

SECTION 5: ASSESSMENT REGIMES

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5.1 GENERAL

- 5.1.1 The University requires that assessment regimes for programmes and modules are fitted to their purpose, which includes promoting effective student learning and enabling students to show the extent to which they have met the intended learning outcomes of the modules or programmes. The University's procedures for programme approval include consideration of the assessment regime's fitness for purpose, and its effectiveness in measuring student attainment of intended learning outcomes and in promoting student learning (Programme Lifecycle Policies, Guide to Policy and Procedures for Teaching and Learning, Sections 5c-5d).
- 5.1.2 The University's Centre for Quality Support and Development (CQSD) offers expertise and materials which support staff in reflecting on appropriate methods of assessment and feedback. CQSD offers sessions on assessment and feedback, and these matters are also addressed in the development programme for new lecturers.

5.2 LANGUAGE OF ASSESSMENT

- 5.2.1 In respect of taught programmes, the language of assessment will be English (except in the case of programmes involving modern languages or British Sign Language, where teaching and assessment may be conducted in either English or the relevant modern language/British Sign Language at the discretion of the School). Any proposed variation from this convention requires the explicit approval of the University Board for Teaching and Learning (UBTL).

5.3 STUDENTS' AWARENESS OF MARKING CRITERIA

- 5.3.1 Generic marking criteria for modules at Levels 4-6 and for modules at Level 7 are set out in Annexes 1 and 2 of Section 10.

- 5.3.2 Students should be informed, and periodically reminded, of the generic assessment criteria relevant to their degree. Students should be advised, at the time when the work is set, of the detailed assessment criteria which are relevant to the specific piece of work. Detailed assessment criteria which are made known beforehand help students direct their learning and are an aid to the teaching and learning process. It is important that students are informed of the assessment criteria which are relevant to the work which they are undertaking; and, where distinct criteria apply to different pieces of work, the relevant criteria should be clearly stated.
- 5.3.3 Schools should seek to enhance students' awareness of, and engagement with, the generic assessment criteria which underpin their degree, and to promote their understanding of those qualities which are valued. Schools should consider how this might best be achieved in respect of their students. Experience suggests that an activity or exercise which requires students to engage critically with assessment criteria is more effective than providing a written explanation or discussing the criteria in a lecture.
- 5.3.4 The University provides guidance on the use of the criteria in the [Policy on providing feedback to students on their performance](#).
- 5.3.5 The use of assessment criteria and their effective communication to students are considered in the periodic review of teaching.

5.4 ASSESSMENT OF GROUP WORK

- 5.4.1 The following guidance on the assessment of group work is designed:
- to provide a formal reference point in relation to the assessment of group work;
 - to promote thought about the most appropriate means of assessment;
 - to ensure a degree of fairness in group assessment across modules.
- 5.4.2 In relation to the assessment of group work, it is a requirement that summative marks informed by peer assessment are considered provisional until approved by the module convenor (subject to the usual internal and external moderation procedures). This is consistent with the procedure given in the Assessment Handbook, section 10.2.1 that "Marking shall be carried out by appropriately qualified and properly appointed persons. It should be noted that peer assessment may be used for formative purposes and a marker's determination of a formal mark may be informed by peer marking".
- 5.4.3 It is a requirement that Boards of Studies take a view on the proportion of any final module mark arrived at through group work, especially where this exceeds 50%. In making this judgement Boards of Studies should consider the impact of circumstances relating to group work that are not entirely in the student's control; and whether development of an ability to work in a group is central to the aims of the module.
- 5.4.4 In designing and implementing the assessment of group work, Schools should apply the following principles (some of which apply to assessment more generally):
- i. Any assessment should be appropriately aligned to the learning outcomes of the module. Wherever possible it is good practice to use the widest appropriate means of assessment for a module while taking care to ensure an appropriate balance of formative and summative assessment;
 - ii. In considering how to assess group work, the module convenor should begin by reflecting upon why it is appropriate to do so. Reflection on this question will helpfully inform design of the assessment task(s). In particular, the convenor can usefully reflect upon whether it is the process of group work that is being assessed, or the product, or both;

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- iii. In the light of this reflection the convenor should clearly articulate how the group assessment marks will be derived, for example: will all group members receive the same mark? Will there be elements of peer assessment? Will there be elements of individual assessment?
- iv. Students may be consulted on the design of assessments;
- v. External examiners should be consulted on the design of group assessment;
- vi. Thought should be given to the size and composition of student groups, which can impact on both the group work experience and subsequent quality of work produced;
- vii. Thought should be given to the needs of students with specific learning needs and/or disabilities;
- viii. As with any assessment task, so particularly in respect of group assessment, it should be made clear where the limits of legitimate collaboration between students lie; and what constitutes improper collusion, which is a form of academic misconduct;
- ix. It is the responsibility of the School to ensure that the assessment of group work is properly moderated internally and externally;
- x. The module description should be clear on arrangements for reassessment of group work.

5.4.5 The following guidance relates to the assessment of students with disabilities:

- i. Dyslexic students, entitled to a green e-sticker, should add the e-sticker to their group and individual pieces of work if they wish their dyslexia to be taken into consideration. (Guidance for students about how to do this is published here: <http://bit.ly/uorgreenstickers>.) For group work, if possible, they should also indicate the section of the work they contributed towards.
- ii. The lecturer should specifically indicate in the feedback that they have noted the circumstance and have taken it into account when marking. They may also want to add a comment e.g. "the quality of the work meant no consideration was necessary".
- iii. If the lecturer considers the quality of the English, or ability to proof read, to be part of the assessment, and therefore that the work should be exempt from 'green e-sticker' considerations, this should be made explicit in the coursework specification and noted in the feedback. In all other cases marking should be consistent with the presence of a SpLD e-sticker.

5.4.6 Further guidance and examples of best practice in relation to the assessment of group work is provided at: www.reading.ac.uk/engageinassessment/assessing-group-work/eia-assessing-group-work.aspx.

5.5 MARKS FOR PARTICIPATION

- 5.5.1 Participation in class is an important part of learning, and, under the Statement of Learner Responsibilities agreed by UBTL at its meeting of 3 May 2011, students are required to participate appropriately in all classes.
- 5.5.2 In approving an assessment regime for a module, Boards of Studies may identify participation as a distinct component of assessment and assign a proportion of the module mark to this component. Any contribution to the module mark related to participation should be specified in the module description and students should be reminded of this at the beginning of the module. Only in exceptional circumstances may a minimum level of participation required over the Part be specified separately as a condition for progression.