Assessment Policy for Taught Provision

1. Introduction

1.1 Preamble

1.1.1 As well as being the principal mechanism for setting and maintaining academic standards and measuring student achievement, assessment is a key component of student learning. The aims of this Policy are to provide a framework for Schools to manage approaches to assessment and feedback in ways that:

- are 'robust, valid and reliable and that the award of qualifications and credit are based on the achievement of the intended learning out comes'[1];
- are consistent across the University;
- promote learning;
- support student achievement; and
- are inclusive.

1.1.2 The Policy is aligned with the expectations described in the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Part A and Chapter B6.

1.2 Applicability

1.2.1 The Policy applies to all elements of taught provision (programmes and modules), both undergraduate and postgraduate, that lead to the award of a degree or credit by the University.

1.2.2 Any deviation from the expectations detailed in the Policy must be for compelling reasons and proposals must be agreed by School Boards and at the level of the University through formal approval by the Quality and Academic Standards Committee (QASC) reporting to the University Senate[2]. Specific exceptions to the normal expectations described in this Policy are detailed in Appendix 2[3].

1.3 Responsibilities

1.3.1 The Policy assumes the following basic allocation of responsibilities:

Academic staff have responsibilities to:

- design and implement assessment in ways that are inclusive, that encourage and promote effective learning, and that measure student achievement effectively with reference to stated intended learning outcomes;
- make reasonable adjustments to the design and conduct of assessments to meet disabled students' individual needs;
- provide constructive feedback on assessed work to students; and
- review assessment methods as part of annual and periodic quality assurance procedures.

Boards of Examiners, moderated by external examiners and reporting to Senate through the relevant School Boards, have the primary responsibility for assuring the academic standards of awards and the effectiveness of assessment in the subject.

School Learning and Teaching Committees, reporting to School Boards, have the responsibility to oversee all aspects of assessment including where relevant, liaising with external

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[1] UK Quality Code, Part A.

[2] The University's Emergency Powers process may be used under exceptional circumstances.

[3] Appendix 2 will be updated on each occasion where there is QASC approval of specific exceptions to the Policy. This Policy is a publicly available document which is published on the University website.

professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) to seek clarification of competence standards for academic programmes (in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, which places duties on qualification-awarding bodies to review competence standards and to determine the extent of flexibility to accommodate disabled students' needs).

The Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) has the responsibility to maintain and develop this Policy, and to oversee its implementation across the University including consideration of compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

School Associate Deans (Learning and Teaching) and School Managers have responsibility for ensuring that relevant information about assessment is included in module or programme handbooks (see the University's Module and Programme Handbook Policy and Guidelines).

Students have the responsibility to engage effectively with assessment as a key component of their learning.

1.4 Awarding qualifications

1.4.1 Qualifications should be awarded on the basis of achievement of clearly defined learning outcomes at the appropriate level and volume of credit. Where a candidate does not meet the learning outcomes for an intended award, a lower award can only be made where the candidate has met the learning outcomes for that lower award.

1.5 General principles of assessment

1.5.1 Assessment is an important part of learning and teaching. In addition to providing a measure of the achievement of students on academic programmes, it also provides information that guides students and academic staff in their learning and teaching respectively. To contribute usefully in both of these areas, it is important that assessment:

- is fair, in that students are entitled to parity of treatment and comparable assessment demands in modules of equal level and credit;
- is reliable, in that the assessment criteria would support independent markers to reach the same judgment on a piece of work;
- is valid, in that the assessment relates to the intended learning outcomes of the modules studied;
- is transparent, in that the criteria and methods by which students' work is being judged is clear to students, staff and examiners. This is particularly important for the purpose of determining the reasonableness of any adjustments to the design and conduct of the assessment; and
- recognises and respects equality and diversity.

1.6 Types of assessment

1.6.1 Whilst assessment tasks within higher education can take a wide variety of forms, they are commonly understood to serve 3 distinct functions: diagnostic, formative or summative. These are described by the QAA (http://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary) as follows:

- **Diagnostic assessment**: Evaluation of how well a learner is prepared for a given programme or unit of study within it, identifying any strengths, gaps in knowledge, or shortfall in necessary understanding and skills.
- **Formative assessment**: Feedback on students' performance, designed to help them learn more effectively and find ways to maintain and improve their progress. It does not contribute to the final mark, grade or class of degree awarded to the student.
- **Summative assessment**: Formal assessment of students' work, contributing to the final result.

1.6.2 Although these describe quite different functions of assessment, in practice, any assessment task may serve more than one function. For example, the emphasis within much coursework may be formative assessment but it will generally also contribute towards a summative statement of achievement. Likewise, the results of summative assessment can be used in a formative manner to indicate to students how to improve on their current performance.

2. Conduct of assessment

2.1 Appropriateness of assessment

2.1.1 Assessment should be designed to reflect the intended learning outcomes of the module, which in turn should take account of:

- the intended learning outcomes of the programme;
- relevant QAA subject benchmark statements;
- the relevant level descriptors of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF);
- any relevant PSRB requirements; and
- the principles of inclusive assessment practice.

2.2 Scheduling and amount of assessment

2.2.1 The student workload associated with assessment, both for completion of coursework assignments and for preparation for examinations, should be considered in relation to the credit rating of the module and associated notional student effort.

2.2.2 Scheduling of assessment, in particular coursework assignments, should take account of students' overall work load in the context of the semester structure.

2.2.3 Students should be provided with clear, accessible information regarding the scheduling of all assessment, including submission dates for coursework etc. They should be provided with this information sufficiently in advance, normally at the beginning of each semester, to enable them to plan and prepare effectively. Schools, and programme and module leaders should assist students to time-manage their assessment workload through effective induction, publicity, reminders and where possible, by liaison between Schools.

2.2.4 Wherever possible, assessments should be scheduled so that students receive timely feedback that they can take into account in preparing for subsequent assessments.

2.3 Assessment at Scottish Higher Education (SHE) levels 1 and 2 (SCQF levels 7 and 8) in the modular structure

2.3.1 SHE level 1 Semester 1 modules should normally be assessed within class times or by course work and not by traditional unseen examinations.

2.3.2 Wherever summative final examinations are used at SHE levels 1 or 2, there should be no more than one examination, of no longer than two hours duration for each 20 credit module.

2.4 Marking criteria

2.4.1 Criteria for assessment must be explicit and available to students and examiners before assessed work is undertaken. This should include the following:

- explanation of the University's grade descriptors (excellent, very good etc., see Appendix 1) in the context of the subject;
- explanation of the assessment weighting and criteria to be applied for each module; and

- explanation of the weighting and criteria to be applied to each separate component of assessment (e.g. coursework assignment, or examination paper).

2.5 Language of assessment

2.5.1 All assessment of modules or programmes leading to an academic award of the University must be in the English language, apart from the following exceptions:

- foreign-language modules provided by the University's School of Humanities;
- modules or equivalent provided and assessed by another university associated with a student exchange approved by the relevant School Board;
- provision within another higher education organisation that contributes to a University award under an articulation arrangement, or via recognition of prior learning (RPL); and
- where profoundly deaf students need assessments to be presented in British Sign Language.

2.6 Reassessment, resubmission and resitting

2.6.1 Students have no automatic right to retrieve a failed module and Schools may set criteria that students must fulfil in order to qualify for a retrieval attempt. Students must be provided with clear information for each module regarding the opportunities and requirements for reassessment including resubmission of coursework and resitting examinations. Such information should adhere to the general principle that, normally, undergraduate and postgraduate taught programme modules should allow for one earned summative resubmission or resit with two exceptions:

1) Resits or resubmissions are not normally allowed for final year modules that count towards honours classification, except in the case of clear mitigating circumstances that cannot be addressed by any other means (such as condonement).
2) Where the nature of the assessment is predicated upon longitudinal performance and participation (e.g. some laboratory based modules and personal academic study skills modules), School Boards may approve a module specification which explicitly excludes a resit or resubmission opportunity.

2.6.2 Students who pass (i.e. attain a grade of D3 or above) a resit of a previously failed module will receive a capped grade of D3 for that module. Transcripts of achievement on work undertaken at the University will also indicate whether or not the module grade was achieved at the first attempt. Capping at D3 applies to the reported module grades, and not to individual elements of assessment.

2.6.3 Where a module or set of modules are retaken in full (or where a credit deficit is retrieved by taking a different module or set of modules), module grades will not normally be capped unless it is a requirement of a PSRB for a particular qualification. Any such requirements should be made clear in student handbooks.

2.7 Disabled Students

2.7.1 The curriculum, including assessment and examination policies, practices and procedures should be designed to:

- proactively consider accessibility for disabled students in the design and conduct of the assessment to remove any barriers for disabled students; and
- anticipate reasonable adjustments to provide disabled students with the same opportunity as their peers to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes. This may involve making adjustments to the type, scheduling or marking of the assessment in the context of maintenance of academic standards.

2.7.2 Reasonable adjustments to assessment practices should:

- recognise the needs of disabled students with a range of impairments, including physical and mobility difficulties, hearing loss, visual impairments, specific learning difficulties including dyslexia, medical conditions and mental health problems;
- be widely publicised in an accessible format and easy for students to follow;
- operate with minimum delay;
- allow flexibility in the conduct of the assessment;
- not be dependent on students' individual funding arrangements; and
- be agreed with individual disabled students and all appropriate parties.

2.7.3 Identification of reasonable adjustments to meet a disabled student's individual needs is dependent on registration with Disability Services, a needs assessment and the development of an agreed learning support plan with the student and their School(s). Inclusive assessment practices will reduce the need for individual adjustments to be made.

2.7.4 Further information and guidance is available from the University's Disability Services.

2.8 Assessment of flexible, blended or distance learning

2.8.1 Appropriate measures must be in place to ensure the effectiveness of assessment for programmes or modules that are offered in flexible, distance or blended modes. These measures must endeavour to:

- ensure that assessed work is properly attributed to students;
- confirm that a student's assessed work is the original work of the student only; and
- ensure that any mechanisms, such as web-based methods or correspondence, for the transfer of work to assessors, are secure and reliable.

2.9 Online assessment

2.9.1 Procedures concerning online assessment are addressed in the University's Online Assessment Policy and Procedures.

2.10 Plagiarism and academic dishonesty

2.10.1 Matters concerning plagiarism and academic dishonesty are addressed in the University's Code of Practice on Academic Misconduct by Students.

2.11 Anonymised marking

2.11.1 Anonymised marking must be carried out for all written examination papers. Whilst the University policy on anonymised marking does not extend to other forms of assessment such as course work, laboratory or clinical assessments, anonymised marking should be carried out wherever this is compatible with the nature of the assessment.

2.12 Feedback to students

2.12.1 Students should be provided with appropriate, accessible and timely feedback on all forms of assessed work, including all forms of examination, in ways that promote learning and facilitate improvement.

2.12.2 Students should be given clear, accessible information about opportunities for receiving feedback.

2.12.3 Feedback needs to be provided to students within a timeframe which permits the student to make profitable use of the feedback in preparing for and completing subsequent assessment tasks. Specifically, students should receive marks (with an explicit statement that they are provisional, as described in Section 3.5) and feedback on coursework no later than three working weeks after the submission deadline for the work. An exception to this

requirement is for final capstone projects/dissertations, and students should be informed about the timeframe for receiving marks and feedback where applicable. If there are unavoidable circumstances that will result in a delay in the return of marked work beyond the set timeframe, a clear and timely explanation should be provided to affected students.

2.12.4 Students should be provided with the opportunity for feedback on examination performance as an integral part of formative assessment. Feedback opportunities should be given for all forms of examination, whether written, oral, practical or OSCE (Objective Structured Clinical Examination). The only exception to this is final degree exams. Schools should decide on the means by which students are provided with feedback on their performance in each diet of examinations. This may include the opportunity for supervised review of completed examination scripts.

2.13 Academic appeals

2.13.1 Appeals are dealt with in accordance with the University's appeal procedures.

2.14 Retention and disposal of assessed work

2.14.1 Schools should ensure that all assessed work is securely retained for a time period sufficient to:

- facilitate internal moderation and moderation by external examiners; and
- be available as evidence in case of a student appeal.

2.14.2 The normal expectation is that assessed work[4] for the entire study period should be retained for a minimum of one calendar year following the date of the Board of Examiners at which the grades were decided.

2.14.3 Schools should ensure that assessed work is disposed of in an appropriate manner[5] either by:

- returning it to the student; or
- shredding or burning.

2.15   Extension Requests

2.15.1 Students are expected to monitor their workload, to be aware of all submission deadlines, and be able to organise themselves and their work accordingly. However, it is recognised that there may be occasions where students are impacted by circumstances that genuinely affect their ability to complete coursework on time. In such circumstances a student may request an extension to the coursework submission deadline.

2.15.2 Extension requests must be submitted before the submission deadline. Extension requests submitted after the submission deadline will not typically be considered. Schools must determine when extension requests may be submitted and ensure this information is made available to their students.

2.15.3 Schools must identify appropriate individuals to consider and approve extension requests. It is recommended that requests are reviewed and approved by two members of staff, at least one of whom holds an academic position. Typically approvers would be an

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[4] The term 'assessed work' used here mainly applies to written assignments and does not apply to certain creative works or situations that involve assessment of competency standards for work on live subjects.

[5] Where required, advice should be sought from Records Management Services on the secure disposition of assessed work.

Associate Dean Learning & Teaching or Quality & Academic Standards, Senior Advisor of Studies or the relevant programme leader or an appropriate administrative lead. For the purposes of this policy these individuals are designated the 'Approver'.

2.15.4 Extension requests should be made in the format required by the School. At the Approver's discretion a verbal request may be considered.

2.15.5 A reason for the request should be given, and evidence to support the request provided. Where a student already has in place adjustments that were agreed by Disability Services or Student Support Services (i.e. recurring circumstances support plan) that allow for flexibility in meeting deadlines the student does not need to resubmit the evidence previously considered by Disability Services of Student Support Services.

2.15.6 The extension request decision should be confirmed, in writing (by email), to the requester within 5 working days, or prior to the original coursework deadline whichever is the sooner. Where the extension is approved, the new submission date must be confirmed.

2.15.7 The outcome of requests must be recorded by the School and monitored to ensure repeated requests, which may indicate a student is experiencing difficulties with their studies or elsewhere, are followed up appropriately. Consideration must be given to how the extension request records can inform consideration of mitigating and enduring circumstances.

2.15.8 The length of any extension granted is at the discretion of the Approver, and consideration should be given to; the circumstances that have led to the request being made, weight of the coursework, credit volume of the module, the type of assessment, students mode of study, any additional requirements outlined in the students record, impact on board of examiner meetings or award decisions, visa timelines etc. Standard coursework submission dates would, normally, be extended by a maximum of 5 days. For the purpose of this policy, a day is defined as each 24 hour period following the prescribed submission deadline including weekends and holidays.

2.15.9 At the discretion of the Approver (in consultation with appropriate colleagues) a longer period of extension may be given.

2.15.10 If the student is unable to meet the new extended deadline, the student should then use the relevant mitigating or enduring circumstances procedure.

2.15.11 Where a student fails to submit their coursework by the new extended deadline, and where mitigating or enduring circumstances are not known to the School, late penalties will be applied in the usual manner (3.13)

2.15.12 Schools must make clear to their students the following information:
- By when extension requests can be made
- How extension requests should be submitted, and to whom
- The timeframe by which they can expect a decision

3. Marking and reporting on assessment

3.1 Principles

3.1.1 The principles guiding assessment reporting include:

- maintaining a system of reporting that is clear and straightforward for students and other interested parties to understand;
- ensuring that assessment reports are fair, consistent and broadly comparable across different subject areas; and
- having clear descriptions of the range of discriminations between grades so that these are manageable, meaningful and transparent.

3.1.2 The nature of the assessment methods for any particular module or programme is considered as part of the normal University approval process for credit-bearing taught provision. The effectiveness and quality of the approach to assessment is reviewed annually and periodically as part of the University programme review process.

3.1.3 The University operates a single alphabetical (literal) reporting scale, which should be used to report the outcomes of assessment of all taught programmes for all forms of assessment. This scale, as set out in Appendix 1, is the only scale that can be used to inform students of the outcome of their assessment. Students should not receive grades for assessed work (whether coursework or exam) using any other scale. Programme teams are therefore encouraged to use the literal reporting scale as the marking scale.

3.1.4 Schools should ensure that all assessment grades are held on the Student Management System (SITS).

3.2 Use of assessment marking scales

3.2.1 Students' work should normally be assessed using the alphabetically-ranked grading system described in Appendix 1. It is, however, recognised that for some elements of assessment the alphabetical ranking of student achievement may require an underlying calculation based on percentages (for example where students' knowledge and understanding is being assessed through multiple choice questions or the ability to solve specific problems with 'right or wrong' answers). In such cases a percentage marking scale may be used to calculate the grades, although grades must always be reported to students in the form of the literal reporting scale described in Appendix 1. Under those specific circumstances where percentage marking must be used, the relationship between the percentage scale and the alphanumeric scale must be made clear to students, e.g. through publication on the School website, in student handbooks and/or on the VLE.

3.2.2 School Learning and Teaching Committees have ultimate responsibility for decisions on the approach to marking each assessment element, and deciding on any particular circumstances where it is essential to use a percentage scale for the underlying calculation of grades. Wherever possible, Schools should use the alphabetically-ranked system as their primary approach to marking.

3.3 Aggregation of part-assessment marks

3.3.1 Where the overall assessment of a module takes into account more than one piece of students' work:

- aggregation should take account of weightings that the individual assignments have within a module assessment scheme; and

- aggregation should be carried out using the numerical assignments to the specific elements of the alphabetically-ranked scale (Appendix 1) bearing in mind the weighting that each assignment has within a module assessment scheme.

3.4 Assessment reporting scales

3.4.1 All assessment results must be reported to students using the literal reporting scale described in Appendix 1 unless only pass/fail is being considered (see below).

3.4.2 Under certain circumstances (e.g. where there are specific requirements from PSRBs for accreditation of programmes) a simple pass/fail system of marking may be used. This approach to marking should only be applied where students are required to pass a range of pre-specified areas of competence and/or where more detailed grading is for very good reason, judged unsuitable. Where pass/fail judgements are solely used to describe and report on student learning achievements, assessment on a pass/fail basis cannot be used to contribute to the discrimination of performance that would contribute to honours classifications or distinctions and merits for non-honours and taught postgraduate programmes.

3.5 Disclosure of provisional marks and results

3.5.1 Guidelines published by the Registry should be followed in relation to the release of assessment marks. Any information on marks or performance that is provided to students (e.g. for formative purposes) prior to completion of moderation and approval by Boards of Examiners must include an explicit statement that the marks are provisional, and subject to change by moderation, and the decision of the Board of Examiners. When an individual student's grade or grades have been released on a provisional basis and are later adjusted on intervention of the Board of Examiners, that student has the right to ask the relevant School to provide him/her with the relevant extract from the minute of the Board of Examiners.

3.6 Stages of assessment for undergraduate degrees

3.6.1 For the purposes of this Assessment Policy, the SHE levels that contribute to undergraduate degrees are considered as stages. Stages 3 and 4 represent SHE levels 3 and 4 respectively. Stage 5 describes the final year of integrated undergraduate masters programmes.

3.7 Honours classifications—general principles

3.7.1 Each School should establish more detailed descriptors additional to the basic University descriptors for the award of grades. This information should be available to students at the start of their honours programme.

3.7.2 Honours classifications should be determined using a stage-weighted grade average based on performance at stages 3 and 4 (and 5 for integrated undergraduate masters programmes) as the primary determinant, with grade preponderance being considered as a secondary measure for borderline cases (see Section 3.8 below). SHE levels 1 and 2 do not count towards honours classifications.

3.7.3 For standard honours programmes (i.e. where students graduate after completion of SHE level 4), the degree class should be determined using a combined average of the module grades from stages 3 and 4 weighted 40:60. Note that the stage weighting is based on the year of study and not the SCQF level. For example, an SCQF level 10 module taken at stage 3 would be weighted as 40, and an SCQF level 9 module taken at stage 4 would be weighted as 60.

3.7.4 For integrated undergraduate masters programmes, the degree class should normally be determined using a combined average of the module grades from stages 3, 4 and 5.[6] The stage weightings for specific integrated masters programmes are shown in Appendix 2.

3.7.5 For all honours degree programmes (including integrated undergraduate masters programmes), candidates must achieve a minimum pass grade of D3 for 75% (90 credits) of each of the stages that contribute to the award. This minimum requirement is in place to allow a certain level of condoned failure or compensation for marginal failure.[7]

3.7.6 The maximum amount of condonement and compensation permitted is 25% (30 credits) for each of the stages that contribute to the honours classification. Condoned modules and assessments are not graded and do not contribute to the final degree classification. Where compensation is applied, the compensated mark will contribute to the final degree classification. A degree with honours cannot be awarded where there are failed modules that have not been condoned or where compensation has not been applied.

3.7.7 In cases where candidates do not meet the minimum requirements for their intended standard honours degree (i.e. where students graduate after completion of SHE level 4), an ordinary degree may be awarded where at least 50% of the stage 3 and 4 modules (i.e. 120 credits) have been graded at D3 or above.

3.7.8 For integrated undergraduate masters programmes, a bachelors degree with honours may be awarded where a candidate has failed stage 5 modules. In such cases, the degree classification should be based on performance in stages 3 and 4 using the classification methods for standard honours programmes described in this Policy.

3.7.9 For candidates who enter a 4 year honours programme at stage 4 through recognition of prior learning from other institutions or through local 'year out' transfer arrangements from vocational programmes such as medicine and dentistry (i.e. the BMSc), honours classifications will be based solely on performance at stage 4, with the grade average at stage 4 being the primary determinant of the degree classification.

3.7.10 In cases where programmes are aligned with PSRB requirements, compensation or condonement recommendations may not be permitted depending upon the nature of the requirements of the PSRB. Any such PSRB requirements must be clearly communicated to students and the Board of Examiners.

3.7.11 Where modules that contribute to stages 3, 4 or 5 have been taken and assessed through an external body (e.g. as part of a student exchange programme), the outcomes will not contribute to the weightings for honours degree classifications. Whilst the marks given by an external body will not count towards the final degree classification, they will be appropriately recorded in transcripts of the student's achievements. The credit achieved through study elsewhere (as an approved part of a specific honours degree programme) will be recognised and awarded by the University, but the classification of honours will only be based on work that has been set and assessed by the University of Dundee. Where a student fails a module undertaken and assessed by an external institution, credit will not be granted by the University unless the Board of Examiners decides that there is a case for compensation. Boards of Examiners may also consider condonement for a failed module taken and assessed outside the University.

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[6] Where one of the stages is a year abroad or an industrial placement, passed credit would be recognised but the grades achieved would not normally contribute to the degree classification (see also paragraph 3.7.12).

[7] See also 3.12 Compensation and condonement.

3.7.12 In circumstances where there is credit overload (i.e. where students take a non-compulsory additional SCQF level 9 or 10 module over and above the required 120 credits for any stage that contributes to the honours classification), a higher grade achieved for such an additional module may be used to substitute for a lower grade achieved for an optional module within the compulsory 120 credits for the relevant stage prescribed in the degree regulations. Substitution of grades may only be made between modules taken and assessed at the same level. Grades achieved for credit overload modules cannot substitute for failed core modules.

3.8 Honours classifications—borderline cases

3.8.1 For classification grade borderline cases, there should be an automatic 'rounding up' where the stage-weighted grade average is at or within 0.5 of a numeric grade from the next upper degree classification grade boundary (for example, a stage-weighted grade average of 18.5 would automatically be rounded up to 19, which would be a first class award).

3.8.2 Where the stage-weighted grade average is at or within one numeric grade from the next upper degree classification boundary (i.e. 18, 15, 12 or 9), the preponderance of module grades will be used as the next measure to consider the final degree classification. In these circumstances, where students have achieved the upper degree classification for at least half of the contributing stage 3 and 4 modules, the degree classification will be awarded at that upper level.[8] Where programmes have a range of credit ratings for modules at levels 3 and 4, care should be taken to ensure that the preponderance principle takes into account the different module sizes. For example, for a student with a borderline mark of 18.4 with a 60 credit module at grade A3 alongside two 30 credit modules at A3 a first class degree would be awarded.

3.8.3 The principles of automatic rounding up and grade preponderance should also be applied to the classification of integrated undergraduate masters programmes. There will be an automatic 'rounding up' where the stage-weighted grade average is at or within 0.5 of a numeric grade from the next upper degree classification grade boundary. Where the grade average is at or within one numeric grade from the classification boundary, the preponderance principle described in paragraph 3.8.2 above will be applied as follows:

- Where students have achieved the upper degree classification in at least half of the contributing stage 4 and 5 modules, the degree will be awarded at that upper level. Where programmes have a range of credit ratings for modules at levels 4 and 5, care should be taken to ensure that the preponderance takes into account the different module sizes as described in 3.8.2 above.

3.8.4 Grade preponderance cannot be used to downgrade a degree classification initially determined by the stage-weighted grade average.

3.8.5 For students who enter a 4 year honours programme at stage 4 (as described in 3.7.9), borderline cases should be considered following the general principles described above, but applied to stage 4 only. There will be an automatic 'rounding up' for situations where the grade average is at or within 0.5 of a numeric grade from the next upper degree classification grade boundary. Where the grade average is at or within one numeric grade from the next upper degree classification boundary, the preponderance of module grades will be used as the next measure to consider the final degree classification. In these circumstances, where

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[8] For standard honours programmes where all of the modules are taken and assessed by the University of Dundee, this would equate to 120 credits. Where modules are excluded from the weighting (e.g. for study abroad), grade preponderance as a secondary measure will be calculated from the weighted grades so that if half of the weighted credits are at the upper degree classification, the degree will be awarded at that level.

students have achieved the upper degree classification in at least half of the stage 4 modules (i.e. 60 credits), the degree classification will be awarded at that upper level. The approach to compensation and condonement should follow the overarching principles described in this Policy, where no more than 25% of credits may be condoned or compensated in any of the stages that contribute to the honours degree. Where stage 4-entry candidates have uncompensated or uncondoned failures, work that has been recognised for entry to stage 4 through prior learning, articulation arrangements or through local 'year out' transfer arrangements from vocational programmes will not be considered for an ordinary degree from the University unless a clear case is made that the learning outcomes for the award of an ordinary degree for the relevant programme have been met.

3.8.6 *Viva voce* examinations (face-to face interviews that test knowledge and understanding) should not be used to facilitate the determination of the classification of honours degrees for borderline cases but may be used as part of the assessment schedule for a particular module.

Viva voce examinations may be held online subject to the following conditions:

- *All parties must agree, in writing, with the arrangements prior to the examination*
- *The technology and facilities used during the examination must be secure and reliable*
- *The examination must not be recorded*
- *The examination arrangements must be approved by the Associate Dean for Quality & Academic Standards* on behalf of the School Board.*

*This applies to taught programmes. For RPG programmes the approver remains the Dean. The following guidance has also been provided to be candidates, and programme teams may wish to use/adapt this to your programmes context.
The following tips might help you prepare for an online viva:

- If you're not familiar with the video call software you'll be using, practice with it until you feel confident.
- Make sure that the space where you'll be working is as comfortable as possible. You may have to sit in one place for a few hours, so try to make sure that your set-up isn't going to hurt your back and that everything you might need (pens, paper, copy of your thesis, water) is close by.
- Make sure that your chosen space will be free of interruptions – you'll need to appear on the screen alone and won't want any family members, friends or pets bursting in to distract you.
- If you have any concerns about feasibility (finding an appropriate space/good internet connection etc), please raise these with your supervisor and School ahead of time so that you can be offered any practical support possible.
- Agree contingency plans in the event of technical issues prior to the examination so that you know what to do in the event that something doesn't work on the day.
- If you do experience technical issues during the viva that make things difficult for you, raise this with your examiners immediately.

3.9 Honours classifications—role of Boards of Examiners[9]

3.9.1 Boards of Examiners should make recommendations on all honours degree classifications based on consideration of the regulations described in this Assessment Policy. Boards of Examiners have the authority to exercise their judgment on all honours degree classifications,

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[9] See also 5. Conduct of examination boards.

and their judgement supersedes the preliminary classifications generated by SITS. Boards of Examiners may also make recommendations for compensation or condonement where this is judged to be appropriate. Any such decisions by Boards of Examiners must be based on reasons that are fair, justifiable and equitable, and give due consideration to the maintenance of academic standards, and whether specific groups or individuals could be advantaged or disadvantaged.

3.9.2 Boards of Examiners should consider reports from Mitigating Circumstances Committees, and also make judgements on the appropriateness of any other adjustments (such as grade scaling) that might be applied to any particular assignments or modules.

3.10 Assessment of taught postgraduate courses

3.10.1 Assessment of taught postgraduate courses should follow the principles and procedures described in this Policy, and should be reported using the alphanumeric scale. As for undergraduate programmes and modules, a simple pass/fail scheme is permitted where there is a compelling reason to use this.

3.10.2 Schools should decide what resit and/or resubmission options are appropriate, taking special account of the needs of international students, for whom resit opportunities are clearly important, especially in one-year programmes.

3.11 Reporting results of resits or resubmissions

3.11.1 If a module is not passed at first attempt, the student transcript will show the number of attempts at the module. Resits or resubmissions will be marked as normal but the module grade will be reported as D3.

3.11.2 Resits are not normally allowed for modules taken as part of stage 4 or stage 5 assessments that count towards the honours classification.

3.12 Compensation and condonement[10]

3.12.1 The University definitions and interpretations of the terms 'compensation' and 'condonement' are noted below.

- Compensation is the process by which a Board of Examiners may decide that a strong performance by a student in one part of the curriculum may be used as the basis for the award of credit in respect of marginal failure elsewhere.
- Condonement is the process by which a Board of Examiners, in consideration of the overall performance of a student, decides that without incurring a penalty, a part of the programme that has been failed need not be redeemed.

3.12.2 Compensation for a failed module or assessment is distinct from a mark adjustment to D3 or above on the recommendation of a Mitigating Circumstances Committee. Where there is a compensated failure, the mark that has been compensated will still contribute to the overall grade or degree classification.

3.12.3 Compensation or condonement should not normally be used where there are opportunities for resitting exams, resubmission of failed work or repeating periods of study.

3.12.4 Boards of Examiners may only make recommendations for compensation or condonement based on anonymised data. All instances where the performance of an individual student may have been affected by extenuating circumstances must be considered

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[10] See also 3.7. Honours classifications—general principles.

by a Mitigating Circumstances Committee who will make recommendations to the Board of Examiners.

3.12.5 Mitigating Circumstances Committees, which are sub-committees of Boards of Examiners (see also Conduct of Examination Boards below), may make recommendations to Boards of Examiners on compensation or condonement based on discretion informed by professional judgment and specific information relating to individual cases. The following procedures must be applied in any case of compensation or condonement that is based on mitigating circumstances:

- Each case must be considered on an individual basis.
- The external examiner(s) must agree with each proposal.
- Individual decisions, and the basis of justification, must be recorded in the minutes of the Mitigating Circumstances Committee. A separate note of the meeting, where students are not identified by name, should be provided for the Board of Examiners.
- The 'original' grade (i.e. the mark allocated to the module prior to any discussion of compensation or condonement) will be reported to the Registry, with a suffix 'flag' indicating compensation/condonement.

3.12.6 The student's transcript will show the 'original' grade plus suffix 'flag', and the award of credit for the relevant module, with a footnote explaining that credit was awarded by compensation/condonement within the University's Assessment Policy.

3.12.7 In considering approaches to compensation and condonement, Boards of Examiners should also consider any accreditation requirements of relevant professional or statutory bodies (PSRBs) regarding compensation or condonement. These may:

- restrict or prevent application of compensation or condonement; or
- require additional procedures, e.g. submission of additional, specific information to the Board of Examiners.

3.12.8 For individual candidates, the combined amount of compensation and condonement should not exceed 25% for both undergraduate and postgraduate awards. Compensation may only be applied to marginal failure (M1-M3, described in Appendix 1).

3.12.9 The extent and nature of compensation and condonement will be monitored annually, as part of annual programme review procedures.

3.13 Application of penalties

3.13.1 Students should not normally be penalised for non-attendance at lectures and tutorials by preventing them from sitting examinations or submitting coursework for assessment. Exceptions to this are where there are specific PSRB requirements for attendance, or where the assessment is based on participation in a specific activity that requires attendance. Penalties for non-participation or non-attendance must be clearly described in student handbooks and degree regulations.

3.13.2 Marks will normally be deducted when coursework is submitted after the prescribed deadline. The only exceptions to this are where there are documented mitigating circumstances, where reasonable adjustments are in place for individual students, where there have been recognised difficulties with University IT systems which have prevented assignments being submitted by the deadline or where there have been unforeseen delays with project or dissertation work (e.g. ethical approval, availability of University equipment) which were outwith the student's control.

3.13.3 Depending on the nature of the taught provision in the individual Schools, mitigating circumstances that result in late submissions of assignments may be considered prospectively

(i.e. so that extensions to submission deadlines are authorised in advance) and/or retrospectively through the formal meetings of Mitigating Circumstances Committees. Where Schools wish to permit the prospective consideration of mitigating circumstances and the authorisation of extensions to deadlines for individual candidates, the applications must be considered by a subgroup of the relevant Mitigating Circumstances Committee. The membership of the subgroup must include the Associate Dean (Quality and Academic Standards) or their nominee. The subgroup will report all authorisations of extensions to deadlines to the Mitigating Circumstances Committee. Schools must ensure that the approach to consideration of mitigating circumstances for late submissions of assignments, whether prospective or retrospective, is clearly communicated to students through student handbooks and other appropriate media.

3.13.4 All unauthorised late submissions of coursework will be penalised by one numeric point on the 19 point marking scale per day up to a maximum of 5 days late. For the purpose of this policy, a day is defined as each 24 hour period following the prescribed submission deadline including weekends and holidays. Assignments submitted more than 5 days after the agreed deadline will receive a zero mark, with 'AB (unauthorised absence or non-submission)' being noted as part of the student record of achievement. For late submissions of resubmitted work, note that grade capping for resubmissions is at the level of the module and not the individual element of assessment. Marking and the application of penalties should therefore be carried out as if the resubmission was a first attempt.

3.13.5 For coursework that is assessed through a pass/fail system without grading, unauthorised late submissions will normally receive a zero mark, with 'AB (unauthorised absence or non-submission)' being noted as part of the student record of achievement.

3.13.6 Unauthorised late submissions of coursework which are late by up to 5 days after the deadline should be marked as normal, with individual mark deductions being formally agreed following meetings of Mitigating Circumstances Committees. Unauthorised late submissions of coursework beyond 5 days will not normally be marked.

3.13.7 Penalties will be applied for instances of plagiarism as described in the University Code of Practice on Academic Misconduct by Students.

3.13.8 Clear guidance must be provided to students on the penalties for late submission of assignments as well as plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Schools should be proactive in ensuring that students understand the University policies on penalties, and student handbooks must include a description of how penalties will be applied, referring to this Assessment Policy and the University Code of Practice on Academic Misconduct by Students.

3.13.9 Students have the right to appeal about penalty decisions. Such appeals should be considered at the local level (i.e. by the relevant School) in the first instance.

3.13.10 Information about all instances where the application of penalties is being considered should be provided to Mitigating Circumstances Committees. Boards of Examiners should be provided with detailed statistics on the application of penalties, and a commentary on the application of penalties should be included in the minutes of the Board of Examiners.

3.14 Non-honours undergraduate degrees—definition of merit and distinction

3.14.1 The standard definitions for awards of all non-honours (ordinary) undergraduate degrees with merits or distinctions (with the exception of the MBChB, BDS and LLB degrees) are as follows:

- An ordinary degree may be awarded 'with distinction' to candidates who have undertaken a programme of studies which consists of at least 120 credits at SHE level 3 (SCQF Level 9) where students have achieved a B3 or above for each of the graded

modules that contribute to the stage 3 assessment. A minimum of 90 credits must be derived from graded modules in order for candidates to be eligible for a distinction. Students will not be eligible for an award 'with distinction' where there have been failed modules that have been retrieved through resubmissions or resits unless there are documented extenuating circumstances that have been considered and approved by the relevant Mitigating Circumstances Committee.

- An ordinary degree may be awarded 'with merit' to candidates who have undertaken a programme of studies which consists of at least 120 credits at SHE level 3 (SCQF Level 9) where students have achieved a C3 or above for each of the graded modules that contribute to the stage 3 assessment. A minimum of 90 credits must be derived from graded modules in order for candidates to be eligible for a merit. Students will not be eligible for an award 'with merit' where there have been failed modules that have been retrieved through resubmissions or resits unless there are documented extenuating circumstances that have been considered and approved by the relevant Mitigating Circumstances Committee.

3.14.2 Students on honours degree programmes who exit with an ordinary degree are eligible for an award with distinction or merit using the criteria described above.

3.15 Merit and distinction awards for taught postgraduate programmes

3.15.1 For the award of distinction, candidates must have attained grades of at least A5 or above for at least 50% of the assessed work (i.e. 90 credits of a 180 credit programme) plus an overall average of B1 or better.

3.15.2 For the award of merit, candidates must have attained grades of at least B3 or above for at least 50% of the assessed work (i.e. 90 credits of a 180 credit programme) plus an overall average of C1 or better.

3.15.3 Students shall not be eligible for an award with merit or distinction where there are failed modules that have been compensated or condoned, or retrieved through resubmissions or resits, unless there are documented extenuating circumstances that have been considered and approved by the relevant Mitigating Circumstances Committee.

4. Internal moderation of assessment

4.1 Definitions and context

4.1.1 Internal moderation is defined in Chapter B6 of the QAA Quality Code as 'a process separate from that of marking and provides assurance that assessment criteria have been applied appropriately, reflecting the shared understanding of the markers, and an approach which enables comparability across academic subjects (in particular recognising that students may be studying more than one subject)'. It is one of the mechanisms that the University has in place to ensure that marking is fair, consistent, is aligned with expected academic standards and conforms to the marking criteria that have been set. The process is focused on analysing a range of assessed work and is not about changing individual students' marks or resolving differences between separate markers.

4.1.2 Internal moderation should be constructive and developmental. Besides being an element of assurance of standards and quality, it should be seen as both a form of peer support and staff development for academic staff.

4.2 Principles

4.2.1 Internal moderation should be applied to all elements of credit rated assessments, i.e. all assessment that counts towards a student's degree. This should include the involvement by an academic member of University staff (the 'internal moderator') other than the module

leader/first marker. The internal moderator should have a reasonable knowledge of the subject at the level in question.

4.2.2 Internal moderation should include consideration of the design of proposed assessment (i.e. coursework assignments, draft examination papers and marking schemes) and the approach to providing feedback to students. The process should check:

- whether the assessment reflects the intended learning outcomes of the module;
- whether the assessment promotes and encourages learning;
- the fairness and clarity of assessment; and
- whether appropriate arrangements are in place to provide useful and constructive feedback to students.

4.2.3 Internal moderation of assessed work should consider:

- whether the marking is fair and rigorous, and whether it reflects the intended learning outcomes for the module at the appropriate level and standard of achievement; and
- the general performance by students, noting areas of good and poor performance for the cohort.

4.2.4 Internal moderators should analyse a representative sample of all types of submitted work that count towards credit, i.e. from all examinations and coursework assignments. The output should be an agreed set of marks to be submitted to the Board of Examiners for their consideration. Feedback provided by internal moderators to first markers may be included as an input to annual module monitoring.

4.2.5 Whilst there is an expectation that all elements of assessment that make a substantive contribution to module grades (i.e. discrete units of assessment that contribute more than 10% towards module grades) will be subject to internal moderation, Schools have a level of flexibility to adopt different approaches in this area, depending on the type of assessment, the volume of assessment and also whether there are specific requirements by PSRBs. This may range from sampling of representative pieces of assessed work to second marking (open or blind) of all pieces of assessed work. Routine second marking of all pieces of assessed work should not normally be carried out unless:

- the cohort size is 10 or less;
- it is a requirement of a relevant PSRB;
- the first marking has been undertaken by an inexperienced internal examiner, or where the internal examiner is examining outside their main field of expertise; or
- a single assessment, such as an honours dissertation, represents 30 credits or more.

  Second marking of all pieces of assessed work would also not normally be carried out for assessment tasks which involve a limited range of right answers and which can be objectively assessed.

4.3 Sampling of assessments

4.3.1 Sampling should be guided by the principle that staff time and expertise should be used to best effect in order to assure standards. The extent of and basis of sampling should depend on the number of students, the number of elements of assessed work, the level, the conventions in the subject and the nature of the subject and module. Internal moderators should normally review the marking of the work of at least 10 candidates for each piece of assessment, or 10% of the cohort if there are more than 100 candidates.

4.3.2 Sampling should include a strong focus on the margins—at classification boundary grades and where the pass/fail line is drawn. It is also strongly advised that sampling/moderation of

marks should focus on areas where there has been outstanding student achievement as well as areas where there has been poor student achievement. For the latter, attention should be paid to assessments where there are problems or outliers—e.g. problem questions, students taking a specific interpretation of a question or assignment that wasn't originally envisaged or performance by specific groups of students.

4.4 Reaching a consensus on the appropriateness of marking and the grades awarded

4.4.1 The internal moderator should either:

- confirm from their observations from sampling of assessed work, that the marking has been accurate and consistent; or
- report to the School Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) any differences in judgement between the first marker and moderator about the overall approach to marking in terms of accuracy and consistency.

4.4.2 Where an internal moderator reports differences between their own academic judgement and that of the first marker in any of the sampled elements of assessment, the School Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) should normally arrange for the assessment sets under question to be blind double-marked. The double marking would usually be carried out by the internal moderator, but may be carried out by a third internal examiner where the School Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) deems this to be appropriate. The School should work to reconcile any differences and agree on the marks given in a way that is fair and transparent, with appropriate recording of decisions made which should be reported to the Board of Examiners. Under exceptional circumstances, where academic judgements cannot be reconciled at the level of the School, the external examiner may be asked to mark samples of assessed work.

4.5 Monitoring and review

4.5.1 School Learning and Teaching Committees will approve and review approaches to internal moderation used for modules and programmes for which the relevant School has lead responsibility.

5. External examining

5.1 University policy

5.1.1 The policy and guidelines for external examining are covered by a separate Policy and Code of Practice on External Examining of Taught Programmes.

6. Conduct of examination boards

6.1 Membership and quoracy

6.1.1 A Board of Examiners should be supported by a designated Secretary and comprise the following members:

- a named Convener who is a member of University staff. The Convener will normally act as the Chair of the Board of Examiners and will work closely with the Secretary to ensure that the Board is conducted in accordance with the relevant regulations and policies;
- members of academic staff to represent each of the modules and programmes being considered by the Board;[11]

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[11] Where Boards of Examiners are considering joint honours programmes at a separate meeting, there should be an appropriate balance of representation for each of the subjects.

- external examiner(s) for the programme and constituent modules;
- the Chair or representative of the Mitigating Circumstances Committee.

6.1.2 A Board of Examiners is quorate when the Chair is satisfied that there is an appropriate spokesperson for each of the modules and programmes under consideration.

6.2 Meetings of Boards of Examiners

6.2.1 External examiners should be invited to all meetings of the Board(s) of Examiners for the modules or programmes which they examine. They are expected to attend the main meeting of the Board of Examiners for each programme (usually held in May/June for undergraduate programmes).

6.2.2 Examination boards for undergraduate programmes must be held at the end of the second semester and following the resit examinations. They may also be held at the end of the first semester. If an examination board meeting is not held at the end of the first semester, any notification of assessment results to students must include the warning that "This result is provisional and may be changed following moderation by the Board of Examiners in the second semester, after which final results will be notified to students". Such provisional results must however include the normal process of internal moderation. If a meeting of a Board of Examiners is convened at the end of the first semester, it must include participation by the external examiner.

6.2.3 In the case of meetings of Boards of Examiners where final awards are being considered at ordinary, honours or taught masters levels, the final decisions about the awards may not take place unless an external examiner is present.

6.2.4 For the degrees of MBChB and BDS, where contributing subjects have been assessed by a Board comprising internal and external examiners, the final assessment may be made at a meeting of the Board of Examiners in the absence of an external examiner. Wherever possible, however, it is highly desirable that at least one external examiner should be present.

6.3 Conduct of the meetings of Boards of Examiners

6.3.1 A formal minute of the meeting of the Board of Examiners must be kept. The minute should include:

- a note of members present;
- a record of any declaration by those members of any personal interest, involvement or relationship with a student being assessed;
- the final decisions taken;
- the extent to which medical evidence or extenuating circumstances were taken into account by the Mitigating Circumstances Committee;
- any general comments made by external examiners; and
- in the case of Examination Boards for joint honours programmes, a record of the final decision on honours degree classifications, which states that all of the external examiners involved in that programme are in agreement.

6.3.2 All candidate information should be normally be anonymised. Individual identification should be by matriculation number only. The Chair of the Board of Examiners, the Board Secretary and the Chair of the Mitigating Circumstances Committee should hold the information about each candidate, but discussions with the Board about the grades to be awarded should not identify individuals. All issues potentially affecting the performance of individual candidates should be considered by Mitigating Circumstances Committees (see below), who will make recommendations to Boards of Examiners on mark adjustments, retrievals, compensation and condonement (see Section 7) for specific individuals whose

performance has been affected by extenuating circumstances. These decisions will be conveyed to the Board of Examiners. Anonymity should be lifted once the Board of Examiners has reached its decisions on the grades of all candidates being considered.

6.3.3 Other than where there are cases for compensation or condonement of failed assessments that are based on anonymised data, Boards of Examiners should not normally change the marks achieved by individual students unless recommended by Mitigating Circumstances Committees. Under certain circumstances, mark adjustments may be made for cohorts (whilst ensuring that the learning outcomes of the programme have been met and academic standards have been maintained). Such circumstances include:

- where defects or irregularities in the examination process have been identified (for example, where there has been an error in an examination paper or where there has been an ambiguous or problematic question); and
- where the Board of Examiners has judged that marking is out of line with the expected standards.

6.3.4 In addition to confirming grades and awards for the candidates, the Board of Examiners should also consider good practice and areas for development for the programme and its constituent modules.

6.4 Inquoracy of Boards of Examiners due to unforeseen circumstances

6.4.1 If a Board of Examiners is inquorate due to illness or any other unforeseen circumstance, the relevant School Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) in consultation with the Director of Policy, Governance and Legal Affairs, should agree on arrangements to ensure that there is appropriate external and internal oversight of assessment for the programme in question. Such arrangements may include the appointment of a replacement external examiner.

7. Mitigating circumstances

7.1 Definition of mitigating circumstances

7.1.1 Mitigating circumstances are circumstances beyond a student's control which have adversely affected their performance in summative assessments. Such circumstances include illness affecting the student, a significant personal or family crisis (e.g. bereavement or a serious illness affecting a close family member), or unforeseeable, unpreventable events (e.g. being a victim of a criminal act, natural disaster, such as severe weather affecting travel, and military service).

7.2 Processes for dealing with mitigating circumstances as they occur, and reporting to the relevant Mitigating Circumstances Committee

7.2.1 It is the responsibility of individual students to apply for consideration to be given to mitigating circumstances that have affected their performance in assessed work. Schools are responsible for providing clear guidance to students on how they should apply for consideration of mitigating circumstances, when they should submit their application, how their request will be considered and what types of circumstances constitute 'mitigating circumstances'.

7.2.2 All requests for consideration of mitigating circumstances should be made using the standard University form. The form requests information about:

- the time period where circumstances adversely affected the student's performance;
- the specific assignments and modules where the student's performance was affected;
- whether degree exams would be, or were attended;
- details of the circumstances that made an impact on performance;

- details of how performance was affected by the circumstance; and
- the supporting evidence that is being provided to support the application.

7.2.3 In the case of illness, mitigating circumstances applications should normally be accompanied by a medical certificate that covers the period of time where candidates were affected.

7.3 Composition and roles of Mitigating Circumstances Committees

7.3.1 Mitigating Circumstances Committees are sub-committees of Boards of Examiners and are responsible for reviewing confidential information on instances where the performance of individual candidates may have been adversely affected by specific circumstances.

7.3.2 Mitigating Circumstances Committees are responsible for making judgements on whether there should be condonement and/or compensation or any mark adjustments for the work of individual students, based on individual circumstances, and reporting their decisions to the Board of Examiners.

7.3.3 Given the confidential nature of the student information that is being considered, Mitigating Circumstances Committees should normally comprise the minimum number of individuals whose input is essential to make appropriate judgements with due recognition of the safeguarding of academic standards.[12] Mitigating Circumstances Committees should normally comprise:

- the School Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) or the School Associate Dean (Quality and Academic Standards) or their nominee;
- an appropriate representative for each programme;
- the convener of the Board of Examiners;
- the School lead for equality and diversity; and
- an external examiner.

The Committee should be supported by a designated Secretary (whose role is to verify that the supporting data is correct, provide input about the process, and make a record of the outcome of the considerations and judgement of the Mitigating Circumstances Committee to be reported to the Board of Examiners).

7.3.4 Whilst an external examiner should be designated as a member of each Mitigating Circumstances Committee, their input may be through written comments, a private consultation before meetings of Boards of Examiners, participation through web or tele conferencing, or attendance at meetings of the Mitigating Circumstances Committees. No matter which approach is taken by Schools in managing mitigating circumstances, there is an expectation that external examiners will be involved in the judgements made by Mitigating Circumstances Committees.

7.4 Guidelines for the consideration of mitigating circumstances

7.4.1 When considering a request the Mitigating Circumstances Committee should take into account the following four criteria:

1) **The evidence.** If the request does not provide supporting evidence, or the evidence fails to satisfy the guidance provided within this Policy, the claim will normally be rejected. The authenticity of documentary evidence will also be considered, taking

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[12] Whilst it is important that Mitigating Circumstances Committees should comprise as small a number of individuals as possible, an appropriate gender balance should be sought where possible.

into account the author of the document, the level of detail about the effect of the events, and the dates corresponding to the period of the claim.

2) **The effect of the event.** Consideration will be given to whether the event described in the request and supporting documents is likely to have affected the ability to study for, or take an assessment. The effect will be rated on a scale:

> Severe—where the event described would have a very major impact on the ability to study and participate in any assessment. This would include the inability to take part in some or all of the components of assessment in a module.
>
> Significant—the event is likely to have had some effect on the performance in an assessment. This would include the situation where a student is able to participate in the assessment, but at a level below what is normally expected based on past performance.
>
> Mild—there is likely to have been some, but probably only a small impact on the level of performance.
>
> No Case—the event is not likely to have affected performance in any way.

3) **The timing of the event**. Consideration will be given to when the reported event occurred in relation to the assessment. For example, a major medical condition which occurs and is reported at the time where an assessment is due would have more impact than one that is experienced (after which a full recovery is made) several weeks before an assessment is due.

4) **The performance in the assessment.** The mark received in the assessment should be compared to marks in the affected module and other modules to determine whether it shows any possible drop in performance. The general trajectory of marks during the time at the University should also be taken into account when considering performance. If there is a steady performance at a particular level, but this is seen to drop at the time of the reported event, then it would be expected that performance would continue at the previous level. When there is evidence of an improving performance over time, this general trend of improvement would be anticipated to continue had the event not taken place.

7.4.2 Students are not normally expected to attend any meeting of a Mitigating Circumstances Committee to consider their case, except under exceptional circumstances, in which case they should have the opportunity to be accompanied by another appropriate individual such as a DUSA sabbatical officer or the School President.

7.5 Judgements to Boards of Examiners

7.5.1 The Mitigating Circumstances Committee should make a judgement based on the information provided by the student in relation to the specific assignments and modules where the student's performance was affected. This judgement will be based on the evidence, effect, timing and performance criteria. The judgement must be confidential, and not release any of the personal circumstances related to the event in question to the Board. In reporting to the Board of Examiners the information provided should be the matriculation number of the student, a list of the assessments affected, and the recommendation for each assessment.

The judgement can be:

- no change—the mark and assessment should not change;

- additional opportunity—the student should be given another opportunity to take the assessment, but any normal penalties such as the capping of components would apply;
- first attempt—reassessment should be considered as a first attempt, with no penalty applied;
- condonement or compensation—a failed module or assessment may be condoned (where the element of assessment should not contribute to the calculation of the degree classification or to the award of distinctions or merits) or compensated (where credit is awarded for a marginal fail of a module or assessment);
- mark adjustment – a mark in an assessment or module affected by a relevant event may be raised to match the trajectory of other marks in this or previous years. This adjustment would not normally be more than three numeric grades, e.g. C1 to a B1; or
- credit should be awarded, but with the relevant mark being excluded from consideration of the overall module grade or degree classification.

7.5.2 The Board of Examiners will use the judgement(s) of the Mitigating Circumstances Committee to form a decision on the students' overall performance on their programme

8. Recognition of prior learning

8.1 University policy

8.1.1 Recognition of prior learning is described in a separate University Policy and Guidance on Recognition of Prior Learning.

9. Development, review and enhancement of assessment

9.1 Staff training and development

9.1.1 Staff training and development at University and School levels should provide comprehensive development support and opportunities related to assessment. This should include:

- innovative approaches;
- assessment approaches for specific situations and categories including on-line assessment; assessment for flexible and distributed learning; assessment for disabled students; and
- training for specific groups of staff, in particular recently-appointed or staff with limited experience of assessment.

9.2 Enhancement of assessment

9.2.1 Schools and individual staff are encouraged to enhance approaches to assessment, by reference to reported effective practice both internally and externally, and by innovation. Innovative approaches may involve risk. These risks should be managed in ways that protect students' interests, e.g. by initial small-scale pilots, and by discussing proposed approaches with other staff (within the School or from the University's support services).

9.3 Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of assessment

9.3.1 The effectiveness of assessment should be considered through consideration of external examiners' reports, annual review of modules and programmes, and periodic programme review.

Karl Leydecker, Neale Laker and Lesley McLellan, August 2015

Minor revisions approved by the Learning and Teaching Committee, 2016, May 2017, Jan 2018, May 2018, November 2018
Minor revisions approved by the Quality and Academic Standards Committee, May 2021
Revisions to include On-line Vivas QASC 18 May 2022 Chairs Action

The literal reporting scale for assessment

Literal Reporting Scale	Associated Aggregation Scale	Descriptor	Honours Class (where appropriate)
A1	23	Excellent	1st
A2	22		
A3	21		
A4	20		
A5	19		
B1	18	Very Good	2(i)
B2	17		
B3	16		
C1	15	Good	2(ii)
C2	14		
C3	13		
D1	12	Sufficient	3rd
D2	11		
D3	10		
M1	9	Marginal Fail	
M2	8		
M3	7		
CF	5	Clear Fail	
BF	2	Bad Fail	
QF*	-		
**	0		

* QF indicates that a student has not met the conditions required to have obtained an overall pass. Any queries should be directed to the School concerned.

** Relevant descriptor selected from: CA (Certified Absence); AB (Unauthorised Absence); MC (Medical Certificate); WD (Withdrawn); DC (Discounted); ST (Stopped); NM (Not Marked—generally used where penalties have been applied for plagiarism).

Exceptions to the Assessment Policy

1. Stage weighting for the classification of integrated undergraduate masters degrees

1.1 MEng. The degree class is determined using a combined average of the module grades from stages 3, 4 and 5 weighted 15:42.5:42.5.

1.2 MSci. Physics, MSci Mathematical Biology and MMath. The degree class is determined using a combined average of the module grades from stages 3, 4 and 5 weighted 30:30:40.

1.3 MSci. Biological Sciences and MSci Physiological Sciences. For the 2015 entrant cohort the degree class will be determined using a combined average of the module grades from stages 4 and 5 weighted 40:60.

1.4 MArch. For the 2015 entrant cohort the degree class will be determined using a combined average of the module grades from stages 4 and 5 weighted 40:60. Classification of the BA Architecture is based on module grades from stage 4 only.

2. Feedback to students

2.1 Marks and feedback to students for certain modules with single elements of assessment may be dealt with within a longer timeframe than the recommended period of 3 weeks stated within this policy. Exceptions to the policy, detailed below, have been permitted where feedforward is not an essential part of the assessment.

2.2 The School of Nursing and Health Sciences. Marking and feedback to students for the following modules will take place within 4 weeks from the submission date:

- Non-Medical Prescribing (NB30005 and PN50057)
- Clinical Assessment (NB30050 and PN50117)

2.3 The School of Education and Social Work. Marking and feedback to students for the following module will take place within 6 weeks from the submission date:

- Research and the Teacher (ED41001)

2.4 The School of Medicine. Marking and feedback to students for the following module will take place within 4 weeks from the submission date:

- MMEd Dissertation Module (CM50151)

3. Marking and reporting of assessment

3.1 School of Dentistry. The School will report BDS student marks to SITS as MC, Fail, Pass, Pass with Merit or Pass with Distinction for AY 2015-16.

4. Merits and distinctions

4.1 The School of Education and Social Work. Merit and distinction awards for the Professional Graduate Diploma in Education.

To be considered for merit or distinction students **must** successfully complete module ED51072 and ED52075.

- For the award of distinction, candidates must have attained grades of at least A5 or above for each of the graded modules (i.e. 60 credits of the 120 credit programme). Credit for successfully completing the professional practice placement modules will not be counted towards a distinction as these are assessed at SCQF Level 10 and as 'Pass/Fail'.

- For the award of merit, candidates must have attained grades of at least B3 or above for each of the graded modules (i.e. 60 credits of the 120 credit programme). Credit for

successfully completing the professional practice placement modules will not be counted towards merit as these are assessed at SCQF Level 10 and as 'Pass/Fail'.

5. Classification of undergraduate degrees

5.1 School of Art and Design. For standard honours programmes (i.e. where students graduate after completion of SHE level 4), September 2015 and September 2016 entrant cohorts only a transition arrangement was agreed where these cohorts will be classified using both systems, with the best outcome from both systems being the decider for the classification. The School will fully adopt the new Assessment Policy system for the student cohort starting in AY 2017-18. This will mean a two-year delay for the full implementation of the Assessment Policy in the School of Art and Design.

5.2 School of Education and Social Work. For the BA (Hons) Community Education, BA (Hons) Social Work, MA (Hons) Education Programmes (where students graduate after completion of SHE level 4):

- students will be permitted to resit modules at stage 4 for the purposes of Professional Registration. The honours degree classification will be determined using the module grades attained at the first attempt
- students will be required to achieve a minimum 75% of all credit attained as opposed to 75% of graded credit at stage 4.

6. Reassessment, resubmission and resitting

This applies to the following programmes only:

- Business management with Industrial Experience
- Civil Engineering with Industrial Experience
- Engineering, Design and Manufacturing with Industrial Experience
- IT: Management for Business with Industrial Experience
- IT: Software Development with Industrial Experience

The above programmes are all part of the Graduate Apprenticeship Suite of Programmes. Graduate Apprentices are work-based learning degrees. The GA programme at the University of Dundee is primarily a project/portfolio-based degree meaning that we engage with employers to find projects that apprentices can undertake work as part of their employment and learning experiences. Projects are chosen so that they also reflect the skills and knowledge the apprentices will be acquiring through the University of Dundee.

These projects are used as assessment components for the programme. These are individual or in some cases, joint/group projects as long as it is clear what the apprentice has learned from the experience. Projects are of varying length. A typical project at SCQF Level 7 will be between 2-4 weeks and worth 5 to 10 credits, whereas SCQF Level 10 projects would be longer, more complex projects taking anything around 3-12 months and worth up to 60 credits. The actual form of these assessments varies depending on the skill being assessed. Students' work on their project(s) under the mentorship of an academic and a work-based member of staff, to combine both the academic and industrial application of the work.

In order to give the flexibility required to allow different students to undertake different projects and fulfil the learning outcomes in different ways, the degree program comprises of 4 120 credit modules (1 per annum).

Paragraph 2.6.2 of the Assessment Policy states: Students who pass (i.e. attain a grade of D3 or above) a resit of a previously failed module will receive a capped grade of D3 for that

module. Transcripts of achievement on work undertaken at the University will also indicate whether or not the module grade was achieved at the first attempt. Capping at D3 applies to the reported module grades, and not to individual elements of assessment.

Given that each level of the Graduate Apprenticeship Programmes is recorded in SITS as one module of 120 credits and the students may have only failed 1 project within this module, this capping could be very detrimental to the student. Instead we ask that we cap the failed assessment component(s) at D3 and not the complete module. This principle can be applied to any module at levels 1 to 3. The final module mark will be calculated using the agreed assessment weighting for the module. There is no limit to the number of assessment components that can be failed/retaken within a module.