

Chapter 7

Assessment: Taught Programmes

7. ASSESSMENT: TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

7.1 Introduction

- (1) This chapter sets out the University's approach to the assessment of students on taught programmes of study and on the taught element of research programmes of study. The regulations and procedures described take into account the *UK Quality Code* for Higher Education; *UK Quality Code* for Higher Education: Advice and Guidance: Assessment. They are reviewed and, where appropriate, amended on an annual basis as part of the annual review of the Academic Quality Handbook.

7.2 Principles

- (1) Rigorous assessment procedures are essential for the maintenance of appropriate academic standards.
- (2) Assessment methods and criteria are aligned to learning outcomes and teaching activities.
- (3) Assessment is reliable, consistent, fair and valid.
- (4) Assessment design is approached holistically.
- (5) Assessment is inclusive and equitable.
- (6) Assessment is explicit and transparent.
- (7) Assessment and feedback is purposeful and supports the learning process.
- (8) Assessment is timely.
- (9) Assessment is efficient and manageable.
- (10) Students are supported and prepared for assessment.
- (11) Assessment encourages academic integrity.
- (12) Assessment methods and strategies are designed to motivate students by providing them with opportunities to review, demonstrate and consolidate what they have learnt at particular stages of their programme of study.
- (13) Students are provided with opportunities to experience a range of different kinds of assessment.
- (14) Feedback on assessment performance provides students with information on their strengths and weaknesses, with the aim of helping them to improve the quality of their knowledge, understanding and skills in a timely manner.
- (15) External examiners are appointed for all provision that leads to an intended award.
- (16) Where programmes are offered in partnership with other institutions, memoranda of agreement confirm that assessment and examination arrangements are the responsibility of the University.

7.3 Information to be provided for students

All students must be provided with information relating to assessment as follows:

- i) Access to the Academic Quality Handbook;
- ii) The learning outcomes to be assessed in each module;
- iii) The assessment criteria to be used;
- iv) The methods and dates of assessment tasks, including information about the format of examination papers, and the length of written and nature of other types of assignments.
- v) Where group working is to be assessed, the information about the methods to be used to apportion marks must be provided;
- vi) A schedule of assessment tasks associated with each module;
- vii) An indication of how and when they will receive feedback.

7.4 Assessment and Re-assessment Timing

- (1) Institutes can decide on their approach to assessment and reassessment taking into account the nature and requirements of their provision, and the needs of their cohorts of students.
- (2) Programmes must articulate this approach through the validation process and ensure that it is fair, transparent and consistent and does not advantage or disadvantage a particular cohort.
- (3) Institutes must explain clearly to students the timing of assessments and reassessment periods.
- (4) Institutes must liaise with Registry in regards to (re)assessment timing to ensure that students will have the opportunity to enrol following the resit period.

7.5 Assessment Security

- (1) Institutes and Professional Services must ensure that assessment is carried out securely.
- (2) Staff must carry out all aspects of assessment in a way that ensures the integrity of the assessment process and in turn the academic standards of each award.
- (3) Institutes and Professional Services must ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place for the transit of draft assessment questions/tasks between staff and for the transit of materials to external examiners.
- (4) Institutes and Professional Services must ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place for the invigilation of examinations.
- (5) Institutes and Professional Services must ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to confirm the identity of students undertaking assessments whether in an examination room or online, and when student work is submitted in person, online or through other means.
- (6) Institutes and Professional Services must ensure that students' marks and related information are held securely and disclosed only to those who need access and have a right to see it.

7.6 Assessment Submission

- (1) Institutes must explain clearly to students the arrangements for submission of work for assessment and the deadlines by which submission is required. Unless specified otherwise, the deadline for submission will be 23:59 (time zone where the assessment is set) on the submission date.

- (2) Institutes must ensure that student work that is submitted for assessment is kept securely until after the meeting of the relevant Examining Board and thereafter is archived in line with data protection regulations.
- (3) All assessments except formal examinations and assessments of a practical nature must be submitted electronically, normally through the University's VLE. Tutors must ensure that all involved with the assessment process have sufficient knowledge to enable them to use the electronic submission facilities, together with the facilities for grading and feedback. Where submission cannot be via electronic methods or where there are other reasons for alternative submission, the actual method of submission must be made clear, including details of where and how to submit. Where students submit work for assessment in hard copy, they must be given a receipt. The receipt must be signed and dated by an authorised member of the Institute and a copy must be retained by the Institute.
- (4) In the event that the University formally announces that the electronic submission system is not available on the submission date, the submission deadline will be extended by 24 hours. In such cases, students must not use alternative methods to submit their work. In the event that the University formally announces that one or some or all of the University's campuses are exceptionally closed due to extreme weather conditions or other reasons, students will be informed of any adjustments to submission deadlines or to arrangements for formal examinations and assessments of a practical nature.
- (5) Late submission penalties must be applied to work that is not submitted by the published deadline. Work which is submitted up to 1 week late will be capped at the minimum pass mark for the Level for first attempts and will be awarded a mark of 0% for re-assessment. Late submission penalties may be lifted only with the approval of Mitigating Circumstances Decisions.
- (6) Work submitted more than 1 week after the submission deadline will be considered as a non-submission and will not be marked. The work may be considered as a submission for reassessment if offered by an examination board.

7.7 Work over the word limit

- (i) Different assessments have varying word lengths specified for them; it is important that the student keeps to the word length specified for each assessment at all times on the following grounds:
 - To encourage succinct and clear writing by students.
 - To ensure equity between all the students doing that particular assessment
- (ii) If the specified word limit for an assessment has been exceeded, the following penalties would normally apply. The penalty cannot take the work into the fail category.
 - Up to 10% above the word limit – No deduction off final mark
 - Between 10% and 25% above the word limit – Deduction of 5 marks off final mark, or reduce the mark to the capped mark, whichever is the lesser penalty. For example, for an undergraduate student achieving a final mark of 44%, the mark would be reduced to the capped mark of 40%; whereas for an undergraduate student achieving a final mark of 49%, the mark would be reduced to 44%. For a postgraduate student achieving a final mark of 54%, the mark would be reduced to the capped mark of 50%; whereas for a postgraduate student achieving a final mark of 67%, the mark would be reduced to 62%.
 - Between 25% and 50% above the word limit – Deduction of 10 marks off final mark, or reduce the mark to the capped mark, whichever is the lesser penalty. For example, for an undergraduate student achieving a final mark of 47%, the mark would be reduced to the capped mark of 40%; whereas for an undergraduate student achieving a final mark of 55%, the mark would be reduced to 45%. For a

taught postgraduate student achieving a final mark of 59%, the mark would be reduced to the capped mark of 50%; whereas for a postgraduate student achieving a final mark of 64%, the mark would be reduced to 54%.

- 50% or more over length – Maximum mark of capped mark
- (iii) A failure to meet the word limit (or minimum word limit if a range is given) may result in lower marks based on the quality of the work because the work may not include the necessary information required for the assessment to meet the stated learning outcomes.
- (iv) The feedback on the assessment should explicitly mention any mark deduction and the reason for it.

7.8 Marking

(1) Marking principles

- (i) Marks for individual assessment tasks that contribute to an award must be expressed as a percentage (whole number). Any other scheme of marking (e.g. pass/fail grading) must be approved explicitly at validation.
- (ii) Marks are awarded to students on an individual basis irrespective of the nature of the assessment task.
- (iii) Marks are provisional until confirmed by an Examining Board.
- (iv) All formal written examinations at the University must be marked in the anonymous state. Candidates in such examinations must be identified only by their student number until such time as both first marking and moderation or second marking have been completed. There is no requirement that assessments other than formal written examinations be marked in the anonymous state as the University recognises that the preservation of anonymity may be either impossible or pedagogically undesirable. However, assessments will be marked in the anonymous state where this is deemed appropriate for a particular assessment and this is clearly indicated in the relevant documentation for the assessment.

(2) Scaling of marks

- (i) If, due to academic discipline, an Institute wishes to adopt a system of the scaling up or down of marks, the proposal must be approved by the relevant module external examiner(s), the Institute Board, and the Academic Standards Committee. Students must be given full written information about any such system at the start of the module.

(3) Study abroad

The time spent abroad normally takes place during Level 5 or Level 6. Students will be enrolled on an Independent Study Module. In addition to modules completed at the host institution, students will normally be asked to undertake other work as part of this module. As part of this module, students, in conjunction with the International Recruitment Unit and Programme Manager, will develop a learning agreement to outline the nature of the optional study abroad placement. The assessment will be specified in the Learning Agreement in line with the module. This will include how all of the grades that are obtained at the partner university will be converted to the UWTSD equivalent marks and will then contribute to the degree. Institutes have rigorous conversion practices so the marks obtained overseas can be converted to the mark system used at UWTSD. Students will be made aware that grades will be converted on return.

(4) Allocating a mark for lost student work

- (i) Students must, whenever possible, keep a copy of work submitted for assessment.
- (ii) In the event that work that has been submitted for assessment is irretrievably lost and the nature of the work is such that it was not feasible to make a copy, or in the event that an examination script or a class test is irretrievably lost, the following rules apply:
 - The student must be informed by the Institute that s/he has the option of either being re-assessed without penalty or choosing to accept a mark, allocated as follows, for the lost work:
 - In the event that the assessment task is one of several assessment components for the module and more than 50% of the module assessment is available, the student is allocated a mark for the missing component that is based on a weighted average of the marks available for the module's other assessment components. The relative weighting of the components used is the same as the relative weighting of these components for the whole module.
 - In the event that the assessment task is the entire assessment for the module or if the work available is less than 50% of the module's assessment, the student is allocated a module mark equal to his/her weighted average in the best 60 credits of modules completed at the same level.
 - If no response is received from the student by the specified deadline, a mark for the lost work must be allocated in accordance with the rules above.

(5) Moderation processes (undergraduate programmes and the taught element of postgraduate programmes)

- (i) The University uses a variety of moderation processes to reflect the varying demands of different disciplines and the different requirements of various types of assessed material. Institutes must determine the most appropriate processes for their Programmes of Study and must use agreed criteria. The chosen processes and criteria must be published, and any subsequent changes must be approved by the Institute Board following consultation with the relevant module external examiner(s) using the available guidance.
- (ii) All assessments which contribute to a final award/degree classification must be subject to moderation.
- (iii) Where sampling is used, a representative sample of at least six pieces of work will be selected and should include:
 - examples of work in the first class category (or equivalent for other awards);
 - examples of work in the fail category;
 - examples of work from each classification;
 - examples of work within 2% of a classification boundary (or equivalent for other awards);
 - any work on which the marker wishes for another opinion.
- (iv) If the moderation process identifies concerns relating to the marking in one or more categories, all work in the identified category must be reviewed and any differences must be resolved by means of discussion and negotiation. If such resolution is not possible, the work must be marked by an additional marker identified by the Chair of the relevant

Examining Board. The marks awarded by the additional marker are final. The process by which a final mark is agreed must be carefully documented so that the module external examiner is able to follow that process.

7.9 Language of delivery and assessment

- (1) The expectation is that the language of study of the University's programmes will be Welsh or English (or other language where this has been specifically agreed as part of the approval and validation of a particular programme), except where study of another language contributes to the academic content of the module. The language of delivery and the language of assessment will normally be the same. In the event that a student asks permission to be assessed in a language other than the language of delivery, the request must be considered and a decision made with reference to the aims and intended learning outcomes of the module.
- (2) Where study of another language contributes to the academic content of a programme, a minimum of at least half of the programme must be assessed in English or Welsh. For programmes which include a dissertation or project module with a credit value of at least 60 credits, the written and oral assessments must be in English or Welsh.

7.10 Assessment through the medium of Welsh where the medium of delivery is English

- (1) Paragraph 7.9 (1) above notwithstanding, the University is committed to promoting the Welsh language and to encouraging students to develop their skills in its use. All requests from students following English-medium modules to undertake assessments through the medium of Welsh must be accommodated where these are made in a timely manner (normally at the start of the module but at least three weeks prior to the assessment submission deadline) and are not inconsistent with the programme aims or the module learning outcomes. Failure to make such a request may result in delays to the student's assessment due to the time required to translate materials. In the event that undertaking the assessment task requires input from others (e.g. group work or a task associated with a placement), it may not prove possible to enable the student to undertake the assessment through the medium of Welsh without modifying the assessment task in some way. The Programme Manager will need to ensure that the student fully understands the implications of any such modifications. The Programme Manager will also need to ensure that any modifications are approved as per the Assessment Protocol and that they do not compromise the fairness of the assessment process for any of the students undertaking the module. Programme Managers must make arrangements for the translation of the necessary assessment materials and are responsible for ensuring that the student is not unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged.
- (2) Whenever possible, Welsh-medium assessments must be marked by a Welsh-speaking tutor with appropriate academic qualifications and experience in the subject being assessed, and with experience of Welsh-medium assessment at a similar level. Such a tutor must also mark assessments written in English as part of a process of moderation.
- (3) If it is not possible to find a suitable Welsh-speaking assessor, then the student's work must be translated into English for marking purposes. In such an event, translators must be instructed to translate without changing the meaning of the argument that is being presented or improving the clarity of expression.

7.11 Setting tasks for re-assessment

- (1) Where an Examining Board has determined that a student is to be re-assessed:
 - (i) The nature of the repeat assessment task may differ from the original assessment task providing that the nature of the assessment has been approved by the Institute Board and the relevant learning outcomes are fully assessed. However, the form of the re-assessment task is normally identical to the original assessment task.

- (ii) Where the re-assessment task takes the form of a timed examination, the examination questions must differ from those set in the original examination. Questions must be sufficiently different from previous questions to ensure that the assessment is not just testing rote learning.
- (iii) Where the re-assessment task takes the form of an assignment, case study or other form of project, the student will normally be given the opportunity to re-work and re-present or present the original assignment.
- (iv) For students for whom an allegation of academic misconduct has been substantiated and have been required to resubmit an assessment as part of the penalty, a new task must be given.

7.12 Potentially Compromised Marking

- (1) The University's approach to personal or professional links between staff and students is set out in the Policy Governing Professional Relationships in the Workplace.
- (2) Where students are involved in a complaints procedure against a member of staff, the University will ensure that assessment processes will be impartial and fair. This may involve the use of different markers.

7.13 Disclosure of marks/grades

- (1) Unconfirmed or provisional marks or grades are those which have yet to be presented to an Examining Board.
- (2) Confirmed marks or grades are those that have been agreed by an Examining Board.
- (3) Students must be made aware that any marks and grades released prior to formal approval by an Examining Board are provisional.
- (4) Decisions of the Examining Board are communicated to students by the Registry normally no more than 10 clear working days after the relevant Board has met.

7.14 Feedback and the return of work

- (1) For undergraduate programmes and the taught elements of postgraduate programmes, marking of students' work must be completed no later than 20 clear term-time working days after its submission and students must be provided with provisional feedback within the same time scale. For taught master's dissertations, the marking must be completed and students provided with provisional feedback within 30 clear working days. Where appropriate (for example, in respect of end-of-term formal examinations) the feedback may be provided at the start of the following term. Staff must seek written permission from the Academic Director in the event that marking and feedback cannot be completed within this timescale and students must be notified accordingly.
- (2) The University recognises that feedback to students may take many forms, such as immediate diagnostic feedback on individual and/or group tutorials. Formal assessment feedback must be prepared for every piece of assessed work that contributes to the formal assessment of an individual student's performance.

7.15 Assessment Repository

The University maintains an assessment repository for the purposes of providing a record of assessment and demonstrating that standards are consistently maintained between years. The University Assessment Protocol outlines the criteria for inclusion in the repository and how it can be accessed.

7.16 External Examiners

7.16.1 Purposes of External Examiner

- (1) The principal purposes of the University's external examiner system are to ensure that:
 - the standard of each award is maintained at the appropriate level;
 - the standards of student performance are comparable with standards on similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions with which they are familiar;
 - the processes for assessment and the determination of awards are sound and fairly conducted.
- (2) The University will appoint at least one module external examiner for all taught provision which leads to an intended award of the University. At least one external examiner will be in attendance at each Examining Board; where module external examiners are not available to attend, the University will appoint a procedural external examiner to attend the Examining Board. In exceptional circumstances, where the Senate acts in the capacity of an Examining Board, a Senate External Examiner may be appointed.
- (3) The University recognises the importance and mutual benefit of the work undertaken by its own staff as external examiners for other institutions and where possible will approve requests from staff to undertake external examining duties at other institutions.
- (4) The roles, responsibilities and procedures relating to External Examiners can be found in the External Expertise Protocol.

7.16.2 Role of External Examiners

- (1) The University expects an external examiner to:
 - (i) Review and comment on the University's standards and student performance in relation to those standards;
 - (ii) Review and comment on the consistent and fair application of policies and procedures ensuring the integrity and rigour of academic practices;
 - (iii) Review and comment on good practice and possible enhancements;
 - (iv) Verify the appropriateness of assessment tasks and assessment criteria;
 - (v) Be full members of examining boards (attendance requirements are clarified in Chapter 6);
 - (vi) Present a written report to the University.