THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback 2011–2012

Introduction

The University's formal procedures relating to the conduct of assessment are embodied in the Ordinances and Regulations, principally Ordinance 6, Regulation 2 (for research degrees) and Regulation 5 (for taught programmes). 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 the Examinations Office. **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 Policies and Procedures* incorporates amendments to

Introduction *continued*

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.

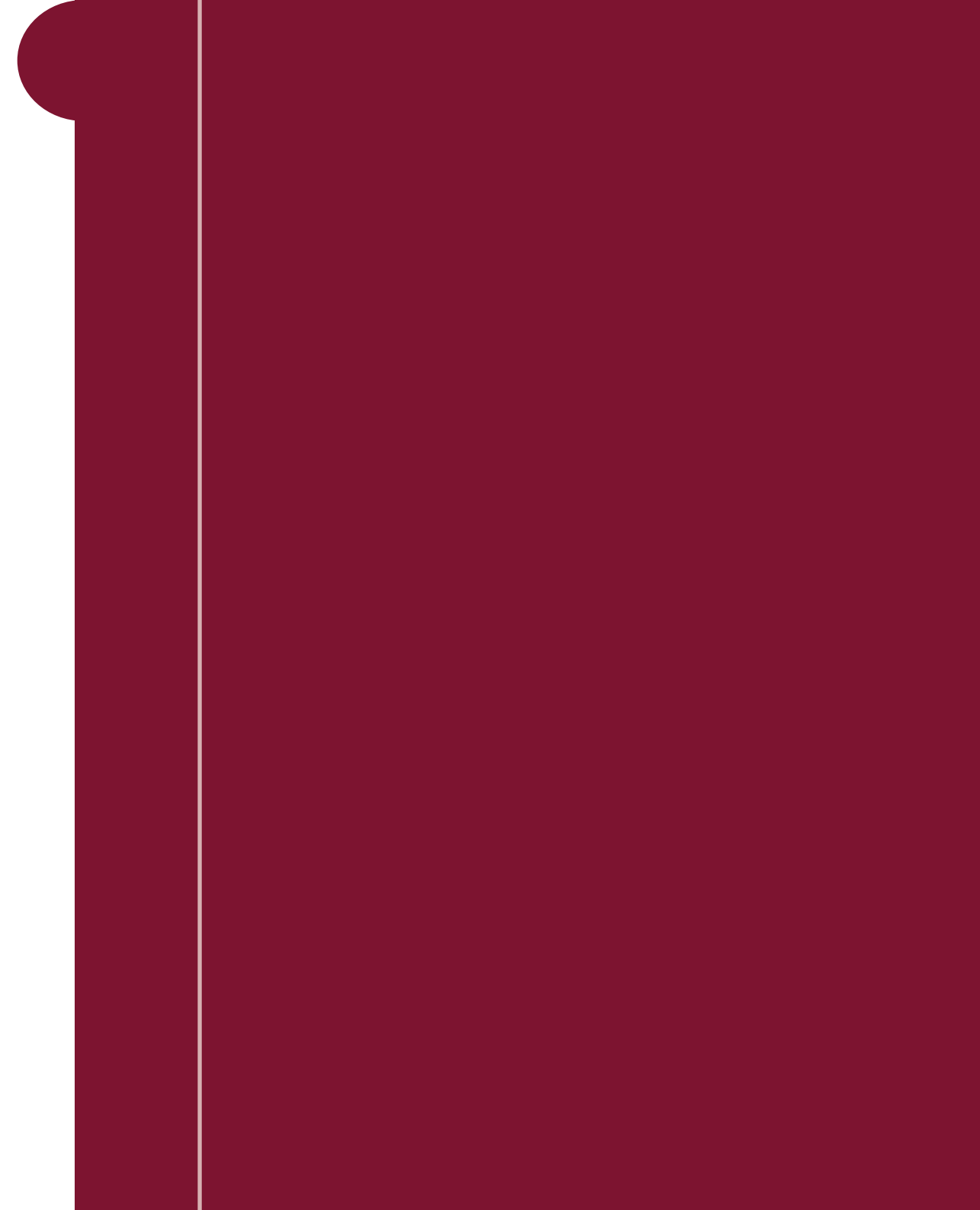This edition (2011 / 2012) includes amendments made throughout 2010/2011.

The Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback is also available at:

www.york.ac.uk/about/departments/support-and-admin/registry-services/guide

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

CONSISTENCY

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

Contents

Assessment –
Principles, Policies
and Requirements

Assessment – Principles, Policies and Requirements

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 the principles, departments are responsible for developing their own policies and procedures in respect of assessment. Policies and procedures must be linked explicitly to the teaching and learning aims and outcomes of the academic programme concerned and to the aims and objectives of the department. They must be designed to ensure that students are treated equitably and should allow students 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[1]

In higher education, 'assessment' describes any processes that appraise an individual's knowledge, understanding, abilities or skills. There are many different forms of assessment, serving a variety of purposes. These purposes include:

- promoting student learning by providing the student with feedback, normally to help improve his / her performance

- evaluating student knowledge, understanding, abilities or skills

- providing a mark that enables a student's performance to be established. The mark may also be used for progress decisions

[1] Taken from the text of the QAA Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education: Assessment of students (September 2006) paragraphs 12 – 16 and Appendix 2.

■ enabling the public (including employers), and higher education providers, to know that an individual has attained an appropriate level of achievement that reflects the academic standards set by the awarding institution and agreed UK norms, including the frameworks for higher education qualifications. This may include demonstrating fitness to practise or meeting other professional requirements.

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.

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 (see 2.2 below).

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   Written statements of assessment
Departments must have in place a clear and comprehensive Written Statement of Assessment for their single subject and combined programmes of study, explaining how their policy and practices are operated (see Appendix A).

Departments are responsible for ensuring that the Statement 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.

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 (eg 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   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 department's Written Statement of assessment in the light of the University's requirements on Assessment and good practice in higher education.

3.5   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 Erasmus 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 QAA Code of practice: Assessment of Students (September 2006).

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 special arrangements may need to be considered at a full meeting of the Standing Committee on Assessment, rather than by Chair's action, and students and Boards are asked to submit paperwork allowing for the timings of Committee meetings.

In the case of individual assessment arrangements, a recommendation on behalf of the Board of Studies should be submitted to the Examinations Office, supported where appropriate by an expert statement. Detailed guidelines on the process for accessing special arrangements in University examinations are provided in a leaflet available from the Examinations Office, departmental offices, the Disability Office and other distribution points on campus. They are also on the web at *www.york.ac.uk/*

students/studying/assessment-and-examination/taking-an-exam.

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 a special arrangement on the student's behalf.

The above procedures also apply to the rescheduling of examinations in individual cases, including special arrangements for York students studying at overseas institutions.

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 48 hours duration. The recommendation to the Standing Committee on Assessment, on behalf of the Board of Studies, should be submitted to the Examinations Office supported by an expert statement. Applications relating to students following combined programmes should come from the Combined Board of Studies. 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 (eg the candidate's writing speed), and demonstrating compatibility with the learning outcomes being assessed. Boards may wish to consider other special arrangements that may be appropriate for individual students as an alternative to extra time.

4.3.3   Spelling / grammar stickers

When a student has a certified disability that recommends they should not be penalised for errors of spelling or grammar in a closed examination or an open assessment and the recommendation is

agreed by the Board of Studies to be consistent with relevant published module and/or programme learning outcomes, the following procedure will be adopted. A standard sticker wording will be prepared by the Examinations Office and distributed to the departments. The Boards of Studies should ask students who have been professionally assessed and found to have such a disability for written confirmation that they wish to have stickers placed on their assessments. Requests from students wishing to have stickers on their work should be forwarded to the Standing Committee on Assessment for approval. 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 Registry 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 University Teaching Committee. Such variations include modifications to the timing of assessment as well as its nature (see the document 'Approval of Modifications to Existing Programmes of Study' which is available at *ww.york.ac.uk/staff/ teaching/programme-development/programme/modify*.

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 University Teaching Committee and departments are asked to allow for the timings of committee 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. Combined Boards of Studies 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 practises 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.

Marks generated from electives should be treated according to section 19.1.2.

In particular, Chairs of Boards of Studies 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

Deadlines for assessed work must be published in a format that is accessible to students. All work submitted late, without valid mitigating circumstances, will have ten percent of the available 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 eg 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 take the mark into a negative result.

Departments are advised not to set Friday deadlines for the submission of assessed work. In order to ensure equity for students, the facilities for handing in student work should be open for a minimum of three hours prior to the deadline for submission, and any students in a queue to hand in work at the deadline should be able to hand in the work without penalty.

4.7.2   Other penalties

Any other penalties (eg for over-long essays) must be published in a format that is accessible to students and be included in Written Statements of Assessment.

4.7.3   Pass/fail modules

The penalty for submitting late on a pass/fail module is a fail.

4.7.4   Reassessment – failure to submit an assessment (see 4.7.1) or attend an examination

Where a student, with no valid mitigating 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 in accordance with Regulation 5.3 (b) and (c) for Category 1 students on the old modular scheme, Regulation 5.2 (c) and (d) for the Category 2 students on the

new modular scheme and Regulation 2.7.4 (e) for research degree students. However, if the examination or assessment missed is already a re-sit or re-assessment to redeem an initial failure, no further re-assessment opportunities will be available without proof of mitigating 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 2.6 (c) 2.7.7 and and 6.5 (c).) Confirmation of successful completion is required for:

a. undergraduates at the end of their first year, in order to be able to progress;

b. Students on postgraduate taught before their first assignment is marked, although submission of the assignment will be accepted regardless of whether the student has completed the tutorial;

c. candidates for the degrees of MPhil and MA/MSc by research, when the thesis is submitted for examination;

d. doctoral students, when confirmation of enrolment is submitted.

Registry 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*

The academic misconduct policies, guidelines and procedures are given at: *www.york.ac.uk/about/departments/support-and-admin/registry-services/academic-misconduct* and are also available as a booklet. 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 (see Section 4.8.1). 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 (eg 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, eg at the first meeting of the Board;

f. designate a member of staff responsible for ensuring compliance with the University's expectations regarding students and academic misconduct.

4.9   Notification of results

In their Written Statements of Assessment, departments should include their policies for timing of notification of results to students. Category 1 students should be notified at least four weeks before the date of a resit period that they will need to resit an assessment. This deadline is five weeks for

undergraduates and three weeks for taught postgraduates for Category 2 students. 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, eg 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 *Viva voce* 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.

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* – North American, Erasmus exchanges and any other study abroad 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.

- *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 (eg 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 the standard assessment is an examination scheduled for a time after the student has left the University, or in these cases, 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.

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, 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 or resit 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 (eg 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   Retention of assessment papers/ evidence

4.14.1   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.

4.14.2   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.

4.14.3   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.

Assessment
Formats

CONSISTENCY

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

Assessment Formats

page number

CONSISTENCY

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

Assessment Formats

page number

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 from the Examinations Office, in the YUSU and GSA offices and on the web at *www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/ assessment-and-examination/taking-an-exam*

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 on 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 at *www.york.ac.uk/it- services/help* in the section called Knowledge Base under the title "Word 2007: Encrypting a document".

Examination question papers for printing should be delivered personally to the Examinations Office and a receipt obtained; they should never be sent through the internal mail. Answer scripts should be delivered by hand to their destination within the University and a receipt obtained, or by registered post or similar secure means to destinations outside the University. More detailed information about maintaining security in the preparation of examination papers is issued annually and guidelines for staff and departments are provided at *www.york. ac.uk/staff/teaching/key-areas/assessment/examinations/security*.

Advice can also be provided by Dr Arthur Clune, Systems Security Advisor in IT Services (01904 323129 arthur.clune@york.ac.uk).

5.4. Examination scheduling and timetabling

a. University examinations – in Autumn and Spring terms – should normally be held in Week 10 and Week 1 respectively. Final examinations are held during the summer term and will not normally be scheduled in Week 1 periods. Note that in the New Modular Scheme the university closed examinations will take place in Spring Week 1 and Summer Weeks 5-7.

b. For Category I students only: Departments wishing to teach in Week 1 periods, or to hold non-final examinations outside Week 1 are required to demonstrate, on an annual basis through a written declaration to the Examinations Office, that students are not significantly disadvantaged by this arrangement.

c. Examinations may be timetabled for any day falling within term time. Saturdays and bank holidays are sometimes used. Examinations are normally scheduled Monday to Friday between 9.00 am and 5.30 pm. However, they may be scheduled up to 8.00 pm where necessary.

d. University-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.

e. Students may be required to take up to two examinations in one day, but these will normally allow a minimum break of 1.5 hours between examination sessions for students without special arrangements.

f. A provisional examination timetable is issued for the main examination period. This timetable is available on departmental notice boards and on the web. It is the responsibility of departments to ensure their students check their timetables and can raise any concerns they have with the appropriate departmental staff.

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. Departmental 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 provide a specimen signature in the examination room. The photograph of the student held in the University's database will be checked by the Examinations Office staff during or immediately after the examination.

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 the Examinations Office within one working day of the examination session. Except with the express permission of the SCA, candidates who do not provide suitable identification to the Examinations Office within the specified time frame will be deemed not to have attended the examination and their script will not be marked.

c. In order to confirm, in a sensitive manner, the identity of students who veil

their faces, it is essential that departments inform the Examination Office in advance that a veiled student will be sitting an exam. An identity check will be conducted by a female member of the invigilation team or Examinations Office staff, in a separate private room, against the student's photograph held in the University's database. Except with the express permission of the SCA, failure to agree to this procedure to establish the student's identity will result in the student not being permitted to sit the examination.

d. 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 two invigilators for between 2 and 50 students; three invigilators for between 51 and 100 students; four invigilators for between 101 and 150 students and five invigilators for 151 students or more. 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 and copies are available in each examination room. A copy is also available on the web *www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/key-areas/assessment/examinations.*

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 power 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. A member of the department's academic staff must always be present at the beginning of an examination to deal with any queries that may arise from papers, and at the end to check and sign for the scripts, 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 by the invigilators (see also section 5.10.h).

5.8   **Use of the Professional Invigilation Team**
Departments may nominate outside invigilators for University examinations if they wish.

a. Registry Services 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 and Related staff including a team of professional Senior Invigilators, with the approval of the Standing Committee on Assessment.

b. Recommendations for the proposed invigilator(s), using the form available on the web at *www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/key-areas/assessment/*

examinations and signed by the Chair of the relevant Board of Studies, should be submitted to the Examinations Office.

c. Departments may be asked to meet the costs of using additional invigilators to support arrangments such as those outlines in 5.9.a.iv.

d. 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:

    i. A clear pencil case or clear plastic bag, which may contain:
- Pens
- Pencils
- Rubber
- Pencil sharpener
- Ruler

    ii. A small bottle of still water

    iii. University Card[2]

    iv. If permitted by the department, open books, dictionaries (see below), calculators (see below), other materials.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that dictionaries or other approved books that they are permitted to bring into an examination room do not contain illicit material (see section 5.9.d and 6.2.5).

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. Where dictionaries are

[2] *Please note that correction tape and fluid are no longer permitted in closed examinations.*

permitted, they are subject to the conditions set out in section 5.9.c. If departments wish candidates to have access to a dictionary, this must be included in the examination rubric and the department must provide staff to distribute the dictionaries throughout the examinations.

c. Calculators

In addressing the difficulties arising from the use of calculators in University examinations, the Examinations Office has a standard calculator (Casio fx-85WA or fx-85MS) that is distributed to those students for whom a calculator is necessary in the completion of particular examination papers. Departments should advise the Examinations Office that they will require these calculators to be available to candidates at the time of submission of the relevant examination paper. Candidates will not normally be permitted to bring their own calculators into formal examinations except where departments make prior arrangements for this with the Examinations Office.

Departments should ensure that students are informed in good time of the model of calculator that will be provided so that they can familiarise themselves with its use before the examination. Details and instructions for the use of the calculators are available at *www.york.ac.uk/students/ studying/assessment-and-examination/taking-an-exam/what-to-bring* and departments may wish to include this information in the relevant student handbooks.

Departments requiring candidates to use a calculator in a University examination, and wishing to provide a different model of calculator to their candidates must advise the Examinations Office in advance of the examination that they will be doing so. If the department is supplying substitute calculators to students under examination they must undertake to check in advance that these do not hold any additional information, nor could be subsequently programmed to do so.

If the use of students' own calculators is to be permitted in a formal University examination then departments must provide staff competent to check such calculators to ensure they do not hold any additional information, nor could be subsequently programmed to do so, in the period after the candidates have entered the examination room and before the examination begins.

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, data-bank watches or other data storage units into formal examinations. An announcement to this effect must be made at the beginning of each examination session and reiterated in the "Notes to Invigilators" issued to each examination invigilator by the Examinations Office. Invigilators should ensure that any such devices inadvertently carried into an examination room are made inaccessible to students during the examination session.

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.

Extracting pages from bound examination answer booklets is regarded as academic misconduct.

c. Candidates may not bring written or printed material or equipment, including calculators, into the examination room for an invigilated examination unless provision has been made for this and the items in question have been approved by the examiners (see sections 5.9 and 6.2.5).

d. Candidates found taking illicit material into closed examinations will, at a minimum, receive a mark of zero for the paper.

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.

f. Candidates may not communicate with anyone except the invigilator during an invigilated examination.

g. Candidates may enter the examination room up to half an hour after the start of the examination, 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. See also section 5.7.h.

i. Smoking 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). Departments will be notified as soon as possible after the start of a University closed examination of any absent students. Where students are absent from examinations for no apparent reason it is desirable that departments make a reasonable effort to contact them.

b. A candidate taken ill prior to or during the period of an examinations must contact his or her medical practitioner immediately and obtain a medical certificate which should be forwarded without delay to the departmental

administrator. This must happen before the examination results are considered by the appropriate Board of Examiners. The department will submit the evidence to the Chair of the relevant Board of Studies and inform the supervisor of the candidate concerned.

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 Registry 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 (eg 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 practises 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 provision of a basic calculator (ie standard arithmetical operations only, and no memory retained at 'switch-off') in place of the standard University calculator.

d. Special arrangements involving computer or amanuensis 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. Students making appeals are always invited to submit a written statement and may be invited to attend a hearing in person, but where this is not practicable telephone or video-conferencing arrangements may be made. In every case a student may be accompanied by a registered student or employee of the University and/or either a Sabbatical Officer of the Students' Union or the SU Education and Welfare Support Co-ordinator or, for postgraduate students, an officer of the Graduate Students' Association(see Regulation 2.8.4 (d) and 6.7.4 (c)).

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 eg formulae, law statutes. This allows more time in the exam for higher level tasks eg 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 eg 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 eg 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. Take home examinations

Examples:

a) students are given an assessment task to complete in a limited time (eg 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 (eg overnight or over one or two days), the students are given a precise task to complete under exam conditions.

7.1. Purpose

Take-home 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   Take home 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: eg 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 ie a student does not submit the required elements. If mitigating circumstances have prevented the student from completing all the tasks then the Mitigating Circumstances Policy can be applied. If

not, the department needs to be clear how and when non-completion will be addressed. See Regulation 20.1 for Category I and D.16ff for Category II students.

9.   Essays (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.

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 6 weeks (see Feedback Policy, particularly Section 15.1.3) 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

10.1   Purpose

Writing a dissertation or undertaking a project provides students 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 students have undertaken for some time – especially in subject areas that are more reliant on examinations. The pressure and stress this produces can make accidental or deliberate plagiarism 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.

If the department has a policy regarding proof-reading, this should be made clear to students from the start.

10.4   Marking and feedback

As dissertations and projects often warrant a high weighting (eg 80%) in high credit modules (eg 40 credits) 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.

10.5   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 – eg 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

If students marginally fail or fail a dissertation or project module, reassessment through resubmission is allowed. However, consideration should be given to what is realistically possible in terms of revising a sub-standard 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 ie 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 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.

11.5   Moderation, anonymity and marking

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.

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, 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 (eg 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 (ie mitigating circumstances). Guidance should include how the students can value and acknowledge this experience as part of their learning (see also 26.3.D.19).

- 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 (ie the way individuals collaborated during the project) and the collaborative product (ie the final group document and/or presentation);

- who will carry out the assessment (eg, individual lecturers, panel of lecturers, peers);

- how the contribution of each member to the group project will be assessed (eg 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 co-operation 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:

Group assessment

The work of the group (ie 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.

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.

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.

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.

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 a separate criteria. The criteria for the group product would most probably be similar to criteria for other assessment tasks (ie 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.   VLE and delivery of summative assessment

The University's centrally supported virtual learning environment, *Yorkshare*, 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.

Yorkshare's assessment engine, which supports a range of short-answer and multiple choice question-types, has not been designed for use in 'live', that is, real-time, contexts for the delivery of high-stakes, summative assessment

activities. However, the SCA recognises that it may be appropriate in some circumstances to use *Yorkshare* for this purpose. In general, the reasons against using *Yorkshare* for summative assessment are:

13.1   *Performance risks and unavailability*

Considerable effort and expense has been committed to supporting a robust and scalable virtual learning environment. However, due to the complexity of *Yorkshare* and its interactions with other systems and services, including the network, the VLE Service Group cannot guarantee 100% availability of the service. This means that there is a small and unquantifiable risk that *Yorkshare* will become unavailable in the middle of a scheduled examination, resulting in unpredictable outcomes, which might affect students who are submitting responses to the assessment engine, thereby impacting on their performance in the examination.

13.2   *Security*

A range of security risks may be associated with the use of *Yorkshare* to deliver real-time assessment activities, namely:

i. *Access to inappropriate resources*
Most personal computers, including those in general-access classrooms, support a very open computing environment, allowing considerable opportunities for collaboration, communication and discovery, for example, through the use of email and search engines such as Google, which also supports a range of collaborative tools. As such, they may be unsuitable for certain types of summative assessment activities. The Computing Service is investigating the possibility of providing a 'locked-down' computing environment, but no general-access classroom currently has this capability.

ii. *Impersonation*
It is possible by simple exchange of username and password for one user to impersonate another.

iii. *Split sessions*
Where an assessment needs to be split across time, for example, due to a lack of sufficient computer capacity to manage all assessment submissions across a cohort, there is a risk that information can be passed between groups.

Should a department wish to use *Yorkshare* for the delivery of summative assessment activities, it should make this request to the SCA in writing. The request should:

- give a rationale for the request,
- explain why the above reasons against using *Yorkshare* for summative assessment generally either do not apply in this case or are outweighed by other reasons for using the VLE in this case,
- include a response to the performance and security risks from the VLE Service Group,
- include a reply to the VLE Service Group's response.

Standards and Marking

CONSISTENCY

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

Standards and Marking

page number

14. Standards and Marking

14.1 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.

14.2 Establishing standards

14.2.1 *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 (eg 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 postgraduates who teach (PGWTs). 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

postgraduates are involved in marking and providing feedback, it is especially important that they understand fully level-criteria and how to guide students toward improvement.

14.2.2 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 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.

14.2.3 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 PGWTs involved in teaching / marking those modules meet to examine the calibration of their marking practices to those of the wider department.

14.3   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 (See 14.2.1).

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

14.3.1 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 (eg 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.

14.3.2 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.

14.4   Marking requirements

14.4.1 Ensuring equity and consistency in marking

Departments should state clearly in their Written Statements of Assessment how their procedures for marking ensure equity and consistency. In particular, all work contributing to progression decisions or a final award must be marked using a procedure which has in-built monitoring capabilities. 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.

14.4.2 Anonymous marking

14.4.2.a Anonymous marking is mandatory for all assessment contributing to a progression decision or a final award, except where unfeasible (eg in assessed practicals; weekly tutorials with associated written work; performance-based assessments; assessments not based on written or recorded work; projects) or unnecessarily cumbersome (eg in class tests).

14.4.2.b 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. Registry Services is responsible for these arrangements. Candidate numbers should be used in place of names in all assessment that is marked anonymously.

14.4.2.c 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.

14.4.2.d Marks under consideration by a Board of Examiners should remain anonymous until the Board has:

  i.   determined the classification boundaries (for Category I students) and

  ii. logged the examination candidate numbers for which medical or other evidence is to be tabled.

However, an individual's module marks contributing to a degree classification may have been released during the course of a year but are provisional until recommendation has been confirmed by a Board of Studies.

14.4.2.e 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.

14.4.2.f 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.

14.4.2.g 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.

14.4.3 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.

14.5 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.

14.6 Resolving differences between markers

Departments should have guidelines, contained in their Written Statements of Assessment, 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 eg 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.

14.7   Annotation of examination scripts

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

14.7.2   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.

14.7.3   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.

14.7.4 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 (see section 4.15).

14.7.5 Further information on the University's Data Protection Policy on Teaching and Examining may be found at: *www.york.ac.uk/ recordsmanagement/dpa/index.htm.*

14.8 **Examination scripts that deviate from the rubric**
Departments should have clear guidance in their Written Statements of Assessment, 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.

14.9 **Transcription of illegible scripts**

14.9.1 As amanuenses are specifically provided for students with a contemporary formal diagnosis of a relevant disability, these services cannot be used for students with illegible handwriting who have no such diagnosis.

14.9.2 *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.

14.9.3 *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.

14.9.4 *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.

14.9.5 *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.

14.10   Mitigating circumstances

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

14.11   Deadline for releasing results and feedback

The maximum turnaround time for summative feedback and marks to students is six weeks.

14.12   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).

Feedback

Feedback

15.   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 15.1.3).

15.1   Feedback policy

15.1.1 *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.

15.1.2 *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 that 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: Forms of Feedback

15.1.3 *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.

> **TIMELINESS: Students should receive feedback within 6 weeks of submission of the assessment.**

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 ie 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.

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

15.2 Procedures concerning feedback

15.2.1 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: Model for Statements on Feedback.

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 Written Statement 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: Legal Issues related to Feedback.

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, Annual

Programme Review and following up 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.

15.2.2 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 (ie 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.

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

15.2.3.a Formative assessment and feedback are often dealt with by

multiple staff members – module leaders; other lecturers; PGWT – 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.

15.2.3.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.

15.2.3.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.

15.2.3.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.

15.2.3.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.

15.2.3.f Where practical work is being assessed, departments should provide students with sufficient feedback to enable them to reflect on and improve their performance.

15.2.4 *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 ie writing "a great start" as a comment on a draft essay could lead the student to expect a good final mark.

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.

c. 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 Principles above – Section 15.1.3.

15.2.5 *Feedback on Summative Assessment – Examinations*

15.2.5.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: Improving Feedback on Closed examinations.

15.2.5.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.

15.2.5.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.

15.2.5.d **Student access to marked examination scripts:** Following successful pilots 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.

15.2.6 Marking procedures and feedback

15.2.6.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.

15.2.6.b Where **single marking** is used, it is especially important that marks and feedback are linked to explicit marking schemes or criteria.

15.2.6.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.

15.2.6.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.

15.2.6.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.

15.2.6.6 **Resits / capping marks:** Marks achieved at resit examinations should be fed back to students – even though these marks might subsequently be capped in the case of Category 1 students, or won't count towards award marks or degree classifications for Category 2 students.

15.2.7 Supervisory feedback

Supervisions (ie 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.

15.2.8 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
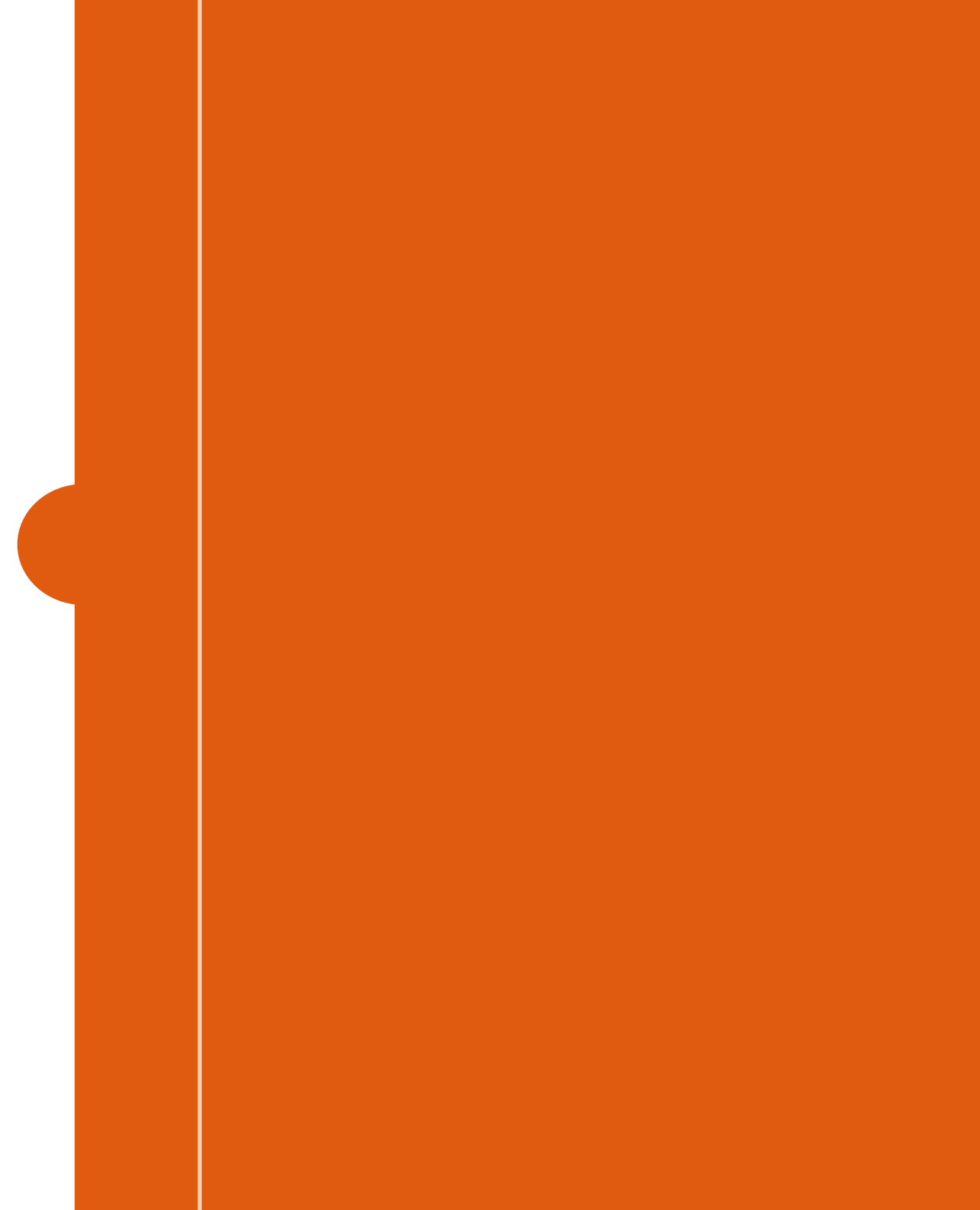
Examiners for Taught Programmes

16. Board of Examiners for Taught Programmes

16.1   Constitution of the Board of Examiners

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

16.1.2   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 17 (Internal Examiners).

16.1.3   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.

16.1.4   For combined programmes, the members of a Combined Board Executive Committee, together with an appropriate External Examiner, may consider and recommend degree classifications; to be quorate, the Board must include at least one representative of each department involved in offering the combined programme.

16.1.5   For procedures for the Board of Examiners for research students see section 25.

16.2   Role and powers of the Board of Examiners

16.2.1   University Ordinance 6 is relevant to this section of the guide.

16.2.2   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 to both performance of individual students and to mark distribution from individual modules, in the presence of the External Examiner(s) (see also sections 18.3.9 and 20.1.2);

- defining the borderlines for final year undergraduate students;

- ratifying provisional marks;

- making recommendations to the Board of Studies on progression and resits;

- ensuring documentation is completed.

16.2.3 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.

16.2.4 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 and consider any mitigating circumstances. This meeting must be attended by at least one External Examiner (see sections, 16.1.3 and 18.3 (d), (j)).

16.2.5 Minutes must be kept of meetings of the Board of Examiners, with particular attention to decisions relating to individual students (eg, borderline cases). This also applies to meetings of the Board of Studies at which examination results are discussed

16.2.6 Exam boards must be held in time for results to be entered into SITS in time for graduation and progression deadlines. For Category II programmes, this requires that undergraduate boards meet by the end of Summer Week 10, and the postgraduate boards meet by the end of November at the latest.

16.3 **Procedures of the Board of Examiners**
Written Statements of Assessment should include a description of the procedures followed by the Board of Examiners at its meeting(s) and by any relevant sub-committee(s), and should outline what, if any, student work is to be available at meetings of assessment panels and Boards.

17.   Internal Examiners

17.1   Permanent contract, limited contract and casual staff

17.1.1   A distinction should be drawn between those staff for whom the University can accept responsibility as Internal Examiners (ie continuing employees, whether on permanent or limited-term contracts) and those for whom it cannot (ie 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.

17.1.2   For the purpose of Ordinance 6.4 'academic staff' includes not only teaching, but also research, library 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 17.1.1 above.

17.2   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.

17.3   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 17.1.2.

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

18. External Examiners

The following guidelines have been formulated on the basis of advice given in the CVCP document 'Academic Standards in Universities' (1989), the HEQC's 'Guidelines on Quality Assurance' (1996) and the QAA's Code of Practice on External Examining (2004).

18.1 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 outlines the University's formal position on External Examiners.

18.2 Nomination and appointment

a. The Examinations Office is responsible 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 Examinations Office, or available at *www.york.ac.uk/ about/departments/support-and-admin/registry-services/exams/ examiners.* Nominations are approved by the Standing Committee on Assessment on behalf of Senate.

b. When nominating External Examiners departments should have regard to the following:

  i. nominees for appointment as External Examiners should have appropriate levels of expertise and experience in relation to the roles

they are expected to fulfil within the department and the capacity to command authority and the respect of their colleagues in their particular field. In particular, External Examiners for Foundation Degree programmes need to have appropriate expertise in this level of qualification;

ii. where a nominee is not a Professor, Reader or of equivalent status, departments should provide evidence that nominees meet the criteria in (i) above (this usually requires that the department provide the Examinations Office with an up-to-date academic CV);

iii. former members of staff, and former students of the University, may not normally be nominated for appointment unless a period of three or more years has elapsed since they left the University;

iv. former External Examiners may not normally be nominated unless a period of three or more years has elapsed since their previous period of appointment expired;

v.   nominees should not normally hold more than one other concurrent substantial External Examinership during the relevant period;

vi. nominees should not normally be members of a department in an institution where a member of the nominating department is serving as an External Examiner;

vii. the requirements of professional or accrediting bodies, where relevant;

viii. potential conflicts of interest; for example it would not be appropriate for a nominee to act as External Examiner if close family members are registered students on, or involved in the teaching of, any programmes for which they would have responsibility (see also section 4.2).

c. Appointments are normally made for a period of three years. Appointments may be extended for a further year subject to the notification of the Examinations Office in Registry Services. The extensions will then be reported to the Standing Committee on Assessment.

Once approved, the Examinations Office confirms appointments in writing to the nominee.

The contract of an External Examiner may be terminated prior to the normal expiry date of the appointment only under exceptional circumstances and with the approval of University Teaching Committee and Senate.

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. External Examiners are sent copies of this document, an annual report form and an expenses claim form on appointment and annually thereafter.

18.3 **The role of External Examiners**

In broad terms, External Examiners are asked to:

a. comment and give advice on programme content, balance and structure;

b. review, evaluate and moderate 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;

c. assist in the calibration of academic standards through the review and evaluation of the outcomes of the assessment process. For Category I programmes, External Examiners will also moderate at pass/fail and classification boundaries;

d. 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;

e. submit a written report on an annual basis to the Vice-Chancellor including commentary and judgements on the validity, reliability and integrity of the assessment process and the standards of student attainment.

More specifically, this will normally include the following:

f. Comment on draft examination papers and other forms of assessment.

g. Scrutiny of examination scripts.
External Examiners have the right to see all examination scripts. Where a selection of scripts is scrutinised, the principles for selection should be agreed in advance. These principles should ensure that External Examiners see a sample of scripts from the top, middle and bottom of the range and have enough evidence to determine that internal marking and classifications are of an appropriate standard and are consistent. External Examiners should normally be asked to scrutinise the scripts of borderline candidates, those of candidates assessed internally as first class or as failures and those of candidates for whom special circumstances exist.

External Examiners cannot change marks agreed by the Board of Examiners for an individual piece of work under any circumstances, but can make recommendations that marks be changed to the Board of Examiners, who are free to accept the recommendation or not. If External Examiners are asked to advise on changes to marks on individual scripts, they should do it in the context of the full range of marks from all the scripts in the cohort. External Examiners for taught programmes should not act as markers under any circumstances.

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 module is responsible for the mark awarded to the student for that module, within the cohort of students studying the 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.

h. Scrutiny of other assessed work.
All written or recorded work contributing to progression decisions or to the final award should be available for external examination or comment. External Examiners should also have access to evidence relating to other work which contributes to the final award, eg Internal Examiners' comments on oral performance in seminars.

i. *Viva voce* examinations.
Such examinations should normally be conducted by one or more External Examiners who may be assisted by one or more Internal Examiners.

j. Attendance at meetings of Boards of Examiners.
The role of the External Examiner at meetings of Boards of Examiners is particularly important in the event of disagreement on the mark to be awarded for a particular piece of assessment, or, in the case of Category I students, on the classification to be derived from the array of marks of a particular candidate. Meetings also provide a valuable opportunity for External Examiners to offer comments and advice on any aspect of the assessment process.

k. 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 Board of Examiners meeting in person, participation by video or telephone conferencing (with the approval of the Standing Committee on Assessment) is an acceptable alternative.

Where the award of a qualification (ie, an exit award) is an automatic consequence of a failure, an external examiner should be able to approve such an award without the need to be physically present at, or otherwise participate in, a Board of Examiners.

l. Provide a verbal report on their main findings which is minuted at the Board of Examiners meeting, and which can be used for the Annual Programme Review

m. Declare any conflicts of interest to the Chair of the Board Examiners at the earliest opportunity (see 4.2 and 18.2.b.viii).

18.4　**The responsibilities of the department**
Departments are responsible for ensuring that External Examiners are provided with all necessary information for the effective fulfilment of their role as outlined above, and that they are consulted at appropriate stages of the assessment process. This will include providing External Examiners with detailed syllabus and programme structure information and liaising with them on arrangements for meetings of Boards of Examiners. External Examiners should also be provided with a copy of the Annual Programme Review each year as it is submitted to University Teaching Committee. It is also considered

to be good practice for the latest Annual Programme Review report, including the reports of outgoing and continuing External Examiners, to be sent to newly-appointed External Examiners. Departments should ensure that they check with new External Examiners if they have any special needs.

Departments must document their procedures for considering the performance of Category I students near borderlines to enable them to apply the University's principles of equity, clarity, consistency and openness, and should ensure that these procedures are covered in the induction briefings and documentation provided to their External Examiners.

Individual departments are responsible for providing External Examiners with a Written Statements of Assessment policies and procedures. Departments must have published a Written Statements of Assessment in accordance with the policy outlined in Appendix A of this booklet.

When planning assessment schemes and schedules departments should ensure that they are not overloading External Examiners, but also take into account the need for effective moderation by External Examiners.

Departments are responsible for 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.

18.5 Reporting

Examiners are asked, in their expert judgement, to report 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 some other higher education institutions;

v. good practice they have identified.

a. *Procedure*

The University requires each External Examiner to submit a written annual report to the Vice-Chancellor within two months of completion of the annual examining process. At the end of a period of office, the report should be extended to cover the entire examining period.

The standard report form provided should be completed and submitted direct to the Vice-Chancellor in the pre-paid envelope supplied, or returned electronically to the Examinations Office in Registry Services.

Fees are only authorised for payment upon receipt of a signed report.

Departments are responsible for ensuring that, within a reasonable time, External Examiners are provided with a response to their comments and recommendations, 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.

b. *Review*

External Examiners' reports are considered at meetings of Boards of Studies. In addition, the University requires all departments to carry out an Annual Programme Review of their each department's taught (and research) provision, which includes reflection on external examiners' comments and reports (where available), and to report to University Teaching Committee on the outcomes of the review. Details of Annual Programme Review are available at: *www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/monitoring-and-review/apr.*

The annual programme review report is normally submitted to the University Teaching Committee by the the end of November, in time for consideration at a University Teaching Committee meeting in December.

All External Examiners' reports are also scrutinised by the Chair of the University Teaching Committee who takes forward any major University-wide issues of significant concern.

c. *Confidential matters*
The reports of External Examiners are normally available for discussion widely within the University (see section (b) above). In particular External Examiners' reports will be shared with student representatives, so it should not be possible to identify individuals (and particularly individual students) in these reports. Exceptionally, an additional, separate and confidential report may be submitted to the Vice-Chancellor if an External Examiner considers this to be appropriate (for example, on highly confidential matters related to individual candidates). Such reports will be dealt with outside the normal committee procedures.

d. *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 benchmark statement at *www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/ Documents/Foundation-degree-qualification-benchmark.pdf*, and the appropriateness of work-based learning elements;

iii. teaching quality and methods as revealed in examination scripts;

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. whether disability issues have been adequately addressed in processes;

x. the procedures for induction and preparation for their role and the time available to perform it.

18.6   Fees and expenses

Fees for External Examiners for taught programmes are calculated on the basis of an annual fee as detailed in the letter of appointment, plus a capitation fee based on the number of students examined. Fees are paid upon receipt of a signed report. In addition, the University will reimburse travelling expenses and any other reasonable expenses necessarily incurred. Claim forms for expenses are issued to External Examiners annually by the Examinations Office.

Old Modular Scheme – Category 1 Students – Rules for Assessment, Progression and Award

Category 1 Students – Rules for Assessment, Progression and Award

Category 1 Students – Rules for Assessment, Progression and Award

Introduction
The rules outlined in this section relate to Category 1 students (see Regulation 3). This includes all undergraduate students enrolled at the University prior to Autumn 2010 and taught postgraduate students enrolled prior to Autumn 2011 in programmes which are not operating under the new modular scheme.

Category 1 students, who are studying on programmes in the previous modular scheme, have module codes (eg 2010015) that carry the 35% pass mark. Programme specifications for these programmes are available from relevant departments.

19. Marking Schemes

19.1 Credits and assessment weightings

Departments should note that the weighting of the assessment for a module may be different from the credit attached to that module.

Where the credit has been earned in a department other than a student's 'home' department, the teaching department for the module must provide a mark on the 0–100 University mark scale. This will then be incorporated into the assessment procedures operated by the 'home' department.

19.2 University mark scales — Foundation Degree, undergraduate, graduate and taught postgraduate programmes

Module marks in Foundation Degree programmes are provided on the undergraduate mark scale. The Foundation Degree itself is awarded on a pass or fail basis (see 23.1.3).

19.2.1 Undergraduate

The University mark scale applied at undergraduate level 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
Pass	35–39
Fail	0–34

19.2.2 Where departments use a different undergraduate mark scale internally, they should identify the following seven points of correspondence between the departmental and University scales for the purposes of translation.

  a. the minimum possible mark (0 on the University scale);

  b. the fail/pass borderline (34.5 on the University scale);

  c. the pass/third borderline (39.5 on the University scale);

d. the third/lower second borderline (49.5 on the University scale);

e. the lower second/upper second borderline (59.5 on the University scale);

f. the upper second/first borderline (69.5 on the University scale);

g. the highest possible mark (100 on the University scale).

Borderlines (b)–(f) should be half-way between the highest possible mark in one class and the lowest in the next. Each departmental mark should be translated into a University mark by first identifying the interval between these points in which the departmental mark lies, and then calculating the University mark that divides the interval on the University scale in the same ratio as the departmental mark divides the interval on the departmental scale.

19.2.3 *Graduate*

The University mark scale applied at graduate level is 0–100 with the pass mark set at 40:

Distinguished performance at graduate level	70–100
Good performance at graduate level	50–69
Satisfactory performance at graduate level	40–49
Fail	0–39

Standards of attainment on the graduate mark scale should notionally be equivalent to those of the Honours-degree classification (range 40-100), although graduate-level awards are not classified Honours degrees.

Where departments use a different mark scale internally, the principle outlined in 19.2.2 should be applied to convert marks to the University graduate scale, with points of correspondence at 0, 39.5, 49.5, 69.5 and 100.

19.2.4 *Taught Postgraduate*

The University mark scale applied at taught postgraduate level is 0–100 with the pass mark set at 50:

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

Where departments use a different mark scale internally, the principle outlined in 19.2.2 should be applied to convert marks to the University taught postgraduate scale, with points of correspondence at 0, 49.5, 59.5, 69.5 and 100.

- A mark of 70 or above for distinguished performance at postgraduate level should be given for performance that is excellent but need not be exceptional (ie in the same sense that, at undergraduate level, performance at first class level is excellent but not necessarily exceptional).

- The taught postgraduate mark scale applies to postgraduate-level Certificates and Diplomas as well as Masters qualifications.

19.3   General

19.3.1 Departments may devise their own marking schemes but are required to translate final marks for all modules into the University mark scale before they are formally communicated to students, the Examinations Office and entered on SITS.

19.3.2 Marks required for progression within a programme or from one award to another (eg postgraduate Diploma to Masters, or Bachelors to Integrated Masters) may be set higher than the pass mark (see also section 22).

19.3.3 Exact marks (where relevant) should be used in calculations when marks from separate assessments or modules are combined to yield an overall mark.

19.3.4 Boards of Studies should consider ways in which greater use, where appropriate, of the use of the full range of marks might be facilitated, eg by including grade descriptors for very high and very low marks.

19.3.5 Boards of Studies should provide students embarking on all exchange schemes with a statement of how the marks they obtain will be treated (see section 4.12).

19.3.6 A mark or signal supplied by an individual Board of Examiners for the purpose of computing a student's overall mark for a combined degree must be an integer on the appropriate scale.

19.3.7 Boards of Examiners should communicate to students overall marks and marks for individual modules on the appropriate scales, rounded up or down to the nearest integer (with 0.5 rounded up).

19.3.8 With the permission of the University Teaching Committee, modules may be marked on a pass/fail basis. Approval for modules to be marked on a pass/fail basis will only be granted if there is a clear and convincing rationale for this approach: approval is likely to be limited, for example, to competency-based modules in professional / vocational subjects, work-based learning modules, and certain skills modules.

19.3.9 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. The points of correspondence can then be used to rescale marks according to the method described in 19.2.2. 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.

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

The students enrolled on the module must also be informed by their department as soon as possible, whenever assessment marks are rescaled or changed in any way.

20. Combining Marks

20.1 **Combining marks from individual modules**
Each taught programme, undergraduate, graduate or postgraduate, single subject or combined, must publish a clear statement explaining the process by which marks from individual modules are aggregated to yield the final mark. The following should be noted:

20.1.1 The process should be as simple and transparent as possible, while complying with the four underlying principles of the University's assessment policy (see section 1.1);

20.1.2 The statement must outline how marks from elective modules are to be handled, noting that when a student undertakes an elective module in another department it is important that the module generates a mark that can substitute for any mark normally associated with the module that is being replaced, and that the mark will be available in time for consideration at the final Board of Examiners for the programme of study that the student is following. The weighting attached to the mark for the elective will be equivalent to that of the module it is replacing;

20.1.3 It should include marks gained during exchange programmes (eg the North American Exchange schemes) and years away from York (eg Erasmus, Years in Industry schemes);

20.1.4 It must include an explanation of the weighted contributions from different years or levels to the final mark;

20.1.5 There should be clear information about the progression requirements needed to progress to the next level of study, whether or not the modules from that particular year or level contribute ot the final award mark;

20.1.6 Combined Boards of Studies may decide whether the joint programme

will be handled by a separate Written Statement of Assessment or by relevant and consistent sections in the Written Statements of each contributing department;

20.1.7 Written Statements of Assessments must include how credit accumulation is affected by failure of modules, and must specify any attendance requirements that have to be fulfilled to gain credit.

20.2 Weighting of modules from different years
The weighted contribution to the final award of assessment from each year of study must be clearly stated for all programmes. If the first year is zero-weighted, Boards of Studies should consider the desirability of having in place a formal progression requirement, eg students must achieve x% overall in order to proceed to the second year (see section 20.1.5).

20.3 Multi-cohort modules
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.

20.3.1. 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.

20.3.2. If the learning outcomes differ for the cohorts then there will be different assessments and/or mark descriptors for each cohort.

20.3.3. Agreed marks need to be subject to analysis by cohort. Where there is evidence for cohort-related performance differences, marks should be moderated to ensure equitable treatment of students from different cohorts, and the assumptions of equity underlying the multi-cohort teaching will need to be re-examined.

Sometimes it may be academically appropriate for combined programme students to attend a module in one of their disciplines (ie 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.

20.4   Marks from North American Exchange Programmes
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 (see also section 4.12 and 18.3.g).

20.4.1 University Teaching Committee has noted that departmental practices must be standardised regarding the conversion of North American marks, to ensure parity for students across departments.

An agreed conversion table is provided by the Registrar's department (International Office on ext. 3534 or Examinations Office on ext. 4656), together with guidelines to Boards of Studies that suggest that, if necessary, the distribution of marks gained on the exchange by a student, the percentile rank of the student in the class and evaluation forms should be used to supplement the conversion table as additional indicators of a student's performance.

20.4.2 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.

20.4.3 External Examiners should be provided with a clear statement of how North American marks have been treated.

20.4.4 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.

21.   Reassessment and Failure

21.1   Failure to complete assessments
In situations where an undergraduate finalist/taught postgraduate has not submitted or has failed an element or elements of assessment, the following principle may be applied:

Where a candidate has not submitted or has failed an element or elements of assessment, amounting to a small proportion (a maximum of one-ninth) of the weighted contributions to the overall degree assessment, and there are compelling medical or compassionate circumstances, it is within the discretion of Boards to waive this element and award a degree on the work submitted and on such other written work as is available.

Hereafter, this principle will be referred to as the 'principle of one-ninth'. The principle of one-ninth has been established to quantify the proportion of the weighted contribution to final degree assessment that may be waived to assist Boards of Examiners to arrive at a correct degree result where this is based on less than the full range of marks. The principle of one-ninth should be applied only when there are compelling medical or compassionate circumstances that prevent a sit "as if for the first time" and/or a resit, or lead to a fail. Departments should note that where mitigating circumstances lead to failure or missing assessment earlier in a student's programme, this failure or missing assessment should be reported straightaway to the Assistant Registrar with responsibility for examinations, and Boards of Studies should recommend some measure other than the waiving of marks to rectify the situation.

21.1.1   If an undergraduate candidate has been unable to submit or has failed a substantial proportion (more than one-ninth of the weighted contribution) of the work required for the overall degree assessment because of medical or compassionate reasons, Boards of Studies should consider the candidate for the award of a degree with Honours (Aegrotat) or ordinary (Aegrotat), and to make a recommendation for that award to the Special Cases Committee.

21.1.2   In exceptional cases where neither the procedures in section 21.1 nor those in 21.1.1 is appropriate, the Boards may recommend to Senate

either the award of a classified degree or that the candidate may be permitted to resit the missed assessments in whole or in part for a classified degree on one subsequent occasion not more than one year later. The recommendation will be considered by the Special Cases Committee and, in a case where a classified degree is recommended, detailed supporting evidence will normally be required, including the result of any oral examination of the candidate on the material involved in the missing units of the examination assessment.

21.1.3 If a taught postgraduate candidate has been unable to submit or has failed a substantial proportion (more than one-ninth of the weighted contribution) of the work required for the overall degree assessment because of medical or compassionate reasons, Boards of Studies or Graduate School Board may consider the candidate for the award of a degree, and to make a recommendation for that award to the Standing Committee on Assessment.

21.2   Reassessment

21.2.1 Regulations 5.2 and 5.3 sets out the circumstances under which students may be provided with opportunities to redeem failure. 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. These principles should also be applied to students studying for Foundation Degrees and graduate and taught postgraduate awards of the University of York.

i. Where programmes of study include a progression hurdle and resit opportunities are provided in programme requirements then students may undertake resit examination without the approval of the Special Cases Committee.

ii. Where a student misses or fails a progression hurdle assessment or a formal examination under mitigating circumstances (eg medical or compassionate), and wishes to take resit examinations "as if for the first time" then the appropriate Board of Studies/ Graduate School Board must make a recommendation to this effect to the Special

Cases Committee unless the department has implemented the new Mitigating Circumstances policy.

iii. The Special Cases Committee must approve the recommendation and outline for the student the options available to them and what will happen if they fail the resit examination. This process must be complete before the resit examination takes place.

iv. In any other case where a student wishes to take resit examinations "as if for the first time" the process must follow a recommendation to the Special Cases Committee from the appropriate Board of Studies/Graduate School Board as outlined in (ii) above.

v. The procedures above apply whether the recommendation is for resits or sits "in residence" or "out of residence".

21.2.2 Where a module has been reassessed, the greater of the original mark and the resit mark should normally be used to inform progression decisions and the determination of the final award, following suitable capping procedures. This applies even where the student has failed to complete the reassessment.

The exception to this rule arises where a student is found to have committed academic misconduct on the original assessment. In this circumstance the higher of the two marks should inform the progression decision, but it should be the original failing mark which is carried forward to the determination of the degree award and recorded on the student academic transcript.

21.2.3 Where a student is found to have committed academic misconduct during the reassessment and fails the module, no further reassessment opportunity should beallowed.

21.2.4 Where a progression hurdle has been set higher than the University's pass mark on the undergraduate, graduate or taught postgraduate mark scale as appropriate (eg a hurdle of 50 in undergraduate practical modules), the mark carried forward following reassessment should be capped at the higher of the pass mark and the original mark (see also section 19.2).

21.2.5 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 Monday 13 to Friday 18 August 2012, 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.

21.2.6 All candidates are normally expected to attend resit examinations in York on the scheduled dates , which for the 2011/12 academic year are the 13 to 18 August, 2012. 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.

22. Progression

22.1 **Progression, programme transfer and leave of absence**
Regulation 6 deals with interruption to normal academic progression, programme transfers and leave of absence for undergraduate students. Rules for academic progression within programmes of study are defined by Boards of Studies and approved by University Teaching Committee.

If there is a formal progression requirement within a programme, the decision on whether a student can progress to the following year of the programme should be made in adequate time to allow a failing student to make decisions about further study in the forthcoming academic year.

22.2 **Progression hurdles**
Progression hurdles should only be set higher than the University's pass mark when it is deemed necessary for a student to demonstrate attainment at a standard higher than that required for the pass mark. In setting expectations of student performance mapped against the University mark scale, all Boards should calibrate Honours threshold performance, equivalent to a mark of 40, against relevant Benchmark Statements. See also section 19.2 and Appendix A (f).

22.3   Transfers between Bachelors and four-year Masters degrees

Departments should follow the guidelines below in administering transfers between three-year Bachelors degrees and four-year Integrated Masters degrees. Decisions should be made within the department concerned, with recourse to the Special Cases Committee where necessary, noting that:

a. a definitive decision should be taken at the end of the second year of study and that this decision should be made on the basis of a formal progression requirement;

b. students on a four-year programme are not normally permitted to graduate with a Bachelors degree at the end of three years of the programme except when the student has failed to meet the progression requirements for entry into year 4, or continuation into year 4 is not possible for medical or compassionate reasons;

c. it is the department's responsibility to ensure that students are made aware in advance of any progression requirements.

22.4   Compensation and condonation

See the Glossary (Appendix B) for a definition of the above terms.

22.4.1 It is the responsibility of each Board of Studies (including Combined Boards of Studies) to define the circumstances under which compensation of failed modules will be allowed. Because these circumstances may vary between programmes of study it is important that all students are made fully aware of the relevant requirements at the start of their programme.

22.4.2 Although it is necessary to complete an assessment to earn credit at the University of York, it is not necessary to pass a module in order to do so and for this reason the issue of condonation is currently irrelevant.

22.5   Appeals

Appeals procedures are laid down in Regulation 2.8 (for research degree students) and Regulation 6.7 (for taught programme students).

23. Degree Classification

23.1 General guidelines

23.1.1 The University provides an academic transcript for each graduating student on a taught, credit-bearing programme that includes their degree classification.

23.1.2 Exact marks (where relevant) should be used in consideration of students' overall marks in relation to borderlines.

23.1.3 Foundation Degrees are awarded on a Pass or Fail basis, and the final result is calculated on the basis of marks from Level I modules only. Module marks, however, should normally be provided on the standard undergraduate mark scale to enable students to demonstrate achievement above the threshold and allow for the application of academic misconduct penalties (see also section 19.2.1).

23.1.4 Students who successfully complete 120 credits of a Foundation Degree at Level C are eligible for the award of Certificate of Higher Education.

23.1.5 The final degree classification of a student who has progressed to a University of York Bachelor with Honours programme from a Foundation Degree programme will based solely on Level H modules.

23.1.6 Taught postgraduate qualifications are not classified, but may be awarded with distinction where specified criteria approved by Boards of Studies have been met. All taught postgraduate programmes (Certificates, Diplomas or Masters) must allow the possibility of award with distinction, even if such awards are not routinely made. A distinction should be awarded for overall performance in a programme that is excellent but need not be exceptional (ie, in the same sense that, at undergraduate level, performance at first class level is excellent, whereas performance at starred first level is exceptional).

The criteria necessary for the award of a qualification with distinction should normally include:

a. distinguished performance in any dissertation or project, where a mark for this is awarded;

b. consistent quality of performance (in terms of an overall mark —

including or excluding the dissertation or project — at or above a specified level and/or marks at or above a specified level for a specified number of modules and/or the absence or paucity of marks below a specified level);

c. the explicit approval by the External Examiner of the award of the qualification with distinction.

23.1.7 Graduate-level qualifications also are not classified, and distinctions typically should be awarded to students whose overall attainment is at a standard notionally equivalent to undergraduate first-class Honours. In their Written Statements of Assessment, departments should provide precise information about what achievements will be necessary in order to gain a distinction in each graduate-level programme.

23.1.8 The award of a graduate or taught postgraduate qualification with distinction may be announced and/or indicated on results lists, providing it is made clear that the award is subject to formal approval by the Standing Committee on Assessment.

23.2 **Guidelines for classifying combined degrees**

23.2.1 Written Statements of Assessment must state clearly how departures from the 1:1 or 2:1 contributions of departments will be taken account of for individual candidates.

23.2.2 Combined degrees should be classified using a simple weighted averaging system, based on the following premises:

a. i. *either* the average should be calculated using only the 'signals' from the two subjects concerned, each signal having been determined at single-subject level, using a procedure corresponding to the department's mechanism for computing single-subject degrees,

ii. *or* marks from all modules (rather than signals) should be combined according to a publicised weighted average procedure that is independent of the departments from which the marks originate (see section 20 on arrangements for combining marks).

b. the departments concerned should communicate draft marks before

the meeting of the final Board and early enough for borderline students to be identified and, where appropriate, External Examiners to be involved in vivas at single-subject level (vivas cannot be used to determine borderline students);

c. marks should be externally verified, discussions about individual students held, and recommendations for opportunities to redeem failure (where a student has obtained a mark of 30–34) determined, at single-subject level. See also section 26 on the treatment of mitigating circumstances;

d. candidates who obtain a total average of less than 30 in one of their combined degree subjects should fail;

e. at least one External Examiner should normally be present at the meeting of the Combined Board at which students' degree classifications are considered (see Ordinance 1.4).

Note that, for these purposes, students of the School of Politics, Economics and Philosophy (PEP) are not regarded as studying on combined degree programmes..

23.3   First-class honours degrees with distinction

23.3.1   Boards of Examiners, when establishing final degree classifications, are required to give special consideration to the award of first-class Honours degrees with distinction ("starred firsts") and to establish criteria in line with their own marking schemes to allow them to do so.

The following basic requirements for the award of first-class Honours degrees with distinction should be adhered to by all Boards of Studies:

i. award of a distinction requires the explicit approval of External Examiners;

ii. criteria must be expressed in terms of the University mark scale;

iii. 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.

The criteria used to calculate distinctions should follow one of the following models:

  a. a minimum overall weighted average (usually 80%) 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.

23.3.2 The award of first-class Honours degrees with distinction should be announced and/or indicated on results lists only after approval has been given for such awards by the Standing Committee on Assessment acting on behalf of Senate. 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. Candidates should not be informed of any such recommendations, nor should these be indicated on results lists until the approval of the University Senate has been obtained and formally advised to the Board.

24.   Completion of Degrees

24.1   **Combined degrees**
In the case of a candidate on a combined degree programme who fails assessment in one of the subjects, the Combined Subject Board may take into account the performance of the candidate in both subjects before making a recommendation to the Senate via the Standing Committee on Assessment (Regulation 5.3 (e)). See also section 23.2.2 (c) and (d), and section 16.1.4.

24.2   **Issuing degree results**

24.2.1 Recommendations from Boards of Studies for undergraduate awards are submitted to Senate via the Standing Committee on Assessment for approval in the week in which graduation ceremonies are held. 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.

24.2.2 Recommendations from Boards of Studies for the award of taught postgraduate and research degrees are submitted to Senate via the Standing Committee on Assessment. Departments should complete and return appropriate results lists to Registry Services, 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.

24.2.3 Results should be conveyed to students stating clearly that they are provisional until ratified by Senate.

24.2.4 Candidates who are unable to be awarded a Masters degree, but who have completed the requirements for the award of 120 credits at FHEQ 'M' level, may be awarded a postgraduate Diploma in qualifications where the award of a Diploma has been approved by University Teaching Committee. Where such an award has not been previously approved, the award of a Diploma to students who have failed to meet the requirements for award of a Masters degree is not possible.

24.2.5 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 (eg from Certificate to Diploma-level) there is no requirement to surrender the previous award document.

24.2.6 The University may, in unusual circumstances, make an intermediate award to a student who has committed academic misconduct, where such an award exists within the programme of study and where there can be certainty that academic misconduct has not occurred in any of the work contributing to that intermediate award.

24.3   The role of Senate
Senate, via the Standing Committee on Assessment, ratifies the recommendations of Boards of Studies or Graduate School Boards. Ordinance 6.7 provides additional information. See also section 23.3.2.

25.   Assessment rules for Transitional Students

Students who are returning from a leave of absence or a year away and joining a stage(s) with new modular scheme entrants they should be subject to the same rules as the new modular scheme entrants in relation to the pass mark (ie, the pass mark will be 40 for undergraduate level modules) and progression/award (ie, compensation and reassessment, including the progression requirements from stage 3 to 4 of Integrated Masters programmes, where applicable).

However, because the marking, assessment and progression arrangements that applied to these students before they went away used the current departmental rules, such students should not be subject to the new degree classification calculation. The degree classification calculation that was in place when the studentsenrolled should be used.

In addition, the new early exit awards under the new modular scheme will only be available to students who started their programme of study under the new scheme. So, for example, if a student is on leave of absence and returns on or after Oct 2010 they will not be eligible for an exit award if they decided to withdraw from their programme during or after Oct 2010.

New Modular Scheme – Category 2 Students – Rules of Assessment, Progression and Award

CONSISTENCY

THE UNIVERSITY of York

Contents

Category 2 students –
Rules for Assessment, Progression and Award

Introduction

The rules outlined in this section relate to Category 2 students (see Regulation 3). This includes all undergraduate and taught postgraduate students enrolled at the University, in programmes operating under the new modular scheme.

Details of all programme specifications for programmes under the new modular scheme studied by Category 2 students are available at *www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/manage/ programmes/programme-specs*

Programmes for Category 2 students studying within the new modular scheme have new module codes, eg HIS00001C, where the first three letters identify the department and the last letter identifies the module level. Modules with this coding carry a 40% pass mark for undergraduate programmes, and a 50% pass mark for taught postgraduate programmes..

A.   Introduction

A.1   This document sets out the rules relating to assessment, progression and award under the undergraduate and taught postgraduate modular scheme. The rules apply to all undergraduate programmes (including Integrated Masters) commencing in or after academic year 2010/11 , and any postgraduate programmes commencing in or after 2011/12 (excluding electronics).

A.2   Details of the scheme's award, stage and module requirements for those involved in programme design, approval and review are available at *www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/programme-development/programmes/ programme-design.*

A.3   A glossary of terms can be found in **Appendix B**.

B.   Overview of the Modular Scheme

B.1   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 Regulations, and other University regulations (eg 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.

B.2   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 bachelors programme. Students who undertake study abroad or a work placement as

'additional' credit (see Section I) and do not achieve that credit, will transfer to the relevant variant of the programme.

B.3   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..

B.4   Individual student cases of mitigating circumstances are dealt with by the appropriate departmental and University committees (see Section 26).

C.   Marking Scheme for Undergraduate Programmes

C.1   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) (but see Section D below).

C.2   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 (see C.6 below).

C.3   The University mark scale applied at undergraduate level (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 a fail mark of 30-39 is potentially compensatable (see below), and marks of 0-29 are outright fails.

C.4   The current guidance on the rescaling of marks should apply not only to programmes for Category 1 students, ie students on the old modular scheme, but also for programmes for Category 2 students, ie students on the new modular scheme.(see 19.3.9)

C.5   The pass mark for any Masters-level modules taken as part of an undergraduate programme is 50.

C.6   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 cannot be compensated (see Section D below).

C.7   In exceptional circumstances (eg, 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).

C.8   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 G below). This process occurs only if a student has met the progression requirements for each stage (see Section D below).

C.9   Final penalties arising from academic misconduct 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.

D.   Progression in Undergraduate Programmes[3]

D.1   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*).

D.2   In addition, any supplementary progression requirements specified for their registered programme must be met (for example, for PSRB accreditation).

[3] *Appendix L provides an overview of progression for undergraduate awards and integrated masters.*

D.3   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.

Compensation

D.4   In defined circumstances credit may be awarded for failed module(s) where the failure is compensated by achievement in other module(s).

Compensation in foundation years (stage 0)

D.5   If a student fails one or more modules (ie, 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.

Compensation in foundation degrees

D.6   In stage 1, if a student fails one or more modules (ie, 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.

D.7   In stage 2, if a student fails one or more modules (ie, 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.

Compensation in a University Certificate of Lifelong Learning

D.8 If a student fails one or more modules (ie, 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.

Compensation in Bachelors Programmes[4]

D.9 In stage 1, if a student fails one or more modules (ie, 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.

D.10 In stage 2, if a student fails one or more modules (ie, 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:

[4] *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'.*

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.

D.11   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 mark falls below the threshold for compensation appropriate for its level,[5] and

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

Compensation in integrated masters programmes

D.12   In stage 1, if a student fails one or more modules (ie, 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.

D.13   In stage 2, if a student fails one or more modules (ie, 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.

[5] *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.*

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

D.14 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, 4 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.[6]

Where a student has not met the criteria for stage 3 of the integrated masters 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.15 In stage 4, 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, 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 Bachelors degree on the basis of their results in stages 1 – 3'

[6] *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 (see Section G2: 3rd bullet) will allow consideration of alternative weightings, including 1:1:1."*

Reassessment

D.16   Reassessment is an opportunity for students to redeem failure for the award of credit to meet progression or award requirements.

Reassessment in foundation years (stage 0)

D.17   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 (ie, module marks less than 30) in that stage.

Reassessment in foundation degrees (stages 1,2,3)

D.18   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 (ie, module marks less than 30) in that stage.

Reassessment in a University Certificate of Lifelong Learning

D.19   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 (ie, module marks less than 30) in that stage.

Reassessment in bachelors programmes [7]

D.20   In stages 1 and 2, where a student fails modules and the progression

[7] 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 (ie, module marks less than 30).

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 (ie module marks less than 30) in that stage.

D.21   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.

D.22   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[8] have already been achieved. This will simply be an opportunity, not a requirement.

Reassessment in integrated masters programmes

D.23   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 (ie, module marks less than 30).

D.24   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 (ie, module marks less than 30). Where a student has not achieved the stage average for progression on the integrated masters programme, reassessment opportunities will only be provided for continuation on the bachelors programme.

D.25   In stages 3 and 4, where a student has met the required stage average for

[8] By potentially compensatable marks we mean marks between 30-39 (for level C/4, I/5 and H/6 modules) or 40-49 (for level M/7 modules), which could be compensated if, following reassessment, a student's profile of marks indicates the compensation criteria could be applied.

progression or award, reassessment opportunities will be limited to 40 credits. For stage 3, where a student has not achieved the stage average for progression on the integrated masters programme, reassessment opportunities will only be provided for award of a bachelors degree.

All programmes

D.26 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.

D.27 Any modules for which reassessment opportunities cannot be provided should be clearly identified in the Programme Specifications and approved by University Teaching Committee.

D.28 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 (see C 7 and 8 above) 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. 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.[9]

[9] *Reassessment opportunities within integrated masters programmes at stages 2, 3 and 4 are limited to students who have achieved the required stage average (see D.24 and D.25 above). Thus reassessment within integrated masters programmes is purely an opportunity to satisfy the credit criteria.*

D.29 Where a student is not permitted a reassessment opportunity (ie, cannot meet the specified progression requirements through reassessment as defined above) and there are no mitigating circumstances the student's registration will be discontinued. S/he may be eligible for a lower credit-volume award (see Section F).

D.30 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 Monday 13th to Friday 18 August 2012, 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.

D.31 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.

D.32 The rules relating to assessment for graduate programmes will be included in this guide in 2012-13. Please refer to *www.york.ac.uk/media/staffhome/learningandteaching/documents/ programmedevelopment/framework%20and%20assess%20rules-%20 FINAL.pdf*

E. Marking Schemes for taught postgraduate programmes

E.1 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.

E.2 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.

E.3 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 are outright fails.

E.4 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.

E.5 All level 6 (H) modules taken as part of a postgraduate programme must be marked on a pass/fail basis.

E.6 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 Programme Design of Taught Postgraduate Modular Scheme: Framework for Programme Design *[www.york.ac.uk/media/staffhome/learningandteaching/documents/ programmedevelopment/framework%20-%20PGT%20-FINAL.pdf])*.

F.   Compensation in Taught Postgraduate Awards

F.1   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 in Masters[10]

F.2   If a student fails one or more non-Independent Study Modules (ISM) (ie, 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.

F.3   Independent Study Module(s) cannot be compensated.

Compensation in Postgraduate Diplomas[11]

F.4   If a student fails one or more modules (ie, 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.

Compensation in Postgraduate Certificates[11]

F.5   If a student fails one or more modules (ie, achieves a mark below 50) s/he may still receive the credit for the failed module(s) provided that:

[10] *Applied at the end of the 'taught' component of the programme*

[11] *Where a staged approach is taken to a programme (eg students register for a Certificate before progressing to a Diploma), the assessment rules are cumulative. So, for example, if a student undertakes 20 credits of reassessment during the 60 credits at the certificate stage, they will only have 20 credits of reassessment available to them during the 60 credits of the diploma stage.*

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.

All awards

F.6 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.

Reassessment[12]

F.7 Reassessment is an opportunity for students to redeem failure for the award of credit to meet award requirements.

Masters: non-ISM modules

F.8 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 40 credits.

Masters: independent study module (ISM)

F.9 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'.

Postgraduate Diploma[11]

F.10 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 40 credits.

[12] *Information about the timing of reassessments is included in **www.york.ac.uk/media/staffhome/ learningandteaching/documents/programmedevelopment/framework%20-%20PGT%20-FINAL.pdf***

Postgraduate Certificate[11]

F.11   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 20 credits.

All awards

F.12   A student may only be reassessed in a particular module on one occasion.

F.13   Any modules for which reassessment opportunities cannot be provided should be clearly identified through Programme Specifications.

F.14   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).

F.15   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.

F.16   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. See F.9 regarding ISMs.

G.   Study Abroad and Work Placements

G.1   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.

G.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.

G.3   Where study abroad or work placements are taken as 'replacement' credit, these should usually be given marks on the University mark scale.

G.4   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).

G.5   Students should be made aware that reassessment opportunities cannot be guaranteed in relation to study abroad or work placements. Where appropriate and feasible, Boards of Examiners may offer a reassessment opportunity back in York. The nature of any reassessment opportunities should be set-out in the module description/Programme Information.

G.6   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.

G.7   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 (eg, for additional credit designated as part of stage 2 a mean mark of 40 is required).

G.8   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 E.5 above).

G.9   After reassessment, if the above criteria (E.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.

G.10 **Marks from North American Exchange Programmes**
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 (see also section 4.13).

G.10.1 University Teaching Committee has noted that departmental practices must be standardised regarding the conversion of North American marks, to ensure parity for students across departments. An agreed conversion table is provided by the Registrar's department (International Office on ext. 3534 or Examinations Office on ext. 4656), together with guidelines to Boards of Studies that suggest that where necessary the distribution of marks gained on the exchange by a student, the percentile rank of the student in the class and evaluation forms should be used to supplement the conversion table as additional indicators of a student's performance.

G.10.2 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.

G.10.3 External Examiners should be provided with a clear statement of how marks from the North American portion of the degree have been treated.

G.10.4 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 they leave for their exchange placement.

H.   Award Requirements

H.1   A degree 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 credit-volume award than the award for which they are registered, provided that they have met the requirements for that award and are in good academic standing. Such awards will usually be generic University awards (for example, Ordinary degrees and Certificates of Higher Education) and will only be recorded as having been passed.[13] Generic qualification descriptors for early exit awards are available at *www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/programme-development/programmes/programme-design.*

[13] *Where departments wish to introduce specific, named exit points (for example, Certificate of Higher Education or Diploma in Geography) programme learning outcomes must be specified. Ordinary degrees cannot be named awards.*

H.2 **The University award requirements are:**

Award	Credit volume (minima)$^\Omega$	Credit levels	Electives	Combined degrees: credit distribution	
			max credit volume	Main/ subsidiary (A with B)	EQ combinations (A and B)
Masters 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 Masters Degree	480	at least 120 credits at level 7 (M) (over stages 3 and 4)	80	Variation permitted between 360:120 and 310:170	240:240 regarded as the norm, but with variation permitted up to 290:190
Bachelors 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, but with variation permitted up to 220:140
Ordinary Degree	300	at least 60 credits at level 6 (H) (over stages 2 and 3)	60		
Foundation Degree*	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 of Lifelong Learning*	60	60 credits at level 4 (C)	n/a		

Ω 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). 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.

* Not available as early exit awards.

I. Degree Classification (for Undergraduate Awards)

I.1 The Bachelors with Honours and Integrated Masters awards are classified degrees.

I.2 The mechanism for calculating degree classifications is as follows:

- Stage 1 (and stage 0 if applicable) marks are excluded from the classification calculation;
- 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 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.

I.3 Pass/fail marks do not contribute to the degree classification.

I.4 Ordinary degrees, Certificates and Diplomas of Higher Education are not classified.

I.5 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.

J. Merits and Distinctions for Postgraduate Degrees

J.1 Postgraduate degrees are not classified, so undergraduate classification terminology should not be used to describe achievement at this level (eg. 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 (See J. 3-6), regardless of whether the award is achieved as an intended award, an early exit award, or as the result of a failed ISM.

J.2 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.

Merits
Masters

J.3 To be recommended to Senate for the award of a Masters 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 failed modules.

Postgraduate Diplomas

J.4 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 failed modules.

Distinctions
Masters

J.3 To be recommended to Senate for the award of a Masters 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.

Postgraduate Diplomas

J.4 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.

Research Degrees

Research Degrees

This should be read in conjunction with the University Ordinances and Regulations and the Code of Practice on Research Degree programmes.

25. Research Degrees

25.1   Assessment [QAA code sections 22–24]

255.1.1 Criteria

The criteria for the award of the degrees of MPhil, PhD and EngD are set out at

www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/manage/research-students/ criteria

A candidate for the degree of MA or MSc by research will complete a substantial piece of research, including original work, and be assessed solely on the basis of that research. The examiners must be satisfied that the candidate has achieved outcomes appropriate to a masters-level qualification; that the work submitted is the candidate's own (or, if done in collaboration, that the candidate's share in the research is adequate); that the candidate has an adequate understanding of research methods; and that the mode of presentation is satisfactory.

25.1.2 Submission of theses

25.1.2.a Research degree candidates are required to prepare and to submit for examination copies of their thesis or dissertation as specified in the University's guidance on the presentation and submission of theses and dissertations (*www.york.ac.uk/students/ studying/manage/research-students/theses-dissertations*).

25.1.2.b The thesis must be presented and bound in accordance with the University's requirements (*www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/ manage/research-students/presentation-binding*), and submitted to the Examinations Office for examination. Printed copies of theses and dissertations submitted for examination must be softbound, as specified in the University's requirements for the binding of theses and dissertations, and the number of printed copies submitted must equal the number of examiners appointed.

25.1.2.c Candidates who enrolled in their degree programme in October 2009 or later, in addition, must submit the same number of copies of a CD (or other portable data storage unit acceptable to the

University) containing an electronic copy of the thesis or dissertation. The electronic copy must be in pdf format (or other format acceptable to the University and appropriate to the medium) and be identical in every way to the printed copy.

Candidates who enrolled for their degree programme before October 2009 may also submit electronic copies in addition to the printed copies, but are not required to do so.

Each CD (or other portable data storage unit) must bear a label giving the title of the thesis or dissertation, in abbreviated form, if necessary, the volume number (where applicable), the author's name, the name of the qualification for which the thesis or dissertation is submitted (eg, PhD or MA), and the year of submission.

25.1.2.d   Assessment for the award of the MA or MSc by research will normally be on the basis of a dissertation, but with the approval of University Teaching Committee the assessment for a specified programme may be on the basis of other materials arising from research.

25.1.2.e   Departments need to ensure that students understand that once their thesis has been submitted, it cannot be retrieved. In order to clarify this to students, thesis handbooks should include guidance concerning submission and the necessary checks students should make before submission. Departments should also ask students, at the point of submission, to sign a declaration accepting that the thesis, once submitted, cannot be retrieved. The Chair of the Standing Committee on Assessment, in exceptional circumstances, may approve a request to retrieve a thesis.

25.1.2.f   The copies of the thesis or dissertation submitted for examination (or, following referral, for re-examination) remain the property of the University.

25.1.3   *Examiners*

At least two examiners, including at least one external examiner, will be appointed for each candidate by the University, in accordance with Regulation 2.7.3. Where three examiners are appointed, two must be external examiners. Appointments will be made on the recommendation of the departmental Graduate School Board concerned.

An external examiner will normally be a member of the academic staff of another higher education institution in the United Kingdom, or be of comparable academic standing. External examiners should have appropriate levels of expertise and experience, and the capacity to command authority and the respect of their colleagues in their particular field. Where a nominee for appointment as external examiner is not a Professor or a Reader or of equivalent status, evidence should be provided that the nominee meets the foregoing criteria.

An internal examiner will be a member of the academic staff of the University other than the candidate's supervisor.

25.1.4 *Oral examination procedures*

a. Every MPhil, PhD or EngD candidate is required to attend an oral examination, that forms an important part of the examination for the degree. The purpose of the oral examination is to allow the examiners the opportunity to explore and to satisfy themselves that

i.   the thesis is the student's own work or, if it was done in collaboration, that the student's share in the research was adequate;

ii. the mode of presentation is satisfactory; and

iii. in the case of a PhD or EngD candidate, the thesis represents a substantial original contribution to knowledge or understanding, and is worthy of publication, either in full or in an abridged form; or in the case of an MPhil candidate, that the thesis represents a recognisable original contribution to knowledge or understanding.

iv. An oral examination may be a requirement of an MA or MSc programme by research. Where not required by the programme, an oral examination may nevertheless be required for an individual candidate, at the discretion of the examiners, in order to ensure that the work submitted for examination is the candidate's own or that the candidate meets the standard required for award of the degree.

The examiners will also seek to satisfy themselves that the candidate is well-acquainted with the general field of knowledge to which his/her research relates and will also look for evidence of training in and the application of appropriate research methods. The oral examination is also to allow the candidate an opportunity to respond to any shortcomings identified by the examiners.

b. The oral examination is normally held within three months of the date of submission of the thesis. Permission to hold the oral examination more than three months after this date must be obtained from the Standing Committee on Assessment.

c. Before the oral examination, each examiner must prepare an independent preliminary report on the thesis on the appropriate form (see *www.york.ac.uk/staff/supporting-students/issues/academic*), identifying the principal issues which he/she intends to raise in the examination. These reports should be brought to the examination, deposited with the internal examiner or observer, and subsequently attached to the examiners' joint report when it is forwarded to the Examinations Office.

d. Before the oral examination the supervisor should ensure that the examiners are informed if specific arrangements need to be put in place because of disability or exceptional stress. At the request of the candidate, and with the consent of the examiners, the supervisor or another member of academic staff approved by the Board of Studies concerned may be present at the oral examination as a silent observer.

e. In order to ensure that the oral examination is conducted fairly, the internal examiner acts as chair of the examination and ensures that it is conducted in accordance with the University's Guidelines on the conduct of the oral examination for the appropriate programme (see *www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/manage/research-students/oral-exams-phd*).

f. Audio-recordings will be made of all oral examinations as a means of providing an objective record of the oral examination in the event of an appeal, in accordance with the University's

policy (see *www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/manage/ research-students/audio-recording*). The University makes available appropriate equipment for this purpose. Recordings are stored centrally in a secure manner, and are listened to only if an appeal is received from the candidate based on the conduct of the examination, or by an additional examiner subsequently appointed where the examiners have failed to agree between themselves whether or not the candidate has satisfied the requirements for a particular degree and the departmental Graduate School Board has been unable to resolve the disagreement (see sub-paragraph (e) below). Recordings will be destroyed once the period allowed for submission of an appeal has elapsed or, if an appeal is received, after consideration of the appeal within the University has been concluded.

g. Where two external examiners are used, or there is no internal examiner, one examiner shall be asked to act as chair, as well as being an examiner. Where both examiners are external examiners, the department concerned must provide an internal observer. The internal observer should be a member of academic staff in the relevant discipline other than the candidate's supervisor. The examination must follow the University's guidelines on the conduct of the oral examination.

25.1.5 Examiners' reports

a. Following the oral examination for the degree of MPhil, PhD or EngD, the examiners will submit a joint report indicating their decision whether or not the candidate has satisfied the requirements for the degree concerned on the appropriate form; they may decide that the candidate has satisfied those requirements subject to minor corrections to be completed within two months to the satisfaction of the internal or another of the examiners. Where the candidate has not satisfied those requirements, the examiners may recommend (i) that the candidate should be allowed a period not exceeding one year in which to revise and resubmit the thesis for examination; (ii) that (in the case of a PhD or EngD candidate) the degree of MPhil should be awarded; or (iii) that no degree should be awarded.

b. Following the examination of a candidate for the MA or MSc by research, the examiners must submit reports on the appropriate form. The examiners may recommend (i) that the degree of MA or MSc should be awarded; (ii) that the degree of MA or MSc should be awarded subject to minor corrections being made to the dissertation (or other materials submitted for examination), normally within one month of the candidate's receiving notification of the corrections to be made, to the satisfaction of the internal or another of the examiners; (iii) that the dissertation (or other materials submitted for examination) should be referred for resubmission, after a period of not more than three months of the candidate's receiving notification of the revisions to be made, for the degree of MA or MSc; or (iv) that no degree should be awarded.

c. A candidate must be notified in writing, normally by the internal examiner, of any minor corrections to be made to a thesis or dissertation.

d. The examiners' report(s) should be submitted to the department concerned as soon as possible and in any case within two weeks of the date of the oral examination. Where no oral examination is held (for example, in the case of a candidate for the MA or MSc by research), the examiners' report(s) should be submitted to the department concerned as soon as possible and in any case within three months of the date of the submission of the thesis or dissertation for examination. The examiners' report will be considered by a member of the Standing Committee on Assessment acting on behalf of the Committee, and will be made available to the candidate on request.

e. Where the examiners fail to agree between themselves whether or not a candidate has satisfied the requirements for a particular degree and the departmental Graduate School Board is unable to resolve the disagreement, the examiners should prepare individual reports for the consideration of the Board of Studies or Graduate School Board which should forward them to the Standing Committee on Assessment together with a recommendation for the appointment of an additional external examiner. The

additional external examiner will decide, on the basis of the other examiners' reports, of the thesis, and of the audio-recording of the oral examination (where available) whether or not the candidate has satisfied the requirements for the degree. The decision of the additional external examiner, which will be communicated by the University to the other examiners, will be final.

f. If the examiners recommend that the degree should be awarded, and following the completion, to the satisfaction of the internal or another of the examiners, of any minor corrections which the examiners may require, the candidate must deposit copies of the thesis or dissertation in accordance with the requirements laid out in section 25.3 below, and the University's guidance on the presentation and submission of theses and dissertations (*www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/manage/research-students/theses-dissertations*). These copies of the thesis or dissertation remain the property of the University.

g. The result of the examination will be formally communicated to the candidate by the Examinations Office normally within two weeks of receipt of the examiners' report from the department concerned or within two weeks of the deposit by the candidate of copies of the thesis or dissertation, whichever is the later.

h. Further information for members of staff on the assessment process is given at *www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/key-areas/assessment/examinations*

25.2   **Referral**

a. Where the candidate has not satisfied the requirements for the degree concerned, and the examiners recommend that the candidate should be allowed to revise and resubmit the thesis or dissertation for examination, the examiners should provide advice in writing concerning the points which should be borne in mind by the candidate in revising the thesis or dissertation. This advice should be forwarded to the candidate by the supervisor or another appropriate member of staff.

b. The candidate should not expect to receive a mechanical list of revisions

to be made, particularly when the revisions required involve major improvements in the depth, intellectual quality, analysis, argument or structure of the thesis.

c. The candidate should be offered the opportunity of an initial meeting with the supervisor to discuss the examiners' requirements for revision.

d. Unless a further oral examination is held, the examiners' report(s) on the revised thesis or dissertation should be submitted to the department concerned as soon as possible and in any case within three months of the date of the resubmission of the revised thesis or dissertation for examination.

25.3   Deposit of theses and dissertations after examination

a. *Candidates enrolling in their degree programme before October 2009*

After the examination, if a degree is awarded, and after any minor corrections required by the examiners have been made to the satisfaction of the internal or another of the examiners, a candidate must deposit two printed copies of the thesis or dissertation with the Examinations Office, of which one will be forwarded to the University Library and the other to the department or centre concerned.

Theses deposited by candidates for the degrees of PhD, MPhil or EngD must be hardbound, as specified in the University's requirements for the binding of theses and dissertations, which are available at *www.york. ac.uk/students/studying/manage/research-students/presentation-binding.* Dissertations deposited by candidates for the degrees of MA or MSc (by research) may be either softbound or hardbound, as specified in the University's requirements for the binding of theses and dissertations, which are available at *www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/manage/research-students/presentation-binding.*

Candidates who registered for the degree programme concerned before October 2009 may alternatively, if they wish, deposit theses or dissertations after the examination according to the procedure set out in paragraph (b) below.

b. *Candidates enrolling in their degree programme in October 2009 or later*

After the examination, if a degree is awarded, and after any minor corrections required by the examiners have been made to the satisfaction of the internal or another of the examiners, a candidate must deposit one printed copy of the thesis or dissertation with the Examinations Office. This will be forwarded to the University Library. The thesis or dissertation may be either hardbound or softbound, as the candidate chooses; in either case, the binding must conform to the University's requirements for the binding of theses and dissertations, which are available at *www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/manage/research-students/presentation-binding.*

In addition, the candidate must upload an electronic copy of the thesis or dissertation deposited to an online repository specified by the University, following the procedure required by the repository. The electronic copy must be in pdf format (or other format acceptable to the University and appropriate to the medium) and be identical in every way to the printed copy.

25.4   Academic misconduct

a. *The University regards any form of academic misconduct as an extremely serious matter.*

Academic misconduct may include cheating, collusion, fabrication, personation or plagiarism, as defined in Regulation 2.7.7 and 5.7.

The University has a procedure for dealing with academic misconduct by research students, which includes guidance on the penalties that may be imposed (see *www.york.ac.uk/about/departments/support-and-admin/registry-services/academic-misconduct <http://www.york.ac.uk/about/departments/support-and-admin/registry-services/academic-misconduct>*)

b. All students are required to complete the University's online Academic Integrity Tutorial before the end of the first stage or year of their programme of study. Students will not be considered for confirmation of PhD or EngD enrolment or thesis examination or award of a degree until confirmation of successful completion of the tutorial has been received.

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

Failure to comply with this regulation may result in termination of enrolment with the University.

c. Any student found to have committed plagiarism and who is continuing on a programme of study will be required to take or retake the online Academic Integrity Tutorial and successfully complete it.

25.5   **Availability of theses and dissertations**
All theses and dissertations deposited by candidates for research degrees after examination, in printed or electronic form, must normally be available for consultation and for reproduction (subject to normal conditions of acknowledgement). However, a candidate may request that access to the thesis or dissertation should be withheld, and that none of the material contained in it should be reproduced, for a period not exceeding two years from the date on which the printed copy (or copies) of the thesis or dissertation is deposited with the Examinations Office after the examination.

Mitigating Circumstances

The Mitigating Circumstances Policy applies to all Category 2 students and must be used in all such cases.

Many departments are using this Policy for cases arising among Category 1 students – ie those enrolled on programmes which are not operating under the new modular scheme – but it is not mandatory to do so.

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*
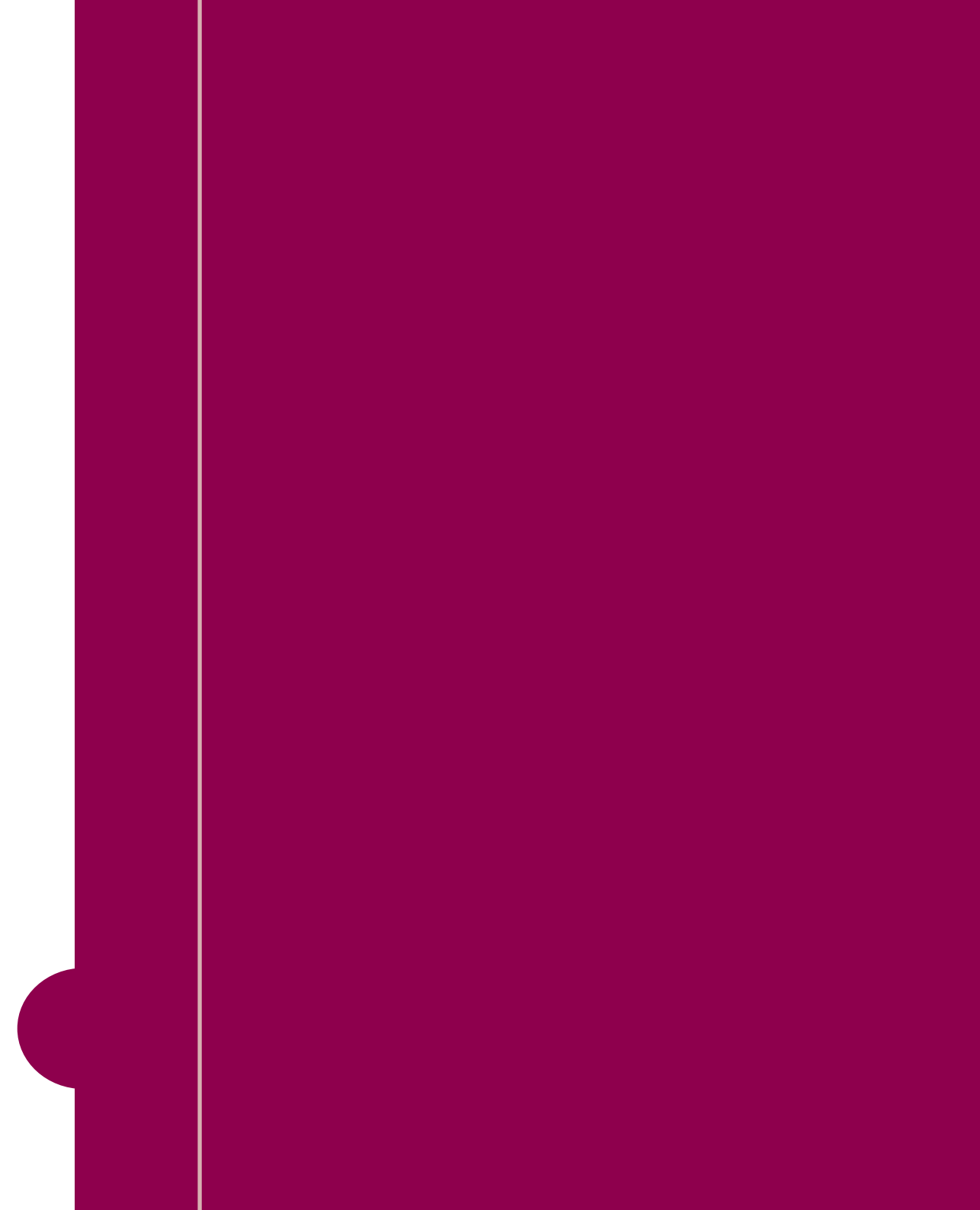
Mitigating Circumstances

The Mitigating Circumstances Policy applies to all Category 2 students and must be used in all such cases.

Many departments are using this Policy for cases arising among Category 1 students – ie those enrolled on programmes which are not operating under the new modular scheme – but it is not mandatory to do so. Mitigating circumstances must be treated under either this policy or pre-modularisation mitigating circumstances policies for entire cohorts within each department and the two systems cannot be used interchangeably.

page number

For forms and student guidance related to mitigating circumstances, contact department administrators or Student Support Services.

26. Mitigating Circumstances

26.1   Principles

The University defines mitigating circumstances as problems that students have encountered which go beyond the normal difficulties experienced in life and which have affected their academic performance adversely during the assessment period for which they are claiming.

i. *Where assessments are affected by mitigating circumstances the normal time-scale for completion of the programme should be adhered to as far as possible.*

This principle applies to situations where assessments have been affected by mitigating circumstances rather than to situations where attendance/ receipt of teaching has been affected. Where a student has not received teaching or met attendance requirements as a result of mitigating circumstances leave of absence/repeat study, which will extend the normal length of the programme, might be needed.

ii. *Mitigating circumstances should normally be considered and any action decided and applied before the end of the stage of the programme during which they occur.*

Consideration of mitigating circumstances should take place more frequently than annually and ideally termly. This is in order to provide opportunities throughout the year to enable students to rectify damaged[14] assessments, particularly where these relate to professional and / or progression requirements or lab working. **As far as possible, approval of arrangements to alter the deadline for completion of module assessment (whether coursework submission or formal examination) must be made in advance of the deadline.**

[14] *A 'damaged' assessment is one where the outcome is likely to have been affected by relevant mitigating circumstances for which acceptable evidence has been provided. The assessment may have been missed or failed or passed.*

iii. *Approval of recommendations from the Mitigating Circumstances Committee (MCC) should be at Board of Studies level with appeals to the University's Special Cases Committee (SCC).*

Consideration of mitigating circumstances for students on combined programmes should be by the Combined MCC even where the affected module 'belongs' to one of the departments.

iv. *The External Examiner must not be involved in the mitigating circumstances procedure.*

v. *The usual means of compensating for mitigating circumstances affecting an assessment should be the opportunity to take the assessment 'as if for the first time'.*

vi. *The opportunity of taking the assessment 'as if for the first time' should apply at all stages including the final year.*

It is expected that all normal re-assessments and attempts 'as if for the first time' will be taken or will have a hand-in date during the third week of August. Marking of assessments will be completed by the end of August each year.

vii. *Where a student is taking an assessment 'as if for the first time' the new mark will stand. The original mark cannot be used except with the approval of SCC on a case-by-case basis.*

Such approval is expected to be very exceptional. It might, for example, occur if the sit 'as if for the first time' is itself separately damaged and there is a reason why it is not appropriate for the student to take leave of absence in order to attempt the assessment again.

Students are permitted to decline the opportunity for a sit 'as if for the first time', and in such cases the original 'damaged' mark will stand. This allows a student whose circumstances have affected more than one assessment to choose to take some but not all of the 'damaged' assessments 'as if for

the first time'. Students should not be deterred from submitting legitimate mitigating circumstances because they fear that doing so may require them to take the assessment again, particularly if they passed the original assessment in spite of their circumstances. Students should be made aware of their original mark, if available, at the time of being offered a 'sit as if for the first time' as an outcome of submission of mitigating circumstances. Students will not be able to choose between marks gained at the first and second attempt. The original mark will become void when the second attempt takes place. Failure to attend or submit for assessment 'as if for the first time' will be treated as declining the opportunity to do so. Departments should set a date by which students must inform them of their decision to accept or decline the sit(s) 'as if for the first time'.

viii. *Consideration of mitigating circumstances with a view to promotion to a higher class of degree will no longer be possible. Mitigating circumstances will have received consideration throughout the programme so should not be re-visited at the end.*

In exceptional cases a recommendation for a higher class of degree can be made to SCC. Such a recommendation might be appropriate where it has not been possible for mitigating circumstances to be submitted and considered before the end of the stage of the programme during which they occurred. It is not expected, however, that the award of a higher class of degree would be recommended without full and formal consideration of the individual circumstances of any such case.

> **Example:** A student is diagnosed with a disability which is of an ongoing nature, eg dyslexia, during their third year. Adjustments are made for that academic year, an improvement in academic performance is noted and the student's final mark is borderline. Assessments in previous years when no adjustments were made are likely to have been affected by the disability.

ix. *Mitigating circumstances should not be considered at MCC/Board-of-Studies level without completion of the University's standard form and provision of satisfactory evidence.*

x. *Consideration of mitigating circumstances must always take place prior to*

consideration of the assessment result by the Board of Examiners/Board of Studies.

If the MCC has been notified of mitigating circumstances at the appropriate time but the evidence has not been supplied, it may make a decision if the following conditions are met:

a. The student has stated the nature of the evidence;

b. The student has stated why it is not currently available and the MCC accepts the reason(s);

c. The student has stated when the evidence will be available;

d. The evidence is subsequently submitted as stated.

> **Example:** A student has an accident close to the time of assessment and medical evidence has been requested but not supplied by the doctor in time for MCC consideration.

Where notification of mitigating circumstances is submitted after the relevant meeting of the MCC, or the above conditions relating to evidence are not met, the student must follow the procedure for academic appeals through SCC.

xi. *Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Academic Misconduct Policy*

Circumstances which might be acceptable as mitigating under this policy will not normally be acceptable as mitigation against the award of penalties in relation to academic misconduct. For the definition of mitigating circumstances with respect to academic misconduct, please refer to the Academic Misconduct Policy.

> **Example:** The death of a close relative is a mitigating circumstance against the award of a particular mark for a module, since the death adversely affected the student's performance on the assessment for which that mark was awarded, but this death is not a mitigating circumstance against the award of penalties for having committed academic misconduct on an assessment.

xii. *Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Equality*

The Policy should be applied in accordance with the University's equality policies, which are located at *www.york.ac.uk/admin/eo/policies/index.htm*

26.2   Procedure for the consideration of mitigating circumstances

This procedure applies to the treatment of any assessment undertaken on any taught programme whether these are examinations administered by Academic Registry or other forms of assessment administered by departments.

26.2.1 Students with Disabilities

This procedure does not apply to recommendations for individual arrangements in assessments on the grounds of disability which should continue to be made to the University's Special Cases Committee (SCC).

Where a student has a disability and reasonable adjustments are in place to accommodate that disability then the disability is not regarded as mitigating circumstances.

Consideration of disability as mitigating circumstances may be appropriate for periods of the programme during which reasonable adjustments were not in place either because of late diagnosis or delays in receiving support, or where such arrangements have broken down. The Mitigating Circumstances Committee (MCC) will need to consider issues of timing and responsibility in such cases. Students who present mitigating circumstances on the basis of such delays would be expected to produce evidence of the reasons for the delay.

Consideration of disability as mitigating circumstances may also be appropriate where evidence is provided that an abnormal or unforeseeable temporary change or increase in severity of the disability has occurred. The MCC would need to consider whether the student had the experience or time to manage the situation.

If a student who is known to have a disability presents mitigating circumstances the MCC should be made aware of the student's disability status.

26.2.2 Composition of the Mitigating Circumstances committee (MCC)

i.   Mitigating circumstances must be considered by a 'Mitigating Circumstances Committee' (MCC) which must be a sub-group

of the Board of Studies (BoS) or Combined Board of Studies (Combined BoS). This includes consideration of mitigating circumstances arising during an assessment. There is to be one MCC for each Board of Studies (a single-subject MCC) covering all programmes within the remit of that BoS and one MCC for each Combined BoS (a Combined MCC) covering all programmes within the remit of that Combined BoS.

ii. Single-subject membership of MCC:

A single-subject MCC must consist of five members of academic staff selected by, but not including, the Chair of the Board of Studies in consultation with the Head of Department. The quorum for meetings of the MCC is three, and an MCC meeting must not take place unless it is quorate. The term of office for members of the MCC should normally be three years. In exceptional circumstances, the Chair of the BoS in consultation with the Head of Department can extend the period of office for a member to four years.

iii. Combined-subject membership of MCC

A Combined MCC must consist of four members of academic staff selected by, but not including, the Chair of the Combined Board of Studies in consultation with the Heads of Department. If a Combined MCC cannot agree on the acceptability of mitigating circumstances in an individual case, the Chair of Combined MCC shall have a casting vote. The quorum for meetings is three with at least one member from each department, and an MCC meeting must not take place unless it is quorate. The term of office for members of the MCC should normally be three years. In exceptional circumstances, the Chair of the BoS in consultation with the Head of Department can extend the period of office for a member to four years.

iv. Chair and administrator of MCC

The Chair of the BoS/Chair of the Combined BoS in consultation with the Head(s) of Department should appoint a fixed Chair of the MCC/ Combined MCC from its members. (Combined) MCC meetings should be serviced by an administrator, and all decisions must be recorded.

The administrator from a Combined MCC should be from the same department as the Chair.

v. Students are not permitted to attend the (Combined) MCC meetings

vi. Conflict of interest

In cases where a formal complaint has been lodged against a member of the (Combined) MCC by a student making a claim of mitigating circumstances, or there is an evidenced conflict of interests for a member of the (Combined) MCC, that member should exclude themselves from consideration of the relevant case(s). If, as a result of such exclusions, the (Combined) MCC has insufficient members to conduct its business, then the Chair of the (Combined) MCC may propose to SCC that alternative members should be co-opted.

26.2.3 Responsibilities related to (Combined) MCC

i. Deadlines for submission of mitigating circumstances

It is the responsibility of the Board of Studies /Combined Board of Studies to set and publish the deadlines for submission of mitigating circumstances in relation to particular assessments, taking into account the time needed to assemble paperwork for the (Combined) MCC meetings. The deadline should be stated on the Mitigating Circumstances Claim Form, and, wherever possible, it should be set to ensure that the application is received and any extension approved before the normal deadline for completion of the assessment.

When students are incapacitated they must complete the University's Mitigating Circumstances Claim Form within a week of the normal deadline for completion of the assessment, though they may be accepted later where there are exceptional circumstances, and the claim form is accompanied by compelling evidence detailing the reasons for late submission. Claims of mitigating circumstances must not be considered at the (Combined) MCC level without completion of the above-named form and provision of supporting evidence (see also section 26.1.x). Third party applications for consideration of mitigating

circumstances should not be accepted unless the submitter has power of attorney for the student concerned.

Mitigating circumstances submitted during an assessment with appropriate evidence should be considered by the Chair of the (Combined) MCC and one other member of the (Combined) MCC, who together have the power to grant an extension to the deadline for the assessment. Any such decisions should be reported with the evidence to the next full meeting of the (Combined) MCC.

ii. Timing of meetings

The (Combined) MCC must meet at the conclusion of each Common Assessment Period, and more frequently when required. The meeting must be held in sufficient time to allow its recommendations to be input into the student record system (SITS), that is, at least three working days prior to any relevant Board of Examiners meeting in order that these recommendations may appear on the relevant reports. It is understood that Boards of Examiners may sometimes meet without an External Examiner present and release provisional results.

iii. Confidentiality

Consideration of mitigating circumstances cannot be anonymous but should, however, remain confidential. Discussions and decisions should not normally be disclosed outside the (Combined) MCC and the recording of decisions. It should be noted, however, that in cases where a student makes an appeal or complaint against a decision of the (Combined) MCC, the documentation will need to be seen by the Chair of the (Combined) BoS and sent to those outside the department who are dealing with the appeal or complaint.

iv. The (Combined) MCC will make recommendations to the appropriate (Combined) BoS.

v. The (Combined) BoS must take a decision in relation to any case for which mitigating circumstances have been accepted by

the (Combined) MCC and notify the Examinations Office of the decisions concerning mitigating circumstances at the same time as the assessment results are submitted for ratification. Where the recommendation of a (Combined) MCC has been changed by the (Combined) BoS, this change must be annotated on the results lists.

vi. Where the student is offered an attempt 'as if for the first time', the options which will be available if that attempt is failed must be explained to the student before the attempt takes place. Where a student fails an assessment taken 'as if for the first time' during the third week of August, or where the assessment is itself 'damaged', a leave of absence or suspension of enrolment may be needed to accommodate any further (re-)assessment.

vii. Any requests for consideration of mitigating circumstances which fall outside this procedure will require the approval of Special Cases Committee.

viii. The student must be informed in writing of the decision as soon as possible. Notification from a University email address to the student's University email address is acceptable.

ix. When the procedure has been completed, the Mitigating Circumstances Claim Form and supporting evidence should be retained on the student's departmental file in a sealed envelope which states that the envelope should be opened only by a member of the (Combined) MCC or Chair of the (Combined) BoS (see Guidance to Departments for further information).

x. Where a decision relating to acceptance of mitigating circumstances is taken outside a meeting of the (Combined) MCC, a report of such decisions should be made to the next meeting of the (Combined) MCC, whether that is the scheduled meeting or an interim meeting called by the Chair of the (Combined) MCC, and thereby recommended to the BoS. The student record system (SITS) should be updated with the decision as soon as possible and, in any case, within a week of each formal meeting.

26.3 **Acceptability or otherwise of circumstances**
Please note that the Board of Studies can make recommendations to Special Cases Committee in relation to mitigating circumstances which it wishes to accept but which are not covered below.

Section A: Reasons for non-acceptance of mitigating circumstances
The following examples are indicative but not exhaustive.

1. The full information required by the mitigating circumstances form is incomplete;

2. No independent documentary evidence has been supplied to support the request (letters from family, fellow students or academic supervisors are not normally sufficient on their own – see below for acceptable evidence);

3. The timing of the circumstances cited would not have adversely affected the assessment(s);

4. The nature of the circumstances cited is not over and above the normal difficulties experienced in life;

5. The evidence submitted does not support the student's claim that the nature of the circumstances was over and above the normal difficulties;

6. The mitigating circumstances form was not submitted by the department deadline as stated on the form and the mitigating circumstances would not have prevented the student making a claim by the departmental deadline;

7. Sufficient mitigation has already been made for the same circumstances;

8. The mitigation is a disability for which reasonable adjustments have been made (see the guidance in the Procedure document).

Section B: Circumstances normally accepted and types of acceptable evidence

Circumstances normally accepted	Examples of evidence that would support a claim based on this circumstance
Compassionate grounds	A letter from the Open Door Team, a counsellor or a relevant independent third-party explaining that, in their professional opinion, the circumstances have had a serious impact on your ability to engage with academic work effectively during the assessment period in question
Exceptional personal circumstances[16]	A letter from a relevant independent third-party (such as the open door team, a counsellor, or a GP) explaining that, in their professional opinion, the circumstances have had a serious impact on your ability to engage with academic work effectively during the assessment period in question
Close bereavement[17]	A death certificate
Victim of a serious crime	A crime report and number
Disabilities for which reasonable adjustments are not yet in place and where the delay is not due to the student	A letter from the Disability Services
Serious and unforeseeable transport difficulties	A letter from the relevant transport company or evidence of a major road incident
Interviews for placements or for employment	Evidence showing that the interview date cannot be rearranged
Legal proceedings requiring attendance	A letter from a solicitor or a court

[16] *For example, the illness of a dependent or the repossession of your accommodation.*

[17] *The following relatives are accepted as 'close' without further evidence: spouse, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, and grandchild. For other bereavements, evidence of closeness in the form of a statement from a third party should also be provided. Additional evidence should be provided where mitigation is claimed for an extended period where the bereavement is not close, for example, for more than a fortnight following the death of the relevant person.*

For part-time students and research students in their writing-up period:

Paid work commitments or constraints arising from paid employment	Evidence of employment explaining that the circumstances have had a serious impact on your ability to engage with academic work effectively during the assessment period in question

NB: The timing and nature of the above circumstances should have adversely affected the assessment. Where the timing and nature has affected longer periods, leave of absence should be considered.

Section C: Circumstances never accepted

1. Loss of work not backed-up on disk or printing problems.

2. Misreading of the examination timetable.

Section D: Circumstances not normally accepted

1. Paid work commitments or constraints arising from paid employment for full-time students;

2. Minor illnesses eg those for which only self-certification under the University scheme is available;

3. Disabilities for which reasonable adjustments have been made or where the student has experience or time to manage the situation;

4. Long-standing minor medical conditions such as hay fever;

5. Over-sleeping;

6. Holidays;

7. Minor everyday surmountable obstacles eg disruption to normal domestic routine (it being reasonable to expect the student to alter such routines to accommodate known arrangements for assessment);

8. English being a second language;

9. Moving house;

10. Deadlines for work being set close together;

11. Planned health appointments;

12. Financial difficulties;

13. Breakdown of personal relationships unless leading to compassionate circumstances as described above;

14. Weddings;

15. Unavailability of course books/resources;

16. Attending or taking part in sporting or social events;

17. Voluntary work;

18. Refusal to return for assessments scheduled in the August resit period as required by Regulation 5.6. Attendance on placements or internships that run across the resit period, being on holiday outside the UK, or living somewhere a long way from York are not acceptable circumstances for not attending.

19. Mitigating circumstances that affect an individual in relation to group assessed work cannot be claimed by other members of the group.

26.4 **Options available in response to mitigating circumstances**
Nb. These options are available in response to damage to assessments. The assessment may or may not have been taken/failed outright.

1. The opportunity to take/submit 'as if for the first time' the assessment during the third week of August.

2. The opportunity to attempt 'as if for the first time' at another suitable opportunity during the same academic year. In recommending this option, the (Combined) MCC would be expected to take into account the additional workload for the student and the need to advise the student accordingly. NB: If a second attempt is also damaged and the (Combined) MCC wants the original mark to stand, this will require the approval of SCC.

3. An extension to the deadline for an attempt 'as if for the first time' of the assessment. In the case of finalists, permission to complete the assessment after the end of the programme will result in a postponement of graduation. The deadline for such extensions in other years should not be later than the end of August. If an extension beyond the end of August is necessary, a leave of absence may be appropriate.

4. The opportunity to take 'as if for the first time' a different form of assessment to that with which the student is familiar. This will usually be for

practical reasons, eg so that the assessment can take place in time for the next stage of the programme.

5. Additional work to complete the original learning outcomes of the module, eg where practical work has been only partially completed.

6. Repeat of some or all elements of previous study.

7. Recommendations to SCC for the award of an undergraduate aegrotat degree where all of the following apply:

    - The student is in his/her final year;

    - 300 credits have been completed successfully;

    - There is clear evidence that the student was achieving at honours level;

    - The mitigating circumstances are such that that there is no or very little prospect that the student will be able to resume study in the foreseeable future.

    Recommendations for the award of a postgraduate aegrotat degree for a taught programme should also be made to SCC.

8. If a single module mark is created from a number of marks from assessments testing the same learning outcomes, the following rule may apply. The (Combined) MCC can, in order to produce a module mark, recommend to the (Combined) BoS waiving no more than 20% of the overall module mark. This is providing the learning outcomes for the module have been met by the remaining assessments for that module. Where the various elements of a module are intended to test different learning outcomes, such waiving of marks is not permissible. This procedure may be followed for up to a maximum of 40 credits per stage, provided that the learning outcomes for the module(s) have been achieved.

9. If a module has been agreed by UTC to be non-re-assessable, a revised submission (referral) of work already submitted may be permitted.

The following are never permitted:
Substitution of marks;
Changing of marks.
The following is only permitted with the approval of Special Cases Committee:
Waiving or pro-rating of marks beyond that permitted above.

26.5   **Policy on Granting Extensions**

A (Combined) Mitigating Circumstances Committee can extend the deadline for the submission of an assessment subject to the following conditions.

The Mitigating Circumstances Claim Form should normally be submitted prior to the original submission deadline. However, depending on the mitigating circumstances, if accepted, departments may wish to accept late submission without penalty or allow for an attempt 'as if for the first time' in August.

- The intention in granting an extension is to compensate for the time lost through mitigating circumstances.

- The student's overall workload should be taken into consideration when granting a new deadline.

- Extensions are granted for whole days.

- Where an extension goes beyond the Board of Examiners' end-of-year meeting, students must be advised of the consequences for reassessment should they fail (see section 26.2.3.vi).

- Students must be advised that the granting of an extension cannot subsequently be regarded as mitigation for failure in that or other assessments.

- Approval or refusal should be given and communicated to the student in writing, either conditionally, if all the evidence is not immediately available, or unconditionally, if all the evidence is immediately available. Third-party applications for consideration of mitigating circumstances should not be considered, except in instances where the third party has the relevant power of attorney.

Appendices

CONSISTENCY

Appendices

Appendix A

Written Statement of Assessment – guidelines
The Written Statement of the assessment policies and procedures of a department should state how the processes of assessment are operated by a department within the University Ordinances, Regulations and guidelines. It should be a single comprehensive and coherent document, publicly available, and suitable for effective use by students, academic and administrative staff, External Examiners, and the University Teaching Committee.

It follows that it is not sufficient for the Written Statement of Assessment to consist simply of references to information that is dispersed in other documents, especially when not all of these are publicly available. However, the Statement can be web-based provided it can be printed as a single document.

All programmes leading to a qualification or award of the University of York must be covered. Combined undergraduate programmes and taught postgraduate programmes offered by more than one department may be covered in the Statements of each department, or may have their own individual Statement(s). Where a programme contributes to qualifications of a professional or statutory body the Written Statement should address issues related to assessment that are relevant to the requirements of the body.

Departments are asked to bear in mind that students may be unfamiliar with a number of concepts. A full explanation in the Statement of procedures and of what to expect in, for example, a closed examination, may defuse unnecessary worries and help students in preparing with confidence for assessment.

The Written Statement will normally deal, inter alia, with the issues listed below. This is only to assist departments, who will wish to structure their statement(s) in a style most suitable to their own needs. Standard documents related to assessment (eg paper rubrics, instructions to markers) might conveniently be included in appendices to Written Statements. Departments are invited, as part of their Written Statement, to identify areas of assessment that might be sensitive to equal opportunities, or to identify where they feel equal opportunities issues might be impacting on assessment.

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. It is not necessary to include details of linkages between assessments and intended learning outcomes because these will be covered in programme specifications.

b. If applicable, a description of assessment of study away from York.

c. A description of the marking procedures used by the department, including:

    i.   assessment which is not based on written or recorded work (indicate the weighted contribution of these assessments to the final award);

    ii. arrangements for anonymous marking (indicate assessments that contribute to progression requirements or the final award but are not marked anonymously);

    iii. procedures for double marking, or for alternative arrangements (for example, single marking against specimen answers) as approved by the University Teaching Committee;

    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. guidelines on how differences in marks between first and second markers are resolved;

    vii. the procedures for combining marks within individual modules, unless specified in module-related documentation (see section (a) above);

    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;

x. the procedures for recording marks.

d. Explicit confirmation that marks formally communicated to students (including to home departments for elective modules) entered into final spreadsheets or used for academic transcripts are on the University undergraduate, graduate or taught postgraduate 0–100 scales. Where departments use other internal schemes for marking, the procedures used to translate departmental marks onto the University scale must be described transparently.

e. 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.

f. 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 (eg 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.

g. The process by which marks (on the University scale) for different modules or assessments are weighted and aggregated for progression purposes and to yield the final mark, including:

i. elective modules;

ii. study at a previous institution;

    iii. study away from York;

    iv. contributions from different years or levels;

    v. contributions from each department to combined programmes.

h. The processes and/or formulae used to determine degree classifications for category 1 students, including:

    i. justification for deviations from simple weighted averages (eg compensation rules);

    ii. justification for class boundaries defined as other than by the University mark scale;

    iii. procedures used for combined degrees, including (where appropriate) allowance for departures from 1:1 or 2:1 credit contributions from departments;

    iv. criteria for recommendations for the award of starred firsts;

    v. criteria for recommendations for the award of postgraduate qualifications with distinction.

i. A description of the composition of the Board of Examiners, of the responsibilities of the Board and its officers, and of the relationship of the Board of Examiners to the Board(s) of Studies. An indication should be given of departmental procedures that lead to the nomination of External Examiners.

j. A description of the procedures (eg outline agendas) at meetings of the Board of Examiners and any relevant sub-committees, and at meetings of the Board(s) of Studies that consider recommendations of the Board of Examiners, including:

    i. an explicit statement of the role, responsibilities, powers and extent of authority of the Board's External Examiners;

    ii. stage of proceedings to which anonymity of candidates is preserved;

    iii. circumstances under which borderlines may be adjusted;

    iv. circumstances under which marks may be adjusted at borderlines, and procedures for doing so;

     v.   the use of evidence relating to medical or other mitigating circumstances, including any filtering process;

     vi. arrangements for combined degrees;

     vii. notification of results.

k. A description of examination procedures, including:

     i.   guidance for students who seek special arrangements (eg 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 (eg for late submissions, exceeding word-limits) etc;

     v.   circumstances under which extensions to deadlines will be awarded, and procedures for requesting extensions;

     vi. arrangements for assessments administered by departments;

     vii. steps taken to maintain the confidentiality of examination numbers;

     viii. departmental policy on the use of dictionaries and electronic devices in closed assessments.

     ix. mitigating circumstances procedure

l. A description of progression requirements (including compensation and reassessment criteria), and a description of resit arrangements.

m. Guidance on the procedures to be followed in the event of failure, including:

     i.   failure to complete a module;

     ii. failure to meet attendance requirements or submit procedural work;

     iii. failure to complete an assessment or examination;

     iv. failure to attend a closed examination;

     v. failure to pass resits;

vi. failure to meet the requirements for an award.

n. Guidance on the procedures to be followed (and documentation required, including timing) in the event of illness or other compassionate or mitigating circumstances, including:

  i.   circumstances prior to or during an examination period;

  ii. illness during a closed examination;

  iii. reference to Regulation 5.h.iv. governing Aegrotat degrees for undergraduates, and equivalent procedures for taught postgraduate students.

o. Reference to the University's appeals procedures in Regulations 2.8 (research postgraduates) and 6.5 (taught students).

p. Guidance in relation to academic misconduct, including:

  i.   reference to Regulation 5.4; and the University's on-line Academic Integrity tutorial (see 4.8.1);

  ii. steps taken to ensure that students are aware of the different types of academic misconduct;

  iii. advice to students on how to avoid plagiarism (eg citing sources and use of quotation marks);

  iv. attendance considerations when laboratory or field work is assessed;

  v.   appropriate boundaries between group or collaborative work and individual assessment work;

  vi. the penalties that will be applied to students involved in academic misconduct.

  Note that it is not necessary to reproduce in Written Statements the procedures that are followed in the event of alleged academic misconduct; but reference should be made to the procedural guidelines provided at *www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/ assessment-and-examination/taking-an-exam*

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). Definition taken (or modified) from Credit and HE Qualifications: Credit guidelines for HE qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (November 2001)

Credit Level: Indicates the module's relative intellectual demand, complexity and depth of learning and of learner autonomy. Definition taken (or modified)

from Credit and HE Qualifications: Credit guidelines for HE qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (November 2001) University guidance on level descriptors is available at: *www.york.ac.uk/media/staffhome/ learningandteaching/documents/programme development/Guidance%20 on%20Credit%20Level%20Descriptors.PDF*

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.

Closed examination: a timed, invigilated examination conducted under traditional examination conditions.

Departmental assessment: assessment administered at 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.

FHEQ: the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (see: *www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/FHEQ08.pdf*).

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.

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.

Mitigating 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.

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.
- **Pre-requisite 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, eg through the writing of essays, reports and dissertations, or through non-written or non-recorded work.

PGWT: Postgraduates who teach.

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/Combined Boards of Studies/Graduate School Boards and approved by University Teaching Committee. A template /guidance on Programme Specifications will be available soon

SCA: Standing Committee on Assessment (see: *www.york.ac.uk/about/ organisation/governance/sub-committees/sca*).

SCC: Special Cases Committee (see: *www.york.ac.uk/about/organisation/ governance/sub-committees/special-cases*).

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: University Teaching Committee (see: *www.york.ac.uk/about/ organisation/governance/sub-committees/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.

* From Wayne Turnbull (2000) 'Assessment and Credit: Regulations and Practise within Higher Education in England, Wales and Northern Ireland'. QAA and NUCCAT.

Appendix C

Assessing individual contributions to group work

Individual mark – based on records / observation of process
Each individual group member's contribution (as defined by pre-determined 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.

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.

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.

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. 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.

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 (eg. X 0.5 for 'half' contribution or X 1 for 'full' contribution).

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.

Winchester-Seeto, T. (2002). Assessment of collaborative work – collaboration versus assessment. Invited paper presented at the Annual Uniserve Science Symposium, The University of Sydney, 5th April.

CONSISTENCY

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

Appendix D

Definitions of Marking Processes

Processes	Definition	Conditions
Single Marking	• single marker marks to criteria / key	• formative assessments – any level • seminar performance – to specified published criteria (see GAPP …) – any level
Electronic assessment and marking	• absolute right / wrong item tests (true/ false – matching – multiple choice) • delivered and marked on the VLE	• small student group (capacity of computer lab) • VLE programme has been piloted and tested for reliability
Answer key marking	• single marker or multiple single markers marking to a very specific answer key	• exam type assessment where items lead to limited possible answers eg mathematics / facts / information • answer key has been piloted or used before • moderator appointed to oversee marking procedures, address problems, update answer key and update the marking team
Standardised marking	• marking is divided between a team of single markers following a standardisation session in which sample papers are marked and discussed to established a shared understanding of acceptable answers / unacceptable answers	• test-type assessment which involves answers which cannot be covered sufficiently by an answer key eg longer written answers to specific questions • moderator appointed to run standardisation session, oversee marking procedures, be available for consultation re: problematic answers • marking is completed within a very limited time to ensure consistency

Appendices 175

Processes	Definition	Conditions
Moderated marking	• initial marking completed by experienced, single markers, followed by sample marking by appointed moderator. Sample = 10% of all marked papers including all "1st" and "Fail" papers.	• any form of assessment task where a clear standard has been established through stringent assessment design, criteria design, departmental marking activities and sample building. • if a particular set of marking is judged to be too harsh / too lenient, the set must be checked and possibly remarked
Double marking	• 1st markers mark and comment / 2nd 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.	• Stage 2 or 3 medium to high stakes assessment where a clear standard has NOT been established or inexperienced markers are involved. • 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 • moderator deals with borderline of contentious cases and sample checks 10% of all new markers papers. • samples of work at each criteria level are retained to provide an example of standards for subsequent offerings of the module

Processes	Definition	Conditions
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.	• very high stakes assessment where the anonymity of the student may be lost or the lecturer of the student has to be a marker eg dissertations / major projects / long-term assignments. • very clear criteria are published beforehand to students and staff
Joint marking	• marking is completed by two (or more) markers at the same time • particularly high-stakes performance-based assessment where student anonymity is lost and no written or recorded record is kept.	• students and staff have very clear criteria well beforehand • markers have time following each performance to make reasoned judgements with reference to the criteria • all agreed marks and comments are recorded for each performance within the same day • a percentage of performance is always recorded for later standards development and moderation • to single mark performance-based assessment, a recording MUST be made to allow for later moderation

Appendix E

The Implications vs Risk Graph – for deciding appropriate marking procedures
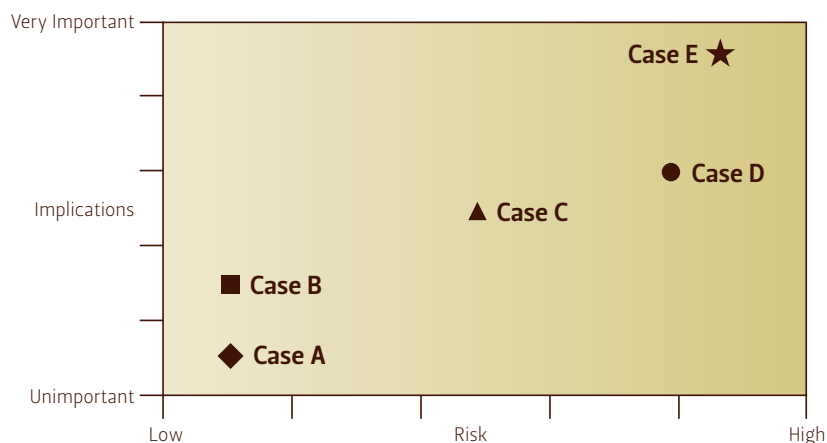
The X axis considers degree of risk of possible error. Areas which could contribute to increasing risk include:

■ 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 (eg formative assessment), to the mark having a significant effect on whether they pass their degree (ie 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 others' 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 on-line 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 feed forward:** 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 to be added to the list, please contact Cecilia Lowe at MCL501@york.ac.uk

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 4 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 eg 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 – eg 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 ie 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 coversheets with 2 good points and 2 areas for improvement

- provision of feedback coversheets 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 finalized

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 (eg 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

- defining criteria for assessment

- discussing course standards and expectations

- assessing past papers and peer assessments

- providing feedback to each other on regular, formative work is an ideal way to engage students more fully in the learning. See

■ *Gibbs G and Simpson C (2004) Conditions under which assessment supports student learning. Learning and Teaching in Higher Education 1, pp3-31.*

■ *Brown, S. Rust, C. and Gibbs, G. Strategies for Diversifying Assessment in Higher Education Oxford: Oxford Centre for Staff Development (1994)*

2. *Marking and providing feedback on samples of work:*

For a large cohort in which regular (eg 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 eg

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:

- Deciding what is to be assessed – the process, the product, or both;
- Selecting criteria, particularly if the group process is to be assessed;
- Deciding who is to 'do' the assessing – staff, students or both; and
- Deciding how marks are to be assigned – collectively, individually, or a mixture.

The most obvious tension that can arise from group work assessment is the perception that some students are marked unfairly, due to "group" marks being given that do not reflect differences in individual student effort. For advice concerning addressing such tension and other maters 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*

  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 Cecilia Lowe at MCL501@york.ac.uk

Appendix K

An example to illustrate procedures for rescaling marks

This appendix illustrates the procedure discussed in paragraph 3.2.16 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	49.5 to 69.5

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 LO and HO, and the lowest and highest values on the corresponding interval on the University scale are LU and HU 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 LU and HU in the same ratio as M divides the interval between LO and HO. 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:

Important features of this procedure are that the rank ordering of original marks is maintained, that it preserves minimum and maximum marks, and that it maps the points of correspondence on the original scale to their partners on the University mark scale. The procedure can also be automated, eg, using spreadsheets.
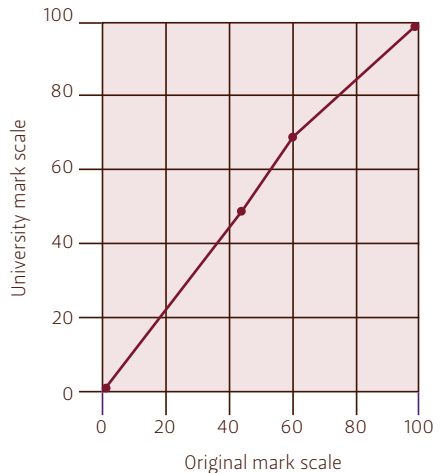
Appendix L

Writing clear examination instructions and questions

1. Keep instruction sentences short and to the point. Avoid overcomplicated or ambiguous instructions ie 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

   - colloquialisms
   - slang
   - negative or double negative questions
   - highly specialist language (unless necessary to the assessment)
   - 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

Bachelors (Honours)

(360 credits including 100 at level-H/6)

Bachelors (Ordinary)

Diploma of HE

Overall achieved: 300 credits including 60 at level-H/6?

Overall achieved: 240 credits including 90 at level-I/5 or higher?

Yes — No — Yes

Reassessed 120 credits achieved?

Compensation criteria applied (see note 2) 120 credits achieved?

Yes — Yes — No

Pass 120 credits?

Compensation criteria applied (see note 2) 120 credits achieved?

Eligible for reassessment? (see note 3)

Yes — No — No — Yes — No

Stage 3 Register: 120 credits

Study abroad or work placement possible (See the Framework for Programme Design and Programme Regulations)

See overleaf for Integrated Masters programmes

Reassessed 120 credits achieved?

Compensation criteria applied (see note 2) 120 credits achieved?

Yes — Yes — No

Pass 120 credits?

Compensation criteria applied (see note 2) 120 credits achieved?

Eligible for reassessment? (see note 3)

Yes — No — No — Yes — No

Leave the University with a Certificate of HE (120 credits including 90 at level-C/4 or higher) (see note 4)

Stage 2 Register: 120 credits (see note 1)

Study abroad or work placement possible (See the Framework for Programme Design and Programme Regulations)

Reassessed 120 credits achieved?

Compensation criteria applied (see note 2) 120 credits achieved?

Yes — Yes — No

Pass 120 credits?

Compensation criteria applied (see note 2) 120 credits achieved?

Eligible for reassessment? (see note 3)

Yes — No — No — Yes — No

Leave the University

Stage 1 Register: 120 credits (see note 1)

START HERE

Notes:
1. Programme regulations for combined degrees may specify up to 30 additional credits that may be taken in stages 1 or 2. These will be regarded as additional to the programme requirements and the results of such modules will not contribute to progression or classification requirements (see Framework for Programme Design)
2. The compensation criteria for each stage are set out in Section D.
3. The details of available reassessment opportunities are set out in Section D and relevant programme regulations.
4. A student choosing to exit a bachelors programme early may be awarded a Certificate or Diploma of HE, subject to meeting the award requirements (see Section F)

The Guide to Assessment Standards Marking and Feedback is also available at:
www.york.ac.uk/media/abouttheuniversity/supportservices/
academicregistry/registryservices/Guide%202011.12.pdf

THE UNIVERSITY *of* York

Appendix M

Progression flowchart: integrated masters

Notes:
1. The compensation criteria for each stage are set out in Section D.
2. The details of available reassessment opportunities are set out in Section D and relevant programme regulations.
3. Students registered on an Integrated Masters who do not meet the progression requirements at the end of stage 3 or fail stage 4 may be eligible for a Bachelors (Hons) (See Section F).
4. A student choosing to exit early may be awarded a lower level award subject to meeting the award requirements (See Section F).

Integrated Masters
(480 credits including 120 at level-M/7)

Pass 120 credits?

Stage 4
Register: 120 credits

Compensation criteria applied (see note 1)
120 credits achieved?

Eligible for reassessment? (see note 2)

Reassessed.
120 credits achieved?

Compensation criteria applied (see note 2).
120 credits achieved?

Met the Bachelors (Hons) requirements AND achieved an average over Stages 2 and 3 of at least 50?

Stage 3
Register: 120 credits

Compensation criteria applied (see note 1)
Met Integrated Masters requirements?

Eligible for reassessment? (see note 2)

Reassessed.
Met Integrated Masters requirements?

Compensation criteria applied (see note 2).
Met Integrated Masters requirements?

Met the Bachelors Stage 2 to 3 progression requirements AND Stage 2 average of at least 55?

Compensation criteria applied (see note 1)
Met Integrated Masters requirements?

Eligible for reassessment? (see note 2)

Reassessed.
Met Integrated Masters requirements?

Compensation criteria applied (see note 2).
Met Integrated Masters requirements?

Considered for transfer to Stage 3 of the Bachelors

START HERE
(end of Stage 2)

Stages 1 and 2 follow the same structure as bachelors programmes (including the same compensation and reassessment opportunities in stage 1)

Overall achieved: 360 credits including 100 at level-H/6?

Bachelors (Hons) (see notes 3 and 4)

Overall achieved: 300 credits including 60 at level-H/6?

Bachelors (Ordinary)

Overall achieved: 240 credits including 90 at level-I/5 or higher?

Diploma of HE

Yes / No

The Guide to Assessment Standards Marking and Feedback is also available at:
www.york.ac.uk/media/abouttheuniversity/supportservices/
academicregistry/registryservices/Guide%202011.12.pdf

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 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 (eg 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 (ie 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 (ie a mark below 40).

For ISMs with component assessments, eg 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.

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.

Index