

Section 7 Assessment format policy

7.1 Summative and formative assessment

Type	Definition
Formative	Assessments with a developmental purpose, designed to help students learn more effectively by giving them feedback on their performance and how it can be improved and/or maintained.
Summative	Formal assessment of students' work, contributing to the final result for the module. Used to indicate the extent of a student's success in meeting the assessment criteria to gauge the intended learning outcomes.

7.2 General

- 7.2.1 Each modular assessment component is classified on the module specification as a particular type from a pre-defined list. There are **13 types of assessment**.

Code	Description
CAP	Capstone project
CLINIC	Clinical assessment used in health-related programmes
CREATE	Creative artefact
EPA	End-point assessment
EXAM (NEXAM)	Examination conducted under examination conditions in a centrally organised examination room (or school organised)
EXT	External/Practice Education
ITEXAM (NITEXAM)	Digital examination conducted under examination conditions in a centrally organised examination IT room (or school organised)
LAB	Laboratory report
PORTF	Portfolio
PRCT	Practical
PRES	Presentation
TIMED	Timed assessment that is completed in a set period of time without examination conditions, normally measured in hours or days
VIVA	Viva voce
WRIT	Written work

- 7.2.2 Each proposed assessment type can be further defined: (academic) written work may encompass anything from a 250-word abstract to a Master's dissertation. This detail continues to be supplied in the descriptive text of the assessment and is not formally constrained.
- 7.2.3 Each separate assessment component must be clearly indicated with the component weighting in the module specification.
- 7.2.4 Assessment components cannot be further divided into sub-components.

7.3 Guidance on assessment volume

- 7.3.1 Awards should be made up of modules that normally follow a 20-credit pattern for undergraduate degrees and 30-credit pattern for postgraduate taught degrees. For comparative purposes, all equivalences are given for a 20-credit module and should therefore be applied flexibly to modules with higher or lower credit weighting. Normally 1 or 2 summative assessment components will be used in measuring the achievement of learning outcomes for a 20-credit module.
- 7.3.2 The following is for guidance only with some modes of assessment broadly equivalent to the word length required for written assessments in a 20-credit module. A definitive word count should be detailed in the Assignment Brief.
- 7.3.3 Refer to [sections 7.4-7.17](#) for more detailed information on assessment types.

Assessment type	Maximum limits (Note: These are maximum limits. The actual limit may be less depending on the nature of the assessment and what is pedagogically appropriate)
Examination	• 3 hours (100%) • 2 hours (75%) • 1 to 2 hours (50% and under)
Digital examination	• Dependent on Assignment Brief. Online quizzes/multiple-choice would be shorter than standard examinations. • Digital examinations that follow a similar format to a standard examination but delivered online would expect to range between 1.5 to 2 hours.
Written assessment	• 4,000 words (100%) • 3,000 words (75%) • 2,000 words (50%) • 1,000 words (25%)
Individual presentation / video	• 10 to 20 minutes (75 – 100%) • 5 to 10 minutes (25 – 50%)
Group presentation / video (per individual)	• 3 to 5 minutes (75 – 100%) • 2 to 3 minutes (25 – 50%)
Performance / Practical / Exhibits / Creative artefact	• Typically determined by the number of hours of student work as part of the overall module assessment strategy. • Dependent on project context.
Portfolio	• 2 to 5 elements dependent on level. • Assessed holistically. • No overall word count.
Capstone	• 8,000 words (40 credits) • 12,000 words (60 credits)
Viva	• Dependent on level.
External/Practice Education	• Dependent on requirements of an external body.
Timed assessment	• Dependent on Assignment Brief, weighting, and level.
Clinical assessment	• Dependent on competencies being assessed appropriate to the programme and level. • Would normally follow similar limits to an examination. • Where there are several short examples, examination stations or a portfolio approach, the combined total would not normally exceed the maximum limit of an examination.

Module specification documents

- 7.3.4 In all cases, the module specification document must indicate the relevant university assessment type, the nature of the assessment and the assessment deliverables (for example, a short overview of what the student must submit). This should indicate things like:
- Length in words/minutes.
 - Individual/group requirements.
 - Portfolio assignments should be clear as to what students need to hand in and what additional supporting work needs to be submitted (for example, sketchbooks, developmental work, lesson plans).

7.4 Capstone project

- 7.4.1 A multifaceted assignment that serves as a culminating academic and intellectual experience for students.
- 7.4.2 This may include a choice of assessment types from which students select one for a single mark.
- 7.4.3 Examples include:
- Dissertation or consultancy project; dissertation or body of practice-based work incorporating a reflective analysis.

7.5 Clinical assessments

- 7.5.1 A clinical assessment is an assessment that is often used in health-related programmes (for example, nursing, midwifery, paramedic science, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, etc.). This form of assessment is used to test students' performance of clinical skills such as communication, clinical examination, medical procedures, clinical decision making, clinical thinking/reasoning in a simulated medical environment, and to allow them to demonstrate required clinical competencies.
- 7.5.2 Clinical assessments are often specifically designed as Objective Structured Clinical Examinations / Assessments (OSCEs / OSCAs). Different disciplines may run these assessments in different formats with the same aim of assessing simulated clinical performance. At times students may be asked to work with other students, staff, or actors as appropriate, to demonstrate effective management. A clinical assessment would usually involve several short examples (up to 15 minutes each) of competently performed clinical skills, which may be a simple demonstration, or in response to an evolving scenario.
- 7.5.3 Clinical assessments may take the format of a single day with various examination stations or a collated portfolio approach; they may be video recorded or in-person (or both). Clinical assessments should be performed in real time whatever format the assessment takes. Examples of the format may include, but are not limited to:
- Video recorded clinical assessments, submitted as a portfolio.
 - In-person clinical assessment in front of assessors.
 - Full scenario (multiple skill) based assessments.
 - Single skill-based assessments.
 - A team (groupwork) approach to skill or scenario assessment.
 - Clinical management of a standardised or interactive virtual scenario.
- 7.5.4 If the assessment is to be held under examination conditions (refer to [section 9](#)), students must be clearly advised in the Assignment Brief what these conditions are. The Assignment Brief should also, where necessary, detail any actions or specific materials that would breach the academic misconduct regulations if performed or brought into the assessment (refer to [section 27](#)).
- 7.5.5 Students requesting deferrals due to exceptional circumstances should follow the Exceptional Circumstances Policy (refer to [section 13](#)). If these are approved, the assessment would normally be deferred to the next assessment period (refer to table in [section 13.16](#)).
- 7.5.6 Additional time is not normally given to a student for a clinical assessment unless this is specifically recommended in a student's Learner Adjustment Plan (LAP). Reasonable adjustments to standard assessment procedures are recommended by the Disability Support and Inclusion Team through the [Learner Adjustment Plan \(LAP\) process](#). Adjustments are based on individual requirements and evidence of need (refer to [section 10](#)).

7.6 Creative artefact

7.6.1 A creation in a particular form that fulfils a brief.

7.6.2 Examples include:

- Artwork; blueprint; cognitive map; composition; concept; creative writing; exhibition; film; handout; manifesto; mind map; model; music product; pamphlet; poster; prototype.

7.7 End-point assessment (EPA)

7.7.1 An EPA is an independent assessment at the end of an apprentice's training that confirms the student has reached occupational competence.

7.8 Examination

7.8.1 Examinations are time-limited and held under staff-controlled conditions.

- Refer to [section 9](#) for more detailed information regarding processes and procedures for examinations.
- Refer to [section 7.15](#) for 'take-home' exams.

7.8.2 Examples include:

- Closed book; open book; seen or unseen; short answers and/or multiple-choice questions; classroom test.
- The 'default' is an unseen, closed-book examination.

7.9 External/Practice education

Practice education

7.9.1 This type of assessment (sometimes referred to as a 'placement') usually takes place in a workplace setting where the theoretical and practical elements of a programme are applied.

7.9.2 The assessment of the application of skills and theory is usually undertaken in conjunction with academic staff, and in compliance with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements.

7.9.3 It is usually (but not always) a pass/fail marked assessment.

7.9.4 Practice education and associated documentation will be different according to specific programme and PSRB requirements and this will be exemplified in module documentation.

Practice assessment documentation

7.9.5 Assessment records and documents can have different names dependent on the requirements of PSRBs. In all cases, the mode of assessment shall be made clear to students prior to commencing their practice education.

7.9.6 In some circumstances a PSRB will mandate a record and recording process, including specifying who can assess student work.

7.9.7 In some circumstances, practice assessments are not double marked due to the nature of the submission.

7.10 Digital examination

7.10.1 Centrally organised digital examinations are designed to deliver an examination paper online and are taken in computer classrooms. The examination is time limited and is held under staff-controlled conditions.

7.10.2 Schools wishing to use digital examinations outside of centrally organised examination periods are responsible for booking a computer classroom, bearing in mind that access may be restricted during central examination periods and teaching periods.

7.10.3 Refer to [section 9](#) for more detailed information regarding processes and procedures for examinations.

7.10.4 Examples include:

- Digital delivery is more appropriate for examinations comprising of mainly multiple-choice style and short answer questions.
- Online quizzes using Moodle.

7.11 Laboratory report

7.11.1 Laboratory reports are written to describe and analyse a laboratory experiment that explores a scientific concept.

7.12 Portfolio

7.12.1 A portfolio is a curated collection of multimodal artefacts which demonstrate the student's achievement of the learning outcomes. A portfolio is submitted one time as a single collection and receives a single holistic mark.

7.12.2 The more detailed description must be one of the following forms:

- Specified elements: required elements are fixed at validation / approval and supports comparability across cohorts.
- Indicative elements: defines the required evidence categories and expectations clearly enough to ensure parity, while allowing (i) student choice within categories and / or (ii) minor annual adjustments that do not change the programme learning outcomes / competencies assessed.

In both cases, the description must make clear:

- The purpose of the portfolio in relation to the programme learning outcomes / competencies.
- The expected kinds of evidence (including permitted media); and the role of reflective commentary in explaining selection, organisation and development.

7.12.3 The evidence within the portfolio will normally be generated over a period of time (not completed in a single session) and module teams are encouraged to design formative checkpoints (not to be graded) to support learning and dialogical feedback (see [section 8.1](#) for the rules on formative assessment processes.) Managed flexibility is permissible where the portfolio is described as using indicative elements (refer to [section 7.12.1](#) above) and where variation is limited to:

- Student choice of artefacts within defined categories; and / or
- Minor annual adjustments that do not change the programme learning outcomes / competencies assessed, the volume expectations, or the basis of the summative holistic judgement to be made.

7.12.4 Any change to the required evidence categories or overall assessment demand requires the appropriate approval route.

7.12.5 Live performances and presentations, examinations and timed assessments cannot form part of a portfolio and must be assessed as separate components. However, recordings may be included as artefacts within a portfolio, provided they are submitted at the same time as the other portfolio evidence.

7.12.6 Where a portfolio comprises different kinds of work (for example, varied artefacts) and / or does not clearly culminate in a single coherent body of practice, students must include a reflective commentary that:

- Explains the rationale for the selection and organisation of artefacts.
- Maps evidence to the relevant programme learning outcomes (or equivalent) and demonstrates learning and development over time.

7.12.7 It is not acceptable to state on the module specification:

- A 'portfolio' with no supporting description (in the same way that just 'written work' is inappropriate).
- A portfolio of materials that have individual weightings or word counts (which must be converted to separately assessed components; these may still be handed in at the same time).
- A pointer to other documentation where the contents are specified (because this information is not necessarily available to the external examiners or the students).

However, guidance should be given regarding the expected and acceptable volume of work to be submitted (for example, a 5-minute video, 1000-word commentary, and 500-word critical self-reflection).

7.12.8 Judgement and feedback should be guided by the Generic Assessment Descriptors (GADs) and / or modular assessment criteria (see [section 43.4.2](#)) but a single holistic mark must be explained with clarity to students and examiners about how the final mark is reached. The final grade should not be made up of individually weighted marks.

7.12.9 All marks must be stored in the student record system (SITS). Assessment marks must not be calculated outside of SITS. Where separate marks are required for distinct tasks, this indicates the assessment should be updated to form assessment components. If applicable, the module specification will need updating and formal approval sought from the Quality and Standards Committee's Programme Amendment Scrutiny Panel (PASP).

7.12.10 All teaching and learning are required to demonstrate and maintain its currency, and portfolios offer great flexibility to respond to and adapt to changes. To ensure parity and consistency across these changes assessment designers are encouraged to engage with other assessment designers on the programme, the programme leader, external examiners, and / or their School Quality Panel.

- 7.12.11 Given the nature of portfolios may change year on year depending on delivery and assignment content, then there is a need to allow a level of flexibility while ensuring that variations do not advantage or disadvantage particular year groups.
- 7.12.12 As defined in [section 7.12.2](#), one of two options is permitted. In both cases, expectations must be sufficiently explicit for external examiner scrutiny and student understanding. Including: purpose linked to programme learning outcomes or equivalents; acceptable media; and the role of reflective commentary in demonstrating learning and development.

7.13 Practical

- 7.13.1 Used to demonstrate a skill in real time (which may or may not be 'live').
- 7.13.2 Examples include:
- Audio file; demonstration; numerical assignment; (peer) observation; performance; process-based assessment.

7.14 Presentation

- 7.14.1 A student-led real-time event (on a topic approved by staff), delivered individually or by a group.
- 7.14.2 Where a presentation assessment requires students to both deliver a presentation and submit supporting materials (for example, slides, or notes), there must be a single, clearly defined submission deadline. This deadline should act as the sole point of submission for all required assessment materials.
- 7.14.3 Presentations that include both a live delivery and submitted materials must receive a single mark; the method by which this mark is determined, including the relationship between the live delivery and submitted materials (for example, slides), must be clearly articulated to students and examiners.

7.15 Timed assessments

- 7.15.1 A timed assessment requires the student to work unsupervised and complete the assessment within a specified amount of time. The specified time is usually measured in hours or days and is not usually longer than 1 week.
- 7.15.2 Examples include:
- Timed case studies; take-home exams; timed portfolios; remote delivery of online assessments that are not held under staff-controlled conditions.
- 7.15.3 For all timed assessments, the duration must be made explicit on the module specification. This information will be recorded in the records system and will appear in the assessment title on the Assessment Schedule.
- 7.15.4 An advantage of a timed assessment is that with the set time period and access to materials, students may better demonstrate their knowledge, abilities and use of sources. For some programmes timed assessments more closely resemble the work activities where students' knowledge and skills will ultimately be used. However, timed assessments may carry an increased risk of unauthorised collaboration between students.
- 7.15.5 The timetabling of timed assessments is the responsibility of the School; therefore, measures must be put in place to ensure that students are not unduly burdened with several assessments at the same time, and the timing requires consideration of other submission deadlines and examination dates.
- 7.15.6 Adequate support should be available throughout the duration of the assessment for both technical issues and for clarification in the case of factual errors in questions.
- 7.15.7 Changing questions each year prevents previous cohorts from sharing their work and helps limit possible academic misconduct in timed assessments, requiring students to work with a recent source or with specific module content or activities.
- 7.15.8 It is good practice for timed assessments that span more than 1 day to time the release of the task and the submission at noon, thereby giving a full 24 hours or longer.
- 7.15.9 Students requesting extensions due to exceptional circumstances should follow the normal procedures (refer to [section 13](#)). If approved the assessment would normally be deferred to the next reassessment period (refer to table in [section 13.16](#)); short extensions counted in days or weeks would not normally be approved. The timing of a deferral would not be when there are other teaching activities or exams.
- 7.15.10 [Section 26.3](#) details how the sanctions for late submissions and resubmissions are applied.

7.15.11 The Assignment Brief should be accompanied by clear guidance regarding:

- How the task will be shared with students – it is important to ensure that the task material is distributed as quickly and fairly as possible.
- When the task will be made available to students.
- The deadline by which the assessment must be submitted, and any late submission sanctions thereafter. Deadlines should not be set on university closure days.
- How the assessment should be submitted (refer to [section 8.7](#) regarding submission and errors when submitting).
- How students can contact academic support during the task, when this is available and how to do this, for example, clearly state the office hours when support can be accessed if the assessment goes over several days.
- Where to seek technical support, when this is available and how to access this.
- It is good practice to give guidance on how much time to spend on preparation as opposed to, for example, a written task.
- If applicable, a clear statement that extra time is not provided for students with LAPs.
- Clear guidance on whether students are working individually or as a group, and that collusion would be dealt with as academic misconduct (refer to [section 27](#)).

7.15.12 Written instructions should be carefully prepared and should include:

- A word-count (this will help communicate expectations, help with keeping marking workload reasonable).
- How the task should be formatted or presented.
- If referencing is required and if so with which referencing system.
- The deadline by which the assessment is due and the policy for late submissions (see [section 26.3](#)).
- The materials can be consulted or referenced or is there a particular limitation on the resources used.

7.16 Viva voce

7.16.1 A viva voce is a form of oral assessment that helps students develop communication skills. The student's response to the assessment task is conveyed by speech instead of writing. It is an examiner-led live event and involves the examiner(s) asking questions to the student about their work.

7.16.2 The assessment can be conducted by one or more assessors.

7.16.3 Examples include:

- Discussing a student's research project or portfolio in more detail; Question & Answer (Q&A) session in support of a student's art exhibition; individual reflection on personal and/or group development; interview-based assessments; professional discussions.

7.17 Written work

7.17.1 Academic writing, usually with referenced sources, and word limited.

7.17.2 Examples include:

- Abstract; annotated bibliography; blog; case study report; commentary; critical study; dissertation; essay; manuscript; online posting; project report; rationale; research paper; research proposal; research report; review article; self-reflective piece of work; strategy; take-home paper; written debate.