

Section 8 Non-examination assessment practice and conduct: policy and procedures

8.1 Formative assessment processes

- 8.1.1 Students will be given the opportunity to undertake formative assessment to gain feedback to support their learning. Formative assessment also enables staff to monitor performance prior to the formal summative assessment and target support to students' needs.
- 8.1.2 Details of formative assessments and activities will be provided by Module Directors/Leads.
- 8.1.3 Formative assessment should be small scale. They can include submission of plans for written work or a small section of an upcoming summative assessment. They must not replicate summative assessments or entail the submission of full drafts of work.
- 8.1.4 Brief feedback should be provided for formative assessments. Formative assessments should be scheduled to ensure feedback is available for students to implement in summative assessments.
- 8.1.5 Feedback on formative assessment should not provide any indicative mark or grade.

8.2 Summative assessment processes

- 8.2.1 Heads/Deans of School or nominated representative (or equivalent at validated partners) have oversight of the management of the assessment process and are, therefore, responsible for ensuring agreed processes are in place and for monitoring the effective engagement in these processes.
- 8.2.2 The School Quality Panel provides an opportunity for the regular audit of process and a formal recording of that effective engagement. The School Assessment Board will also analyse module performance to identify any anomalous marking trends in line with the Protocol for identifying and reviewing anomalous performance in modules (refer to [section 42](#)).
- 8.2.3 All staff concerned with the assessment of the module and external supervisors of placements must be clearly informed of assessment requirements.
- 8.2.4 Assessment requirements, deadlines and criteria for assessment must be clearly communicated to students in module documentation.

8.3 Assignment brief design and communication

- 8.3.1 The core objective of an 'assignment brief' is to maximise the likelihood that students will do what is required and expected in assessment. 'Assignment briefs' must effectively communicate the task's requirements and expectations, to enhance students' performance in assessment and, ultimately, their overall learning experience.
- 8.3.2 It is expected that assessment tasks are updated annually, unless those tasks are, by their nature, individualised (for example, where students choose their own essay title based on the assessment task).

8.4 Approval of assessment titles and tasks

- 8.4.1 Module Directors/Leads are responsible for managing the initial setting of the assessment titles/tasks (reflecting the modes of assessment approved in the validated module specification), including consulting with other tutors involved in the module delivery as appropriate.
- 8.4.2 A collegial process will be established at local level (programme, subject or School) for Module Directors/Leads to approve assessment titles/tasks and the student-facing 'Assignment briefs'. A record of the process of approval will be kept for internal and external scrutiny.

- 8.4.3 All assessment titles/tasks for modules contributing to an award, including timed examination papers, are to be sent to the external examiner for their consideration prior to final approval. It is expected that external examiners will comment on the suitability of the form, content and marking schemes of assessments and examination papers contributing to overall module marks for all modules contributing to the determination of an award of the University.
- 8.4.4 Where tasks do not have a defined title (for example, a presentation or an artefact), or are student-defined (such as dissertations, negotiated essay titles etc.) then these do not have to be referred to the external examiner.
- 8.4.5 The timing of engagement with external examiners regarding draft assessments will influence the timing of communication to students about their assessment. Schools should engage with external examiners in a timely manner at the start of the academic year in which the module is to be taught.

8.5 Submission deadlines

- 8.5.1 Assessment deadlines must be set for **12 noon (12:00)** as standard university practice.
- 8.5.2 Deadlines must not be set beyond the Academic Registrar's deadline/resit deadline. Reassessment deadlines should be set as per the 'Examination and Assessment Schedule', but if it is necessary to schedule a reassessment date outside of the period in the schedule the dates must be agreed with the Assessment team in Registry prior to communicating the change to students. The Academic Registrar's deadlines for the academic year can be found in the [Examination and assessment schedule](#).
- 8.5.3 For non-standard programmes and collaborative partners (validated and franchise), reassessments should be timed in relation to the School Assessment Board (SAB) that the module results are agreed at. The reassessment date should be no earlier than 3 weeks, and no later than 6 months, after the SAB.
- 8.5.4 A deadline **must not be set on a day when the University is closed**. This also applies to franchise partners when setting their deadlines. This includes:
- Saturdays and Sundays
 - Bank Holidays
 - University closure days over the Christmas period
- 8.5.5 Deadlines can normally be set for the first working day that the University is open following the closure, with the exception that following the **Christmas period closure deadlines should be set no earlier than the second working day following the re-opening**.
- 8.5.6 Assessment dates will avoid, as far as possible, holy days and festivals. University events and a link to the Open University Calendar of religious events can be found on our [website](#). Students are required to notify the Assessment team in Registry (or equivalent at a partner institution) of their inability to carry out work on holy days as soon as possible after enrolment.
- 8.5.7 Heads/Deans of School or nominated representative should consider staggering deadlines for their programme to avoid clustering of multiple assessments on or around the same date to account for student workload.
- 8.5.8 It is recommended that students submit their work in good time and, at the latest, start to submit their work at least **1 hour before the deadline** to allow for unforeseen circumstances (for example, Wi-Fi/internet issues).
- 8.5.9 Work submitted after the deadline will be marked as late, even where the student began to upload their work prior to the submission deadline. The sanctions for late submission outlined in this code will apply (refer to [section 26.3](#)).

Assessment schedules

- 8.5.10 Prior to beginning of each academic year, a schedule for all assessment dates for the academic year must be agreed at programme level by the School Quality Panel.
- 8.5.11 The 'Assessment Schedules' for the entire year must be received by the deadlines below.

Schedule	SQP approval by	Deadline for receipt by Assessment team in Registry
All modules for the forthcoming year	July	31 July

8.5.12 For each module or assignment task the 'Assessment Schedule' must include:

- Assessment dates.
- Reassessment dates.
- Agreed dates for returning marks and feedback to students.
- Identification of double markers/internal moderators (this information may be added at a later point if this is not available when the dates are approved by the School Quality Panel).
- The external examiner responsible.

8.5.13 Once finalised the 'Assessment Schedule' must be made available by the Programme Administration and Support Service (PASS) team or programme team to the programmes' external examiners to ensure they are aware of when samples will be received and to assist in managing their workload.

Changes to submission and resubmission deadlines

8.5.14 All deadlines **should not** normally be changed once they have been set and communicated to students.

8.5.15 In exceptional circumstances if a deadline does need to be changed, the Head/Dean of School, or nominated representative, must consult with the Assessment team in Registry prior to implementing or communicating a change to the deadline.

- a) Exceptional circumstances may include, but are not limited to, staff illness affecting module delivery, or unforeseen difficulties with resources. Schools should implement rigorous checking procedures after the Assessment Schedule is approved to ensure that the dates provided to students on Moodle correspond with the date approved on the Assessment Schedule.
- b) A School Quality Panel (SQP) Chair's Action should be completed detailing the rationale for the change of deadline.
- c) Changes must not be communicated to students until the Assessment team in Registry has been consulted.
- d) The SQP Chair, Head/Dean of School, or nominated representative, is responsible for checking the suitability of the new deadline.
- e) If a change is agreed the SQP Chair, Head/Dean of School or nominated representative reports this to the School Quality Panel, who monitor the volume and reasons for changes to deadlines within the School.
- f) If agreed the School must ensure that the change is communicated clearly to all students. Schools must ensure that all students with extensions via exceptional circumstances and/or Learner Adjustment Plans are given amended deadlines for their existing extensions in line with the new deadline.
- g) If an IT problem affects the entire cohort, for example, due to a Moodle update or similar, the School can change the deadline to the **next working day**. In these circumstances the School must notify students in good time and let the Assessment team in Registry know the change in assessment date. Checks will be made for students who may have extensions. The School should also give guidance to students who may have already submitted prior to the IT failure. Students are encouraged not to withdraw their submission as the added time is to remove jeopardy of the IT problem rather than give more time to work on the assessment. Individual students with IT problems should be directed to the 'Exceptional Circumstances Policy' (refer to [section 13](#)), although it should be noted that IT grounds for individual students are unlikely to be upheld.

Changes in assessment

8.5.16 Assessments should not normally differ from the approved module specification published on the Staff Information Point where amendment has not previously been approved by the Programme Amendment Scrutiny Panel (PASP).

- The deadline for module amendments in Semester 1 and yearlong is the final Friday in May for modules delivered the following September.
- The deadline for module amendments for modules delivered in Semesters 2 and 3 is the final Friday in November for modules delivered from the following January.

- 8.5.17 In exceptional circumstances if an assessment does need to be changed for the current year after the deadlines above have expired the Head/Dean of School, or nominated representative, must complete a School Assessment Board (SAB) Special Resolution form explaining the reason for the change, and confirmation about consultation with students and consultation with the external examiner. Refer to [section 41.7](#) for more information on the Special Resolution process.

Changes to Module Directors/Leads

- 8.5.18 Changes to Module Directors/Leads do not require SQP approval. The Programme Administration and Support Service (PASS) team or programme team should email the Assessment team in Registry to notify them of the change.

8.6 Submission methods

- 8.6.1 E-submission is normally the standard method for submission of work. It is recognised that exceptions do exist, and e-submission does not apply to:

- Creative coursework (for example, for art and design courses).
- Some types of portfolios.
- Some types of presentations.
- Some types of group work.

Traditional offline (hard copy) submission procedures may apply to these exceptions.

- 8.6.2 Clear instructions to students as to the form for submission must be given in the module documentation available to students on the Moodle module site and within any other relevant assessment literature for the programme of study.

- 8.6.3 The submission procedure to be followed in relation to programmes delivered by a validated partner organisation (validated provision) will be set out in the programme documentation provided by the validated partner.

E-submission

- 8.6.4 To ensure that students receive a consistent experience across all programme areas, the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) will be used as the online environment for submitting formal summative assignments.

- 8.6.5 Module Directors/Leads should use either of the following supported methods to handle assignment submission:

- Moodle
- Turnitin

- 8.6.6 In the event that University systems are not accessible on the due date/time, students will be advised by email to their university email address of any changes to alternative submission arrangements (refer to [section 8.5.15 g](#)).

- 8.6.7 When work is submitted to Moodle or Turnitin an **email confirmation** will be sent to the student's university email address. If this does not appear then students are advised to repeat the process again. Support information is available on the [Submitting work](#) page.

- 8.6.8 Students are strongly advised to check they have submitted the final version of their work by the deadline. In cases where a draft has been submitted by the deadline and confirmation received the draft can be marked with no late sanction applied.

- 8.6.9 If a Module Director/Lead wishes to stipulate that files submitted must be of a certain type, then they must (where possible) configure the submission point to restrict submissions to acceptable file types. Any such restrictions must be publicised to students at the time of issuing the 'assessment brief', rather than only at the point of submission.

- 8.6.10 If more than one version of work is submitted:

- If all submissions are made before the deadline, the latest version should be marked.
- If no submissions are made before the deadline, the first submission after the deadline should be marked.
- If submissions are made both before and after the deadline, the latest version **before** the deadline should be marked.

8.6.11 Errors when submitting electronically are treated as follows:

- a) Submission of the correct file to the wrong Moodle site or following School advice to submit to a School or tutor's university email account due to technical difficulties, but before the deadline for submission will be treated as correctly submitted and will not incur a late submission sanction. It is the student's responsibility to alert their School if they have made such an error and confirm where the submission has been made.
- b) The timestamp on the receipt issued by the VLE when a submission has been successfully completed is the time that is used to determine whether a submission is late or not – irrespective of when the submission process was initiated. Discretion to waive a sanction for a late submission beyond the deadline does not constitute a fair and transparent approach. There is no discretion when determining whether a submission is on time – the date and time recorded on the final receipt is the only evidence that will be considered and a submission made at 12:01 would incur a late submission sanction (refer to [section 26.3](#)). Receipts with a submission recorded as 12:00 will not incur a late sanction.
- c) Accidental submission of an incorrect document (for example, an assignment from another assessment or an incomplete earlier draft of the assignment) should be marked in the normal manner; this is not accepted as exceptional circumstances (refer to [section 13.5](#)).
- d) A submission of the wrong file type is not accepted as an exceptional circumstance (refer to [section 13.5](#)) and the assignment should be marked in the normal manner which may result in a mark of zero for the assessment. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they follow the instructions as to the acceptable file type(s) for the assessment accurately (refer to [section 8.6.2](#)).
- e) A submission of a corrupted file that cannot be accessed by the marker, is not accepted as an exceptional circumstance and any additional documents subsequently submitted after the deadline will not be marked (refer to [section 8.6.10](#)).

Offline (hard copy) submissions

- 8.6.12 Schools must have in place appropriate and secure arrangements for submission of offline (hard copy) assessed work where this permitted. Work will be logged, and a receipt will be issued. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they are issued with a receipt and to retain it as proof of submission.
- 8.6.13 If work is submitted by post it must be submitted by **recorded delivery**. It is the responsibility of the student to retain a receipt and proof of posting and a copy of the work in case of loss in the post.

8.7 Backing up of student work

- 8.7.1 Backing up work means making a copy of academic electronic files, particularly for assessments during assessment preparation.
- 8.7.2 Backing up work by students (prior to and after submission) is essential for students to protect their work and to prevent loss of student work in cases of software and hardware failure, virus attacks and human error. Students are encouraged to make secure copies of their work frequently, particularly when completing significant changes to draft assignments.
- 8.7.3 Loss or damage to electronic documents are not grounds for exceptional circumstances.
- 8.7.4 Students are reminded to keep backup copies of all work as the University is unable to provide copies of work post-submission should their work be lost, for example, through computer failure, theft or deletion.

8.8 Confidentiality within student work

- 8.8.1 Schools must provide clear guidance to students to ensure they understand and maintain appropriate confidentiality, anonymity of individuals, organisations, and workplaces during their studies and within their assessment submissions.
- 8.8.2 Students will be advised how to handle confidential information within their written work, particularly by protecting client identity. However, students can request that material submitted for assessment is kept confidential if it is commercially sensitive or to protect intellectual property.

8.9 Confidentiality of student work

- 8.9.1 The University will archive students' assessed work in line with the requirements of the Office for Students. Anonymised versions will be available for internal and external quality assurance and audit, or as an exemplar for learning.