflected in the intended learning outcomes for the award. The designation of modules as non-compensatable and/or not available for reassessment requires specific approval from UTC. The risks related to such modules, and possible alternatives must be fully considered (for more information, see the [Taught Postgraduate Modular Scheme: Framework for Programme Design](#))

## YO1.8 Recalibrating marks

Where a Board of Examiners has reason to believe that the raw marks arising from a particular module do not provide an adequate reflection of student performance on the appropriate University scale, the marks should be recalibrated to the University scale, either by remarking or by a rescaling procedure. If rescaling is undertaken it must be performed in the following way.

A number of points of correspondence between the original marking scale and the University scale should be identified. In particular the minimum and maximum marks on the original scale should be placed in correspondence with 0 and 100 respectively on the University scale. Points of correspondence should be located using academic judgement, bearing in mind any relevant descriptors. A sample calculation is presented in Appendix K. The same principle is to be followed, pro rata, if only part of a module assessment is affected.

It is important that the marks of all students taking the module are rescaled in the same way. If the module is shared between programmes the department taking formal responsibility for the module should take the lead in the process. The External Examiners should be informed of any rescaling

and the process and its outcome(s) must be formally documented.

## YO2 Progression requirements in York Online Awards

York Online programmes do not have formal progression requirements, but students should be reviewed regularly to ensure that it is still possible for them to successfully complete the programme. Students who fail modules at second attempt, or who exceed the compensation allowance for their programme should be advised of the impact that has on the awards for which they might be eligible before proceeding.

### YO2.1 Optional Additional Credit

Students may only take more credit than is required by their programme with the explicit permission of the Special Cases Committee. In the event that additional credit is approved, it will not contribute to progression or award requirements, and as such, additional credit must be distinguished from credit for award at the outset of the module.

### YO2.2 Compensation

Compensation In defined circumstances credit may be awarded where a fail mark(s) has been compensated for by achievement in other module(s); provided that it can be demonstrated that the programme's learning outcomes can still be achieved. Modules that are marked on a pass/fail basis cannot be compensated. Any other modules that are non-compensatable must receive explicit approval from University Teaching Committee and must be recorded in the Programme Specifications.

#### YO2.2.1 *Compensation in Masters*

If a student fails one or more non-Independent Study Modules (ISM) (i.e., achieves a mark below 50) s/he may still receive credit for the failed module(s) provided that:

- i. s/he has failed no more than 30 credits, and
- i. No best attempt marks are lower than 40, and
- ii. the rounded credit-weighted mean over all non-ISM modules (including the failed module(s)) is at least 50. (This will be calculated based on best attempts.) Independent Study Module(s) cannot be compensated.

#### YO2.2.2 *Compensation in Postgraduate Diplomas*

***If a student fails one or more modules (i.e., achieves a mark below 50) s/ he may still receive credit for the failed module(s) provided that:***

- i. s/he has failed no more than 30credits, and
- ii. no marks are lower than 40, and
- iii. the rounded credit-weighted mean over all modules (including the failed module(s)) is at least 50.

**YO2.2.3 Compensation in Postgraduate Certificates**

***If a student fails one or more modules (i.e., achieves a mark below 50) s/ he may still receive the credit for the failed module(s) provided that:***

- i. s/he has failed no more than 15 credits, and
- ii. no marks are lower than 40, and
- iii. the rounded credit-weighted mean over all modules (including the failed module(s)) is at least 50.

**YO2.3 Reassessment****YO2.3.1 Limited time for reassessment**

A student may only be reassessed in a particular module on one occasion. If a student elects not to take a reassessment opportunity when it is offered, the original module mark will be carried forward into the progression calculation at that time. It is not possible subsequently to choose to take the reassessment at a later date. Therefore, a student who decides to retain a mark in the 40-49 range rather than resit cannot later decide to resit the module if they accumulate more than 30 credits worth of otherwise compensatable marks.

**YO2.3.2 Modules without reassessment opportunities**

Any modules for which reassessment opportunities cannot be provided should be clearly identified in the Programme Specifications and approved by University Teaching Committee. The following conditions should apply to the treatment of marks after reassessment:

Resit marks will appear, uncapped, on transcripts, but will not be used in degree calculations or for merits and distinctions. Instead, award marks will be based on original 'first attempt' marks. In the event that the credit weighted mean of first attempt marks does not meet the minimum requirement for the award, but all credits were awarded through reassessment or compensation, the award mark will be set at the lowest value consistent with passing the award.

**YO2.3.3 Non-reassessable modules**

Where a student is not permitted a reassessment opportunity due to a module being non-reassessable, or where a reassessment opportunity is failed, the student may be entitled to continue to study, but only for a lower volume award for which they are still able to achieve enough credit in their remaining period of study. A student in this circumstance will not be permitted to undertake any ISM associated with the programme.

**YO2.3.4 Potential re-assessment**

Students may be reassessed in modules for which potentially compensatable marks have already been achieved. This will simply be an opportunity (not a requirement).

**YO2.3.5 Reassessment for lower credit**

If it is not possible for a student to achieve the credit required for her/ his intended award by reassessment, s/he is entitled to be reassessed for a lower credit volume award, as appropriate.

**YO2.3.6 Transcript results and reassessment**

For non-ISM modules, marks obtained following reassessment will not be capped. The reassessment mark will appear on the transcript but it will clearly indicate where marks have been achieved at first attempt and at reassessment.

**YO2.3.7 Purpose of reassessment**

Reassessment is an opportunity for students to redeem failure for the award of credit to meet award requirements.

**YO2.3.8 Reassessment ISM & non-ISM modules**

- a. Non-ISM modules: Where a student has failed module(s) they are entitled to reassessment to achieve the necessary credit. There is no limit to the number of credits in which York Online students can be reassessed.
- b. Independent study module (ISM): Where a student has failed a Masters' ISM with a mark below 40 there will be no opportunity for reassessment. However, where a student has been awarded a 'marginal fail' mark of between 40 and 49 they will have an opportunity to make amendments which would enable a passing threshold to be reached. The mark after resubmission will be capped at 50. See Appendix N for guidance in relation to the criteria for the awarding of a 'marginal fail'.

## YO3 Merits and Distinctions for Postgraduate Degrees

**YO3.1 Classification terminology**

Postgraduate degrees are not classified, so undergraduate classification terminology should not be used to describe achievement at this level (e.g. 2:1, First). The awards of Masters will, however, be marked out with Merit or Distinction where the student meets the appropriate criteria. The Postgraduate Diploma will also be marked out with a Merit or Distinction where the student meets the appropriate criteria, regardless of whether the award is achieved as an intended award, an early exit award, or as the result of a failed ISM.

**YO3.2 Ineligible awards**

The award of Postgraduate Certificate is not eligible for Merit or Distinction, regardless of whether it is achieved as an intended award or an early exit route.

### **YO3.3 Merits Masters**

To be recommended to Senate for the award of a Master's degree with merit a student must achieve the following at first attempt:

- i. a rounded credit weighted mean of at least 60 over all modules, and
- ii. a rounded credit weighted mean of at least 60 in the Independent Study Module(s) taken, and
- iii. no more than 15 credits of failed modules, with no module marks below 40.

### **YO3.4 Postgraduate Diplomas**

To be recommended to Senate for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma with merit a student must achieve the following at first attempt:

- i. a rounded credit weighted mean of at least 60 over all modules, and
- ii. no more than 15 credits of failed modules, with no module marks below 40.

### **YO3.5 Distinctions Masters**

To be recommended to Senate for the award of a Master's degree with distinction a student must achieve the following at first attempt:

- i. a rounded credit weighted mean of at least 70 over all modules, and
- ii. a rounded credit weighted mean of at least 70 in the Independent Study Module(s) taken, and
- iii. no failed modules.

### **YO3.6 Postgraduate Diplomas**

To be recommended to Senate for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma with distinction a student must achieve the following at first attempt:

- i. a rounded credit weighted mean of at least 70 over all modules, and
- ii. no failed modules.



## Postgraduate Programmes

<b>P1. Marking Schemes for Taught Postgraduate Programmes</b>	<b>139</b>
P1.1 Summative assessment	139
P1.2 Numerical marking	139
P1.3. University marking scale	139
P1.4 Minimum mark	140
P1.5 Pass/fail modules - Level 7	140
P1.6 Pass/fail modules - Level 6	140
P1.7 Non-compensatable modules	140
P1.8 Recalibrating marks	141
<b>P2. Progression requirements in Taught Postgraduate Awards</b>	<b>141</b>
P2.1 Progression point	141
P2.2 Progression Boards	141
P2.3 Staged programmes	142
P2.4 Optional Additional Credit	142
P2.5 Compensation	142
P2.6 Reassessment	143
<b>P3 Assessment rules for Masters that consist of 240 or more academic credits</b>	<b>145</b>
P3.1 Progression rules - first year	146
P3.2 Progression rules - second year	146
<b>P4 Merits and Distinctions for Postgraduate Degrees</b>	<b>147</b>
P4.1 Classification terminology	147
P4.2 Postgraduate Certificates	147
P4.3 Masters	147
P4.4 Postgraduate Diplomas	147
P4.5 Distinctions Masters	147
P4.6 Postgraduate Diplomas	147
<b>P.5. Marks from Partner Institutions on Joint and Dual Awards</b>	<b>148</b>

# P1. Marking Schemes for Taught Postgraduate Programmes

## P1.1 Summative assessment

Every module shall be summatively assessed in order to obtain an indication of a student's success in meeting the assessment criteria used to gauge the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme.

## P1.2 Numerical marking

Each module should carry one numerical mark, unless the module is designated as pass/fail (see below). The pass mark for level 7 (M) modules is 50.

Where a module assessment is made up from a number of components, the normal expectation is that the fixed weightings to be applied to each component mark should be specified in advance and made known to the students. Module marks are then calculated as the weighted mean of the component marks. Departments who would like to apply an alternative approach must obtain the permission of the Chair of the SCA, and should expect to undertake any non-standard administration associated with the alternative.

## P1.3. University marking scale

i. The University mark scale applied at taught postgraduate level (level 7 (M) modules) is as follows:

- Distinguished performance at postgraduate level 70-100
- Good performance at postgraduate level 60-69
- Satisfactory performance at postgraduate level 50-59
- Fail 0-49\*

\* Note that a fail mark of 40-49 is potentially compensatable (see below), and marks of 0-39 and fail marks on pass/fail modules are outright fails.

ii. The University mark scale applied for components in H level modules included in taught postgraduate programmes is as follows:

- First-class Honours 70-100
- Upper second-class Honours 60-69
- Lower second-class Honours 50-59
- Third-class Honours 40-49
- Fail 0-39\*

\* Note that components on H level modules taught as part of taught postgraduate programmes will be combined into a single integer mark. This mark will be converted into a pass/fail mark, where marks greater than or equal to 40 will represent a pass.

## **P1.4 Minimum mark**

In order to be awarded a postgraduate award, a student must achieve an award mark of at least 50% in one of two ways:

- As a credit weighted mean of all first attempt taught module marks and any ISM
- Where a student does not achieve at least 50% as the credit weighted mean of all first attempts, the credit weighted mean of all best attempts will be used, and this mean will be capped at 50%

## **P1.5 Pass/fail modules - Level 7**

Level 7 (M) modules may only be marked on a pass/fail basis with the permission of University Teaching Committee. Approval of such modules will only be granted where there is a convincing rationale for this approach (for example, competency based modules in professional/vocational subjects or where students are being introduced to a wide variety of techniques as part of an interdisciplinary programme). Such modules cannot be compensated, though reassessment is possible where credit loads permit.

## **P1.6 Pass/fail modules - Level 6**

All level 6 (H) modules taken as part of a postgraduate programme must be marked on a pass/fail basis. Compensation is not possible on these modules, though reassessment is possible where credit loads permit.

## **P1.7 Level 8/Doctoral level modules**

Level 8 (Doctoral - D) modules should be marked on the same University mark scale as level 7 (M) modules. Where one or more level 8 (D) modules forms part of an approved taught postgraduate programme they should be treated as level 7 (M) modules for purposes of calculating progression, compensation, reassessment, award and merit/distinction.

## **P1.8 Non-compensatable modules**

Boards should also give thought to the possibility of designating some modules as non-compensatable, particularly within Postgraduate Certificate programmes given their small credit volume, to ensure that it is not possible for Postgraduate Certificates to be awarded to students

who have achieved failing marks in key components of the discipline reflected in the intended learning outcomes for the award. The designation of modules as non-compensatable and/or not available for reassessment requires specific approval from UTC. The risks related to such modules, and possible alternatives must be fully considered (for more information, see the [Taught Postgraduate Modular Scheme: Framework for Programme Design](#))

## **P1.9 Recalibrating marks**

Where a Board of Examiners has reason to believe that the raw marks arising from a particular module do not provide an adequate reflection of student performance on the appropriate University scale, the marks should be recalibrated to the University scale, either by remarking or by a rescaling procedure. If rescaling is undertaken it must be performed in the following way.

A number of points of correspondence between the original marking scale and the University scale should be identified. In particular the minimum and maximum marks on the original scale should be placed in correspondence with 0 and 100 respectively on the University scale. Points of correspondence should be located using academic judgement, bearing in mind any relevant descriptors. A sample calculation is presented in Appendix K. The same principle is to be followed, pro rata, if only part of a module assessment is affected.

It is important that the marks of all students taking the module are rescaled in the same way. If the module is shared between programmes the department taking formal responsibility for the module should take the lead in the process. The External Examiners should be informed of any rescaling and the process and its outcome(s) must be formally documented.

## **P2. Progression requirements in Taught Postgraduate Awards**

### **P2.1 Progression point**

Each taught master's degree will have a progression point at the end of the taught section of the programme. In order to progress, students must have been awarded all credits for the taught section either by passing the original assessments, by compensation or by passing the reassessments in line with the compensation and reassessment rules below.

The progression processes will be run in the following order: assessment, compensation, reassessment, compensation.

## **P2.2 Progression Boards**

Progression Boards must take place for all Masters Programmes as soon as possible after all taught elements are marked. Decisions about reassessment, compensation and early exit awards will be made at the progression board. External Examiners must be involved in these meetings, either in person or by teleconference or email, and must have access to students completed and marked scripts prior to any meeting.

## **P2.3 Staged programmes**

Where a staged approach is taken to a programme (i.e., students register for a Certificate before progressing to a Diploma, etc.), the assessment rules are cumulative. So, for example, if a student undertakes 20 credits of reassessment during the 60 credits of the Certificate stage, they will only have 20 credits of reassessment available to them during the 60 credits of the Diploma stage. This is to ensure that all students who are awarded a Diploma or Masters have been subject to the same rules.

## **P2.4 Optional Additional Credit**

Students may only take more credit than is required by their programme with the explicit permission of the Special Cases Committee. In the event that additional credit is approved, it will not contribute to progression or award requirements, and as such, additional credit must be distinguished from credit for award at the outset of the module.

## **P2.5 Compensation**

In defined circumstances credit may be awarded where a fail mark(s) has been compensated for by achievement in other module(s); provided that it can be demonstrated that the programme's learning outcomes can still be achieved.

Modules that are marked on a pass/fail basis cannot be compensated. Any other modules that are non-compensatable must receive explicit approval from University Teaching Committee and must be recorded in the Programme Specifications.

### ***P2.5.1 Compensation in Masters***

If a student fails one or more non-Independent Study Modules (ISM) (i.e., achieves a mark below 50) s/he may still receive credit for the failed module(s) provided that:

- i. s/he has failed no more than 40 credits, and
- ii. no marks are lower than 40, and
- iii. the rounded credit-weighted mean over all non-ISM modules (including the failed module(s)) is at least 50.

Independent Study Module(s) cannot be compensated.

### **P2.5.2 Compensation in Postgraduate Diplomas**

If a student fails one or more modules (i.e., achieves a mark below 50) s/ he may still receive credit for the failed module(s) provided that:

- i. s/he has failed no more than 40 credits, and
- ii. no marks are lower than 40, and
- iii. the rounded credit-weighted mean over all modules (including the failed module(s)) is at least 50.

### **P2.5.3 Compensation in Postgraduate Certificates**

If a student fails one or more modules (i.e., achieves a mark below 50) s/ he may still receive the credit for the failed module(s) provided that:

- i. s/he has failed no more than 20 credits, and
- ii. no marks are lower than 40, and
- iii. the rounded credit-weighted mean over all modules (including the failed module(s)) is at least 50.

## **P2.6 Reassessment**

### **P2.6.1 Limited opportunity for reassessment**

A student may only be reassessed in a particular module on one occasion. If a student elects not to take a reassessment opportunity when it is offered, the original module mark will be carried forward into the progression calculation at that time. It is not possible subsequently to choose to take the reassessment at a later date.

### **P2.6.2 Modules without reassessment opportunities**

Any modules for which reassessment opportunities cannot be provided should be clearly identified in the Programme Specifications and approved by University Teaching Committee.

The following conditions should apply to the treatment of marks after reassessment:

- a. progression decisions following reassessment should be made using the better of the original and reassessment marks for each failed module;
- b. following progression, however, where the original credit-weighted mean did not meet the progression requirement, the credit-weighted total mark for the stage should be capped to the lowest value consistent with the mean mark criterion for that stage;
- c. following progression, where the original credit-weighted mean has already met the progression requirement, the original credit-weighted total mark for the stage should be allowed to stand;

- d. Original 'first sit' marks, rather than resit marks, will be used in calculations of award marks, and for merits and distinctions. Resit marks will appear, uncapped, on transcripts, but will not be used in degree calculations. In the event that the credit weighted mean of first attempt marks does not meet the minimum requirement for the award, but all credits were awarded through reassessment or compensation, the award mark will be set at the lowest value consistent with passing the award.

### ***P2.6.3 Discontinued registration***

Where a student is not permitted a reassessment opportunity (i.e., cannot meet the specified progression requirements through reassessment as defined above) and there are no exceptional circumstances the student's registration will be discontinued. S/he may be eligible for a lower credit-volume award.

### ***P2.6.4 Application of compensation rules***

If, following the application of the compensation rules, a student has not met the overall progression or award requirements then they may be reassessed in modules for which potentially compensatable marks have already been achieved. This will simply be an opportunity (not a requirement).

### ***P2.6.5 Lower credit award***

If it is not possible for a student to achieve the credit required for her/ his intended award by reassessment, s/he is entitled to be reassessed for a lower credit volume award, as appropriate. The number of credits in which s/he is entitled to be reassessed will be capped at the number permitted for the lower credit volume award.

### ***P2.6.6 Reassessment marks cap***

For non-ISM modules, marks obtained following reassessment will not be capped. The reassessment mark will appear on the transcript but it will clearly indicate where marks have been achieved at first attempt and at reassessment.

### ***P2.6.7 Purpose of reassessment***

Reassessment is an opportunity for students to redeem failure for the award of credit to meet award requirements. Students on taught postgraduate programmes must be informed of reassessment opportunities at least three weeks prior to the deadline or examination in order for them to prepare.

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

Masters programmes and the independent study module (ISM)

a. Masters: non-ISM modules

Where a student has failed modules and the award requirements cannot be met by application of the compensation criteria, s/he is entitled to reassessment in a maximum of 40 credits-worth of failed modules provided that they have failed no more than 60 credits with no more than 40 credits-worth of outright fail (i.e. module marks less than 40).

b. Masters: independent study module (ISM)

Where a student has failed a Masters' ISM with a mark below 40 there will be no opportunity for reassessment. However, where a student has been awarded a 'marginal fail' mark of between 40 and 49 they will have an opportunity to make amendments which would enable a passing threshold to be reached. The mark after resubmission will be capped at 50. See Appendix N for guidance in relation to the criteria for the awarding of a 'marginal fail'.

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 P4.5<sup>23</sup>

**P2.6.9 Postgraduate diploma**

Postgraduate Diploma: where a student has failed modules and the award requirements cannot be met by application of the compensation criteria, s/he is entitled to reassessment in a maximum of 40 credits-worth of failed modules provided that they have failed no more than 60 credits with no more than 40 credits-worth of outright fail (i.e. Module marks less than 40).

**2.6.10 Postgraduate certificate**

Postgraduate Certificate: where a student has failed modules and the award requirements cannot be met by application of the compensation criteria, s/he is entitled to reassessment in a maximum of 20 credits-worth of failed modules provided that they have failed no more than 30 credits with no more than 20 credits-worth of outright fail (i.e. Module marks less than 40).

---

<sup>23</sup> 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.



## P3 Assessment rules for Masters that consist of 240 or more academic credits

Note that the following rules do not apply to the MA in Social Work. Where a Masters consists of 240 or more academic credits and, as a consequence, exceeds one academic year when taken on a full-time basis, the compensation and reassessment rules will be applied at the end of the first and second year of the programme.

### P3.1 Progression rules - first year

At the end of the first year a progression board is held and the following rules are applied to the modules taken in year 1:

#### Compensation in Masters of 240 Credits or more

If a student fails one or more non-ISM modules (i.e., achieves a mark below 50)

- i. s/he may still receive credit for the failed module(s) provided that:
- ii. s/he has failed no more than 40 credits, and
- iii. no marks are lower than 40, and
- iv. the rounded credit-weighted mean over all non-ISM modules (including the failed module(s)) is at least 50.

#### Reassessment in Masters of 240 Credits or more

Where a student has failed modules and the award requirements cannot be met by application of the compensation criteria, s/he is entitled to reassessment in a maximum of 40 credits-worth of failed modules provided that they have failed no more than 60 credits with no more than 40 credits-worth of outright fail (i.e. module marks less than 40).

### P3.2 Progression rules - second year

At the end of the second year a final examination board is held and the following rules are applied to the modules taken in year 2:

#### Compensation in Masters

If a student fails one or more non-ISM modules (i.e., achieves a mark below 50) s/he may still receive credit for the failed module(s) provided that:

- i. s/he has failed no more than 40 credits, and
- ii. no marks are lower than 40, and
- iii. the rounded credit-weighted mean over all non-ISM modules (including the failed module(s)) is at least 50.

## P4 Merits and Distinctions for Postgraduate Degrees

### P4.1 Classification terminology

Postgraduate degrees are not classified, so undergraduate classification terminology should not be used to describe achievement at this level (e.g. 2:1, First). The awards of Masters will, however, be marked out with Merit or Distinction where the student meets the appropriate criteria. The Postgraduate Diploma will also be marked out with a Merit or Distinction where the student meets the appropriate criteria, regardless of whether the award is achieved as an intended award, an early exit award, or as the result of a failed ISM.

### P4.2 Postgraduate Certificates

The award of Postgraduate Certificate is not eligible for Merit or Distinction, regardless of whether it is achieved as an intended award or an early exit route.

### P4.3 Masters

To be recommended to Senate for the award of a Master's degree with merit a student must achieve the following at first attempt:

- i. a rounded credit weighted mean of at least 60 over all modules, and
- ii. a rounded credit weighted mean of at least 60 in the Independent Study Module(s) taken, and
- iii. no more than 20 credits of failed modules, with no outright fails.

### P4.4 Postgraduate Diplomas

To be recommended to Senate for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma with merit a student must achieve the following at first attempt:

- i. a rounded credit weighted mean of at least 60 over all modules, and
- ii. no more than 20 credits of failed modules, with no module marks below 40.

### P4.5 Distinctions Masters

To be recommended to Senate for the award of a Master's degree with distinction a student must achieve the following at first attempt:

- i. a rounded credit weighted mean of at least 70 over all modules, and
- ii. a rounded credit weighted mean of at least 70 in the Independent Study Module(s) taken, and
- iii. no failed modules.

## P4.6 Postgraduate Diplomas

To be recommended to Senate for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma with distinction a student must achieve the following at first attempt:

- i. a rounded credit weighted mean of at least 70 over all modules, and
- ii. no failed modules.

## P5. Marks from Partner Institutions on Joint and Dual Awards

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

- a. Where study at a partner institution is taken abroad, conversion tables must be available to students prior to their engagement on the programme to indicate how their marks from the partner institution will translate onto the York marks scheme. Programme-specific grade conversion tables must be established at the appropriate level of study; they will be on different scales depending whether undergraduate or postgraduate studies are undertaken. The grade conversion tables must be approved by the Standing Committee on Assessment.
- b. Only in exceptional circumstances should work completed whilst at a partner institution be re-marked by staff at the University of York, and then only with the explicit approval of the Special Cases Committee.
- c. Departmental examinations officers must use the approved conversion tables to convert grades provided by partner institutions. Departments should provide External Examiners with a clear statement of how worldwide marks have been treated.
- d. Departments may use their discretion when awarding marks above the top integer in a table for students who receive the top available mark in the local grading system. Tables should be used in conjunction with other information available from the partner university to ensure that discretionary marks are justified and evidenced. Evidence could include rankings in class, tutor reports, assessment sheets or other data/information, and should be reviewed on a case by case basis by the examinations officers in the department.
- e. Where the Centre for Global Programmes conversion tables are used, a range of marks is possible for fail grades. The minimum passing grade at a partner institution must be converted to a passing mark at York. If the partner institution has a range of failing grades, Departments should use their discretion to award an equivalent grade between 0% and 49%.

- f. Marks from partner institutions should be converted into the largest module possible which aligns with the number of credits taken in a given academic year at the partner institution. Where a partner institution does not operate a credit-based system, the size of the module will be determined by the proportion of the academic year spent in the partner institution, based on a notional 120 credit academic year.
- g. Departments are responsible for ensuring that appropriately sized modules are set up within the student record system (SITS) proposed through the online module catalogue to input partner institution's marks for each student.
- h. In the event that a student does not successfully complete their intended joint or dual award (either due to academic failure or withdrawal), they can be considered for University of York exit awards, though credits obtained at partner institutions cannot amount to more than 50% of the total credit used to obtain the exit award. (So, a student cannot count more than 30 credits of partner-institution credit towards a PGCert, and cannot count more than 60 credits of partner-institution credit towards a PGDip).
- i. Only modules taken at York will be eligible for re-assessment or compensation in line with the rules described in section P3. The credit-weighted mean applied will include the modules taken at partner institutions, as recorded in the student record system (SITs).

## Appendices

<b>Appendix A - Departmental Policy on Assessment</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>Appendix B - Glossary</b>	<b>152</b>
<b>Appendix C - Assessing individual contributions to group work</b>	<b>156</b>
<b>Appendix D - Definitions of Marking Processes</b>	<b>157</b>
<b>Appendix E - Implications vs Risk Graph – deciding appropriate marking procedures</b>	<b>159</b>
<b>Appendix F - Forms of feedback and good practice</b>	<b>161</b>
<b>Appendix G - Model for Departmental Statements on Feedback</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>Appendix H - Improving feedback on closed examinations and final assessments</b>	<b>164</b>
<b>Appendix I - Legal issues related to feedback</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>Appendix J - Increasing feedback to large groups</b>	<b>166</b>
<b>Appendix K - An example to illustrate procedures for rescaling marks</b>	<b>167</b>
<b>Appendix L - Writing clear examination instructions and questions</b>	<b>169</b>
<b>Appendix M - Progression flowchart: undergraduate awards</b>	<b>170</b>
<b>Appendix N - Independent study module (ISM): ‘marginal fail’</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>Appendix O - Marking to the Full Range</b>	<b>179</b>
<b>Appendix P - Guidance on Proofreading and Editing</b>	<b>180</b>
<b>Appendix Q - Improving student engagement</b>	<b>182</b>
<b>Appendix R - Stepped marking guidance</b>	<b>186</b>

## Appendix A - Departmental Policy on Assessment

The University policies on assessment, progression and awards define the majority of practice with regards to student assessment in order to ensure consistency across the institution. There is some allowable variation between disciplines and departments, however, and where institutional policies are not defined, departments are responsible for clearly publishing any policies and practices which affect its students.

Departmental policies must be presented in a durable format (such as a PDF) which forms part of the contract with the students, and which makes clear how assessments will be treated for all students on a given programme. This can take the form of a department or programme handbook, module specifications, or can exist as a stand-alone statement on assessment. These policies should be made easily available to students, and be stored until one year after all students from the affected cohort have completed their programme with the University. Departments are responsible for drawing students' attention to these policies as part of their induction process, and at relevant points in the programme (such as when an unfamiliar assessment format is encountered for the first time, or in the run-up to an assessment period).

Departments are encouraged to include explicit statements documenting the treatment of the following:

- a. An overview of the different types of assessment used in each component of the programme (diagnostic, procedural, formative and summative), their timing, and how they contribute to progression requirements and/or the final award. Any attendance requirements should be stipulated. Approaches to assessment should be explained, particularly if a variety of styles is not used. It is not necessary to include detailed module-by-module descriptions of assessment where these are covered in handbooks or module synopses that are available to students before they embark on each module.
- b. A description of how the department will treat assessment of study away from York within the University's study abroad rules.
- c. A description of the marking procedures used by the department, including:
  - i. any assessment which is not based on written or recorded work;
  - ii. arrangements for any non-anonymous marking
  - iii. procedures for double marking, or for alternative arrangements (for example, single marking against specimen answers);
  - iv. arrangements for blind double marking where this is practised;
  - v. other relevant instructions and guidance to markers; including the treatment of scripts that deviate from the rubric;
  - vi. an explanation of how differences in marks between first and second markers are resolved;
  - vii. the weightings for different components within modules;
  - viii. moderation procedures for individual assessments or modules;
  - ix. the involvement of External Examiners in the setting, vetting or approving of marks of individual assessments.
- d. Conventions governing feedback to students on performance (including timing and nature of feedback) and the release of provisional marks. Where work is returned to students, this should be indicated together with procedures for ensuring its future

availability to External Examiners. Where specimen assessments and answers are available to students, information should be given in the Written Statement. Where students are allowed supervised access to closed examination scripts details of departmental procedures should be given.

- e. Class descriptors (where appropriate) of expected standards of student attainment for each type of assessment, presented as positive achievements in the framework of intended learning outcomes (including transferable skills). It assists markers to use the full range of the scale if separate descriptors are included for marks in the 70s, 80s and 90s, and similarly for the low end of the scale. Levels of achievement should be calibrated, where appropriate, against Benchmark Statements and/or the FHEQ. Note that undergraduate criteria (e.g. upper second) must not be used to describe postgraduate performance standards. Differentiation by outcome in the context of appropriate assessment criteria may be necessary where undergraduates and postgraduates are taught and assessed together.
- f. The criteria for the recommendation of starred firsts.
- g. A description of examination procedures, including:
  - i. guidance for students who seek special arrangements (e.g. dyslexia, medical, disability or other personal reasons);
  - ii. procedures for publishing deadlines for submissions;
  - iii. procedures for students submitting assessments and for departments issuing receipts;
  - iv. policies on penalties (e.g. exceeding word-limits) etc
  - v. arrangements for assessments administered by departments;
  - vi. mitigating circumstances procedure.

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

## Appendix B - Glossary

**Anonymous marking:** the practise of marking a piece of work without knowledge of the identity of the student concerned.

**Answer key:** A previously agreed list of all the possible correct answers for an exam. To be used by single markers to guide marking.

**Assessment and degree classification policies:** the general basis and principles upon which a department assesses the performance of its students and determines degree classification.

**Assessment and degree classification practices:** the general means by which a department assesses the performance of its students and determines degree classification.

**Assessment criteria:** descriptions of the knowledge, skills and attributes that the learner is expected to demonstrate in order to confirm that learning outcomes have been achieved.

**Assessment method:** the means of assessing student performance in a component of a programme of study.

**Blind marking:** the practise of marking a piece of work without knowledge of the mark already assigned to it by another marker.

**Credit:** A quantified means of expressing equivalence of learning. Credit is awarded to a learner in recognition of the verified achievement of designated learning outcomes at a specified level. One credit corresponds to a notional workload of 10 hours (including all classes, private study and assessment).<sup>24</sup>

**Credit Level:** Indicates the module's relative intellectual demand, complexity and depth of learning and of learner autonomy.<sup>25</sup>

**Compensation:** the process by which an assessment board, in consideration of a student's overall performance, recommends that credit be awarded for part of a programme in which a student has failed to satisfy the assessment criteria, on the grounds that positive aspects of the overall performance outweigh the area of failure.

**Condonation:** the process by which an assessment board, in consideration of a student's performance, recommends that failure in part of the programme does not need to be redeemed in order for the student to progress or to gain the award for which s/he is registered.

**Continuous assessment:** the practice of assessing students on the basis of programme work undertaken while a module is in progress.

---

<sup>24</sup> Definition taken (or modified) from Credit and HE Qualifications: Credit guidelines for HE qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (November 2001).

<sup>25</sup> Definition taken (or modified) from Credit and HE Qualifications: Credit guidelines for HE qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (November 2001) See University guidance on [level descriptors](#).



**Closed examination:** a timed, invigilated examination conducted under traditional examination conditions.

**Departmental assessment:** assessment administered at the departmental level that does not contribute to the final award or to progression from one stage to the next of a programme (see also University assessment).

**Diagnostic assessment:** is used to show a learner's preparedness for a module or programme and identifies, for the learner and the teacher, any strengths and potential gaps in knowledge, understanding and skills expected at the start of the programme, or other possible problems. Particular strengths may lead to a formal consideration of accreditation of prior learning.

**Double marking:** the practice of two examiners marking the same piece of work.

**Exceptional circumstances:** unexpected or disruptive events which are beyond a student's control and are significant enough to adversely affect their academic performance during module work or an examination period.

**FHEQ:** the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (see [QAA Quality Code](#)).

**Formative assessment:** has a developmental purpose and is designed to help learners learn more effectively by giving them feedback on their performance and on how it can be improved and/or maintained. Reflective practice by students sometimes contributes to formative assessment.

**Foundation Degree:** These are programmes designed to be of two years duration full-time or the equivalent part-time, created with an employer's needs in mind and led in conjunction with employers.

**Full scale marking:** Marking using the full scale of marks 0-100 (as opposed to Stepped marking).

**GTA:** Graduate Teaching Assistant refers to a Postgraduate Research student involved in teaching at the University (term in use from 2017/18, formerly known as PGWT).

**Learning outcomes:** statements of the knowledge, skills and attributes that a learner is expected to have acquired after completion of a process of learning.

**Marking scale:** the numerical, alphabetical or other scale used by a department to assign a mark to student work.

**Module:** A self-contained, formally structured, learning opportunity with a coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes and assessment criteria. A module may comprise elements taught by different departments and its function may vary from one programme to another.

- Core module: a module required for a programme.
- Optional module: a module chosen from a prescribed list of modules within the approved programme (but see D.21).

- Elective module: a free-choice module chosen by a student from across the University and from outside their prescribed programme of study. The primary aim of electives is to enable students to develop skills and knowledge outside their main area(s) of study.
- Prerequisite module: a module which must be satisfactorily completed prior to embarking on another defined module.
- Co-requisite modules: module(s) which are mutually dependent. Both/all of which must be studied within a particular programme.
- Mutually exclusive modules: modules both/all of which cannot be studied within the same programme. Definitions taken (or modified) from.
- Credit and HE Qualifications: Credit guidelines for HE qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (November 2001).

**Open assessment:** the practice of assessing students through means other than closed examinations, e.g. through the writing of essays, reports and dissertations, or through non-written or non-recorded work.

**Peer Marking:** Peer Marking: the practice of peers (students from the same module or the same level of a programme) marking and providing feedback on formative student work.

**PGWT:** Postgraduates who teach. Up until 2016/17 this was the term referring to Postgraduate Research students involved in teaching at the University. From 2017/18 the term used is Graduate Teaching Assistant (see GTA).

**Programme:** The set of modules studied for a named award (this may include modules (core or optional) from outside the main department). These are set out in the Programme Specifications and approved by University Teaching Committee.

**Programme Specification:** Govern a programme of study as an approved pathway leading to a particular named award of the University (for example, BA in Archaeology, BSc in Biology, BA in English and Philosophy). They consist of a defined combination of modules, at an appropriate level, and set out the learning outcomes. These specifications are developed and maintained by Boards of Studies/Graduate School Boards and approved by University Teaching Committee.

**SCA:** the [Standing Committee on Assessment](#)

**SCC:** the [Special Cases Committee](#)

**Stepped Marking:** Stepped marking (also known as fixed point marking, platform marking, notch marking, categorical marking) is a clear and transparent marking process which restricts the number of marks available in each class band to an agreed scale (e.g. low/medium/high) - see [Appendix R](#).

**Summative assessment:** is used to indicate the extent of a learner's success in meeting the assessment criteria used to gauge the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme. University assessment: assessment contributing to progression from one stage to the next of a programme or to the final award (see also Departmental assessment).

**UTC:** the [University Teaching Committee](#)

**Weight:** the proportional contribution of an assessment (irrespective of module credit rating) to the aggregate mark on which progression or an award is decided.

## Appendix C - Assessing individual contributions to group work

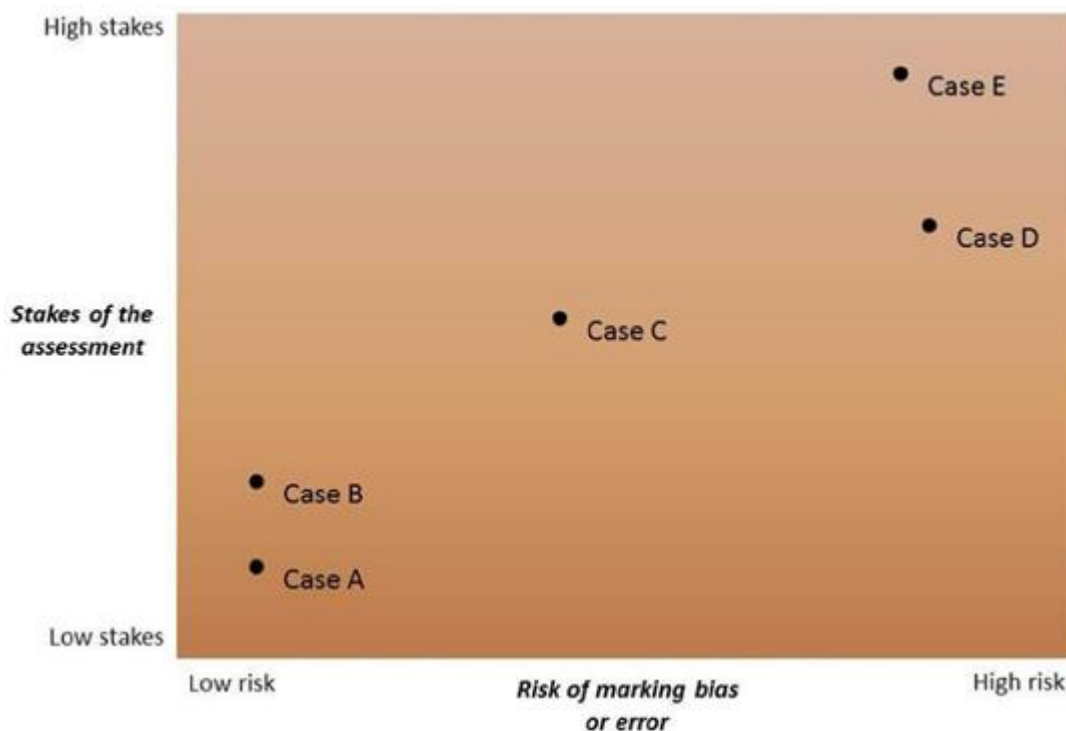
1. Individual mark – based on records / observation of process  
Each individual group member's contribution (as defined by predetermined criteria) is assessed using evidence from:
  - team log books
  - minutes sheets and / or
  - direct observation of process.They are awarded an individual mark based on this evidence.
2. Individual mark – for paper analysing process  
Marks are awarded for an individual paper from each student analysing the group process, including their own contribution and that of student colleagues.
3. Student distribution of a pool of marks  
The lecturer/tutor awards a set number of marks and lets the group decide how to distribute them.
  - a. For example, the product is marked 80 (out of a possible 100) by the lecturer. There are four members of the group. Four by 80 = 240 so there are 240 marks to distribute to the four members.
  - b. No one student can be given less than zero or more than 100. If members decide that they all contributed equally to the product, then each member would receive a mark of 80. If they decided that some of the group had made a bigger contribution, then those members might get 85 or 90 marks and those who contributed less would get a lesser mark.
4. Students allocate individual weightings  
The lecture/tutor gives a shared group mark, which is adjusted according to a peer assessment factor. The individual student's mark comes from the group mark multiplied by the peer assessment factor (e.g. X 0.5 for 'half' contribution or X 1 for 'full' contribution).
5. Peer Evaluation – average mark, using predetermined criteria  
Students in a group individually evaluate each other's contribution using a predetermined list of criteria. The final mark is an average of all marks awarded by members of the group and is ratified by the acknowledged academic marker.

## Appendix D - Definitions of Marking Processes

Process	Definition	Conditions
Single Marking	Single marker marks to criteria/ key	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formative assessments - any level</li> <li>Seminar performance - to specified criteria - any level</li> </ul>
Electronic assessment and marking	Absolute right/wrong item tests (true/false; matching; multiple choice)  Delivered and marked on the VLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formative assessments - any level</li> <li>Small student group (dependent on the capacity of a computer lab)</li> <li>VLE programme has been piloted and tested for reliability</li> </ul>
Answer Key Marking	Single marker or multiple single markers marking to a single specific answer key	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exam-type assessments where items lead to limited possible answers (e.g. mathematics, facts, information)</li> <li>Answer key has been piloted or used before</li> <li>Moderator appointed to oversee marking procedures, address problems, update the answer key and update the marking team</li> </ul>
Standardised marking	Marking is divided between a team of single markers following a standardisation session in which sample papers are marked and discussed to establish a shared understanding of acceptable answers/ unacceptable answers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Test-type assessment which involves answers which cannot be covered sufficiently by an answer key (eg. longer written answers to specific questions)</li> <li>Moderator appointed to run standardisation session, oversee marking procedures, be available for consultation re: problematic answers</li> <li>Marking is completed within a very limited time to ensure consistency</li> </ul>
Moderated Marking	Initial marking completed by experienced single markers, followed by sample marking by appointed moderator. Sample might include, for example, 10% of all marked papers including all failing papers and a cross section of other grade bands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any form of assessment where a clear standard has been established through stringent assessment design, criteria design, departmental marking activities and sample building</li> <li>If a particular set of marking is judged to be too harsh/ too lenient, the set must be checked and potentially remarked or scaled</li> </ul>

Second Marking	1 <sup>st</sup> markers mark and comment/ 2 <sup>nd</sup> markers see the marks and comments and confirm or challenge. Markers agree on a final mark based on criteria and reasoned discussion based on evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stage 2 or 3 medium to high stakes assessment where a clear standard has not been established or inexperienced markers are involved.</li> <li>● Moderator, prior to marking commencing, has the responsibility for marking a sample of assessments. This sample should be used for a moderation meeting with all the markers (or all the inexperienced markers) to establish the standard that is expected/ acceptable</li> <li>● Moderator deals with borderline or contentious cases and sample checks 10% of all new markers papers</li> <li>● Samples of work at each criteria level are retained to provide an example of standards for subsequent offerings of the module</li> </ul>
Blind, double marking	Two markers mark the work without access to each other's marks or comments. Markers meet to discuss and agree on a final mark through reference to the criteria and reasoned argument based on evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Very high stakes assessment where the anonymity of the student may be lost or the lecturer of the student has to be a marker (e.g. Independent Study Modules)</li> <li>● Very clear criteria are published beforehand to students and staff</li> </ul>
Joint Marking	Marking is completed by two (or more) markers at the same time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Particularly high-stakes performance based assessment where student anonymity is lost and a written or recorded record is kept</li> <li>● Student and staff have very clear criteria well beforehand</li> <li>● Markers have time following each performance to make reasoned judgements with reference to the criteria</li> <li>● All agreed marks and comments are recorded for each performance within the same day</li> <li>● A percentage of performance is always recorded for later standards development and moderation</li> <li>● To single mark performance based assessment, a recording MUST be made to allow for later moderation.</li> </ul>
Peer Marking	Students use criteria to judge the formative work of other students (on the same module or at the same level). This practice helps them to internalise standards through making critical judgements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Formative work: Any level for any assessment where appropriate and carefully considered.</li> <li>● Group work: appropriate where the process of working in a group is assessed.</li> <li>● Presentations: appropriate where peers constitute the audience and are therefore able to judge delivery and content.</li> </ul>

## Appendix E - The Implications vs Risk Graph – for deciding appropriate marking procedures



The X axis considers degree of risk of possible error. Areas which could contribute to increasing risk include:

- markers: the number of markers / ensuring consistency between markers / expertise or inexperience of markers;
- clarity of standards: availability of detailed criteria / agreed standard across markers / use of the answer key or criteria before;
- objectivity: the degree of anonymity of the student / the risk of possible bias / the degree of personal judgement involved;
- checking procedures: record kept of the assessment / checks in place.

The Y axis considers the implications of the mark for the student. This can range from the mark not affecting their module mark or degree award (e.g. formative assessment), to the mark having a significant effect on whether they pass their degree (i.e. due to the size of the module or the weighting given to a particular assessment task).

- Case A = a VLE, multiple choice, formative language test for second year students. Very low degree of possible error + very low implication= machine marking acceptable.
- Case B = a summative, first year Maths exam (run for the 10th time with 4 experienced markers). Low degree of possible error + low implication= single marking acceptable.
- Case C = a summative second year Politics exam (50% of a 20 credit module – well established module with very clear criteria and several experienced markers). Medium degree of possible error + medium implication= moderated marking.

- Case D = summative third year Management project presentation (50% of a 20 credit module – no anonymity – no record kept of presentation) High degree of possibility of error + medium implication = joint marking.
- Case E = summative third year History dissertation (80% of a 40 credit module – questionable anonymity – high degree of judgement needed) High possibility of error + high implication = blind, double marking.



## Appendix F - Forms of feedback and good practice

The form feedback takes can be very varied. For example: Whole class / In class

- Discussion which includes responses to student input / queries;
- Provision of answers to formative exercises or discussion of formative exercises in class;
- Comments on areas that could be improved or that were particularly successful following a formative or summative assessment;
- Comments on presentations or on student participation;
- Outline or Model answers to exercises or examinations.

Individual – spoken

- Individual, face-to-face guidance (comments on work, discussion of exercises, comments on individual performance);
- Discussion in office hours.

Individual – written

- Written comments on individual formative work;
- Written corrections on exercises;
- Summative Assessment Feedback sheets (for examinations , essays, presentations);
- Supervised access to written comments on examinations.

Peer

- Feedback provided by students on each other's individual work;
- Feedback provided by seminar groups to an individual or other groups;
- Feedback provided by a whole class to each other via the VLE.

Web-based

- Answers provided or commentary given on completed online formative exercises;
- Email answers to individual queries;
- Comments in response to discussion in an electronic forum.

Audio

- Comments on work spoken onto a recording device / computer and provided to students as a digital file.

Practices which support a better understanding of feedback

- Small, frequent assessment and feedback. Making assessment, and therefore feedback, an integral, regular part of a module from Day One can mean that students develop a better understanding of what is expected of them and how feedback connects to their learning progression.
- Clarity of Information. Students and staff should be very clear about how feedback is approached in the department. Information should be made available and discussed with students specifically. In addition, staff should consider if the written feedback that they provide is legible, clear and understandable.
- Working with criteria. Raising awareness of the assessment criteria being used in a module can help students to understand what is required and to identify where they can improve

- their performance. For example, allowing students to use the criteria to critique past student work / answers in lectures or seminars can be illuminating.
- Increasing student engagement with feedback. Students can be asked to fill in cover sheets for assignments on which they assess their own work according to criteria or on which they make specific requests for feedback on certain areas. Students can also be involved in peer feedback. For example, asking students to do small, frequent tasks that are shared and discussed in pairs or groups can help to increase student engagement and increase student understanding of expectations and standards.
  - Turn feedback into feedforward: Students may pay less attention to feedback which only refers to an assignment or module which is considered finished. A student's major interest and need often relates more to what they can do next time to get better results. Feedback which points toward improvements and learning for the future may demand more of the students' attention.

This list is by no means definitive. If you would like to contribute other forms of feedback, please contact the [Learning Enhancement Team](#).

## Appendix G - Model for Departmental Statements on Feedback

A department's Statement on Feedback should be an explicit expression of the department's attitude toward learning and its students and should serve as a useful document for students. As such, the Statement should not be too long, should be easily readable, accessible to students and discussed by supervisors so that the ethos of the department can be understood.

Information that could be included in a 'Statement on Feedback' includes:

1. The University's principles underlying the provision of feedback and / or a statement of the department's commitment to those principles.
2. A brief statement outlining the department's approach to teaching, learning and assessment and how feedback relates to these. This statement could include a definition of feedback and an explanation of its role in effective academic learning. The statement could also include a description of the roles of academics and students in the learning process, their responsibilities relating to feedback and how their roles change as the degree progresses.
3. A timetable of assessments and feedback deadlines. A rationale should be included for feedback deadlines, especially ones longer than four weeks, in order to clarify procedures.
4. A statement clarifying the formative / summative assessment balance in the department and how this relates to student learning and the purposes of feedback.
5. An explanation of formative feedback methods – specifying the nature and extent of feedback that students can expect in class, in seminars, via websites and in relation to particular types and units of formative assessment. Any specific pro-formas or criteria to be used should be attached as appendices.
6. An explanation of summative feedback methods – specifying the nature and extent of feedback that students can expect following submissions of essays / projects / dissertations; following examinations; following presentations. Any specific pro-formas or criteria to be used should be attached as appendices.
7. A statement clearly specifying who is responsible for feedback and from whom the students will receive feedback for particular types and units of assessment e.g. GTAs, peers, module leaders, supervisors. The statement should clarify how students can find out when these people are available and clarify how students can find further guidance or support if necessary i.e. websites / library / resources.
8. Statement clarifying constraints / requirements which relate to feedback – e.g. feedback and release of provisional marks; the future availability of work to External Examiners; degree of support available from tutors on coursework.
9. Appendices.

## Appendix H - Improving feedback on closed examinations and final assessments

Providing useful feedback on closed examinations and final assessments is particularly important in departments / modules where the majority of the student mark is reliant on an exam or final assessment AND / OR formative assessments and summative assessments assess different skills.

Here are some suggestions about how feedback can be provided on closed examinations, final essays, dissertations or projects.

Cohort exam feedback – general feedback to a group or cohort providing correct or model answers, highlighting common misconceptions, errors and technical deficiencies and offering advice on how these may be remedied.

- make markers' / examiners' reports available on the department website;
- introduce a policy that all examinations submitted by the designer have a completed answer sheet / model answer sheet that can be published immediately after the exam;
- provision of answer sheets to students;
- provision of model answers to students;
- arranging cohort feedback meetings immediately after examinations, whilst marking is continuing, to give immediate impression of performance;
- feedback on exam performance to a cohort via a module VLE site following final examinations.

Individual feedback – personal feedback to an individual highlighting positive elements and areas for improvement.

- arranging feedback meetings for specific students i.e. developing a system whereby borderline and fail students are offered an individual consultation;
- arranging “surgeries” after marking for students to ask questions;
- provision of feedback cover sheets with two good points and two areas for improvement;
- provision of feedback cover sheets with grading according to criteria + comments;
- provision of opportunity for students to view their exam scripts under supervision.

Timely feedback

- investigate ways to shorten turnaround times for feedback on assessments to within four weeks;
- provide cohort feedback before marks are finalised.

## Appendix I - Legal issues related to feedback

1. In relation to giving feedback on examinations, departments are reminded of the University's policy on the annotation of examination scripts and disclosure of examiners' comments under the Data Protection Act.
2. Where feedback is provided electronically (e.g. via email), departments should ensure that feedback which falls under the definition of personal data is secure. Departments should further note the University Teaching Committee's decision that departments should be encouraged to require their students and staff to use the internal email system or VLE as opposed to private email accounts (not Yahoo, Hotmail etc.) when communicating about formal academic matters.
3. Where feedback is provided electronically or in hard copy, academic staff are advised to keep copies until the year after the meeting of Senate at which the student's award is confirmed, in the event that the quality of feedback becomes an issue within the appeals procedure.
4. The University has adopted a policy of disclosure of assessment marks and marks, whether or not they are held in a 'relevant filing system' within the Data Protection Act. This information is the minimum feedback to students that should be provided by departments and it should not therefore be necessary for students to make formal access enquiries under the Act.
5. Boards of Examiners are encouraged to keep records of the reasons for their grading decisions and are required to do so in cases where special considerations have been applied.
6. Departments are responsible for ensuring that all written or recorded work contributing to the final award is available for external examination or comment. Where such work has been returned to students, students are responsible for retaining it in a portfolio for possible future external scrutiny and departments are responsible for alerting students to this requirement.

## Appendix J - Increasing feedback to large groups

Providing regular feedback to large groups of students can prove difficult. To address such situations, the following approaches can be helpful.

### 1. Peer feedback

Involving students in assessment and feedback matters such as:

- a. defining criteria for assessment;
- b. discussing course standards and expectations;
- c. assessing past papers and peer assessments;
- d. providing feedback to each other on regular, formative work is an ideal way to engage students more fully in the learning.<sup>26</sup>

### 2. Marking and providing feedback on samples of work

For a large cohort in which regular (e.g. weekly) work is seen to be necessary for effective learning, students can be asked to produce several pieces of work during the module, however only a sample need be marked e.g.:

- a. Students produce 5 lab reports and they can choose their two best to be marked;
- b. A module requires students to complete three case studies, one of which will be chosen, at random, to be marked;
- c. Students keep a collection of work completed during the course and they choose what is to be included in a limited portfolio to be marked.

### 3. Group work

Group assessment may prove an effective means of ensuring that students learn from each other while at the same time reducing the amount of marking. Group work is no guarantee of a reduced assessment load, but it may save time if students work in groups and submit fewer pieces of work. The key considerations in planning group work assessment are:

- a. Deciding what is to be assessed – the process, the product, or both;
- b. Selecting criteria, particularly if the group process is to be assessed;
- c. Deciding who is to 'do' the assessing – staff, students or both; and
- d. Deciding how marks are to be assigned – collectively, individually, or a mixture.

Tension can arise from group work assessment due to the perception that some students are marked unfairly, due to "group" marks being given that do not reflect differences in individual student effort. See footnote below.<sup>27</sup>

This list is by no means definitive. If you would like to suggest other forms of feedback to be added to the list, please contact the [Learning Enhancement Team](#).

<sup>26</sup> See Gibbs G and Simpson C (2004) 'Conditions under which assessment supports student learning', *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education* 1, pp3-31; also Brown, S. Rust, C. and Gibbs, G. *Strategies for Diversifying Assessment in Higher Education*. Oxford: Oxford Centre for Staff Development (1994).

<sup>27</sup> For advice concerning addressing such tension and other matters related to group work and assessment, please see: Habeshaw S, Gibbs G & Habeshaw T (1992) '53 problems with large classes: making the best of a bad job', Bristol: Technical and Educational Services; Race P, Brown S & Smith B (2005) (2nd ed) *500 tips on assessment*, London: Routledge Falmer; Rust C (2001) *A briefing on the assessment of large groups* York: LTSN Generic Centre.

## Appendix K - An example to illustrate procedures for rescaling marks

This appendix illustrates the procedure for recalibrating marks when it there is reason to believe that the raw marks do not adequately reflect performance on the University mark scale.

For the purposes of illustration we suppose that a taught postgraduate module, initially marked out of 100, has resulted in a set of marks which do not appear to be correctly calibrated to the taught postgraduate mark scale. The first step in the recalibration process is to identify a number of points of correspondence (at least three) between the original mark scale and the University mark scale. This is done by reference to descriptors, and using academic judgement. The lowest and highest marks on the two scales must be identified.

For example, the following points of correspondence might be identified:

Original mark scale	University postgraduate mark scale
0	0
44.5	49.5
60.5	69.5
100	100

Effectively, this sets the borderline pass mark as 44.5 for this paper, and the borderline distinction mark at 60.5. More points might be needed if the distribution of original marks is particularly irregular.

Next, the points of correspondence are used to divide the two mark scales into intervals:

Original mark scale	University postgraduate mark scale
0 to 44.5	0 to 49.5
44.5 to 60.5	49.5 to 69.5
60.5 to 100	69.5 to 100

The rule for rescaling an original mark  $M$  depends on the interval in which it lies. If the lowest and highest values in the interval on the original mark scale are  $L_0$  and  $H_0$ , and the lowest and highest

values on the corresponding interval on the University scale are  $L_U$  and  $H_U$  then the rescaled mark ( $R$ ) is given by

$$R = L_U + (M - L_O) \times \frac{H_U - L_U}{H_O - L_O}$$

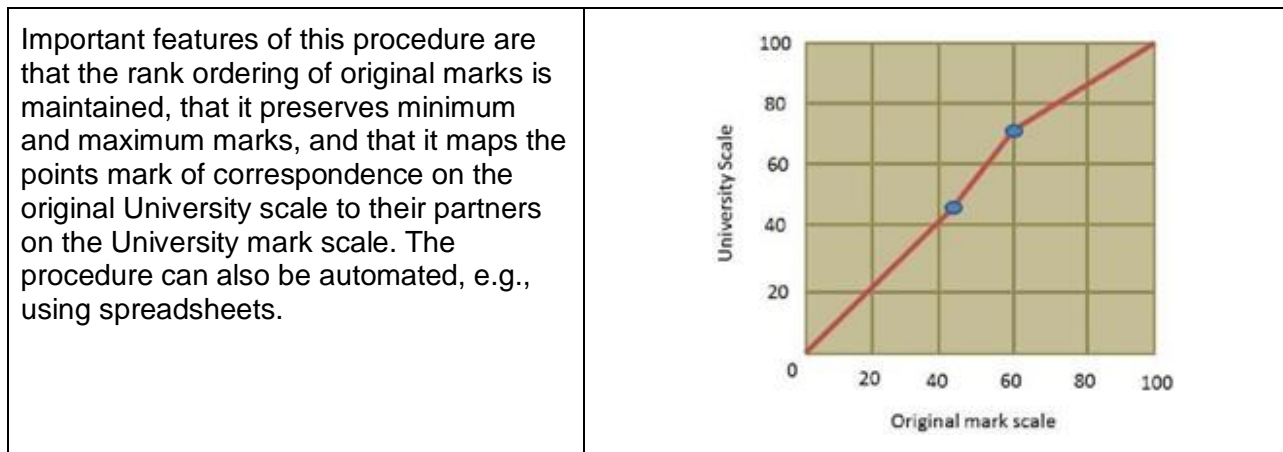
which divides the interval between  $L_U$  and  $H_U$  in the same ratio as  $M$  divides the interval between  $L_O$  and  $H_O$ . In our example, an original mark of 52 lies in the interval between 44.5 and 60.5, which corresponds to the interval between 49.5 and 69.5 on the University scale. Thus  $M = 52$  is rescaled to

$$R = 49.5 + (52 - 44.5) \times \frac{69.5 - 49.5}{60.5 - 44.5} = 58.89$$

Similarly, an original mark of  $M = 75$  is rescaled to

$$R = 69.5 + (75 - 60.5) \times \frac{100 - 69.5}{100 - 60.5} = 80.70$$

The mapping between the original mark scale and the University mark scale in the example may be represented by the following graph:



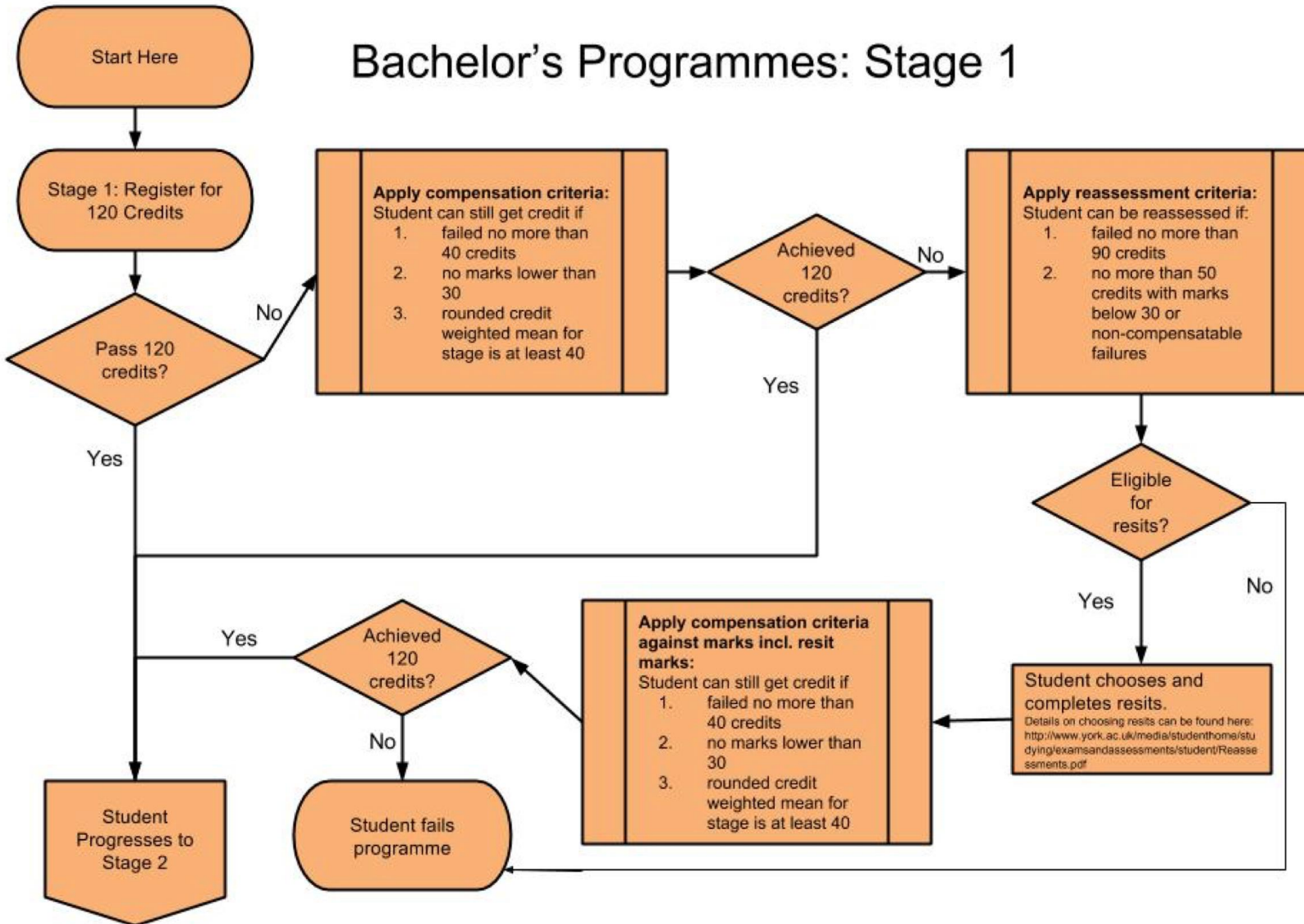


## Appendix L - Writing clear examination instructions and questions

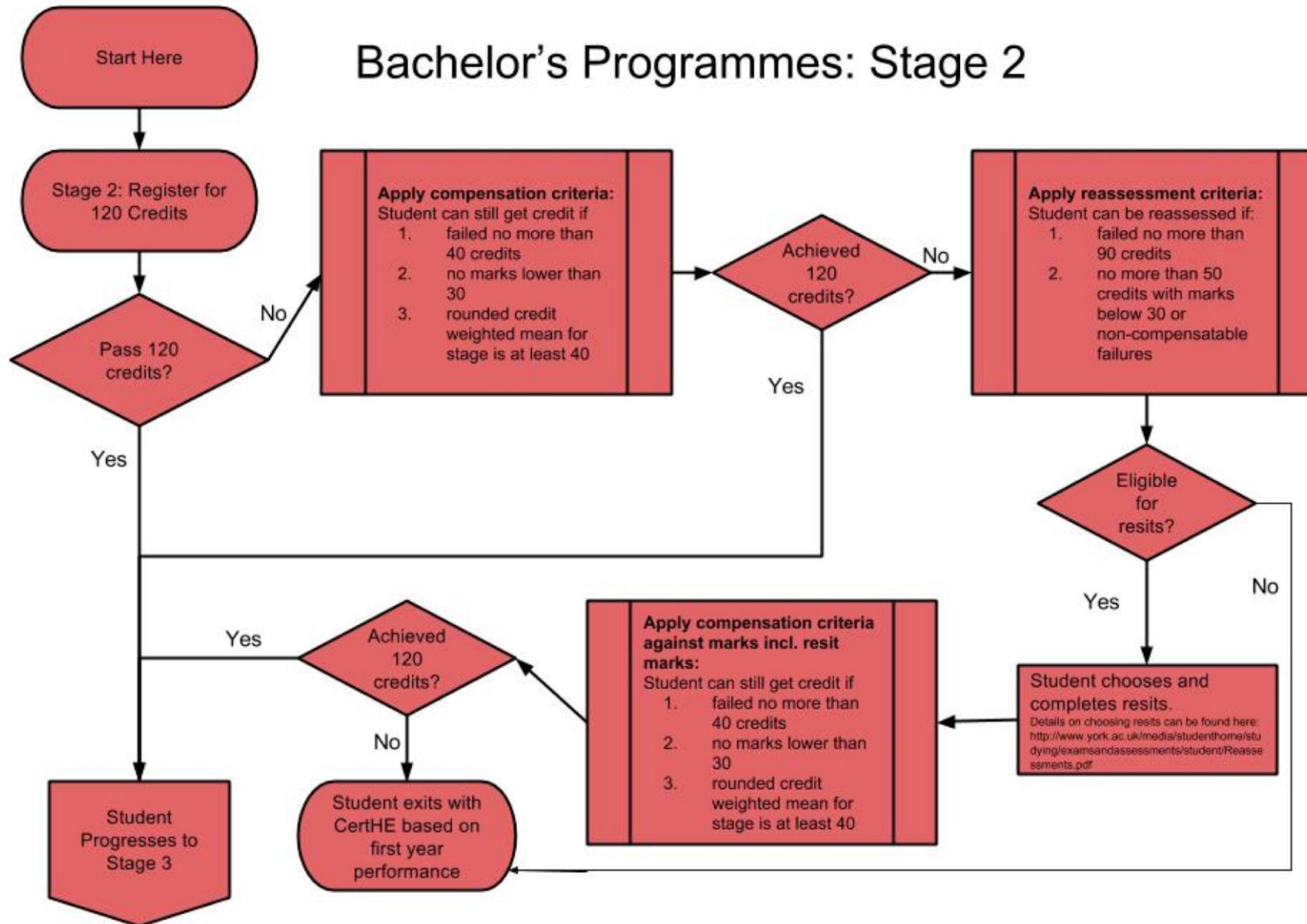
1. Keep instruction sentences short and to the point. Avoid over complicated or ambiguous instructions i.e. multiple clause or multiple part questions, unless absolutely necessary.
2. Express questions as precisely, clearly and simply as possible – extraneous material or sloppy construction of a question will only serve to hold up students, act as a distraction and possibly adversely affect student performance.
3. In writing questions, try to avoid
  - a. colloquialisms
  - b. slang
  - c. negative or double negative questions
  - d. highly specialist language (unless necessary to the assessment)
  - e. wording which has a national, regional or cultural bias.
4. Ask a colleague to proof-read all examination instructions and questions and highlight any punctuation errors, grammatical errors and any possible areas of confusion caused by language.
5. Following the examination, conduct basic item analysis – if more than the average number of students get an item wrong, review the design and wording of the item as well as considering possible problems with learning.

## Appendix M - Progression flowchart: Undergraduate awards

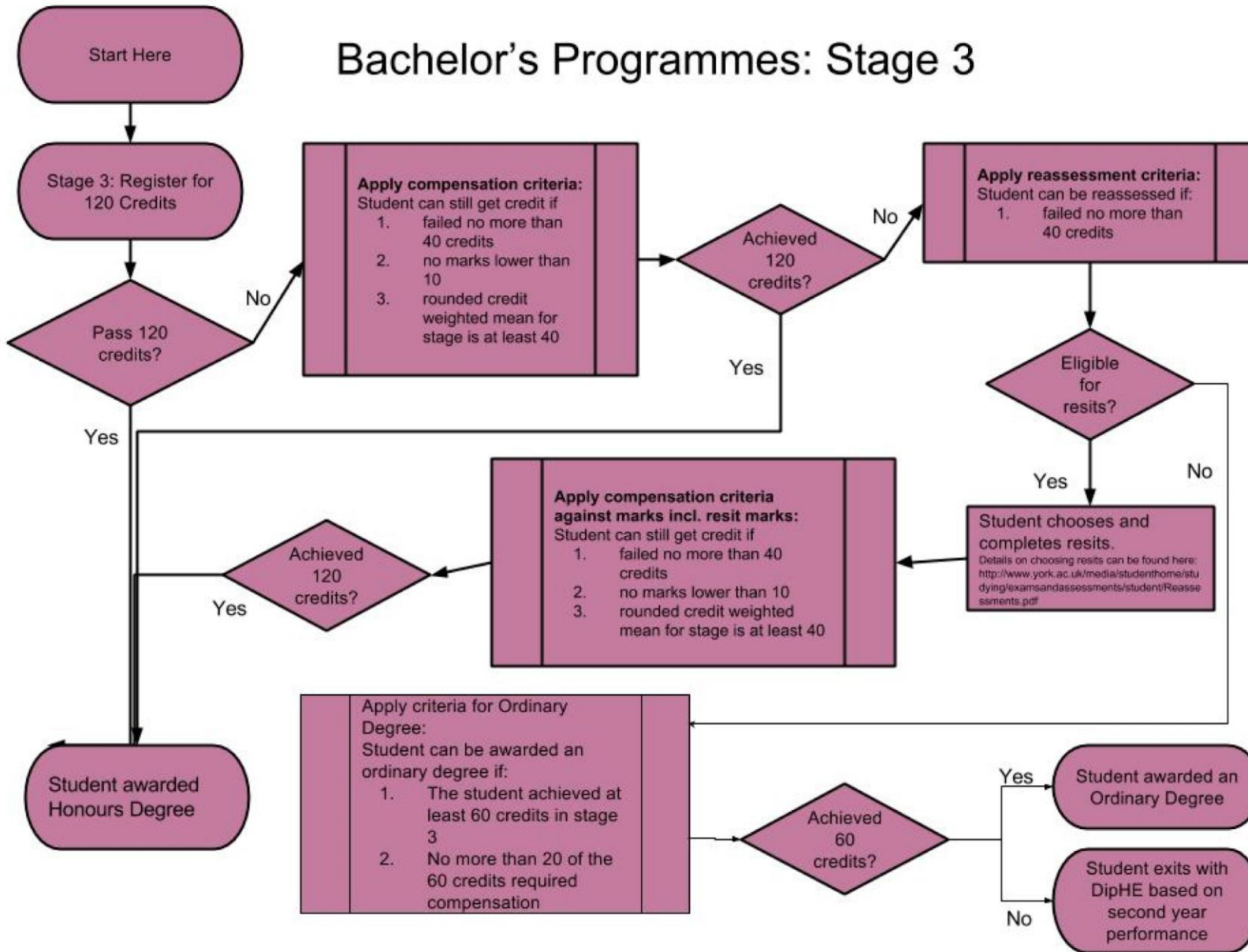
### Bachelor's Programmes: Stage 1



## Bachelor's Programmes: Stage 2

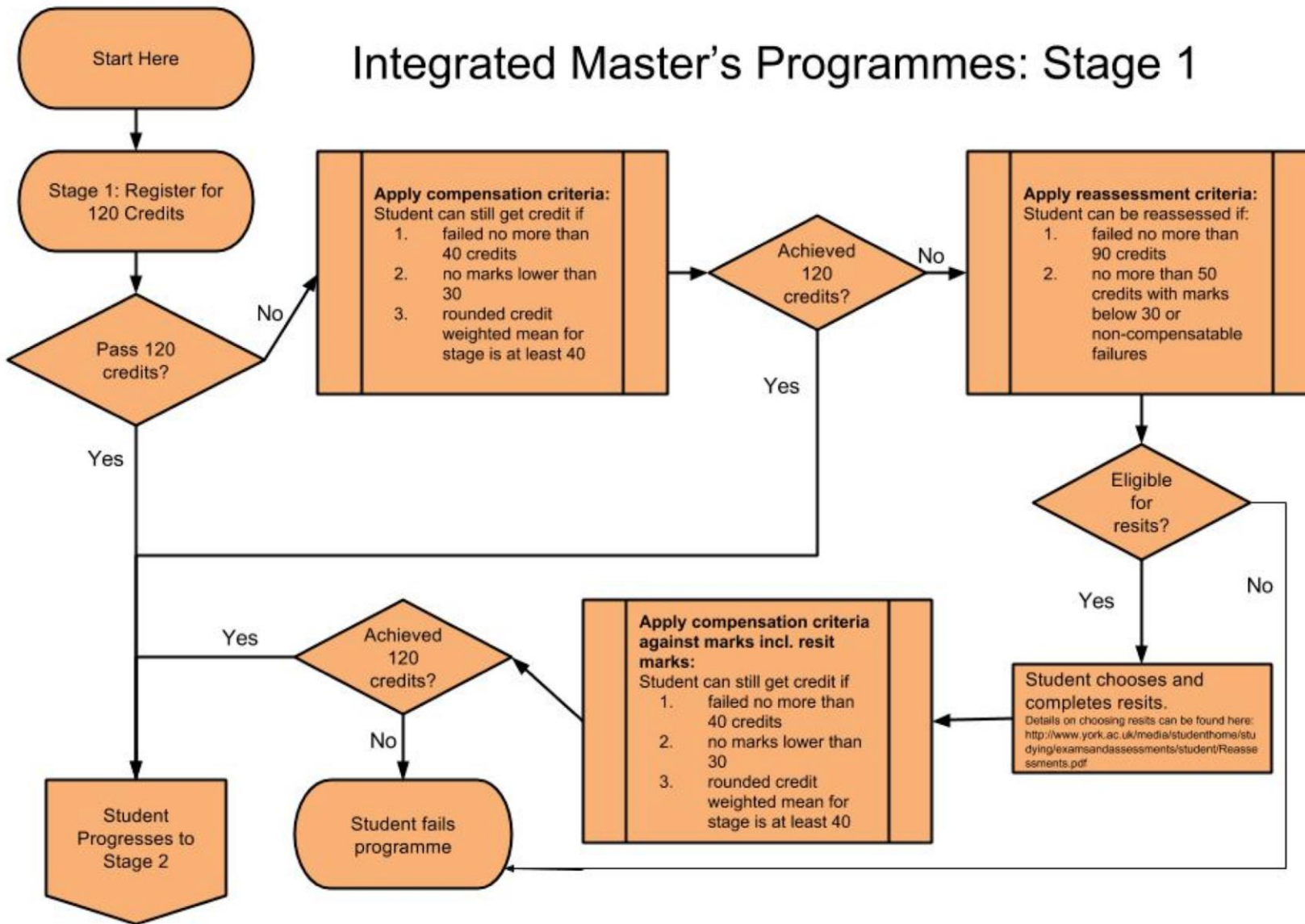


# Bachelor's Programmes: Stage 3

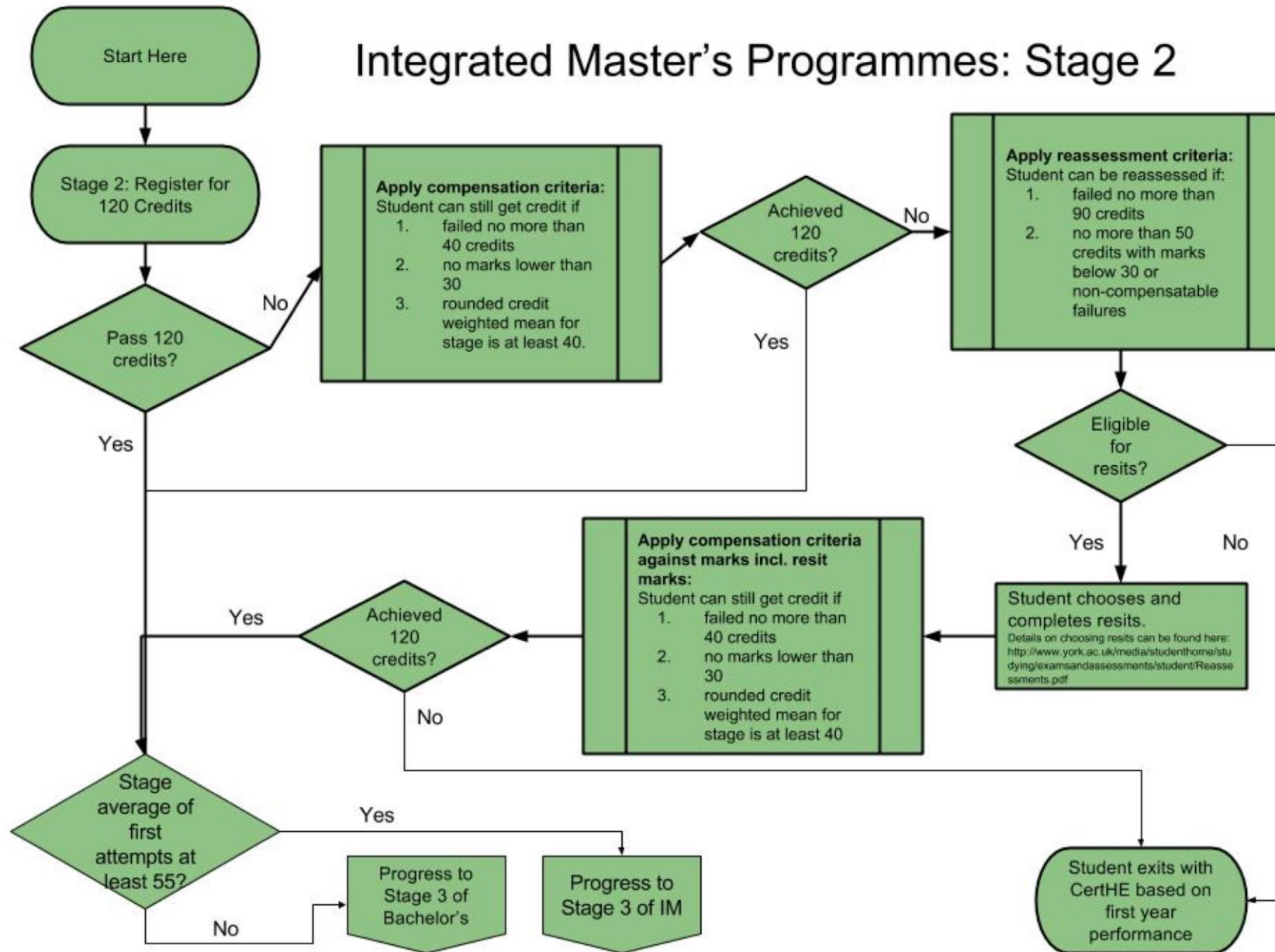


Progression flowchart: integrated masters

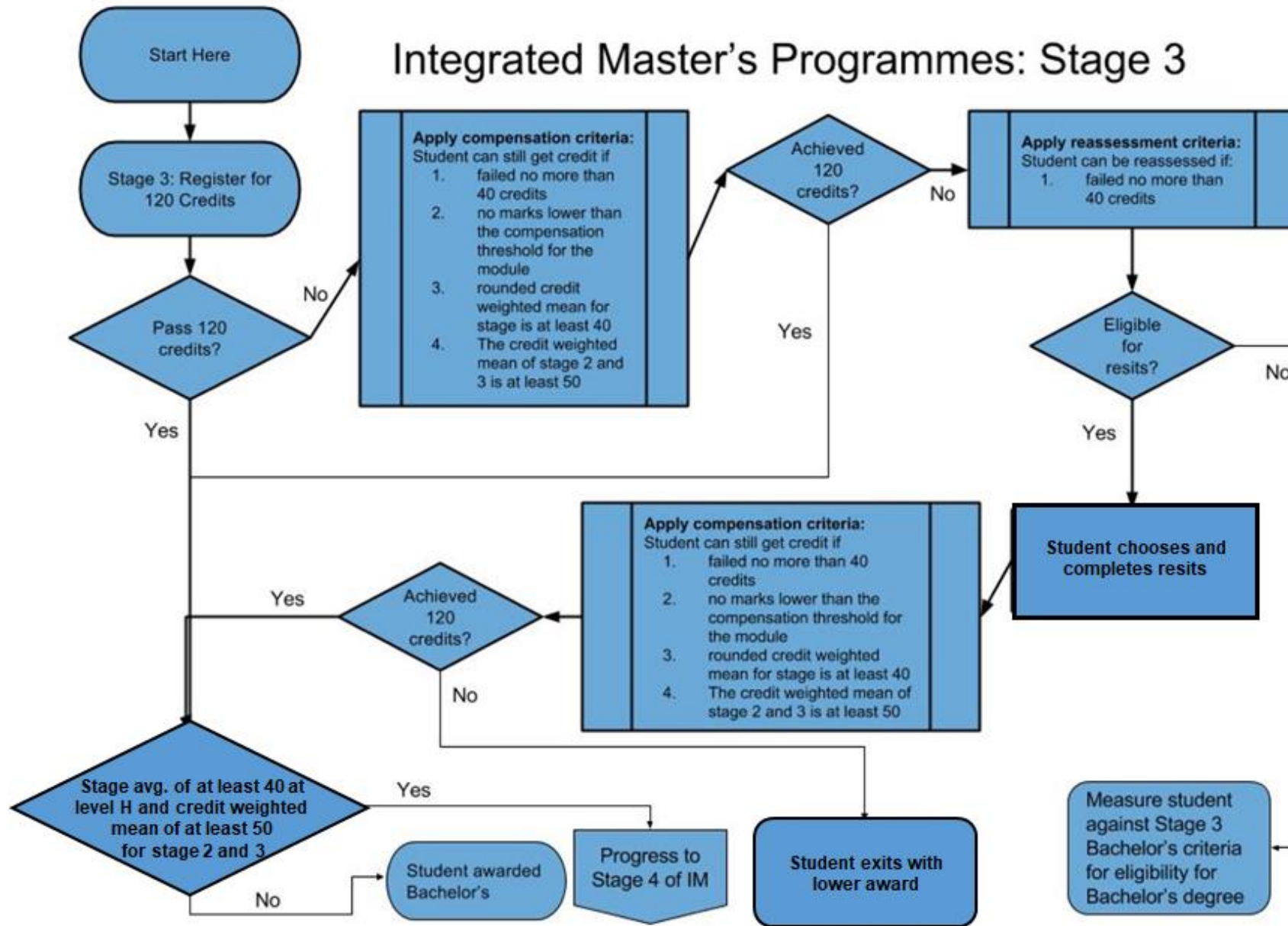
# Integrated Master's Programmes: Stage 1



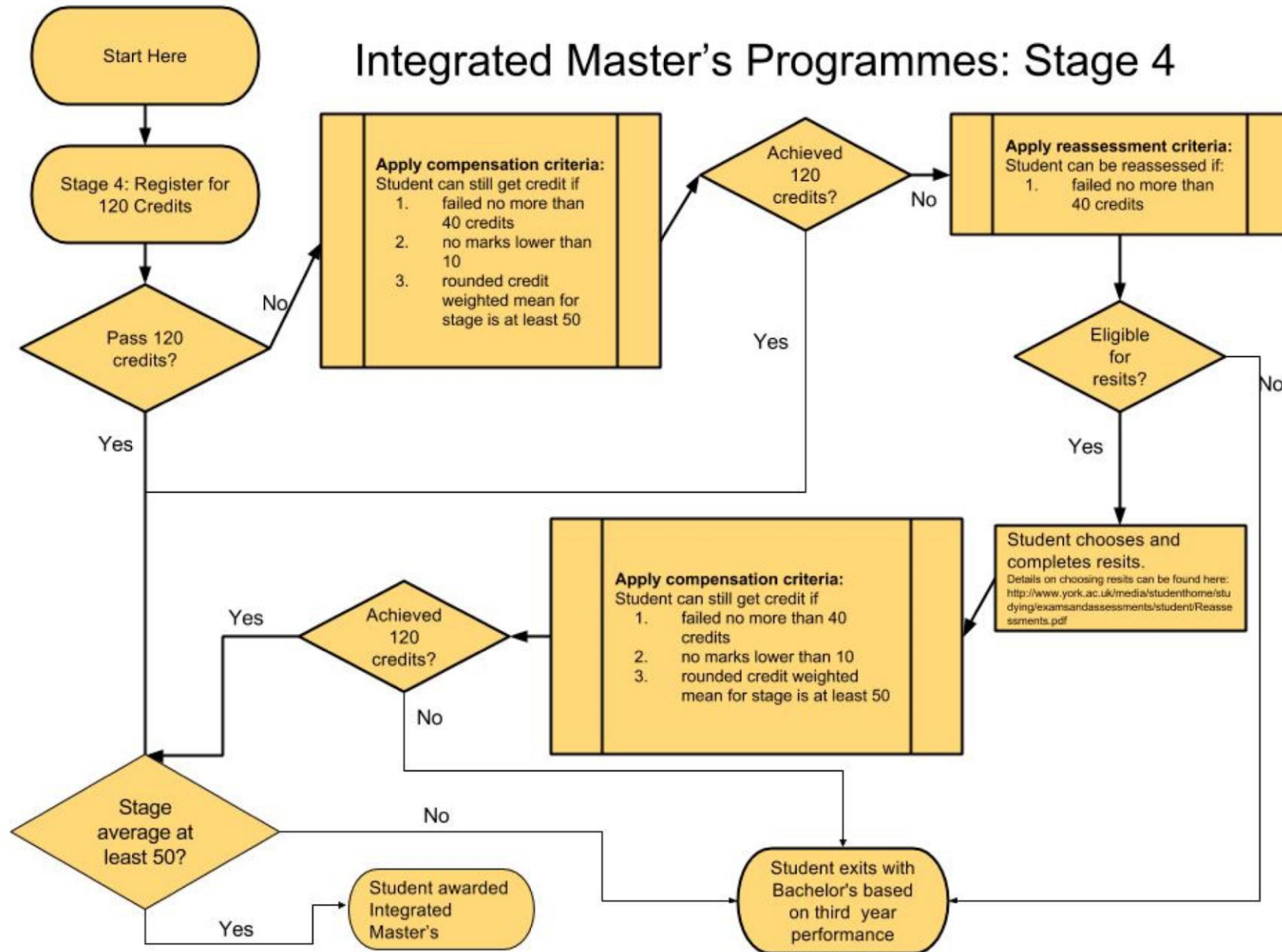
## Integrated Master's Programmes: Stage 2



# Integrated Master's Programmes: Stage 3



# Integrated Master's Programmes: Stage 4





## Appendix N - Independent study module (ISM): 'marginal fail'

Where a student has failed a Masters' ISM with a mark below 40 there will be no opportunity for reassessment. However, where a student has been awarded a 'marginal fail' mark of between 40 and 49 they will have an opportunity to make amendments which would enable a passing threshold to be reached. The overall ISM module mark after resubmission will be capped at 50.

When awarding a 'marginal fail', the guiding principle that markers should use is that the student should be able to undertake the work required to bring this up to pass level:

- without access to the University's physical facilities
- without further supervision
- with no more than two weeks full-time equivalent effort.

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

- editorial corrections, for example
  - use of English
  - style
  - spelling
  - grammar
  - word limit
  - restructuring
  - referencing
- further theoretical analysis/better argumentation
- better critical reflection on the work itself (e.g. research methods)
- better use of literature.

If it is thought that the work required to bring this up to a pass would require more time or support, taking into consideration the above requirements, then an outright fail should be awarded (i.e. a mark below 40).

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

- data collection
- experiments
- extended literature reviews.

If a student is required to undertake any of the above in order to pass, then an outright fail should be awarded (i.e. a mark below 40).

For ISMs with component assessments, e.g. a dissertation, practical and viva, reassessment is only possible if the original mark for the dissertation is 40 or above. Only the dissertation component can be reassessed. The (uncapped) mark for the reassessed dissertation replaces the original mark for the dissertation and the ISM mark is re-calculated. If a pass is achieved, the overall module mark is capped at 50 as stated above.

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

Departments should set a firm deadline for resubmission, taking into account the variation in personal circumstances. It is expected that no more than two weeks' full time effort will be required, and all resubmissions should be submitted within two months at the latest. Students must be informed of the resubmission date when they receive their feedback.

## Appendix O - Marking to the Full Range

1. In examination-based assessments, marking to the full range is more evident where the examination is designed to allow for performance across a range of ability, i.e. parts of the exam include some very high level, challenging items (to allow student to perform at their best) and some more basic, straightforward items (to test core knowledge any standard student should have grasped). Such a mixture of items ensures an examination differentiates student performance more clearly and allows for a greater range of marks.
2. In open assessments (module essays, projects, presentations, posters, dissertations) using the full range of marks is more likely to occur where colleagues have a shared understanding of what candidates must produce to merit particular levels of achievement across the full range of performance. This agreed range of performance should also be clarified in published criteria and/or clear information regarding performance which is available to students.
3. To achieve a consistent level of shared understanding, programme or module teams could:
  - a. make regular time to discuss expectations of students at different levels in a programme, review organisation of criteria/ descriptors and share experience of areas which may cause problems with marking high level and low level students;
  - b. compile a 'band book' for reference by new staff (this is a compilation of several 1sts/ 2:1s/ 2:2s/ 3rds/Fail assignments including the mark allocated and the reasoning for the mark). The process of putting such a guide together and maintaining it can promote valuable discussions within the department;
  - c. divide broad marking bands (1st/2:1/2:2/ 3rd/Fail) into sub-bands with clear descriptors (see Appendix R);
  - d. engage in table marking (all markers marking the scripts for one assessment together in the same room- usually in one or two days). this type of exercise allows time for colleagues to discuss standards/ expectations;
  - e. agree to the moderation of all 3rd/fail assessments and all borderline 1st and 1st assignments by an agreed moderation who should confirm the marks allocated;
  - f. contact relevant colleagues (from departments with good practice, the Standing Committee on Assessment) for assistance.

## Appendix P - Guidance on Proofreading and Editing

### Preamble

The University acknowledges that students (from undergraduate to PhD) may access a variety of forms of support to help them in the preparation and production of written assessed work beyond that provided by their teachers or supervisors, such as:

- peer support: collaboration and mutual support between students on the same programme (group members of a project group, classmates in a particular module, higher level students supporting lower level students)
- informal support: friends and family checking a student's work for them, providing an audience's reaction, commenting on a piece of work
- professional proof-reader : an external, paid person or company employed by the student to proofread their work prior to submission

The purpose of this guidance is to set out, for students and staff, what is and is not acceptable support.

The default position is that this Guidance applies to all assessed work (with the exception of International Pathway College modules).<sup>28</sup> However, departments may opt to specify that, for certain assessments, students should not be allowed any assistance at all in terms of proofreading or editing. This is permitted only if the purpose of the assessment is to determine students' abilities in linguistic areas such as grammar or syntax, making proofreading inappropriate. In this case, the rubric for the assessment should state clearly that this standard Guidance does not apply and that no proofreading assistance is permitted.

### For students on taught programmes (undergraduate and postgraduate)

**Acceptable support:** The amount of support that is required or appropriate, from peers, friends and family or professionals, may vary in relation to the student's level of expertise and familiarity with academic conventions. However, regardless of level or familiarity, in the above situations the University defines support which is acceptable as:

The identification and correction of errors related to:

- Word usage (excluding specific terminology).
- Spelling, punctuation, capitalization, italics, abbreviations, headings, quotations, metrification, numbering, citations, referencing, tables, illustrations, footnotes and appendices.

The identification (but not correction) of issues related to:

- Grammar and syntax
- Clarity of expression
- Voice and tone
- Issues with logical sequencing and linkage between sentences and paragraphs
- Ambiguity

---

<sup>28</sup> International Pathway College: IPC students should not be allowed any assistance in terms of proofreading or editing on all IPC modules (including, but not limited to, Foundation Certificate, Pre-Masters and Pre-Sessionals). This applies from academic year 2017-8, including any Pre-Sessionals taught leading into that year.

- Repetition

### For students on postgraduate research programmes

**Acceptable support:** The amount of support that is required or appropriate, from peers, friends and family or professionals, may vary in relation to the student's level of expertise and familiarity with academic conventions. However, regardless of level or familiarity, in the above situations the University defines support which is acceptable as:

The identification and correction of errors related to:

- Word usage (excluding specific terminology)
- Spelling, punctuation, capitalization, italics, abbreviations, headings, quotations, metrification, numbering, citations, referencing, tables, illustrations, footnotes and appendices
- Grammar and syntax

The identification (but not correction) of issues related to:

- Clarity of expression
- Voice and tone
- Issues with logical sequencing and linkage between sentences and paragraphs
- Ambiguity
- Repetition

For issues listed above where identification but not correction by a third party is appropriate, students (taught or research) should be directed to correct these issues themselves following feedback. Self-correction will aid students in recognising their weaker areas and encourage more independence from the tutor. Students with a contemporary formal diagnosis of relevant disabilities should consult Disability Services about appropriate support.

**Unacceptable support (for taught or research students):** For summative work, undertaking the following tasks for a student is inappropriate.

- adding or re-writing any of the student's sentences or sections of work
- rearranging passages of text, sequences of code or sections of other material for the student
- reformatting the material for the student
- contributing additional material to the original
- checking calculations or formulae
- rewriting formulae, equations or computer code
- re-labelling figures or diagrams

### Acknowledgement (for taught or research students)

If a student receives assistance with proofreading or editing, whether paid or not, an acknowledgement should be inserted in the final submission. This should explain the sort of person providing the assistance (for example, the name of professional proof-reader but not the name of a friend or family member which might lead to the breaking of anonymity), and a statement that the assistance has been in accordance with the University's Guidance on Proofreading and Editing. The student should also accept full responsibility for the authorship and standard of the submitted work.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> University of York, Standing Committee on Assessment, November 2013 (Rev. September, 2017)

## Appendix Q - Improving student engagement with formative work, contact time and formative peer feedback

From research conducted by Gibbs & Simpson (2005), it is clear, in terms of programmes of study, that a negative learning experience is associated with too much summative assessment, a very wide variety of assessment formats, too little formative work, very little oral feedback and slow feedback that is received too late to have any meaning or effect on learning.

To address these factors, the following programme-level approaches related to summative assessment and formative work are suggested:

1. Programme level - balancing formative work and summative assessment
  - a. Limit the number of summative assessments in a programme to allow space for staff and students to focus on learning through formative work with more immediate feedback.
  - b. Consider the range of summative assessment formats. Too few formats (i.e. only exams or only essays) can restrict students' development of a range of skills whereas too many formats can prevent students from developing expertise in relevant skills. Limiting the range of summative formats to a manageable number can allow progression through formative student work to be clearly mapped through a programme and can ensure shared understanding exists among the programme team regarding how their module and formative work contributes to that progression.
  - c. Increase opportunities for students to engage in:
    - i. formative work designed to consolidate learning through practice e.g. regular, progressively challenging online tests
    - ii. formative work designed to clarify standards e.g. peer-marked shorter written assignments
    - iii. formative work designed to exemplify concepts and challenge thinking.
  - d. Necessary engagement - if the majority of students on a module know they can achieve high marks on assessments without attending or engaging in formative work, they will probably not engage. In such situations, the programme team needs to reconsider:
    - i. the standards expected and whether they are high enough for the level;
    - ii. the complexity or degree of challenge of the assessments being assigned and the formative work being assigned;
    - iii. whether marking is consistent with the expected standard.
2. Improving engagement with formative work
  - a. in partnership with the student body, discuss and agree a department approach to non-engagement and ensure the approach is followed by all teaching staff and supervisors.
  - b. Transmit consistent messages about how formative work works in the programme from the first year onwards - and ensure this message is consistent across the programme team.

- c. Use data on engagement and assessment performance to show students there is a link between engaging in formative work and achievement in assessments.
- d. Provide swift, direct feedback - from staff or peers (see I. for details) - on formative work and align this to standards, progression and improved performance on summative assessment.
- e. Support inexperienced staff and GTAs responsible for managing formative work in seminars and labs. Ensure they understand their role, the purpose of the session and the work, and how feedback on the work contributes to progression.
- f. Use the public domain to motivate students to undertake formative tasks e.g. through posters, presentations, blogs.
- g. Use authentic and challenging tasks linked to research, case studies and large projects to motivate student engagement.
- h. Self-directed learners - to learn to monitor and adjust their approaches to learning themselves, students need to understand the standard or goal they are trying to achieve; the gap between their performance and that goal; and how to engage with the support or framework that is around them to bridge the gap. If a programme can provide this information clearly to students in the form of criteria, exemplars, peer support, cross and self-marking exercises, and focussed feedback on formative work prior to assessment then students may be more likely to engage in formative work.
- i. Peer marking - peer marking should be actively encouraged for formative work leading to all assessment types. Peer marking is the practice of students, from the same module or level, marking and providing feedback on each other's work. Involvement in making judgements regarding the work of other students can have significant pedagogical benefits, enhancing:
  - i. engagement with course content, teaching-staff and peers
  - ii. understanding of standards, marking criteria and feedback
  - iii. development of skill through regular critical assessment and comparison to peers
  - iv. awareness of the discourse of the discipline and features of quality work

Research indicates that students are initially critical and sceptical of peer marking however students who are involved in the repeated process of peer marking and feedback (throughout a programme) significantly improve the quality of their own work. The advantages of peer marking may therefore be realised more fully through sustained use, robust design and student training.

3. Improving student engagement with contact time
  - a. Motivation - Extensive research shows that students having confidence in their own competence in an environment with which they identify is a strong motivator for ongoing learning. Providing opportunities for students to learn both autonomously and with others, to develop their sense of competence, and to feel as though they belong means students are more likely to be motivated to engage and succeed.
  - b. Valuing learning - A culture in which learning and learners at all levels are valued by staff has been shown to promote the highest levels of student engagement.

Students often assess these values through the commitment and engagement of staff to the learning programme. Valuing learning and learners can be shown through classes taking place on time, for the full scheduled time and with minimum cancellations or rescheduling. Well prepared, well-aligned, engaging teaching and assessment tasks also demonstrate that care and interest has been taken in the learning and that therefore equal student commitment is expected.

- c. The timetable of module work and assessment can cause bottlenecks which force students to choose where to focus their attention. Programme leaders and teams should consider the balance of workload carefully and adjust the timing of work or assessments accordingly.
- d. Standards - If it is clear to students that they can achieve satisfactory or even good marks without attending half of the term or without completing formative work, then that is what some students will do. Students need to clearly understand the standard expected of them - that that standard is high - that they need to work hard to reach that standard - and that their programme or module has been designed specifically to help them achieve the standard.
- e. Coherence - the more coherent a series of lectures is, the more likely students are to engage for longer. The more incoherent the series is (i.e. due to having multiple lecturers; modules broken into two or three week chunks; disparate topics), the easier it is for students to drop out.
- f. Formats - the format of a lecture or lecture series can encourage continued engagement e.g.
  - i. the question-linked lecture series. Each lecture starts with a challenging or engaging question. This is addressed in the lecture through input and periods of interactive discussion. Toward the end of the lecture, more complex issues related to the question are raised and, at the end of the lecture another related challenging question / problem / case is set for students to consider between lectures. This question then begins the next lecture.
  - ii. the flipped lecture - this approach integrates online focussed lecture input into a cycle of student work which happens before, during and after the face-to-face lecture session. See - [Linking online and face-to-face activities](#).
  - iii. adjust the format of lectures through a term to match the learning needs i.e. loaded with input in Weeks 1 - 3 ; more interactive format in Weeks 4 - 7; taking it to the next level in Weeks 8 - 10. Explain the plan and the purpose to the students at the beginning of the term.
- g. Clarity of purpose - Making the purpose and worth of contact sessions clear to the students can help to increase engagement. This includes clarifying how the session support student learning beyond other forms of input i.e. notes; books; the Internet, and how it will help students to progress.



- h. Reflection on teaching - factors related to teaching style and delivery can affect student engagement with contact sessions and their on-going commitment to attending further sessions. These include:
- i. the level of input: a balance of challenge with accessibility, and interest with relevance to student goals can help students to engage. Presenting low level material, repeating material available in other formats or covered elsewhere or overlapping with other sessions can result in disengagement.
  - ii. the amount of active interaction between lecturer and students and between students and students can make contact sessions more valuable to students.
  - iii. opportunities to discuss key concepts: using contact time to focus on problematic concepts / threshold concepts can make engagement valuable for students.
  - iv. the pace and focus of sessions - changing the pace and focus of lectures every 15 – 20 minutes can reduce loss of attention in lectures (vigilance decrement) and make the session more engaging for the audience
  - v. engaging delivery - factors involved in engaging an audience include: enthusiasm and animation; connecting with the audience; projection, pitch and tone of voice; and body language.<sup>30</sup>

#### Useful reading

Ashenafi, M. M. (2017). [Peer-assessment in higher education—twenty-first century practices](#), challenges and the way forward. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 42(2), 226-251.

Gibbs, Graham and Simpson, Claire (2005) [Conditions under which Assessment Supports Students' Learning](#). *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education* (1). pp. 3-31. ISSN 1742-240X

Zepke, N and Leach, L. (2010) [Improving student engagement: Ten proposals for action](#). *Active Learning in Higher Education* 11(3) 167–177

---

<sup>30</sup> University of York, Standing Committee on Assessment, February 2017/rev. September 2017

## Appendix R - Stepped marking guidance

### *Principles of stepped marking at the University of York*

Stepped marking is an optional approach to marking used by a number of departments at the University of York and across the sector. The following guidance should be considered by departments using the approach in line with principles of assessment: equity, openness, clarity and consistency (14.1).

### *Stepped Marking - definition, reasoning and principles of use*

Stepped marking (also known as fixed point marking, platform marking, notch marking, categorical marking) is a clear and transparent marking process which restricts the number of marks available in each class band to an agreed scale (e.g. low/medium/high). This is a process best suited to essay-based assessments and is not generally applied to closed item marking such as multiple-choice tests. The process works by ascribing agreed marks or 'steps' within each grade band, most commonly -2/-5/-8 (i.e. 52/55/58) . At the higher and lower end of the marking scale, the 'steps' may be more steep, for example 5/15/30, or 80/85/90/95, where marks are less commonly awarded (see below for an example).

When marking assessments to the full-scale, a piece of work could be marked on any number between 0-100 in line with the marking criteria. Evidence and comments from external examiners suggest staff in particular departments mark to increasingly restricted areas of the marking scale. Evidence from this and other institutions suggests that this approach leads to better achievement of learning outcomes by enabling: clear differentiation for markers and students concerning the standard of written work; improved consistency and equity in marking processes; and better use of the full scale of marks (0-100). It also helps to ensure that colleagues who teach and/or mark on the same programme have a shared understanding of the standards expected of students (14.2.2). These all lead to easier, quicker and more consensual marking and moderation, and greater transparency in marks and marking for students.

Degrees at UK universities are traditionally awarded in classes which are determined by the marks given to students for their work. For example, Undergraduate work is classed in the following manner:

- |                              |        |
|------------------------------|--------|
| ● First-class Honours        | 70-100 |
| ● Upper second-class Honours | 60-69  |
| ● Lower second-class Honours | 50-59  |
| ● Third-class Honours        | 40-49  |
| ● Fail                       | 0-39*  |

Stepped marking therefore restricts the scale to a number of steps within each classification and provides more distinct criteria for each step.

This example - for postgraduate programmes - is from The Department of Education:

**Grading:** All module assessment tasks that contribute towards progression and award are graded on the university mark scale (0-100) as follows. Marking criteria in full can be found in the PG Handbook:

Pass 50-59			Merit 60-69			Distinction								
50-59			60-69			70-79			80-89			90-100		
Low	Mid	High	Low	Mid	High	Low	Mid	High	Low	Mid	High	Low	Mid	High
52	55	58	62	65	68	72	75	78	82	85	88	92	95	100

**High:** Assignment that meets and, in some aspects, exceeds the required standards, but does not meet the standards of a higher band.

**Mid:** Assignment that meets most of the standards well.

**Low:** Assignment that meets the minimum standards for the given band.

Outright Fail									Marginal Fail					
0-9			10-19			20-29			30-39			40-49		
Low	Mid	High	Low	Mid	High	Low	Mid	High	Low	Mid	High	Low	Mid	High
0	5	8	12	15	18	22	25	28	32	35	38	42	45	48

## Considerations:

- **Size of steps:** One key consideration is the number of steps which may be included in each band. For example, the department could opt for two (high;low) or three steps (high; medium; low). A feature of stepped marking is that a department can 'customise' the scale according to its particular requirements or identified need. For example, departments may elect to incorporate -3 rather -2 (i.e. 53/63/73) into its marking scale in order to place work clearly up into the particular band and encourage range and difference in its marking.
- **Name of steps at upper end of the marking scheme:** Due to the large range of marks between 70-100, it must be divided into several bands. While some departments choose to differentiate these by naming each band (for example Outstanding - 70/75/80 & Extraordinary - 88/95/100), however this can be negatively perceived by students as creating a new higher degree/award classification. This should be carefully considered.
- **Borderline marks:** Stepped marking may lead to more students falling in the borderline of classifications. Departments should explain the calculation of borderline marks for degree classification clearly to avoid unnecessary complaints from students, monitor the impact of stepped marking on borderline module marks and by adjusting the steps at the division of certain bands (i.e. opting for 60/63/65/68) if necessary.
- **Marking Criteria:** In addition to the stepped marking scale, departments should always make accompanying criteria available to students.
- **Grade inflation:** While the intention is that stepped marking encourages the full use of the marking criteria, staff must be aware that grade inflation may result if the scale is not used appropriately. Ideally, the use of stepped marking should result in a better spread of marks across a cohort rather than a higher overall mean.
- Introduction and implementation of Stepped Marking
  - Stepped marking **must** be carefully considered by the Board of Examiners and discussed with External Examiners before implementation.
  - Departments are **advised** to consult with departments who have already implemented Stepped Marking and/or SCA for guidance.
  - Departments **must** inform students of the Stepped Marking Scale and reasoning for its usage in the Departmental Handbook.
  - Departments are **advised** to also explain this approach to students in a face-to-face session which details assessment practices on their programme.
  - Departments are **advised** to closely monitor the impact of stepped marking to identify any associated issues (such as grade inflation).

