INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this statement of assessment is to give a clear and concise account of the History Department’s procedures and criteria for summative assessment, i.e. assessment that counts towards your progression between stages, i.e. between first year and second year, second year and third year, third year and degree classification, and for the determination of your degree classification. A brief initial note on formative assessment, i.e. assessment that is part of the teaching and learning process but that does not count towards your degree classification, is also included.

As stated in the Department of History Undergraduate Handbook the main overall aims / learning outcomes of the History Department’s BA Programme is to:

- Introduce you to the study of history
- Show you how to interpret the past
- Help you acquire the skills of a historian

One of the main functions of assessment is to see how far you are succeeding in these overall aims and, for each individual module taken, how far you are meeting the stated learning outcomes.

Most of what follows is an attempt to outline pertinent university regulations and procedures in an accessible way, but there is a certain amount that represents procedure, terminology and ways of doing things that are specific to the Department of History. All, however, is done within a
framework established by the university and in all matters conform to university policy and regulations. It is the university that awards your degree, not the History Department. For your information, the terms upon which the university awards degrees are set out in the university’s *Ordinances and Regulations*, especially Regulation 5. These are available at [http://www.york.ac.uk/about/organisation/governance/governance-documents/ordinances-and-regulations/](http://www.york.ac.uk/about/organisation/governance/governance-documents/ordinances-and-regulations/)

This formal structure is explained more fully in the university’s *Guide to Assessment Standards, Marking and Feedback* which can be found at [http://www.york.ac.uk/about/departments/support-and-admin/registry-services/guide/](http://www.york.ac.uk/about/departments/support-and-admin/registry-services/guide/)

This statement is intended to explain the pertinent rules and conventions as they relate to History in a more accessible way, but you will find the university’s *Assessment and Examination webpage* a useful resource. In addition to setting out university rules and procedures in respect of assessment, this provides access to information about examinations and — something you will certainly need to access at various points in your time at York — examination timetables. The webpage is available at [https://www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/assessment-and-examination/](https://www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/assessment-and-examination/)

The Department publishes a separate *Dissertation and Bridge Dissertation Handbook*. This offers invaluable advice and guidance on how to approach and present work for this part of your course. Follow the assessments link from the undergraduate intranet page: [http://www.york.ac.uk/history/student-intranet/undergraduates/](http://www.york.ac.uk/history/student-intranet/undergraduates/)

### 1. FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Although this statement is primarily concerned with summative assessment, often colloquially characterised as ‘marks that count’, formative assessment is actually a crucial part of your learning experience. Depending on their form, formative assessment exercises, and the feedback that you receive on them, may be significant in three ways:

1. They constitute part of the general learning process for particular modules;
2. They may give you practice in particular forms of assessment exercise that will be used in summative assessment at a later stage;
3. Through feedback, which gives you an idea of the level at which you are performing, and of ways in which you can develop and improve your work.

Formative assessment in the History Department is of three principal kinds:

1. Procedural coursework, usually in the form of essays (‘procedural essays’), done in the course of term, for which a mark and feedback are received.
2. Procedural coursework that is not formally marked, but whose completion is part of a course requirement.
3. Assessment of seminar performance (see *Seminar Assessment* below). This forms part of the formative assessment for some modules, but is not counted towards your degree result.

Where work done as part of formative assessment generates a mark, this is the outcome of single marking by your module tutor. It is departmental policy that procedural essays are always given a mark.

Although work for Formative Assessment does not count towards your degree classification it is to be taken seriously. **Failure to complete such work satisfactorily and to the set deadline will result in the application of Departmental Disciplinary procedures.**

**Seminar Assessment**
Seminar assessment is intended to make you, your teachers and your supervisor aware of your strengths and weaknesses in this highly important form of collaborative work. It seeks to take account of the effort you put into making seminars work, not only for yourself, but for the rest of the group. This does not mean that every moment spent in a seminar will be minutely inspected. Rather a general impression will be formed of your constructive participation in terms of listening and contributing in an intelligent and informed way to discussion, preparing presentations, and asking pertinent questions in the seminar over the course of the module.

You are expected to take your fair share of the different activities undertaken by seminar members, whether these are group or individual presentations, the chairing of seminars, or some other task or tasks. However, there are many different ways to help a seminar along and no automatic prizes simply for being talkative.

The most significant potential contributions on which your seminar performance will be assessed are:

**Attendance:** Avoid disruptive behaviour, such as not turning up on time, not coming at all (other than where you are unable to attend for good reason), or not doing other students the courtesy of being present for and paying attention to their presentations etc. Those who observe the common politenesses, such as apologising in advance or at the earliest possible convenience for unavoidable absence, for instance through illness, will not have absence held against them. *(Note that students are expected to provide medical evidence or a self certification for all absences due to illness.)*

**Seminar Presentations:** In some modules you may be asked make presentations, perhaps on your own or perhaps as part of a small group. The purpose of seminar presentations, whether individual or on behalf of a group, is to give a lead to seminar discussion, to inform and to stimulate debate. Presentations need to be lively as well as accurate, clearly stated, and audibly presented and easy to understand. They may primarily be about presenting factual information, although they may equally appropriately attempt to provoke, stimulate, and offer conflicting interpretations – your tutor will give you guidance as to what he or she is looking for and how long a presentation should last.

**Seminar Participation:** Your responses to other students’ presentations and contributions to group discussion or debate are what can make a seminar a success. Seminar participation can be about making appropriate rejoinders, asking supplementary questions, or simply showing interest while remaining relatively silent. Talking for the sake of it is as bad as bored silence and is a discourtesy to other members of the seminar. It is what you contribute to the success of the seminar and the collective pursuit of knowledge that is important.

**Development of Personal Skills:** One reason for seminar assessment is to give you credit for using your time at university to develop the kinds of skills which will be required of you by a future employer. So in addition, evidence of a general social awareness manifested in a willingness to co–operate with other students, to take joint responsibility for tasks, and to plan ahead and show initiative will be recognised.

**Procedural Essays**
Most modules will require you to write a procedural essay, normally of 1,500 – 2,000 words. The deadline for the handing in of procedural work will be posted on the module VLE. You will receive a mark and feedback on procedural work. You must submit your procedural essays with the same standards of presentation and scholarly apparatus as for assessed essays. There are no formal penalties for late submission, but submission of coursework and at the proper time are module requirements and students who fail to comply will be subject to the Department’s disciplinary procedures.

Procedural essays must employ references, footnotes and bibliographies and should be properly presented (e.g. double spaced typescript with margins wide enough for markers to make
comments, using one of the standard fonts such as Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri, in 12 point, and using Chicago Style Manual referencing and bibliography).

2. SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

2.1 FORMS OF ASSESSMENT

There are a number of forms of summative assessment used across the university and higher education institutions more generally. Some are more suited to the discipline of History than others, so we do not use multiple choice papers, which test ‘the right answer’, but we do use assessed essays, which test knowledge, your reasoning skills, and your ability to construct a well-written argument. Different forms of assessment tend to assess slightly different skills. In principle the department tries to use a variety of forms across all three stages of the degree. The following assessments are used:

(i) **Closed examinations.** These are unseen papers, taken under conventional closed examination conditions, i.e. in a designated examination room, under invigilation, without access to notes or reading. They last for various durations. The number of questions to be answered is usually two, but may be different in some examinations (especially Special Subject examinations involving commenting on short extracts from documents, known by some tutors as ‘gobbets’). It is your responsibility to read the rubric on each paper with care.

Answers to questions in closed papers are not expected to contain references, footnotes or bibliographies. You may answer a question in a closed paper on a topic covered by your procedural essay. (Note, however, that the question on the paper will almost certainly be different to that of any procedural essay you may have answered and you will need to be careful to ensure that your answer reflects this.) It is your responsibility to write legibly – under University Regulations examiners are entitled to ask for illegible scripts to be transcribed and the cost of this process must be met by the student.

(ii) **Open examinations.** These are unseen papers taken under ‘open’ exam conditions, i.e. you are not restricted to a particular place, are unsupervised, and have access to notes and reading as desired. Scripts are sent to you electronically at a designated time or you pick up the paper at a designated time and from a designated place at the beginning of the exam period, and you return your exam scripts by a specified deadline. The rubric on papers will specify the word limit on answers, the number of questions you are required to answer, and the duration of the paper. Late submission of open examination answer scripts is strictly penalised under university rules. Over-length or under-length answers are also liable to be penalised. NB the exam period varies from module to module. It is your responsibility to read the rubric on each paper with care.

Answers to questions in open papers must contain the full academic apparatus of references, footnotes and bibliographies, and should be properly presented and organised (e.g. double spaced typescript with margins wide enough for markers to make comments using a standard font such as Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri, in 12 point, and using Chicago style manual citations and bibliography). If you fail to provide a full academic apparatus or your bibliographical references etc. are badly or erroneously presented, you are liable to be penalised.

You may answer a question in an open paper on a topic covered by your procedural essay. (Note, however, that the question on the paper will almost certainly be different to that of any procedural essay and you will need to be careful to ensure that your answer reflects this.)
A number of History Stage 1 and Stage 2 examinations are 24-hour examinations, i.e. they run in theory over a 24 hour period, normally 10 a.m. – 10 a.m. the following day.

(iii) Assessed essays. Assessed essays are essays which you write on a topic agreed with your course tutor. (In some cases, this is a topic of their own devising, in others one chosen from a list set by the tutor.) Essays must be handed in by a fixed deadline and late submission is strictly penalised. Other than in the case of Special Subject assessed essays, the maximum length for assessed essays is 2,000 words with the expectation that you will write in the range of 1,500 – 2,000 words. In the case of some Special Subject (Stage 3) assessments the limit is (from 2013) 4,000 words. Over-length and under-length assessed essays are liable to be penalised.

For assessed essays you must employ the full academic apparatus of references, footnotes and bibliographies and they should be properly presented (e.g. double spaced typescript with margins wide enough for markers to make comments, using one of the standard fonts such as Times New Roman, Ariel or Calibri, in 12 point, and using Chicago style manual referencing and bibliography). If you fail to provide a full academic apparatus or your bibliographical references etc. are badly or erroneously presented, you are liable to be penalised.

You may not submit a revised version of your procedural essay as your assessed essay.

(iv) Projects. Projects take the form of a focused piece of work involving the close study of, varying from module to module, primary and secondary sources. Explorations modules (Stage 2) require students to produce a Project over the first half of the summer term which contributes to the overall module assessment. According to the module, you will undertake this project either individually or you will work collaboratively as part of a group of at least two and no more than four members. (The type of project is advertised as part of the module description and you are not allowed to opt to undertake a different form of project to that advertised.) Projects completed by individual students (Individual Projects) may not exceed 1,500 words. Group Projects undertaken by a group of two to four students may not exceed 3,000 words.

With a Group Project, your tutor will set up groups normally of 2-4 students. The Group Project gives you the opportunity of acquiring the important transferable skills of working in a team, working out how to divide up tasks, sharing and debating ideas, reading each others work, collaborating to ensure everyone owns the project and that the whole is completed by the given deadline. The best Group Projects can be and are better than you or any other member of your team could achieve by themselves. Part of the process is for you and the other group members to manage group dynamics themselves. If, however, a group or members of a group feel that interpersonal problems are proving unmanageable they should inform their tutor at the earliest appropriate moment.

Students who fail the Group Project to the extent that the whole module is failed will be required to complete a new Individual Project as agreed with the module tutor. The project must be submitted within the Summer re-sit period.

(v) The Dissertation or, in the case of some Combined Degree students, Bridge Dissertation (Stage 3) is an independent, research-based piece of work. It is on a topic of your choosing in combination in consultation with staff members. You will be allocated a member of staff who you will meet with you at set times who will be your Dissertation (or Bridge Dissertation) advisor. (If you are a Combined Degree student working on a Bridge Dissertation, which draws upon the two different disciplines of your degree combination, you are likely also to have an advisor in your other parent department). You will have an opportunity in January (term 8) to submit a Dissertation.
or Bridge Dissertation draft to your advisor for comment. **You must hand two copies of your completed Dissertation or Bridge Dissertation in to the History Department office by week 1 of the summer term** (term 9) and must be in the range of **8,000 - 10,000 words** excluding bibliographical references and bibliography. (Note that notes are not to be used for substantial additional discussion and any such discussion beyond purely bibliographical references counts towards your word count.) **Late submission of the Dissertation or Bridge Dissertation will be strictly penalised.** Over-length and under-length submissions are also liable to be penalised.

See ‘Schedule of Module Assessments, History BA Degree Programme’ for details of current assessment arrangements for individual modules.

### 2.2 ELECTIVE MODULES

You may opt to take up to 40 credits in another Department in your second year. You will find details of elective modules by visiting [www.york.ac.uk/admin/sro/electives.htm](http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/sro/electives.htm). Given the different credit weightings of modules in different Departments, it is essential that you research your possible choices thoroughly and that you consult your supervisor about electives **by or in the summer term of your first year**.

The assessment of elective modules will be carried out by the Departments running the electives in question. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are informed about assessment arrangements for such modules. The marks awarded for them will count towards your degree classification.

### 2.3 STUDY ABROAD

Students may opt to study the whole or part of (usually) their second year studying at a university 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.

Course requirements and tables of mark conversions will vary between foreign universities, but all students will be given clear information on how the marks they are awarded abroad will be converted into York marks and how those marks will be entered onto their student records.

### 2.4 VISITING STUDENTS

If you are a visiting student in History, you 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 you are registered unless an examination scheduled for a time after the time you have left the University. In such cases appropriate special assessment arrangements will be made.

It may be possible to ‘audit’ a module, but only if notice is given and you have specific approval of your home university.

### 3. MARK-SCALES AND ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

#### 3.1 MARK SCALE

All assessed work is marked on the University mark scale, which runs from 0 to 100, though in practice marks very high or very low on the scale are rare. The class boundaries for degree classification are shown below. Additional clarification of marks at the top and bottom of the mark scale is shown in italics. Compensation rules apply to progression criteria, including progression to classification (5.1 below).
Outstanding first class mark: 85 and above
First class 70 and above
Upper second class 60-69
Lower second class 50-59
Third class 40-49
Fail 39 and below
Fail capable of compensation 30-39
Fail not capable of compensation 0-29

3.2 GRADE DESCRIPTORS
The Department uses grade descriptors to assist the process of marking. Marks are assigned according to how the work being assessed matches up against the descriptors. There are slightly different sets of descriptors applying to work done for examinations or for assessed essays and for Dissertations or Bridge Dissertations.

Detailed grade descriptors are given on the departmental web pages at Student Intranet / For Undergraduates

3.3 MARKING PROCEDURES
The History Department’s marking procedures seek at all times to uphold the university’s assessment principles of equity, openness, clarity, and consistency.

All assessed work that counts towards your degree classification is moderated or marked by two different internal examiners. In cases where marks cannot be resolved, a third internal examiner is called upon. All work is marked anonymously by examination number. All work is available to be seen by one or other of our external examiners who have oversight of the rigour and quality of the assessment process.

The Department of History uses three different kinds of marking. These are set out below.

Moderated marking
Moderated marking is a system where the initial marking is completed by experienced, single markers, followed by sample marking by an appointed moderator who is also an experienced examiner. The sample equals (at least) ten per cent of all marked papers including all ‘first class’ (i.e. first marked at 70 or above) and ‘fail’ (i.e. first marked at 39 or below) papers. Moderation is used for 20- and 30-credit modules in Stage 2 and Stage 3. In some instances the first marker may not be an ‘experienced’ marker and in all such cases double marking will be used, where the second examiner is ‘experienced’. (‘Experienced’ in this instance means academic staff members with three years or more working as teachers in higher education institutions.)

Double Marking
Double Marking is used for all Special Subjects (40 credit modules) and for modules where moderation is inappropriate (see moderation above). All scripts are read by two examiners, but sequentially. The first marking, having completed their marking, passes the scripts with their marks and comments to the second marker who marks in the light of the first examiner’s marks and comments. Once the second marking has completed his or her marking, the two markers consult to agree final marks with reference to the grade descriptors and reasoned argument based on the evidence of the scripts. This use of sequential double marking recognises the particular specialist knowledge of the first examiner, the second examiner’s role being primarily to ensure that marks are appropriately calibrated with reference to the grade descriptors.

Blind double marking
Blind double marking is used in the case of Dissertations or Bridge Dissertations. The two examiners mark the work without access to each other's marks or comments. The examiners then discuss and agree a final mark with reference to the grade descriptors and reasoned argument based on the evidence of the Dissertation or Bridge Dissertation.

All scripts are marked anonymously, i.e. the candidate is identified by exam number only, not by name. You should never put your name on any work submitted for examination that contributes to your degree classification. Equally it is important that you do include your university examination number clearly and accurately.

After completion of first and second marking or moderation of all scripts for a module, the two examiners confer to reach agreed or reconciled marks for all scripts. In the case of Dissertations or Bridge Dissertations marks are agreed individually on each piece of work. In the case of an assessed essay, the agreed or reconciled mark is the mark that the student receives for that element of assessment. In the case of examinations, an overall mark for the examination as a whole is computed on the basis of the agreed or reconciled marks for individual questions. This is done by calculating the mean overall mark (averaging) and rounding any decimals to the nearest integer. Thus fractions of marks constituting 0.5 or above are rounded up (so, for example, a mark of 64.5 would go up to 65) but a smaller fraction would be rounded down (so a mark of 62.3 would be returned as 62). Where first and second markers are unable to reach an agreed or reconciled mark on a given piece of work, either their marks are averaged (if the difference between them is five marks or less) or, where the disagreement is greater than this, the work in question is referred to an internal moderator, who re-reads the script and assigns a mark within the range delimited by the first and second markers' original marks.

3.4 PENALTIES
The Department imposes penalties, in the form of deductions from the mark assigned i) where a specific word-limit has been set, for over-length or under-length work, and ii) for late submission of assessments.

i) Over-length and under-length work
The penalization of over-length work takes account both of the mark awarded before the imposition of a penalty and of the proportion by which the word limit has been exceeded. The procedure is to reduce the original mark to a fraction of itself that is determined by dividing the word limit by the length of the work actually submitted. Thus, where the word-limit is 2000 words and the essay submitted is 2500 words long, the fraction will be 2000/2500 = 4/5 or four-fifths: the penalized mark will consequently be four-fifths of the mark originally assigned.

The Department does not apply a strict mathematical formula when dealing with work submitted for assessment (including Dissertations and Bridge Dissertations) which is felt to be under length, e.g. below 1,500 words in the case of essays where the rubric demands work to be 1,500 – 2,000 words. Such work, however, is very likely to be marked down for failure to meet the standards (e.g. in development of argument) required by the grade descriptors (3.2 above) in order to meet a higher mark.

ii) Late submission
The penalty for late submission of an open exam or an assessed essay or a Dissertation (or Bridge Dissertation) is the same in all cases. This penalty is determined by university regulations which allow no room for discretion: **ten marks are deducted for each day or part of a day** beyond the advertised submission time. NB a late submission by only ten minutes counts as part of a day for these purposes. This penalty applies for each day the work is late, up to a total of five days, including weekends and bank holidays. After five days the work is marked at zero. No distinction is made here between 'working' and 'non-working' days or between daytime and night-time hours. In the case of open exams, this penalty will be imposed on the mark for the exam as a whole rather than for any individual answer. Printer failure or computer problems are specifically not allowed as mitigating circumstances to explain late submission and consequently you are strongly advised to ensure you back up any computer files and to print text in good time.
3.5 INDIVIDUAL ARRANGEMENTS
The Department may apply to the University for appropriate adjustment to standard assessment procedures in the form of time extensions, examinations in separate rooms, technical support etc. in respect of students with special needs, i.e. students with disabilities, medical, or other conditions which may entitle them under the University’s guidelines to individual arrangements in exams or other assessments. Students with special needs are provided for at Departmental level, by the Departmental Disability Officer and a designated member of the Departmental Office staff, liaising as appropriate with with the relevant University personnel.

Scripts submitted by students with a disability such as dyslexia, whose approved individual arrangements include a recommendation that they should not be penalised for spelling or grammatical errors, may be identified to markers by stickers placed on the pieces of work they submit for assessment.

3.6 MISSED EXAMS AND OTHER ASSESSMENTS
It is the your responsibility to know the time and places of closed exams, the times and places for receiving or picking up open exam papers, and the deadlines for submission of exam scripts, assessed essays and Dissertations or Bridge Dissertations. Allowance can be made under Mitigating Circumstances (4 below) in the case of genuine and compelling unforeseeable circumstances such as sudden accident, injury, or illness (see next paragraph). However, University Regulations explicitly state that simply getting the time or place of an examination wrong is not a legitimate extenuating circumstance. If you miss an examination or assessment for this reason, you will get a mark of zero for that examination or assessment. You will then need to resit the examination in order to get the necessary credits for the module in question. So please make sure that you have correct information on times and venues.

If you are taken ill immediately prior to or during an assessment or examination, please see a doctor / the university Medical Centre promptly so that medical evidence pertinent to the time can be provided in due course. You should request a "Confirmation of Illness" form as quickly as possible from the University Health Centre. The doctors and nurse practitioners at the Health Centre have duplicate pads of these forms, which create a full set of copies. Please note: the Health Centre will provide you with confirmation of illness even if you are not a patient with them; they do this under a specific arrangement with the University. If you are taken ill during a closed examination you should alert an invigilator and go to the university Medical Centre immediately on leaving the examination room. You should also make a prompt application under the Mitigating Circumstances provision (4 below). Please note that a doctor cannot provide retrospective medical evidence – if for example you have a severe migraine at the time of an assessment, you need to have it documented at the time. If you were to see a doctor the next day or the next week, they would only be able to certify that you said you had had a migraine and such evidence of itself would not be acceptable under the Mitigating Circumstances provision.

NB INFORMATION ABOUT ASSESSMENT DEADLINES FOR HISTORY MODULES IS CONTAINED ON THE ASSESSMENT DEADLINES PAGE OF THE DEPARTMENTAL WEBSITE AT http://www.york.ac.uk/history/student-intranet/undergraduates/assessment/deadlines/ (linked from Student Intranet / Assessments)
Combined Degree students taking assessments in other departments or students taking Elective modules will need to find out pertinent assessment times from the department delivering the teaching.
ALL UNIVERSITY EXAMS (INCLUDING RESITS) ARE SHOWN ON THE UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS TIMETABLES WHICH ARE LINKED TO THE UNIVERSITY’S ASSESSMENT AND EXAMINATION WEBPAGE https://www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/assessment-and-examination/
3.7 RUBRICS AND FAILURE TO FOLLOW RUBRICS

The rubric is the few lines of instructions that may head an examination paper. It is so called because historically such important information would be written or printed in red. It may contain information about the number of questions to attempt, instructions about what should be included in answers etc. **It is your responsibility to read rubrics on examination papers and to ensure that these are followed correctly**, e.g. in answering the correct number of questions. If you were to answer too many questions (e.g. three when the examination rubric specifies two) the overall mark for your paper will be awarded on the basis of the answers to only two questions. Were you to answer less than the number of questions required by the rubric, a penalty will be applied to reduce the overall mark for the paper in line with the proportion of the paper attempted. Thus if the rubric asks for three questions to be answered, but the you answer only two, then your overall mark will be reduced by the proportion of 2/3 or two-thirds, thus an overall mark of 60 would be reduced to 40.

3.8 ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

In cases where academic misconduct – plagiarism, collusion etc. – is detected in assessed work, the Department applies the University’s academic misconduct policy, with regard both to the work of detection and to the imposition of penalties. These procedures take account both of the proportion of a piece of assessed work that is affected by misconduct and of the weighting of this work within the degree as a whole. Penalty points are calculated according to these criteria and a final penalty is determined by multiplying the penalty points by a multiplier (normally 1) that reflects the severity of the offence. The final penalty is deducted from the final average mark for the degree and may impact of the final degree classification. The most serious academic or repeat offending can lead to a student having his or her degree failed, or their being asked to leave the University.

Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct are clearly spelt out at [http://www.york.ac.uk/k-roy/](http://www.york.ac.uk/k-roy/). Links from this webpage provide a full description of what constitutes academic integrity and the nature of various breaches of it are explained. There is also helpful guidance on how to avoid such misconduct through good practice, time management etc.

**You must have completed the University’s online Academic Integrity Tutorial in your first year.** The successful completion of this tutorial is a formal requirement of progression from Stage 1 to Stage 2.

Academic Misconduct can take a number of forms, notably:

**Plagiarism:** incorporating within your work without appropriate acknowledgment material derived from the work (published or unpublished) of another.

This is the university’s definition, but, for clarification, what is at issue here is not the use of other people’s ideas since historical scholarship requires proper acknowledgement of and engagement with published scholarship, but rather the unattributed or unacknowledged lifting of other people’s writing (‘material’). It is this ‘borrowing’ of phrases, sentences, or, at worst, whole passages from the work of others. See the ‘Note about Plagiarism’ given in the *Department of History Undergraduate Handbook*. Students may also find helpful the webpage ‘Plagiarism: What it is and how to avoid it’ which gives numbers of examples from historical writing: [http://www.york.ac.uk/teaching/history/pjhp/plagiarism.htm](http://www.york.ac.uk/teaching/history/pjhp/plagiarism.htm)

**Cheating:** deliberate failure to comply with the rules governing examinations and assessments, e.g. by making arrangements to have unauthorised access to information.

**NB** the University is aware of the potential misuse by examination candidates of small data storage units, e.g. mobile telephones, electronic diaries, electronic dictionaries, and data–bank watches. **Candidates are not permitted to bring these into examinations** and may be subject to severe
penalties, unless they have been specifically authorised, if found to be in possession of them during examinations.

**Collusion:** assisting another individual to gain advantage by unfair means, or receiving such assistance yourself.

**Fabrication:** misleading the examiners by presenting work for assessment in a way which intentionally or through carelessness suggests you have collected factual information which has not in fact been collected, or falsifies factual information.

**Personation:** producing work to be submitted as that not of yourself but another, or assuming the identity of another individual in order to deceive the examiners, or soliciting another individual to act or appear as yourself, or to produce work on their behalf.

As with plagiarism, the Department will not hesitate to investigate any cases where transgression of the University’s guidelines on academic misconduct is suspected and seek to apply sanctions. Do consult the University guidelines if you have any uncertainties about what constitutes misconduct. If this leaves those uncertainties unresolved, consult your supervisor or tutor.

If a student is suspected of academic misconduct they will be invited to a hearing within the department to which they may invite a ‘friend’ to support them. (A friend may only be a member of the university or a sabbatical officer of the Student Union.)

### 3.9 FEEDBACK
You will be able to find out your marks for individual modules via E-vision no later than six weeks after the deadline for assessment. These marks remain provisional until they have been confirmed at the pertinent Progression Board or (in respect of Stage 3 marks) at the Board of Examiners at the end of the Summer Term (see 6.2). You will also receive written feedback within this period.

Feedback is not given purely to justify the marks you have been awarded. Feedback is also intended to help you to improve your work by indicating areas where improvement is needed and, where possible, offering advice on how that might be achieved. Do please reflect on this feedback and use it to help you perform better subsequently. If you do not understand your feedback you can discuss it with your tutor and / or your supervisor. You supervisor may also be able to give you advice more generally on your work and how you can try and improve.

Please see also the Department’s **Statement on Feedback** at Student Intranet / For Undergraduates

### 3.10 DEPARTMENTAL MONITORING OF PROCEDURES
Assessment and examination procedures are monitored by the Department’s Teaching and Assessment Committee, which is a committee of the Board of Studies. This committee discusses the overall teaching strategy of the Department and broad examinations policy. All modules and assessment methods proposed by individual staff members have to be approved by the committee. More specifically in relation to examination and assessment, the committee considers overall examining procedures, receives and considers reports from External Examiners (see 6.1 below), monitors the robustness of marking procedures for various elements of the degree programme, and relations with the marking procedures of other departments with which History has Combined Degrees. The committee has responsibility in respect of the implementation of University policies and procedures in respect of assessment and examinations.

### 3.11 COMPLAINTS
If you feel an assessment (exam etc.) has failed to represent the module as taught or is in other ways unfair, or if you are unhappy about the tone of the feedback you have received, or you have
complaints about any other aspect of the assessment procedure, these should be directed to the
Departmental Examinations Officer.

4. MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

Cases of ‘mitigating circumstances’ – i.e. cases where illness or other serious factors (not including
the normal difficulties of daily life) affect your ability to take a particular assessment – are dealt with
by the Department’s Mitigating Circumstances Officer, who chairs the Mitigating Circumstances
Committee (MCC). (In the case of Combined Degree students, there is a Combined Degree MCC
which represents the two combining departments, but otherwise the arrangements are the same.)
It is this Committee which has the power to grant extensions to deadlines in emergency cases. You
are responsible for filling in Mitigating Circumstances forms and for providing medical or other
appropriate independent certification (such as a letter from the Open Door Team) to support any
claims that ‘mitigating circumstances’ considerations should be taken into account. Wherever
possible you should make such claims at the earliest possible moment. If necessary, claims may
be submitted before medical evidence etc. has been received.

If you have a disability that has been declared, your needs assessed, and a programme of
reasonable adjustments put in place then you should not put in a Mitigating Circumstances claim in
relation to your disability.

For individual arrangements in respect of assessment, see 3.5 above.

NB under University Regulations delay in submitting work caused by problems with
computers and / or printers cannot be accepted as Mitigating Circumstances.

If you become aware of factors of the type outlined above which you feel are liable to affect your
performance in an examination or your ability to hand in a piece of assessed work to the given
deadline you must contact the Department’s Mitigating Circumstances Officer or the History
Department Office and submit your form without delay. Approval of arrangements to alter the
deadline for completion of a module assessment (whether submitting an assessed essay, open
examination, or other coursework required for assessment, or sitting a closed examination) must
as far as possible be made in advance. If you were to provide mitigation acceptable to the MCC,
but only at a point where it was too late for such arrangements to be put in place, you could only be
offered an opportunity to sit as if for the first time in the August resit period. Applications for
Mitigating Circumstances can be taken into account up to the assessment deadline.
Thereafter mitigation cannot be considered by the MCC, but may exceptionally be considered by
the university’s Special Cases Committee, but only if there was very good reason why you were
unable present mitigation at the proper time.

For details of Mitigating Circumstances and the university’s Mitigating Circumstances Form go to
Student Intranet / For Undergraduates on the Departmental web pages.

5. RESITS, COMPENSATION AND PROGRESSION

To progress from Stage 1 to Stage 2 or from Stage 2 to Stage 3, you must achieve 120 credits as
required for the degree for which you are registered at the appropriate level for the stage. You will
also need to have an overall mean mark (weighted according to the number of credits attached to
each module) from all your modules of 40 or more. Normally and ideally this requirement means
that you have to pass all your modules by achieving a mark of 40 or above since for modules in all
three stages, viz. Stages 1, 2 and 3, the pass mark for module assessments is 40. (In the case of
Single Subject History students taking Dissertation Skills (level 2), you need simply to pass this
module since it is assessed on a pass / fail basis only.) However, you can sometimes still earn the
credits for a module even if your mark falls below 40, i.e. you fail, so long as your mark does not
fall below 30. This will depend on how well you perform in your other modules. If you fail any
module sufficiently badly that the mark falls below 30, you will have to retake the module, but you are only allowed to do this if you are there are not too many credits-worth of modules that you have failed.

There is no progression from Stage 3 to a further stage, but students do progress to classification, i.e. a student must have achieved 120 credits at that stage in order to be considered for a classified degree and they must have an overall weighted mean of 40 or more. As with progression at lower levels, modules assessed at 30-39 may sometimes be compensated, but no module marks may fall below 30 for progression to be allowed.

5.1 The rules on compensation and progression. which apply to both Single Subject History and Combined Degree students, can be summarised as follows:

**In Stage 1**, if you fail one or more modules, i.e. you achieve a module mark of below 40, in the stage, you may still receive the credit for the failed module(s) and so progress to Stage 2 provided that: no more than 40 credits in total have been failed; no module marks are lower than 30; the credit-weighted mean (rounded to the nearest integer) over all modules taken in this stage (including the failed module(s)) is at least 40.

**In Stage 2**, if you fail one or more modules, i.e. you achieve a module mark of less than 40, in the stage, you may still receive the credit for the failed module(s) and so progress to Stage 3 provided that: no more than 40 credits in total have been failed; no module marks are lower than 30; the credit-weighted mean (rounded to the nearest integer) over all the modules taken in this stage (including the failed module(s)) is at least 40. (If you fail to meet the Stage 2 progression hurdle, you will be given a Certificate of Higher Education.)

**In Stages 1 and 2**, if you fail modules and the progression requirement for that stage cannot be met by the application of the compensation rules just outlined, you are entitled to reassessment in a maximum of 90 credits-worth of failed modules (per stage) provided you have failed no more than 90 credits in that stage with no more than 50 credits carrying irredeemable fail marks (i.e. module marks of less than 30) at that stage.

**In Stage 3**, if you fail one or more modules (i.e. achieves a module mark of less than 40) in the stage he or she may still receive the credit for the failed module(s) and so progress to classification provided that: no more than 40 credits in total have been failed; no module marks are lower than 30; and the credit-weighted mark (rounded to the nearest integer) over all the modules taken at this stage (including the failed module(s)) is at least 40.

If in Stage 3 you fail modules and the award requirements for the stage cannot be met by application of the compensation rules just outlined, you are entitled to reassessment in a maximum of 40 credits-worth of failed modules provided they have failed no more than 40 credits.

The subtext here is that you cannot be awarded a classified degree until you have retaken and passed any modules (worth up to 40 credits in total) that you failed the first time with a mark of less than 30 (or, where compensation cannot be earned, with a mark of less than 40). If, however, you fail modules with a total credit value of more than 40 credits, then you cannot get an honours degree, but will be eligible instead for a lower award (Ordinary Degree or Diploma of Higher Education depending on the total number of credits achieved).

5.2 The rules on reassessment (resits) are as follows:

**You may only be reassessed in a module once.** If you fail a module and fail the reassessment, you will not be able to progress and will fail the programme. You may, however, be eligible to receive a lower (or ‘exit’) award. **However**, if you were allowed by a Mitigating Circumstances Committee to take a module ‘as if for the first time’ because you were unable to avail yourself of the first opportunity or your attempt was voided for medical or compassionate reasons, you could be allowed a further opportunity to retake the assessment if you did not pass on that occasion.
Similarly it would be possible for a Mitigating Circumstances Committee to allow another opportunity if the retake was discounted by reason of mitigation.

If you fail at the first opportunity and are reassessed in a module, your resit mark(s) or your original mark(s), whichever are the higher, will be used for progression purposes. However, in terms of your degree, you will not be allowed to gain an advantage over those who passed the module first time. This is achieved by “capping” the stage mark (not the module mark) at 40 after reassessment.

If you need to resit an assessment you will be notified at least five weeks before the date of the resit period.

If you need to take reassessments, you are required to be available during the August resit period. If any of your reassessments is a closed examination, you will be required to return to York to present yourself at the scheduled resit examinations. If you are resitting only open assessments and / or essays, it will not in fact be necessary for you to return to York. Failure to attend or submit any reassessment will be treated in the normal way, i.e. non-attendance or non-submission will result in a fail unless there is compelling reason why attendance or submission was not possible (see 3.6 above). Pre-arranged holiday is not an acceptable Mitigating Circumstance.

An example of how the rules work
For worked out examples of how this system operates in general terms see Appendix I of the History Department’s Undergraduate Handbook. To repeat one of the examples given there, let us imagine a student, Student Y, who during Stage 1 acquires the following profile of module marks

Module A (20 credits):  29 (Fail);  Module B (20 credits):  29 (Fail)
Module C (20 credits):  38 (Fail);  Module D (20 credits):  38 (Fail)
Module E (20 credits):  65 (Pass);  Module F (10 credits):  65 (Pass)
Module G (10 credits):  60 (Pass)

Student Y is entitled to reassessment of some modules because there are less that 50 credits with a mark below 30 and there are not more than 90-credits worth of failed modules in total. Student Y must be reassessed on Modules A and B (irredeemable fails because carrying marks below 30) and has the option to be reassessed in modules C and D (redeemable or marginal fail marks because carrying marks below 40, but not below 30). In such cases, students should discuss their decision over reassessment with their academic supervisor. It is likely on this particular run of marks that, if Modules A & B were passed on reassessment, Modules C & D could be compensated for: there would be no more than 40 credits of failing marks (Modules C & D) and the overall credit-weighted mean mark would be 40 or above.

If you have a marginal fail in a module (a mark between 30-39) and it cannot be compensated, you can choose to be reassessed in that module as long as it does not take you over the number of reassessment opportunities permitted in the stage (see 5.1 above). You cannot choose to be reassessed in a marginal fail (a mark between 30-39) in a module that can be compensated. Please see your academic supervisor for further guidance.

The pertinent University regulations are set out in paragraphs D. 1-29 of the University’s Guide to Assessment Standards Marking and Feedback

6. CLASSIFICATION OF DEGREES
Once the marking of all assessments counting towards the overall degree classification (i.e. all Stage 2 and Stage 3 marks) has been completed, a Departmental Committee chaired by the Examinations Officer considers the profile of marks for each student and prepares the ground for a meeting of the full Departmental Board of Examiners (usually referred to as the Final Exams Board, see 6.2 below), which includes internal and External Examiners (6.1 below).

Combined Boards of Examiners meet to decide the classification of Combined Degree students, which are then ratified by the relevant Combined Boards of Studies.

6.1 EXTERNAL EXAMINERS
As with all other United Kingdom universities, marking and degree awarding processes in the York History Department are subject to scrutiny by External Examiners. Their function is to scrutinise examination papers, scrutinise samples of all forms of assessed work, and ensure that marking procedures are robust and in line with those followed in other UK university history departments, while their advice is sought over any innovations in assessment procedures. They attend the Final Examination Boards, including Combined Degree Boards where externals from the other Department involved will also be present. External examiners are also be involved in the Progression Boards following the Summer Term Assessment Period and the Summer Resit Examinations. At the Final Examinations Board the externals offer verbal reports on the assessment process. A little later in the year they provide written reports which go to the Vice Chancellor and to the Department and feed into the Department’s monitoring procedures in respect of assessment.

External Examiners are appointed by the university, but are nominated by the Department. They are usually senior academics from other UK History Departments. Appointments are made such that the collective expertise of the External Examiners reflects so far as possible the teaching range of the Department. Each serves for three or sometimes four years. University rules restrict who may be appointed so as to ensure the independence of the External Examiners. Thus recent former members of the Department cannot be appointed nor someone from a History department at another institution for which a member of the York department is currently an external examiner.

6.2 EXAMINATIONS BOARD
All teaching members of the Department’s Board of Studies, together with the Department’s External Examiners, are members of the History Department’s Board of Examiners. The Departmental Administrator is in attendance and meetings are chaired by the Examinations Officer. (When appropriate, other members of the University's academic or academic-related staff, or other persons recommended to and approved by the University's Standing Committee on Assessment may be members of the Board of Examiners.) All classifications are determined using examination number only. Once the Board of Examiners has agreed the class list, the examination numbers are decoded and names announced. The Board of Studies is then convened to ratify the results agreed by the Board of Examiners.

For Combined Degrees, members of the Combined Board Executive Committee, together with an appropriate External Examiner, agree degree classifications in the same way as the History Board of Examiners. These results are then ratified by the executive as a Combined Board of Studies.

After ratification, provisional class lists giving results for all degrees are then posted on notice boards. These results become official once they are confirmed by Senate on the Friday after the end of the Summer Term.

6.3 RULES FOR CLASSIFYING DEGREES

The classifications that are associated with different bands of overall weighted mean mark (explained below) are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Overall weighted mean mark required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

15
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

The degree classification is based on the overall weighted mean (average) of marks from modules in stages 2 and 3. Marks are weighted according to the number of credits in each module. Thus a 30-credit module is worth one and a half times that of a 20-credit module; a 10-credit module is worth half that of a 20-credit module. Marks for stage 2 and for stage 3 are then combined by weighting the marks for each stage in the ratio of 2:3. At this point any penalties for misconduct (3.8 above) are deducted. The position of this overall weighted mean mark (rounded to the nearest integer) on the university’s class scale (above) determines the degree classification in most cases. An exception to this convention is made where students on this calculation are two marks or fewer below a class borderline and an alternative weighting of 1:1 or 1:2 would bring the overall mark into the higher class band. In such instances the most favourable ratio is used to secure the higher degree classification. The calculation is also applied to Combined Degree students. Modules which are Pass / Fail (e.g. Dissertation Skills module) do not contribute to the degree classification, although you must pass them to get the credits. Exceptionally students with outstanding marks and a very high overall score may be recommended for the award a first with distinction.

Degree classifications for Combined Degrees are calculated on the same basis as for Single Subject degrees.

An example of how a degree is classified
Let us take an example of how the degree classification for a hypothetical for single-subject History student, Student X, would be worked out.

Student X’s Stage One marks were good enough to have allowed progression to Stage Two, but they are not used as part of the degree classification.

In Stage Two student X achieved a mark of 61 on one Histories and Contexts module and 64 on the other (each module accounting for 20 credits), 58 on one of the Explorations Modules and 63 on the other (each for 30 credits), 60 on Using Primary Materials (10 credits) and a Pass in Dissertation Skills (10 credits). His or her marks will be calculated as follows:

Histories and Contexts 61 (mark) x 20 (number of credits) = 1220
Histories and Contexts 64 x 20 = 1280
Explorations 58 x 30 = 1740
Explorations 63 x 30 = 1890
Using Primary Materials 60 x 10 = 600
(Dissertation Skills – does not contribute to calculation)
Total for stage = 6730

The Total of 6730 is then divided by the number of credits for the stage that contribute to the assessment, viz. 110 – (NB 10 from the total of 120 Stage 2 credits go to Dissertation Skills – see below) to give weighted mean of 61.18 (NB at this stage decimal points are not rounded to the nearest integer).

The Dissertation Skills module does not generate a mark, being assessed on a Pass / Fail basis, but students must pass in order to gain enough credits to progress to Stage Three. Students who fail this module will be required to revise and present their proposal again in the Summer Resit period. Failure again at this point would mean that a student would not be allowed to progress to Stage Three.

With a weighted mean mark of 61.18 student X proceeds unproblematically to Stage Three.
In **Stage Three** student X gets a mark of 63 on the Special Subject (40 credits), 55 for Debating Historical Practice (20 credits), 57 on the Comparative module (20 credits), and 63 on the Dissertation (40 credits).

Special Subject 63 (mark) x 40 (number of credits) = 2520  
Debating Historical Practice 55 x 20 = 1100  
Comparative module 57 x 20 = 1140  
Dissertation 63 x 40 = 2520

The total of 7280 is divided by the number of credits for this stage (120) to give weighted mean of 60.66

So with a weighting of 2:3 (or 40:60) between Stage Two and Stage Three we calculate the overall weighted mean mark for degree classification purposes as follows:

Stage Two  61.18 x 0.40 = 24.47  
Stage Three  60.66 x 0.60 = 36.39

Mark for final degree classification 24.47 + 36.39 = 60.86. This would then be rounded up to 61. Since student X has no penalties for academic misconduct, there are no deductions from this mark. 61 falls within the 60-69 classification band and so represents a low 2:1 or upper second class degree.

Student X's classification was clear and unproblematic, but let us suppose that they had in fact performed rather less well in their Special Subject and achieved a mark of only 56. Their weighted mean mark for Stage Three would then fall to exactly 35. This would give an overall weighted mean mark of 59.47, tantalisingly close to 60 and the higher class, but because decimals are rounded to the nearest integer, would in fact fall into the lower class with a mark of 59. However, because student X on this calculation would be less than two marks from the higher classification, the overall weighted mean would be recalculated using alternative ratios of 1:1 and 1:2 to see if either would bring student X into the higher class. A ratio of 1:2 would not help student X, but a ratio of 1:1 would give student X an overall mark of 59.76, which rounds up to 60 and squeezes a rather lucky student X into the upper second class band.

### 6.4 APPEALS AGAINST DEGREE CLASSIFICATION

Provisions for appeal are as laid down by the University (Regulation 6.7.3 (c) ) and must follow the specified procedures. Appeals **cannot be made against the academic judgement of the examiners, i.e. specific marks awarded.** You can appeal (a) on the grounds of **procedural irregularities** or (b) special circumstances are cited that may have affected your degree result, but which you did not and **could not reasonably have revealed** to the Department at an earlier stage.

For details on appeals, see [http://www.york.ac.uk/students/help/appeals](http://www.york.ac.uk/students/help/appeals)

Information about appeals can also be found in Regulation 6.7 of the University’s **Ordinances and Regulations:**  
[www.york.ac.uk/about/organisation/governance/corporate-publications/ordinances-and-regulations](http://www.york.ac.uk/about/organisation/governance/corporate-publications/ordinances-and-regulations)

NB any appeal must normally be made within 28 days of the announcement of the assessment decision which is being appealed against.

PJPG  
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