

**Title** Assessment Handbook

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**Summary** At its meeting on 14 June 2016, the Board agreed that the University's assessment policies and procedures be consolidated and rationalised so that the policy on any topic is provided in a definitive, comprehensive account in a single place rather than being distributed across several documents in different contexts.

The Assessment Handbook, which is now ready for publication, presents the University's assessment policies and procedures topic-by-topic, following the broad sequence of the assessment process. The text, in the vast majority of cases, has been carried over from existing documents. However, the process of consolidating and rationalising policy statements from different documents has necessarily involved, in places, the selection of one version over another and some incidental redrafting to combine statements from different sources. In a few cases, these drafting decisions represent minor, but substantive, variations to, and clarifications of, policy. Equally, some supplementary material has been included.

**Action required**

The Board is invited to consider and approve the substantive variations, clarifications and additions which are outlined in the attached paper.

# ASSESSMENT HANDBOOK

## BACKGROUND AND APPROACH

At its meeting on 14 June 2016, the Board agreed that the University's assessment policies and procedures be consolidated and rationalised so that the policy on any topic is provided in a definitive, comprehensive account in a single place rather than being distributed across several documents in different contexts. In consequence, the following documents would be discontinued: Code of Practice on the Assessment of Taught Programmes, University-wide Framework for Classification and Progression for First Degrees, Marking Criteria and Classification Framework for Taught Postgraduate Programmes, Examination and Assessment Procedures Handbook, and a sub-set of the Governing Regulations. The completion of this project has been delayed due to pressures of work in the Examinations Office and the Centre for Quality Support and Development,

The Assessment Handbook, which is now ready for publication, presents the University's assessment policies and procedures topic-by-topic, following the broad sequence of the assessment process. The text, in the vast majority of cases, has been carried over from existing documents. However, the process of consolidating and rationalising policy statements from different documents has necessarily involved, in places, the selection of one version over another and some incidental redrafting to combine statements from different sources. In a few cases, specified below, these drafting decisions represent minor, but substantive, variations to, and clarifications of, policy, and therefore require the Board's approval. Equally, some supplementary material has been included. The Board is invited to consider and approve the substantive variations, clarifications and additions, which are given below.

As previously noted by the Board, the Code of Practice on the External Examining of Taught Programmes (CPEE), which provides in a single document a comprehensive account of the policies and procedures relating to External Examiners, will be maintained for the convenience of External Examiners. References within the CPEE to the Frameworks for Classification and Progression, Code of Practice on the Assessment of Taught Programmes and Examinations and Assessment Handbook will be amended.

Governing Regulations which relate to research degrees will remain, pending completion of work to ensure that their content is reproduced in other appropriate documents. Other Governing Regulations will be discontinued.

The proposed structure of the Handbook is as follows:

Section 1: Ordinance and Governing Principles

Section 2: Key dates [URL for published examination dates]

Section 3: Delegations within Schools and Examination Representatives

Section 4: Nomination and Appointment of Internal and External Examiners

Section 5: Assessment Regimes

Section 6: Conduct of Assessment: Examinations and Coursework

Section 7: Examination and Assessment Arrangements for Students with Specific Needs

Section 8: Extenuating Circumstances Policy [URL for published policy]

Section 9: Academic Integrity and Misconduct

Section 10: Marking

Section 11: Verification and Submission of Marks

Section 12: Providing Feedback to Students on their Performance [URL for published policy]

Section 13: Moderation

- Section 14: Retention of Exam Scripts, Coursework and In-Class Tests
- Section 15: Progression
- Section 16: Awards
- Section 17: Awards: Bachelors
- Section 18: Awards: Integrated Masters
- Section 19: Awards: Postgraduate Taught
- Section 20: Awards: CertHE
- Section 21: Awards: DipHE
- Section 22: Awards: Foundation Degrees
- Section 23: Awards: Ordinary Degrees
- Section 24: Awards: Graduate Diplomas and Certificates
- Section 25: Awards: Professional Graduate Certificate in Education
- Section 26: Awards: Examiners' Meetings
- Section 27: Recording, Documentation and Reporting
- Section 28: Reassessment
- Section 29: Appeals [URL for published appeals procedures]
- Section 30: Visiting Students
- Section 31: Quality Management and Enhancement

As policies are revised, different provisions may apply to different cohorts (for example, in relation to classification rules). Access for staff and students to the correct version will be managed through links to archived policies.

A copy of the draft Assessment Handbook is available on request from the Senior Quality Support Officer (Ms Chetcuti).

## SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES

### Section 1: Ordinance and Governing Principles

A reference to the University Credit and Qualifications Framework has been included.

The Board is invited to commend to the Senate and Council the following draft amendment to Ordinances, to reflect the removal of the Frameworks for Classification and Progression, with effect from 1 January 2018. The proposed amendments do not imply any detriment to current students and can therefore apply, as appropriate, to all students from the effective date.

#### Ordinance C4, I Degrees, Diplomas and Certifications, excluding Higher Doctorates

##### '1 Degrees Diplomas and Certificates, excluding Higher Doctorates

1. In order to achieve a qualification of the University (excluding a Higher Doctorate) a student must:
  - 1.1 be admitted to and register for the programme, and pursue the programme of study for the degree diploma or certificate as prescribed in the programme specification, save that the student may transfer credit in accordance with University policy
  - 1.2 fulfil the criteria for the qualification specified in the relevant programme specification and the relevant [Framework for Classification and Progression awarding rules](#) or Code of Practice for Research Degrees
2. The regulation of the award of a qualification shall be as specified in the relevant programme specification and in the relevant [Framework for Classification and Progression awarding rules](#) or Code of Practice for Research degrees, as appropriate.
3. The University may award a qualification jointly with other institutions, in which case there may be variations to 1.2 above which shall be agreed by the Senate.'

As an interim measure, a Frameworks for Classification and Progression webpage will be created, which will include a note that the information contained in the Frameworks has now been incorporated into the relevant sections of the Assessment Handbook.

### **Section 5: Assessment Regimes**

The guidance in Section 5.3 has been amended to remove text which suggests that there are circumstances in which marking criteria might properly not be provided to students.

### **Section 6: Conduct of Assessment**

A reference to invigilation outside of the UK has been added to Section 6.5 as follows: "Invigilation outside of the UK should observe the same principles as invigilation for examinations in the UK but there will be local variation in the specific arrangements."

Section 6.7 has been revised following the Board's approval in January 2017 of the Policy on Examination Resit facilities at University of Reading Malaysia. The full policy is included as an Annex to this Section.

Section 6.8 has been revised to incorporate provisions in respect of in-class tests which were approved by the Board in June 2016.

Further guidance for Schools and Departments in relation to setting deadlines for the submission of coursework (taken from the policy on *Penalties for late submission*) has been incorporated (6.9.1).

Minor changes have been made to the wording of Sections 6.9.4 Guidance for Schools on electronic submission of work and 6.9.5 Use of Turnitin in text matching online sources for clarity.

### **Section 7: Examination and Assessment Arrangements for Students with Specific Needs**

A new section on special arrangements for in-class tests has been included, following approval of proposals in respect of in-class tests by the Board in June 2016.

### **Section 9: Academic Integrity and Misconduct**

Guidance on recording academic misconduct cases on RISIS has been updated.

### **Section 13: Moderation**

In the guidance on sampling for internal moderation (13.1.4), the reference to 'all borderline candidates' has been removed since moderation will have been completed before borderline candidates have been identified.

### **Section 14: Retention of exam scripts, coursework and in-class tests**

References to in-class tests have been included, following approval of proposals in respect of in-class tests by the Board in June 2016.

### **Section 15: Progression**

The section on Progression from Part 3 to Part 4 of an Integrated Masters programme (15.4) has been amended. The current policy states:

'In order to progress from Part 3 to Part 4 of an M programme, a student shall normally be required to achieve an overall average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 3.'

without provision for programme-specific progression rules. A number of Integrated Masters programmes have progression rules at this stage due to accreditation requirements, and a formal provision allowing programme-specific progression rules has been included.

The approval route for changes to progression rules has been added (15.5): UPB approves the structure of the progression rule (which is specified in the programme specification), its rationale and any specific progression requirements in relation to compulsory modules, while the School Board for Teaching and Learning approves revisions to the list of optional modules or other module groupings specified within progression rules; such changes must be consistent with the structure and rationale. The provision that programme-specific rules beyond the Part 2 threshold performance are only

approved in exceptional circumstances, for example, when required by a PSRB, has been included, and responsibility for approving exceptions has been assigned to UPB rather than, as previously, UBTL.

### **Section 16: Awards**

The provisions for an Aegrotat now include the requirement that a proposal for an Aegrotat be discussed with the relevant Teaching and Learning Dean, the School Senior Tutor and the External Examiner before submission to the USCSC, which is consistent with the revised extenuating circumstances policy.

A minor amendment is required to the Policy on and procedures relating to extenuating circumstances to clarify that the Programme Examiners' Meeting is responsible for agreeing to recommend, through the University Awarding Board, to the Senate the award of a qualification with an Aegrotat Pass.

### **Section 19: Awards: Postgraduate Taught**

The definition of a dissertation which applies in the awarding method for Postgraduate Master's degrees (19.3) has been amended to read:

#### **'Dissertation**

A module comprising a substantial piece of independent work (which may include a project in scientific disciplines) which has been designated by the relevant Board of Studies and the School Board for Teaching and Learning (or previously Faculty Board for Teaching and Learning) as a 'dissertation' for the purposes of awarding. A student's programme should not normally include more than one module which has been designated as a 'dissertation'.

The Chairs of UBTL and DELT have confirmed that they are content with this amendment.

### **Section 20: Awards: CertHE and Section 21: Awards: DipHE**

There is an inconsistency in the Governing Regulations (GR) in respect of the classification of Certificates of Higher Education: GR IX(6) specifies that 'Successful candidates for the award of an Undergraduate Certificate of Higher Education shall be stated to have passed', while GR LXVI(6) specifies that 'Candidates successfully completing the Certificate of Higher Education in Management shall be eligible for a Pass or a Distinction save that a candidate who fails any part of the assessment shall not be eligible for the award of a Distinction on re-examination' (a variant clause relates to awards for the former Continuing Education provision).

Historically, classification was available for some CertHEs and not others. Currently, there are no stand-alone Cert HE programmes which are classified, and the CertHE is only awarded as a lesser award, which is not classified, for those who, having met the threshold standard at Part 1, are leaving the University without completing their degree programme. It is anomalous and potentially misleading to have two classification schemes for the same award since Pass would represent either the lowest band of acceptable performance or a band which stretches from an average of 40% to 100%. It is proposed that the current practice, namely that CertHEs are not differentiated by class, is formalised in the regulations.

An equivalent proposal applies to the DipHE.

### **Section 24: Awards: Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas**

The provisions in the Governing Regulations for the award of Graduate Diplomas and Certificates do not include standard award criteria. It is anomalous that the basis for an award is not specified in the regulations. It is proposed that a small group (comprising representation from ESRG and CQSD and an SDTL) be convened to draft standard award rules for Graduate Diplomas and Certificates.

### **Section 25: Awards: Professional Graduate Certificate in Education**

Information about the award of a Professional Graduate Certificate in Education is currently included in the programme specification. A draft regulation is being prepared for inclusion in the Assessment Handbook.

## **Section 26: Examiners Meetings**

The guidance on Examiners' Meetings requires substantial revision. It is proposed that a small group be convened to review the current guidance and draft a revised version for submission to DELT.

## **Section 28 : Re-assessment**

The following statement is included to clarify the procedures in relation to students repeating a year: 'It should be noted that candidates who repeat their registration for a Part shall normally be assessed at the first attempt and modules previously taken shall be set aside' (28.1.2).

The following statement has been included to clarify that a failed candidate at the second attempt cannot normally register for an alternative programme at the same or a higher level (28.2). This updates clauses in the Governing Regulations which refer to the powers of Senate (which previously considered re-registration requests from such candidates at its Failures Committee).

'The registration of a candidate who fails Part 1 or the Part 2 (or for Integrated Masters programmes only, the Part 3) Examination at the second attempt shall be terminated and shall not normally be permitted to register for an alternative programme at the same or a higher level. The programme registration of a candidate who is not qualified in Part 1 or the Part 2 (or for Integrated Masters programmes only, the Part 3) Examination at the second attempt shall be terminated, but the student may transfer their registration for an alternative programme subject to fulfilment of the normal requirements for admission or progression.

Candidates at Parts 2 and 3 whose registration is terminated due to failure may be eligible for a lesser award.'

The provisions relating to re-assessment for postgraduate taught programmes has been amended to resolve an inconsistency in relation to responsibility for determining the date for re-submission (28.6). The existing statement assigns responsibility for determining a resubmission date variously to the Examiners and the School. The amendment maintains the position that the Examiners are responsible, and assigns to the School an obligation to advise the Examiners.

Re-assessment regulations for Foundation Degrees (28.7) and Ordinary Degrees (28.8) have been included in the Assessment Handbook and represent the provisions which are currently in place.

A section on specific provisions in respect of re-assessment of in-class tests (28.11) has been included in line with the proposals approved by the Board in June 2016.

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