

Section 9 Assessment format policy

9.1 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.

9.2 General

9.2.1 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 departmentally organised)
EXT	External/Practice Education
ITEXAM (NITEXAM)	Digital examination conducted under examination conditions in a centrally organised examination IT room (or departmentally 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

- 9.2.2 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.
- 9.2.3 Each separate assessment component must be clearly indicated with the component-weighting in the module specification.
- 9.2.4 Assessment components cannot be further divided into sub-components.

9.3 Guidance on assessment volume

- 9.3.1 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.
- 9.3.2 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 assessment brief.
- 9.3.3 Refer to [sections 9.5-9.18](#) for more detailed information on assessment types.

Assessment type	Maximum limits (N.B. These are maximum limits. The actual limit may be less depending on the nature of the assessment and what is pedagogically appropriate)
Examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 hours (100%) • 2 hours (75%) • 1 to 2 hours (50% and under)
Digital examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependent on assessment brief. Online quizzes/multiple choice would be shorter than standard examinations. • Digital exams that follow a similar format to a standard examination but online would expect to range between 1.5 to 2 hours.
Written assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4,000 (100%) • 3,000 (75%) • 2,000 (50%) • 1,000 (25%)
Individual presentation / video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 to 20 minutes (75 – 100%) • 5 to 10 minutes (25 – 50%)
Group presentation / video (per individual)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 to 5 minutes (75 – 100%) • 2 to 3 minutes (25 – 50%)
Performance / Practical / Exhibits / Creative artefact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically determined by the number of hours of student work as part of the overall module assessment strategy. • Dependent on project context.
Portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 to 5 elements dependent on level. • Assessed holistically. • No word count.
Capstone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8,000 (40 credits) • 12,000 (60 credits)
Viva	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependent on level
External/Practice Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependent on requirements of an external body
Timed assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependent on assessment brief, weighting, and level

Assessment type	Maximum limits
(N.B. These are maximum limits. The actual limit may be less depending on the nature of the assessment and what is pedagogically appropriate)	
Clinical assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

Oral assessment

- 9.3.4 To allow students sufficient time to successfully cover the content, an individual presentation should not normally be less than 5 minutes and should not normally exceed 20 minutes. Group presentations may be longer than individual presentations but not normally exceed 25 to 30 minutes. For guidance, it may be possible that there are modules where the sole form of assessment is the oral assessment. In such cases, greater time may be appropriate to fully assess outcomes.
- 9.3.5 In all cases, the module specification document must indicate the relevant university assessment type, the nature of the assessment and the assessment deliverables (i.e., 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 (e.g., sketchbooks, developmental work, lesson plans)

9.4 Logistical considerations

- 9.4.1 The arrangements necessary for some assessments need to be considered in advance, in particular:
- a) **Resources** – material and technical resources need to be ordered well in advance.
 - b) **Rooms/space** – suitable spaces for poster displays, performances, and concurrent presentations need to be booked ahead of time; Schools should consider there may be room availability and capacity restrictions during centrally organised examination periods and during teaching periods; and the resources available in the rooms should be checked in advance.
 - c) **Timing** – a schedule for individual timings for presentations or performances must be distributed to students well in advance. The schedule must consider how much time is needed for set-up and clear-away by each student in addition to the assessment. The schedule should allow time for breaks to avoid marker fatigue and be flexible enough to allow for some presentations to over-run. Consideration should be given when scheduling timed assessments and departmental examinations to avoid creating a heavy assessment burden for students during teaching periods.
 - d) **Invigilators** – these are needed for both School and Registry organised examinations, and Schools are expected to be able to provide invigilators for their examinations. In some circumstances, it may be possible for Registry to provide external invigilators, but it should not be the expectation of Schools that this is possible. Where external invigilators are used, Module Directors/Leads are still required at the start of each examination (for further invigilator information refer to [section 11.7](#)).
 - e) **Markers** – arrangements need to be made for enough markers to be available and for marking to be completed consistently.
- 9.4.2 Centrally organised examinations are scheduled by the Assessment team in Registry and are scheduled in set examination periods. The Assessment team in Registry is responsible for booking space to accommodate exams during these periods. Schools holding invigilated examinations outside these periods are responsible for booking space to accommodate their exams. Departmentally organised examinations must be held under the same examination conditions as centrally organised examinations. More information is available from the Assessment team in Registry, please visit our [key academic dates page](#). For further information on examinations refer to [section 11](#).
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9.5 Capstone project

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

9.6 Clinical assessments

- 9.6.1 A clinical assessment is an assessment that is often used in health-related programmes (e.g., nursing, 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.
- 9.6.2 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.
- 9.6.3 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.
- 9.6.4 If the assessment is to be held under examination conditions (refer to [section 11](#)), 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 23](#)).
- 9.6.5 Students requesting deferrals due to exceptional circumstances should follow the Exceptional Circumstances Policy (see [section 17](#)). If these are approved, the assessment would be deferred to the next assessment period.
- 9.6.6 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 (see [section 14](#)).

9.7 Creative artefact

- 9.7.1 A creation in a particular form that fulfils a brief.
- 9.7.2 Examples include:
- Artwork; blueprint; cognitive map; composition; concept; creative writing; exhibition; film; handout; manifesto; mind map; model; music product; pamphlet; poster; prototype.

9.8 End-point assessment (EPA)

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

9.9 Examination

- 9.9.1 Examinations are time-limited and held under staff-controlled conditions.
- 9.9.2 The 'default' is an unseen, closed-book examination. Examples include:
- Closed book; open book; seen or unseen; short answers and/or multiple-choice questions; classroom test.
 - Refer to [section 11](#) for more detailed information regarding processes and procedures for examinations.
- 9.9.3 For 'take-home' exams refer to [section 9.16](#).

9.10 External/Practice education

Practice education

- 9.10.1 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.
- 9.10.2 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.
- 9.10.3 It is usually (but not always) a pass/fail marked assessment.
- 9.10.4 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

- 9.10.5 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.
- 9.10.6 In some circumstances a PSRB will mandate a record and recording process, including specifying who can assess student work.
- 9.10.7 In some circumstances, practice assessments are not double marked due to the nature of the submission.

9.11 Digital examination

- 9.11.1 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.
- 9.11.2 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.
- 9.11.3 Refer to [section 11](#) for more detailed information regarding processes and procedures for examinations.
- 9.11.4 Examples include:
- Digital delivery is more appropriate for examinations comprising of mainly multiple-choice style and short answer questions.
 - Online quizzes using Moodle.

9.12 Laboratory report

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

9.13 Portfolio

- 9.13.1 A collection of artefacts, written work and/or reflections that **is given a single mark**.
- 9.13.2 The more detailed description must be one of the following forms:
- A portfolio of 'specified elements'
 - A portfolio which may consist of 'indicative elements'
- 9.13.3 The collection is submitted at one time. **The 'portfolio' should not be used as shorthand for flexible assessment that can be changed without formal approval.**
- 9.13.4 Live performances and presentations cannot form part of a portfolio and must be assessed as a separate component. **If performances and presentations are recorded, the recording can form part of the portfolio and must be submitted at the same time as the other portfolio elements.**

- 9.13.5 Where the contents of the portfolio are not a collection of similar works, e.g., creative writing pieces, or do not contribute to the culmination of a final piece of work, e.g., in an art portfolio, then a commentary/reflection should be included that binds the separate parts together.
- 9.13.6 Live performances and presentations cannot form part of a portfolio and must be assessed as a separate component. If performances and presentations are recorded, the recording can form part of the portfolio and must be submitted at the same time as the other portfolio elements.
- 9.13.7 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).
- 9.13.8 For timed portfolios also refer to [section 9.16](#).
- 9.13.9 The key property of receiving a single mark must be reconciled with clarity to students and examiners of how the final mark is reached. Although percentage weightings of the materials must not be included for a portfolio, it is acceptable to indicate requirements on length (a 5-minute video reflection on a 2-hour student-led seminar).
- 9.13.10 All marks must be stored in the student record system (SITS). Assessment marks must not be calculated outside of SITS; if marks are being calculated outside SITS this would indicate the assessment needs updating to separate assessment components. If applicable, the module specification will need updating and formal approval sought from Quality Standard Committee's Programme Amendment Scrutiny Panel (PASP).
- 9.13.11 The use of the portfolio as an assessment type is standard practice in many disciplines. However, given it is an umbrella term suggesting the inclusion of multiple items, questions have been asked about the transparency and consistency of assessment where it is used.
- One concern is that the constitution of the portfolio may change year on year and that this variation may result in a lack of parity across cohorts.
- Another concern is that the portfolio is sometimes used where components are given individual weightings and summative marks that are then combined into a single portfolio mark.
- 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.
- 9.13.12 As defined in [section 9.13.2](#) above, 1 of 2 options are permitted when specifying a portfolio. Whilst the first option ensures the same elements and fixes the assessment at the point of the validated document, the second offers a strong indication of what is required. It allows flexibility to accommodate changes in delivery, it gives a strong indication of what is expected, and it is also subject to external examiner scrutiny to ensure that it does not move beyond acceptable norms. Although it is not as fixed as the first option, its flexibility helps to ensure the quality of the assessment as it allows the portfolio to be 'appropriate to the assessment' of the work, where often a set of fixed elements may be less appropriate to the assessment task.

9.14 Practical

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

9.15 Presentation

- 9.15.1 A student-led real-time event (on a topic approved by staff), delivered individually or by a group.

9.16 Timed assessments

- 9.16.1 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.
- 9.16.2 Examples include:
- Timed case studies; take-home exams; timed portfolios; remote delivery of online assessments that are not held under staff-controlled conditions.

- 9.16.3 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.
- 9.16.4 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.
- 9.16.5 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.
- 9.16.6 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.
- 9.16.7 Changing questions each year prevents previous cohorts from sharing their work and helps limit the possible academic misconduct in timed-assessments, requiring students to work with a recent source or with specific course content or activities.
- 9.16.8 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.
- 9.16.9 Students requesting extensions due to exceptional circumstances should follow the normal procedures (see [section 17](#)). If approved the assessment would normally be deferred to the next reassessment period, 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.
- 9.16.10 [Section 32.3](#) details how the sanctions for late submissions and resubmissions are applied.
- 9.16.11 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. University closure days should be considered when setting deadlines.
 - How the assessment should be submitted (refer to [section 10.6](#) 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 (see [section 23](#)).
- 9.16.12 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 32.3](#)).
 - The materials can be consulted or referenced or is there a particular imitation on the resources used.

9.17 Viva voce

- 9.17.1 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.
- 9.17.2 The assessment can be conducted by one or more assessors.
- 9.17.3 Examples include:
- Discussing a student's research project or portfolio in more detail; Q&A session in support of a student's art exhibition; individual reflection on personal and/or group development; interview-based assessments; professional discussions.

9.18 Written work

- 9.18.1 Academic writing, usually with referenced sources, often word-limited or guided.
- 9.18.2 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.