Assessment policy for the Centre for Women’s Studies 2016/17

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Introduction

The Centre for Women’s Studies (CWS) offers a number of programmes at Masters and at Postgraduate Diploma and Certificate level: the MA/PGDip/PGCert in Women’s Studies; the MA/PGDip in Women’s Studies (Humanities); the MA in Women’s Studies by Research; the MA/PGDip in Women’s Studies (Social Research); the MA/PGDip/PGCert in Women, Violence and Conflict; and MPhil and PhD programmes in Women’s Studies. This document focuses on the practices and policies adopted within the Centre for the assessment of taught Masters and Postgraduate Diploma programmes, though it is expected that modules taken outside the Centre, in conforming to the University’s Postgraduate Marking Scheme, will be based on the same principles as those to which the Centre itself adheres.

The principles of assessment are common across all programmes of study. The details of how these principles are applied in practice and how they relate to the learning outcomes defined for each programme are discussed in the rest of this document.

This policy document, which reflects the changes introduced as part of the common assessment approach, is designed primarily as a resource for staff and External Examiners in the department and for the purposes of both internal and external quality assurance systems. It is also available to all Centre students on the ‘MA Handbook’ area on Yorkshare.

The programmes offered in Women’s Studies are at ‘M’ level in the QAA’s ‘Framework for Higher Education Qualifications’.

To meet the aims of the programmes the following learning outcomes are assessed. On completion of their programmes all students will be able to:

For the Masters programmes:

- Learn independently using a variety of information sources.
- Critically analyse accounts of the representation and experience of women and/or gender from a range of disciplinary perspectives.
- Understand key paradigms and problematics current within feminist thought.
- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the module concepts and an ability to apply them in relevant contexts.
- Communicate ideas effectively, both orally and in writing.
- Develop the ability to generate, design and complete research within the subject area of Women’s Studies.
- Reflect on their practice and methodology as researchers.
- Demonstrate careful selection and rigorous application of appropriate research techniques.
Understand the horizons of their background discipline and/or demonstrate an ability to work creatively across disciplines.

For the Postgraduate Diploma and Certificate programmes:

- Learn independently using a variety of information sources.
- Critically analyse accounts of the representation and experience of women and/or gender from a range of disciplinary perspectives.
- Understand key paradigms and problematics current within feminist thought.
- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the module concepts and an ability to apply them in relevant contexts.
- Communicate ideas effectively, both orally and in writing.
- Develop the ability to generate and design research within the subject area of Women’s Studies.
- Reflect on their practice and methodology as researchers.
- Understand the horizons of their background discipline and/or demonstrate an ability to work creatively across disciplines.

In addition to these generic learning outcomes, individual programmes involve aims and outcomes specific to their disciplinary foci. These are outlined in the relevant ‘Programme Specifications’ which are available at http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/cws/prospective/index.htm

**Types of assessment**

The learning outcomes outlined require that assessment measures three elements of learning:

- Knowledge acquired
- Understanding of that knowledge
- Skills gained.

Two types of assessment are involved in achieving and monitoring learning outcomes.

1. Procedural. Before the end of the first academic term of registration each candidate will produce a short essay in answer to a question chosen from a list of questions. These short ‘procedural essays’ will relate to the content of the first term’s main teaching provision. Candidates will be given detailed written feedback on this exercise, as well as the opportunity to discuss it with markers. No grade or mark is provided, and the exercise does not contribute to the final award. Rather, it is an opportunity, especially for candidates returning to higher education after an absence, candidates with non-standard educational backgrounds, candidates working in a new disciplinary or interdisciplinary area, or candidates working in a language which is not their first one, to begin to acquire the skills of thinking and writing in English at postgraduate level.
2. Summative. Written work in a variety of forms (e.g. essays, portfolios, etc.) is formally assessed to measure candidates’ achievement against the learning outcomes defined for the programme. Such written work is submitted as detailed in the Course Handbook and, in the case of the dissertation (Masters students only), at the end of the candidate’s final year of academic registration. Details of how the various forms of written work contribute to the assessment of the programme’s learning outcomes are available in the Programme Specifications.

**Attendance**

Attendance of, preparation for and participation in class are requirements for all Centre modules, as classes are designed to promote the learning outcomes to which our programmes aspire. Exemption from attendance in individual classes is only permissible on medical or other urgent grounds, and in consultation with the course tutor. In such cases the candidate’s supervisor should be informed of the reasons for any unavoidable absence. In addition, the Board of Studies in Women’s Studies will consider (under starred business) any sustained absence from class by a student. The Board of Studies may, in these circumstances, decide that the student has not met the learning outcomes of the module and make a recommendation as to whether the student should be awarded the credits or not.

**Assessment arrangements for visiting students**

These will be arranged on a case-by-case basis in consultation with their home institutions.

**Format of the Courses**

**The Master’s in Women’s Studies (Hums)**

This programme consists of three core modules (20 credits each), three optional modules (20 credits each) and a dissertation of 15,000—20,000 words (60 credits). The total number of credits for the MA is 180.

The core and optional modules are each assessed by a single essay of 3,000-4,000 words or equivalent (see Module details).

The Diploma variant does not include writing a dissertation and consists of 120 taught credits in total.
The Master’s in Women’s Studies (Social Research)

This programme of 180 credits in total consists of five core modules (20 credits each), one optional module (20 credits) and a dissertation of 15,000-20,000 words (60 credits).

The core modules are each assessed by a single essay of 3,000—4,000 words, or equivalent (see Module details).

The Diploma variant does not involve a dissertation and consists of 120 taught credits in total.

The Master’s in Women’s Studies

This programme of 180 credits in total consists of four core modules (20 credits each), two optional modules (20 credits each) and a dissertation of 15,000—20,000 words (60 credits).

The core and optional modules are each assessed by a single essay of 3,000-4,000 words or equivalent (see Module details).

The Diploma variant does not involve writing a dissertation and consists of 120 taught credits in total.

The Certificate variant does not include writing a dissertation and consists of 60 taught credits in total.

The Master’s in Women, Violence and Conflict

This programme of 180 credits in total consists of four core modules (20 credits each, two per autumn and spring term), two optional modules and a dissertation (60 credits) of 15,000-20,000 words.

The modules are assessed by essays of 3,000-4,000 words or equivalent (see Module details).

The Diploma variant does not include writing a dissertation and consists of 120 taught credits in total.

The Certificate variant does not include writing a dissertation and consists of 60 taught credits in total.
# How Modules Contribute to the Final Award

## MA in Women's Studies (Hums)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Credit Value</th>
<th>% Weighting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difference, Diversity and Change</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work, Politics and Culture</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Optional Module 1</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Optional Module 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary Methods in Women's Studies</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Optional Module 3</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissertation</td>
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## Postgraduate Diploma in Women’s Studies (Hums)

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## MA in Women’s Studies (Social Research)

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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Optional Module</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary Methods in Women's Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advanced Social Research Methods</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quantitative Methods and Data Analysis</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>Qualitative Methods</td>
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<td>Dissertation</td>
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MA in Women, Violence and Conflict

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<tr>
<td>Optional Module</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender, Violence and Justice</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women, Citizenship and Conflict</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qualitative Methods or Quantitative Methods and Data Analysis</td>
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Postgraduate Diploma in Women, Violence and Conflict

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Marking arrangements in the Centre for Women’s Studies

All formally assessed written work (i.e. all work other than that specially designated as ‘procedural’) contributes to the final mark awarded for the degree; all modules (other than the Dissertation) are assessed anonymously.

- All formally assessed written work from 20 credit modules is marked and commented on by the appropriate person from the Centre’s team of Internal Examiners, normally the module convener or relevant module teacher.
- A sample of assessed work is carefully monitored by another Internal Examiner to ensure consistency and fairness. This sample will include work at the margins of descriptors, work marked as ‘fail’ or ‘distinction’, and a sample from across the range of marks.
A sample of assessed work is read by one of the Centre’s External Examiners. The range will include work at the margins of descriptors, work marked as ‘fail’ or ‘distinction’, as well as a sample across the range of marks which will include both monitored and unmonitored work. The function of the External Examiner is to assess the overall fairness of marking, and the relevance of comments, and not to change individual marks.

Every Dissertation is marked by two Internal Examiners, normally the students supervisor and one other.

Every dissertation is read by our External Examiners.

In addition to the modules specifically related to the degree that the student is undertaking, all students are required to successfully complete the University Online Academic Integrity Tutorial within the first term of their programme of study. Confirmation that a student has successfully completed this module must accompany the end of year/programme results when they are submitted to the Examinations Office. Student Administrative Services will not process a student’s results, or any upgrading/progression decisions relating to them, or send any thesis submitted by them for a research degree to the examiners, until this confirmation has been received.

Guidance for Examiners

All Internal and External Examiners are provided with the following documents:

- the University of York: Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback;
- this document;
- relevant forms (see Appendix);
- access to the online Programme Specifications and Handbooks.

All Internal Examiners

- provide written feedback to candidates and submit a provisional percentage grade.
- Internal Examiners will provide a provisional independent mark, which is monitored by another Internal Examiner (the ‘Moderator’), and recorded by the Centre’s Administrator.

Candidates should note that all internal marks are provisional until agreed at the Exam Board.

In addition to the internal marking of all assessed Masters work, to ensure consistency and fairness across the range of Centre work the following will normally be sent to an External Examiner(s) to enable them to monitor the programmes.
. Any piece of work marked at ‘Distinction’ level (70% or above)
. Any piece of work marked as a ‘Fail’ (49% or below)
. A sample of work across a range of grades.

In addition, External Examiners may request to see further samples of work according to criteria of their own (e.g. work across a range of disciplines).

Marks are recorded on spreadsheets as they arrive, and cross-checked against individual scripts.

**Marking scale**

The Centre for Women’s Studies’ Marking Scale is based on the University’s post-graduate marking scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>70% to 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Pass</td>
<td>60% to 69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>50% to 59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>0% to 49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Feedback to students**

Candidates submit two copies of all assessed work to the Centre administrator. One copy is returned to the student, along with detailed feedback and a single provisional agreed mark, normally within one month of submission. The second copy is retained for the purposes of External Examination.

**Class descriptors**

**FAIL: 49% and below**

Work may be failed for many reasons including non-submission, academic misconduct, answering a different question from the one asked, poor writing, or not meeting the other requirements for a pass as described below. In some cases, where examiners are in agreement, a piece of work graded as a fail may be referred for re-writing. In such instances an appropriate timetable for resubmission will be agreed with the student and Chair of the Board of Examiners, and guidelines will be offered for re-writing.
PASS: Marking range: 50% - 59%

The overall descriptor for work of this standard is ‘satisfactory’. Work of this type displays the following typical characteristics:

. Awareness of relevant debates on gender and/or women.
. Understanding of key concepts and terms implied by the assignment.
. Evidence of thoughtful and appropriately extensive reading in relevant areas.
. Evidence of active engagement with the aims, content and rationale of the module(s).
. Ability to use appropriate evidence to support claims made.
. Ability to formulate and organize an argument in response to an agreed question or title.
. Ability to distinguish between, compare and evaluate a plurality of viewpoints.
. Familiarity with, and consistency in the use of, scholarly conventions for the presentation of written work.
. There may be evidence of the ability to achieve a higher grade according to the criteria listed below, but this may be marred by poor presentation, gaps in knowledge, frequent errors, poor spelling or grammar, lack of organization, unsupported assertions, etc.
. Candidates receiving marks at the bottom end of this category should seek help from markers or supervisor as to how they can improve their work.

MERIT: Marking Range: 60 –69%

The overall descriptor for work of this standard is ‘good’; the candidate has attained a standard that meets not only the criteria for a ‘pass’ described above but also a majority of the following:

. Ability to engage critically with existing work, and/or with the dominant interpretations of a given topic.
. Evidence of a lively and fresh approach to the assignment.
. Comprehensive and imaginative use of the required course reading, and some evidence of initiative in undertaking further research.
. Active engagement with relevant theory and/or considered deployment and evaluation of appropriate methodologies.
. Ability to develop and present a complex argument.
. Ability to organize ideas and arguments in an illuminating way.
. Lucidity of expression.
. Good standards of presentation, in terms of typography, syntax and punctuation, and the use of bibliographical and referencing procedures.
. There may be evidence of the ability to get a higher grade according to the criteria listed below but this may be marred by poor presentation, gaps in knowledge, frequent errors, poor spelling or grammar, lack of organization, unsupported assertions, etc.
DISTINCTION: Marks range: 70 – 100%

The overall descriptor for this level of work is ‘distinguished’; the candidate has attained a standard that meets not only the criteria for a ‘good pass’ mark described above but also most of the following:

- Evidence of an element of originality of topic (where appropriate) and/or approach.
- Subtlety and energy of argument.
- Sophisticated engagement with existing work on the topic.
- Evidence of critical consciousness of her own procedures/methods/horizons and their implications for the argument.
- Ability to convey the complexity of the issues involved without obscuring them.
- Very high standards of presentation and scholarliness.
- Ability to organize materials and arguments elegantly and proportionately.
- Evidence of extensive research.
- A stamp of individuality and stylishness: a distinctive ‘voice’.

Compensation and Reassessment after failure:

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.

Compensation

Compensation in Masters (applied at the end of the taught component of the programme):
If a student fails one or more non-ISM (= independent study module) modules (i.e., achieves a mark below 50) s/he may still receive credit for the failed module(s) provided that:
- s/he has failed no more than 40 credits, and
- no marks are lower than 40, and
- 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.

Compensation in Postgraduate Diplomas (applied at the end of the taught component of the programme):
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:
- s/he has failed no more than 40 credits, and
no marks are lower than 40, and
- the rounded credit-weighted mean over all modules (including the failed module(s)) is at least 50.

Compensation in Postgraduate Certificates (applied at the end of the taught component of the programme):
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:
- s/he has failed no more than 20 credits, and
- no marks are lower than 40, and
- the rounded credit-weighted mean over all modules (including the failed module(s)) is at least 50.

Reassessment

Reassessment is an opportunity for students to redeem failure for the award of credit to meet award requirements.

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 s/he has failed no more than 40 credits.

Masters: independent study module (ISM)
Where a student has failed a Masters ISM (e.g. the Dissertation module) 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 II for guidance in relation to the criteria for the awarding of a ‘marginal fail’.

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 s/he has failed no more than 40 credits.

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 s/he has failed no more than 20 credits.
All awards

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

Any modules for which reassessment opportunities cannot be provided should be clearly identified through Programme Specifications. 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).

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.

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.

**Award Requirements**

A degree/diploma/certificate will only be awarded on the basis of credits accumulated as part of an approved programme of study. However, a student may be eligible for a lower volume award than the award for which they registered, provided that they have met the requirements.

**Merits and distinctions**

Merit awards
To be recommended to Senate for the award of a Masters degree with merit a student must achieve the following at the first attempt:

- a rounded credit-weighted mean of at least 60 over all modules, and
- a rounded credit-weighted mean of at least 60 in the independent study module(s) taken, and
- no failed modules.

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

- a rounded credit-weighted mean of at least 60 over all modules, and
- no failed modules.

Distinction awards
To be recommended to Senate for the award of a Masters degree with distinction a student must achieve the following at the first attempt:

- a rounded credit-weighted mean of at least 70 over all modules, and
To be recommended to Senate for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma with distinction a student must achieve the following at the first attempt:

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

It is assumed that different disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches will entail different emphases among these criteria. For instance, ‘extensive research’ might be more salient for an historically-based than for a more philosophical or theoretical assignment. It is also accepted that other factors, such as the exigencies of writing in a second or third language, may have a part to play in shaping our appreciation of a ‘distinction’ level effort.

Additional Dissertation Marking Criteria (MA dissertations)

In making their recommendations, Examiners will consider the following factors:

- The candidate should demonstrate familiarity with and understanding of the subject of the dissertation and its principal sources and authorities, and sufficient knowledge of closely related information.
- Candidates should show an awareness of the contextual literature. In some cases (e.g. in social science based work) this may be articulated through a literature review. However, awareness of the implications of this literature should be evident throughout the dissertation as appropriate.
- Where specific theoretical perspectives are employed the candidate should refer, wherever possible, to the theorists’ own writings rather than to secondary commentaries.
- The subject should be dealt with in a competent and scholarly manner. The candidate should display critical discrimination and a sense of proportion in evaluating evidence and the opinions of others.
- While the dissertation need not, in its entirety, constitute an ‘original contribution to knowledge’, it should have its basis in the candidate’s own research, whether critical, theoretical or empirical.
- The dissertation should be fully referenced and have a title page, a 100-200 word abstract, a list of contents, and where relevant a list of illustrations, as well as a bibliography. A clear label giving title, name of author and year of submission should be attached to the front cover.

The dissertation should be clear, concise, well-written and orderly. It should comply with the word length specified for the degree, excluding the bibliography but including substantive footnotes. It should be typed using one-and-a-half spacing except indented quotations (i.e. quotations of 40 words or over), notes
etc. A word count should be included at the end of the text. Overlength or underlength dissertations will normally be referred for rewriting.

The Board of Examiners

The constitution, composition, responsibilities and powers of the Board of Examiners in Women’s Studies are as laid out in section 15 of the University of York’s Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback. Nominations for External Examinerships are agreed by the staff members of the Board of Studies in Women’s Studies, before being placed before the University of York Standing Committee on Assessment.

The Board of Examiners in Women’s Studies will meet twice annually, once normally in the Summer term to consider marks from the taught portion of the course and results of students enrolled on Postgraduate Diploma programmes (the Progression Board) and again in November to consider final marks that include the Independent Study Module (the Final Board), and will be chaired by the Examinations Officer for the Centre. At its Final Board meeting the Board will:

- review and ratify marks awarded to all completing Master's candidates, and agree the recommended final awards (subject to the agreement of the Standing Committee on Assessment);
- discuss on a case by case basis any controversial, problematic or unusual grade profiles, including any profiles likely to lead to the degree of MA with Distinction;
- discuss any proposed changes to the Centre’s (or the University's) assessment policies and practices;
- receive and discuss the External Examiners’ reports on the year’s work, with particular attention to the maintenance and improvement of standards, and to the lessons to be learnt by the course team. Issues arising from this discussion will be reported to the next Board of Studies in Women's Studies, and any necessary action taken.

Recommendations agreed by the Board of Examiners will immediately be forwarded to the University's Standing Committee on Assessment (subject to any required corrections being completed on the dissertation). After the Exam Board meeting, candidates will be notified informally of the provisional recommendations of the Board, as well as of any prerequisite corrections to be undertaken.

Procedures for the submission of assessments

Deadlines for the submission of written work are specified in the Handbooks relevant to each MA/PGDip programme. The required number of copies of each assessment (see Handbooks) should be handed in to the Centre administrator on the specified day.
It is in candidates’ own interests to meet these deadlines. All work submitted late, without valid mitigating circumstances, will have ten marks 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.

The deadline for the dissertation (see Handbooks) is a University deadline and cannot be waived without submission of accepted exceptional circumstances.

Protocol for interdisciplinary work

The Centre for Women’s Studies encourages interdisciplinary efforts in both essays and dissertations. For marking purposes, two kinds of interdisciplinary approach are taken seriously and given credit:

- instances where a candidate has attempted to work outside the discipline in which most of their training has taken place;
- instances where the candidate has attempted to engage with debates, methodological issues, similarities and conflicts between disciplines.

If a candidate wishes to have her or his academic background taken into account, a note to that effect should be appended to each copy of the assessment.

It should be noted, however, that in-depth work in the candidate’s own discipline of origin is also valued and can make a significant contribution to Women’s Studies.

Procedures in the event of illness or other serious exceptional circumstances

In the event of illness or other serious exceptional circumstances you should contact your supervisor and refer to the Exceptional Circumstances webpages for support and advice: https://www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/progress/exceptional-circumstances/

Non-submission of work

Failure to submit an assessment by a specified deadline (or by an extended deadline granted by the Centre) where there are no extenuating circumstances presented to the Board of Studies by the date of the Exam Board will result in a mark of zero for the module.
Academic Misconduct

Candidates are responsible for ensuring that their work does not contravene the University’s rules on academic misconduct, which are set out in Ordinances and Regulations Regulation 5.7. All candidates are required to submit, with each written assignment, a signed copy of the form ‘Centre for Women’s Studies: Declaration Concerning Academic Conduct’, confirming that they have read the relevant section of the Centre for Women’s Studies Handbook (see Appendix below). General definitions of academic misconduct can be found in the Centre’s Handbooks. The procedures followed in cases of alleged academic misconduct are set out in Section 4.8 of the University’s Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback.

Updated October 2016

Appendix A: Independent study module (ISM): ‘marginal fail’

Where a student has failed a Masters’ ISM (e.g. Dissertation Module) 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 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:

a) editorial corrections, for example
   i. use of English
   ii. style
   iii. spelling
   iv. grammar
   v. word limit
   vi. restructuring
   vii. referencing

b) further theoretical analysis/better argumentation

c) better critical reflection on the work itself (e.g. research methods)

d) 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:

a) data collection  
b) experiments  
c) extended literature reviews

If a student is required to undertake any of the above in order to pass, then an outright fail should be awarded (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 recalculated. 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. Students will be given up to two months in which to resubmit in recognition of the variation in personal circumstances, even though it is expected that no more than two weeks’ full-time effort will be required. Students will be informed of the resubmission date when they receive their feedback.
Appendix B: Supplementary Guidelines for Writers, Supervisors and Examiners of Assessed Essays and Dissertations

These notes are supplementary to the guidelines. We hope readers of these notes will offer suggestions and comments for their improvement.

NB Although the MA/PGDip/PGCert in Women's Studies, MA/PGDip in Women's Studies (Humanities), MA/PGDip in Women's Studies (Social Research) and MA/PGDip/PGCert in Women, Violence and Conflict are assessed by submission of written work, seminar attendance is a requirement of the degrees.

IN GENERAL

All Women's Studies written work should take account of issues such as gender, sexuality and equality of opportunity.

For certain optional modules, it may be appropriate for a piece of work (or part of a piece of work) to be offered for assessment in a form other than the standard academic essay. In such instances, the Option leader will make an ‘in principle’ case to the Board of Studies before the option begins. Where necessary, agreement will be sought from the External Examiners. In the case of dissertations, departures from the standard models of academic research and presentations must be agreed by the Board of Studies. The dissertation Supervisor will, on the candidate’s behalf, put the relevant arguments before the Board for discussion.

It is essential to begin work on essays in good time, and, when two essays or more are to be handed in simultaneously, to divide the available time proportionately between the pieces of work. Unless an extension (e.g. on medical grounds) has been applied for in writing, and has been granted, all essays should be handed in on time (as detailed in the Handbook).

TOPICS

Essays: Assessed topics are generally chosen from a list provided by the course leader. Any departure from this list must be negotiated with a member of staff. Whether the essay focuses on a relatively small topic in detail (e.g. a particular text or issue) or a larger question, the candidate should show a reasonable critical awareness of the secondary literature. Within an essay of 3,000-4,000 words, however, we would not expect exhaustive coverage.
Dissertations: Students are encouraged to address a topic on which research can be undertaken well within the time available. The final formulation of the topic should be arrived at in close consultation with the dissertation supervisor, who is appointed by the Centre once the research proposal has been submitted. Thereafter, the candidate can expect five meetings before the submission date. It is expected that these meetings will take place during term time and that any supervision undertaken during vacations is by correspondence.

THE USE OF THE ‘PERSONAL’

Personal experiences may be appropriate and illuminating in Women’s Studies essays and dissertations. However, as External Examiners have pointed out, that an account of personal experience is ‘true’ does not necessarily guarantee its status as a ‘truth about women’. Candidates should treat personal experience in written work with the same critical awareness and skepticism as they would any other kind of data. Furthermore, ‘asserting a bias’ is not necessarily the same as arguing a position or situating a perspective: stating one’s own political outlook is not a substitute for working through its implications and reflecting on its limitations.

SELF-REFLEXIVITY

Ideally, we would hope that an MA/PGDip/PGCert standard essay or dissertation would demonstrate some awareness of its own operations and assumptions. Controversial concepts such as ‘ideology’ and ‘patriarchy’ should be used cautiously and critically, with an eye on the debates around them. A critical stance is to be encouraged throughout candidates’ written work. The inclusion of a ‘literature review’ in a dissertation, for instance, is not always decisive: candidates for the most part need to draw on existing work throughout their argument.

HISTORICAL SPECIFICITY

Wherever possible and relevant, candidates should take account of the historical specificity of their chosen topic or argument. This may be just as important for a contemporary study as for a discussion of events in the past.

PRESENTATION

We expect a high standard of presentation in all written work. Written work should normally be typed. All work should use one-and-a-half spacing except quotations longer than 40 words, which should be single-spaced and indented and notes which should be single spaced. Essays and dissertations should include full references and a bibliography. Written work should be accurately spelt and grammatically sound. A word count should be included at the end of every assessed piece of work. The bibliography should follow recognized style conventions such as the MLA, Chicago or Harvard.
Poorly presented written work may be returned to the candidate for corrections, and a mark only recorded when corrections have been completed.

REPETITION
Candidates should not reproduce ideas or arguments verbatim either between assessed essays or between assessed essays and the dissertation. Such reproduction will be treated as academic misconduct.

PLAGIARISM, COLLUSION
Plagiarism and collusion are regarded as very serious University offences, and suspected cases will always be reported to the Board of Examiners in Women's Studies for investigation. Plagiarism is defined by the University as ‘incorporat[ing] within one’s own work without appropriate acknowledgement material derived from the work (published or unpublished) of another’. Collusion is ‘to conspire to assist an individual to gain an advantage by unfair means’. See Women’s Studies ‘Studying at CWS’ VLE site for further details. All work submitted for assessment should be accompanied by a signed copy of the Declaration concerning academic conduct.

EXTERNAL EXAMINERS
Your essays and dissertation are likely to be read not only by Internal Markers and Moderators but also by our External Examiners who are responsible for advising on and monitoring standards. The Centre for Women’s Studies currently has two External Examiners, with expertise broadly based in the fields of literature, history and social science.

ASSESSMENTS
Essays: Internal markers should address their remarks directly to the candidate, that is, in the second person. They should aim to be constructive and helpful. Comment sheets should record the strengths of a piece of work as well as its weaknesses, and should, wherever possible, offer practical suggestions for its improvement.
Appendix C: Centre for Women’s Studies Declaration concerning academic conduct

Name of candidate...........................................................................................................................................

Degree for which registered...........................................................................................................................

Module/Dissertation title.................................................................................................................................

Word count.....................................................................................................................................................

I confirm that this piece of work contains no phrase or sentence copied either whole or in part from any other source, unless I have explicitly identified it with quotation marks (or, if over forty words, as an indented paragraph). I confirm that all passages so identified are fully referenced and also recorded in my bibliography. I confirm that I have read the relevant section of the Centre for Women’s Studies Handbook which describes academic misconduct, and that this assignment does not infringe the University’s rules:

Signed..............................................................................................................................................................

Date.................................................................................................................................................................

A copy of this form should be completed and submitted with every assignment you hand in. A detailed account of the University’s policies and procedures around academic misconduct can be found at;

The University of York: Ordinances and Regulations (http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/aso/ordreg/) and

University of York: Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback (http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/eto/exams/Guide.htm)