Assessment Code of Practice

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This document can be made available on request, in alternative formats and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English.	

2026/27 Policy Updates:

Date of Update	Update Subject
06/26	Section 4.2, 5 and 6.2 Addition of hyperlink to modes of study and workload information webpages.
06/26	Section 9.2 Addition of hyperlink to External Examiner information webpages
06/26	Section 9.2. Availability of assessment briefs changed to day 1 of a module which correlates with student access to BB Ultra module sites.
06/26	Section 18.2 Feedback suggests automatic grading methods for formative assessments. Formative assessments are promoted as a way to gauge ongoing student engagement and commitment to a programme. Section 18.2.2 encourages educators to generate efficient feedback methods for students. A link to current guidance on digital feedback methods in BBL Ultra and Turnitin has been added.
06/26	Section 21. includes reference to programme regulations 14.6 that indicates resits are permitted at the earliest opportunity following a BoE.
06/26	Section 23.3. Renumbering of associated appendices.
09/26	Section 18 Updated links to enhanced Turnitin Feedback Studio p
09/26	Appendix 6 – addition of template (Ug) coursework feedback proforma for offline marking

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1. Introduction

The Assessment Code of Practice describes University standards of practice for the design, delivery and quality assurance of assessment, and acts as a key reference document for assessment related policies.

This document is written at a general University level and complements Faculty and subjectlevel policies and strategies which may be more nuanced for specific discipline areas. The code does not deal with the assessment of research degrees.

Note: The Assessment Code of Practice replaces the previous Assessment Handbook. While many practices have been retained within the new Code, there have also been some enhancements.

2. Glossary of Terms

- Academic integrity - committing to honesty, fairness, responsibility and respect in all scholarly work, producing original ideas, acknowledging the work of others through accurate citation and referencing, and resisting any temptation to gain an unfair advantage
- **Academic misconduct** - Non-adherence to the University's standards of academic integrity is classed as academic misconduct. This includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, improper use of Artificial Intelligence, collusion, cheating, impersonation, contract cheating and fabrication/falsification.
- **Academic standards** – quality standards articulate the University's expectations for high quality provision in relation to its modules, programmes and awards. The QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2024) provides the reference point for setting and maintaining the standards of awards and for managing the quality of provision. (see assuring academic standards).
- **Accessible assessment** - An accessible assessment will not include any irrelevant features that make it more difficult for some learners to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do to the required standard.
- **Assessment brief** – a set of instructions (can be multimedia) that communicates clearly the expectations and detailed requirements of a piece of coursework. (see guidance on writing assessment briefs).
- **Anonymous marking** – where the student's name or any identifiable information is withheld from the marker.

- **Assessment element and components** – an assessment element is one of two potential methods that are logged on the curriculum management system: coursework or examination. A module may have no more than two summative assessment elements. The combination of two elements leads to 100% overall module mark. An element may be comprised of more than one, interrelated task. These subtasks are identified as assessment components. Note that Faculties may use different terminology e.g., 'deliverables. If and when designing component tasks, due consideration must be given to the overall workload involved with each task. The combined workload must fall within the expected workload equivalence for that overall assessment element of the module.
- **Assessment literacy** – the ability for staff and students to understand the purpose of assessment, how and why they are designed, measured and weighted, and to use assessment data and feedback to make critical judgements on performance.
- **Authentic assessment** – assessment tasks that are designed to reflect real-world activities, themes or scenarios and to allow students to apply their learning to meaningful contexts.
- **Compassionate assessment** – assessment design (including briefings) that is empathetic to the needs of heterogenous students, and where the designer is cognisant of student demographics, workloads, levels of learning and foundational knowledge, and specific learning needs or social challenges. Compassionate assessment enables flexible and inclusive approaches that ensure equity, a sense of belonging (through student engagement) and the overall maintenance of mental health and wellbeing through the assessment process. Timely support and feedback for learners is key and can include the monitoring of at-risk students. Compassionate feedback offers timely, formative and respectful commentary.
- **Continuous Assurance of Quality Enhancement** – the annual quality review of programmes (See CAQE webpage).
- **Diagnostic assessment** – a very early, formative assessment task at the beginning of a module that allows a tutor to gauge the level of current knowledge, skills and attitudes around the subject within their student group. The results will help the tutor to shape or edit module delivery or content in response to learner needs.
- **Extenuating Circumstances** - Extenuating circumstances are events that are of the student's control. These events can impact performance during studies and students may not be able to attend an exam or submit coursework on time.

- **Feedback and Feedforward** – feedback offers formative comments on a student's current performance within an assessed task and can help to justify a given grade. In contrast, feedforward offers additional guidance on steps and actions that can be taken to improve future work. The feedforward could be applied to the current module of study and/or to future modules. This process helps to develop assessment literacy and self-regulation skills.
- **Formative assessment** – while diagnostic assessment is undertaken very early on in a module to help shape design and delivery, formative assessments are further and ongoing opportunities for learners to gain feedback on their progress. Formative assessment activities are typically informal and non-credit bearing but provide timely and supportive practice opportunities and feedback to help ensure success. Tutors can also use formative methods for continuous monitoring of student performance to help them shape module delivery and tutorial support.
- **Holistic assessment** – where assessment designers are cognisant of programme-level content, outcomes and the assessment strategy, and understand how content and assessments across modules might be linked and can build as students progress through the levels. Feedback from one assessment can include feedforward that can shape learning for another assessment. While diverse assessment methods are encouraged to help measure all programme outcomes, there is also value in having some continuity of methods to allow students to build their confidence and assessment literacy. Holistic assessment design also ensures consistency in the quality of assessment design and delivery which can be undertaken through peer review.
- **Inclusive assessment** - (see inclusive assessment attributes).
- **In-Module Assignment Recovery (IMAR)** - A process which will, within designated modules, allow students to rework and resubmit a component of coursework that has not met the threshold pass mark of 40% prior to the Board of Examiners.
- **Jisc** – a UK organisation that provides network and IT services and digital resources. They offer support and advice to FE and HE on digital technology for education and research (see Jisc website).
- **National qualifications frameworks** – qualifications frameworks that define and link the levels and credit values of different qualifications in the UK. The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (FHEQ) is used for qualifications awarded by bodies across the UK with degree-awarding powers.

- **Peer assessment** – (typically) a formative activity where students are engaged collaboratively in assessment tasks to evaluate and provide constructive feedback on the work of their peers. Like self-assessment, this peer activity helps students to share knowledge, ideas and helps develop assessment literacy and self-regulation skills.
- **PSRB** - Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies. Professional and employer bodies, regulators and those with statutory authority over a profession or group of professionals.
- **QAA Quality Code** - The UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) articulates the principles of UK higher education for securing academic standards and assuring and enhancing quality. Built on a shared understanding across the UK, the Quality Code enables providers to see what is expected of them and what they can expect of each other, irrespective of the regulatory framework in which they operate. It informs the public, protects students' interests and champions the UK's worldleading reputation for high-quality education provision (See Quality Code website).

- **Reasonable adjustment recommendations** - students with disabilities and additional study needs are entitled to support to help them achieve their academic goals. AccessAbility Advisers make reasonable adjustment recommendations (RARs) based on students' specific needs and communicate them to the relevant schools, departments and professional services within the university to ensure these needs are met. This includes support for assessments. (see Student Wellbeing guidance site).
- **Rubrics** (and marking criteria) - a rubric is a framework that lists specific evaluative criteria for grading academic work and contains descriptions of different levels of achievement, plus a scoring strategy. Rubrics provide additional guidance for students in terms of assessment expectations and help with consistency of marking (see guidelines on rubrics).
- **Scaffolding** – the provision of support for students to guide their learning and to achieve their learning outcomes. This includes support for learning through an assessment. Support is tailored to meet the changing needs of students as they develop capacity for a subject, activity or an assessment method. Guidance (e.g. multimedia resources and briefs) on how to approach a new assessment method may be quite detailed and model answers or mock assessments will help to build assessment literacy. As students become accustomed to an assessment method, the level of guidance may become less detailed.
- **Self-assessment** – a pro-active and introspective method of assessment where learners evaluate and assess their own learning to gauge progress and to action plan for development.

- **Self-regulation** – a process where students reflect on, monitor and manage their learning with respect to their levels of cognition, motivation, application and behaviour to help action plan for personal and academic development. Formative assessment activities including self and peer assessment can help students engage with their studies and to become self-regulated learners.
- **Specific Learning Difficulties** (SpLD) - SpLD affect the way information is learned and processed. They are neurological conditions, usually run in families and occur independently of intelligence. They can have significant impact on education and learning and on the acquisition of literacy skills (The Dyslexia Association).
- **Strategic Vision** (Ulster) - Ulster University Strategy – People, Place and Partnership.
- **Summative assessment** – a formal assessment that evaluates and grades student achievement against a standard or benchmark and contributes to the overall award. Summative assessment would traditionally be held at the end of a unit/module of learning, however more formative approaches encourage staged assessment design with smaller assessment components spread over a module allowing for timely feedback and feedforward.

- **University regulations** – a set of rules and guidelines to govern practice and policy at a university level, including programme-level regulations (University Regulations. General Programme Regulations.

3. Defining assessment

The process of assessment comprises three critical aspects:

- Assessment determines ***what* students have learned**. Robust assessment processes ensure that University qualifications are awarded to students who meet specified learning outcomes. In this way, awards based on assessed performance provide information that allows students to apply to future programmes, future employment, or a licence to practise. Consequently, systematic quality assurance processes must be applied to assessment to ensure that standards are consistent, equitable, reliable, valid, and fair.

- Assessment shapes ***how* students learn**. Assessment designs should provide a framework that guides students on various topics and themes of study, whilst developing professional competencies, soft skills and personal learning strategies. Assessment tasks can motivate students to engage in learning and encourage them to collaborate, self-assess and to give and respond to feedback. In this way, assessment tasks can develop reflective, self-regulation skills which help students to plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning.

- Assessment informs ***how* educators *teach*.** Performance data and student feedback gathered from formal and informal assessment tasks provides useful information for educators to shape their practice. Where students are struggling, educators should make targeted interventions to further support learning. Conversely, where student performance and feedback are particularly strong, successful strategies can be disseminated more widely to help shape practice in other modules or programmes.

4. Quality Frameworks for Assessment

Assessment practices contribute to the maintenance of academic standards. To achieve this adequately, assessment must achieve the following attributes:

4.1 QAA Quality Code: Expectations for Assessment Standards and Quality

The Quality Code identifies a set of assessment quality standards for the Higher Education sector. These standards are articulated through four expectations which have been identified and contextualised below. They have been used to inform Ulster's core assessment policies and practice.

QAA Expectation 1: Programme assessment determines whether each student has achieved the specified learning outcomes. Outcomes and standards will be consistent with the relevant national qualification framework's descriptors.

QAA Expectation 2: The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.

QAA Expectation 3: Programmes will be well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.

QAA Expectation 4: all students will be provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.

To meet these expectations:

- Assessment processes will ensure that learning outcomes are consistent with the requirements of the relevant national qualifications frameworks.

- Assessments will measure accurately and consistently the extent to which students achieve the learning outcomes both at, and beyond, the threshold level.

- Programmes will be designed so that curricula, learning outcomes and assessment are aligned, enabling reliable assessment and an effective learning experience.

- Assessment will support students' learning and will be designed to enable students to learn through preparing for and undertaking the assessment and from feedback on their performance in the assessment.

- Assessment will be tailored appropriately to different environments (e.g. workplace learning).

- Measurement and representation of student achievement will be reasonably comparable with those of other UK providers.

- The standards of Ulster awards will be credible and secure across the University and its academic partner organisations.

- Student achievement will be measured reliably, fairly, and transparently. External examiners will also be deployed to ensure qualifications have been awarded equitably and in accordance with national standards.

- Programme teams will consider and act on External Examiner reports and will focus on assessment within annual programme reviews. Teams will also engage students in the development, assurance, and enhancement of the quality of their student experience.

- Assessment policies, procedures and processes will be reviewed and enhanced regularly to ensure they are fit for purpose.

- Recruitment, progression, and development of staff involved in teaching and assessment will include consideration of their knowledge and expertise in assessment.

4.2 Assessment Quality Assurance Attributes

Assessment practices contribute to the maintenance of academic standards. To achieve this adequately, assessment must achieve the following attributes:

Validity: assessment is aligned to and measures the associated learning outcomes of the module or programme.

Reliability: the measurement of learner performance is consistent, repeatable and accurate, to include inter-assessor and intra-assessor reliability.

Rigour: Assessments will aim to measure performance at the level of the module or programme and defined procedures, processes and standards should be adhered to strictly.

Assessments should enable assessors to accurately distinguish authentic performance between candidates across the full marking range. Assessment strategies should aim to safeguard academic integrity.

Transparency: The design and delivery of assessment must align with approved methods/schedules and as published in programme specifications and programme/module handbooks. Variations must be approved in a timely way through the Programme Revision process and relevant documents updated accordingly.

Assessment briefs must be clear about why an assessed activity has been chosen as the method to best measure the learning outcome(s). They must communicate clearly the purpose and details of the task, and methods of marking to all students and other relevant audiences.

Fairness: Assessments should be reasonable in the expectations placed on candidates and be demonstrably conducted in an equitable and consistent manner. Assessment tools must be understood and seen to be fair by all candidates, assessors and moderators.

Students should have equivalence of opportunities to succeed across diversified assessment methods. The assessment result should be dependent only on measures of the intended learning outcomes of the module or programme and should be free from bias.

Practicality: As well as being fair in the overall workload placed upon students and staff, the assessment should aim to achieve the maximum valid information for the minimum cost and effort.

4.3 Assessment Design Framework

Jisc's Principles of Good Assessment and Feedback have been incorporated into QAA guiding principles of assessment and QAA Inclusive Assessment Attributes, to shape the design of assessments at Ulster. These principles are values-driven and are well aligned to our values of inclusion, collaboration, integrity and enhancing potential. These design principles have been combined and are identified below:

a. Assessment methods and criteria will be aligned to the relevant learning outcomes and associated teaching activities.

b. Assessment will be reliable, consistent, fair, and valid.

c. Assessment design will be approached holistically. Assessment designs will be diverse, authentic, will develop over stages and will offer an element of student choice where feasible. Assessment strategies will enhance learner employability by assessing authentic tasks as appropriate for the discipline, and by promoting ethical conduct. Additionally, strategies will support staff to critique and develop their own practice.

d. Assessment will support the personalised needs of learners by being accessible, inclusive, equitable and compassionate.

e. Assessment will be explicit and transparent. Assessment strategies will help learners understand what good looks like by engaging them with the requirements and performance criteria for each task.

f. Assessment and feedback are purposeful and support the learning process. Assessment strategies will aim to develop autonomous learners by encouraging self-generated feedback, self-regulation, reflection, dialogue, and peer review.

g. Assessment and feedback will be timely to promote student learning and facilitate improvement.

h. Assessment will aim to be efficient and manageable. Strategies will enable staff and students to manage their workload effectively by having the right assessment, at the right time, supported by efficient business processes.

i. Students are supported and prepared for assessment. Assessment strategies will foster active learning by recognising that engagement with learning resources, peers and tutors can all offer opportunities for formative development.

j. Assessment will encourage academic integrity and will minimise opportunities for students to commit academic misconduct.

5. Programme Assessment Strategies

For each programme, the University requires a statement of the overall assessment strategy and the assessment schedule for each year group. The programme team and wider stakeholders will contribute to the cohesive design of assessments to ensure sector-wide compatibility within disciplines, and that graduate attributes, accreditation requirements and overall programme learning outcomes are identified and achievable at the appropriate level of study. Assessment design must be fit for purpose and an integral part of student learning to enable progressive achievement of learning outcomes. The holistic approach to assessment will support interconnected learning across semesters, academic years, and programme subject areas so all students can develop subject expertise, proficiency in learning, and assessment literacy.

The programme assessment strategy typically describes:

- The components of assessment which are used within the programme and general statements of the standards of performance required at each level and mark/grade bands

- Why the components of assessment have been chosen and how they assist in demonstrating achievement of learning outcomes, competencies, and graduate attributes

- The overall assessment load and schedule (see Designing for learning)

- The process of moderation and quality monitoring which operates

- How the standards and principles of sound assessment practice have been met

- How and where elements of Ulster's strategic vision, it's qualities and values have been supported

* Assessment practices contribute to the maintenance of academic standards. To achieve this adequately, all assessment strategies must aim to meet the quality assurance attributes identified in this section. Assessments collectively will meet the associated programme learning outcomes. Additionally, effective assessment processes and practice will help Ulster deliver a transformative learning experience for students, based on values-led behaviours.

When planning and reviewing assessment design and delivery, programme teams should consider where and how their assessment strategy aligns with the University's strategic vision. Examples of alignment are given in table 1 below.

Table1: Designing Programme Assessment Strategies: Aligning with Ulster's Strategic Vision

Ulster University Strategic Vision	Programme-level Assessment Strategy Design Considerations
To maximise the learning experience and successes of students from all backgrounds	• Identifying learner needs and providing programme transition arrangements • Diagnostic assessment and Formative assessment opportunities including timely feedback and feed-forward • Diversifying assessment and offering the element of choice to allow all students to showcase their knowledge and competencies • Iterative scaffolding of assessment literacy including clear signposting to study support systems • Engage students in assessment co-design and review
To encourage BRAVE thinking and values-led behaviours in staff	• Holistic and collaborative assessment design including meaningful stakeholder engagement including student partners • Identify and promote innovative and effective assessment practices • Supporting regular review and potential enhancement of assessment strategies (e.g., via CAQE and annual programme review). • Support and measure the development of graduate attributes and help students articulate knowledge, skills and attributes through assessment
To build sustainable futures by providing graduates with skills to enhance their life choices and societal outcomes	• Aligning Programme Learning Outcomes (PLO), Module Learning Outcomes (MLO) and associated assessments with sustainable education goals where feasible • Designing assessments that develop and measure sustainability competencies • Developing assessment literacy and engaging with inclusive assessment principles • Providing enrichment opportunities that can be woven into assessments • Including statements on how practice/placement is to be assessed and accredited • Collaboration with external stakeholders to co-design authentic assessments
To maintain space designed for collaboration and the delivery of transformative experiences for all	• Creating environments to support and evaluate innovative and authentic, real-world assessment practices Utilising • social learning spaces that support collaborative peer assessment

To build connections and support the development of communities	• Engage in schools' outreach to support transition to HE assessment strategies

To maintain the spirit of partnership across the institution and the wider community	• Exploring cross-Faculty, multidisciplinary and interprofessional assessment strategies • Building effective communications between academic and professional services to support assessment policy and procedures
To stimulate entrepreneurship and innovation through collaboration with industry, business, and professions including regional and global partners	• • Collaboration with and inclusion of employer stakeholders in the design and delivery of assessment strategies Ensure aassessments align with national qualifications frameworks, Subject Benchmark Statements, and Professional, • discipline-specific competency standards which inform Programme and Module Learning Outcomes Explore academic partnerships including arrangements for quality assurance, accreditation and the recognition of academic • and professional qualifications across borders and countries To support student mobility and the transition of international students to Ulster assessment practices

6. Assessment Elements, Components, Weightings, and preparation for External Examiner Review

A range of different assessment methods and modes should be included across a programme of study to offer all students various opportunities to demonstrate the extent of their learning and achievement of learning outcomes. Unless specifically defined by a professional context, one method should not dominate a programme of study as this could disadvantage certain student groups. Assessment methods must be carefully selected to appropriately measure the knowledge, skills and attributes associated with a given set of learning outcomes.

Due consideration must be given to the value of high-stakes, high pressure methods of assessment e.g., time constrained, closed book exams, and their potential impact on student health and wellbeing. Where high pressure assessments are identified, timely formative opportunities are particularly essential. Inclusive assessment design must be supported to include authentic assessment methods, familiarisation with assessment techniques through briefings and formative opportunities, and elements of student choice in assessment if and where feasible.

How to select assessment methods in CMS.

6.1 Assessment Elements

The University groups summative assessment into two distinct categories, or assessment 'elements' for the purpose of reviewing student performance. These elements are examinations and/or coursework. Modules are allowed up to a maximum of two elements of assessment.

Assessment element weightings may vary from module to module, but results will be aggregated to give an overall module mark. A range of different assessment methods (written exam and various coursework methods) are listed within CMS module descriptors.

6.2 Assessment Components

Where more than one task is included within a given coursework element, these are termed coursework components. Components will be weighted to meet 100% of the overall coursework element. Careful calculation of component weightings must be undertaken before the overall coursework mark is uploaded to Banner.

While separate assessment elements will measure separate topics covered within a module (and possibly separate outcomes), assessment components should be interrelated to meet the overall outcome associated with that assessment element. Careful consideration must be given to the design of elements with sub-components to ensure the overall workload is appropriate.

6.3 Assessment Types

select assessment methods in CMS.

6.3.1 Examinations

A form of assessment which relies on candidates producing written, oral or physical responses to seen or unseen questions, or instructions under timed, invigilated examination conditions. Examinations are typically undertaken during the end of the semester during the Examination period and are typically facilitated by the Examinations Office to follow University examination procedures. Examinations (and class tests) should only be used where it is required by PSRB or where the module cannot be assessed through any other method.

Arrangements for the conduct of examinations must meet the expectations in the University's Regulations Governing Examinations in Programmes of Study. The University operates a policy to ensure the anonymity of examination scripts during the marking process. Partner institutions are required to adopt similar arrangements. The timing of common examinations will be synchronised, including across Franchised partnerships.

When planning and timetabling an assessment, consideration must be given to the space and resources required to run an examination, whether the space requires formal timetabling by the Examinations Office in advance, and whether reasonable adjustments require facilitation. Programme teams will indicate any special requirements on the exam return form, to include for example:

- Where an examination is scheduled for formal timetabling/invigilation during the examination period including date/session preferences for scheduling.
- The nature of an examination e.g., open book
- Whether the examination is to be online and accessed either on or off campus
- Whether any coursework components e.g. class tests require any specific support or resources from the Examination Office.
- The Module Coordinator will take responsibility for their examination and must aim to be available for invigilation and to answer any queries.

Further Information on Examination Timetables
Further information on exam invigilation

Examination Timetabling

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- The Module Coordinator will take responsibility for their examination and must aim to be available for invigilation and to answer any queries.

Further Information on Examination Timetables

Examination Invigilation

- All academic staff, up to and including Heads of School/Dept, are expected to be available for invigilation duties.

- Executive Deans may grant exemption from invigilation to categories of staff (for example, staff in a particular school on a particular campus).

- Staff may be granted exemption from invigilation on an individual basis for specific days or for a particular examination period as follows: ○ Heads of School/Dept must obtain written authorisation from the Executive Dean; ○ Other academic staff must obtain written authorisation from the Head of School/Dept.

- Invigilation duties shall be allocated to staff in each faculty in accordance with the faculty's proportion of the modules assessed by examination on that campus. However, Heads of School are normally required to undertake one session only.

- Where an Executive Dean grants exemption from invigilation to a category of staff, the Executive Dean is responsible for ensuring that the invigilation duties of such staff are undertaken by other staff in the faculty.

Where individual members of staff are granted exemption from invigilation, their duties shall be allocated as additional sessions to other staff in the school.

Further information on exam invigilation

6.3.2 Oral Examinations or Viva Voce

Oral examinations are identified as a typical form of assessment within the wider range of assessment methods available to staff.

6.3.3 Coursework

A form of assessment which relies upon performance in one or more components of written or practical work e.g., through submission of exercises, seminar papers, reports, presentations, blogs, class tests, project or production of artefacts, design, etc. Coursework is typically compiled and completed by a student over an extended period. Where more than one piece of assessment is used in an coursework element, these are termed coursework components.

*An OSCE (Objective, Structured Clinical Examination), or other forms of practical assessment may be identified as a **practical skills assessment**. Such assessments are typically facilitated by the programme team rather than the Examination Office if they fall outside of the Examination period. For this reason, they are identified as coursework. There must be transparency about such assessments being delivered under examination conditions and due regard must be given to facilitating their delivery in accordance with reasonable adjustments.

6.3.4 Class test, online exam, take-home exam: Exam or Coursework?

Class Test: The class test falls between the two categories. While a class test formally sits within the coursework category, it is *typically** a short, timed, invigilated assessment method, often online, with one or more test events scheduled across the semester or academic year rather than during the examination period. However, the class test will be viewed as an 'exam' by students therefore, programme and module handbooks must provide transparency about this method of assessment. While short, distributed tests can provide opportunities for timely feedback, student reflection and improvement, they should not become the dominant form of assessment across a programme. Assessment workload equivalence must also be carefully considered. Class tests are not facilitated through the Student Operations Department and due regard must be given to facilitating their delivery in accordance with reasonable adjustments. Class test papers must undergo peer review prior to External Examiner review, to ensure content and construct reliability, and the conduct of the test must be secure to mitigate the risk of academic misconduct.

Online Exam: this form of assessment may be considered an exam *if* the exam is invigilated/proctored, time constrained and falls within the formal Examination period. However, if students access the online exam platform over an extended period without proctoring, then this method may be classified as coursework. In this context, due consideration must be given to the inherent risks of cheating and collusion.

Take-home exam: this form of assessment is essentially an open book exam undertaken 'at home'. While the format of this type of assessment may follow a typical exam structure, the assessment is designed to be completed over a more extended period (e.g., 24 hours) without invigilation. This categorises the take-home 'exam' as coursework as it is not undertaken within a controlled environment.

See appendix 2: A note about choosing examinations and class tests.

7. Assessment Weighting

Where both coursework and written examination elements are used within a single module, the module descriptor will identify the weighting between these two elements to determine the overall module result. Where coursework and/or examination elements are divided into multiple components, a manually aggregated assessment mark will be uploaded to Banner under the respective element category.

Note that modules will typically have no more than 2 elements. An individual element may comprise more than one component. Consequently, module designers must give very careful consideration to the workload associated with each element and subcomponents, to ensure students and staff are not unduly overloaded. Increasing the number of assessments through additional components, while acceptable, can easily lead to work overload unless weighting and associated workload is considered very carefully.

A small degree of flexibility is expected when calculating workload equivalence. Where there are multiple assessed tasks, (e.g., example 3), some leniency in workload for each task is advised, due to the increased cognitive load associated with undertaking multiple and differing tasks.

Examples of Element and Component weighting (for 20 credit modules) are offered below:

Example 1: 2 Elements: 40% Exam, 60% CWK

(Element) **Examination 40%** (1.5 hr) (Sessional exam)	(Element) **Coursework 60%** (2400 words) (Report)

Example weighted calculation:
Exam score: 56% (x 40% weighting) = 22.4
CWK score: 72% (x 60% weighting) = 43.2

Example 2: 1 Element: 100% CWK Total - 65.6, Total Module Grade – **66%**

(Component) **Coursework A 20%** (800 words) Project Plan	(Component) **Coursework B 80%** (3200 words) Final project

Example weighted calculation:
Coursework score: 55% (x 20% weighting) = 11
Coursework score: 63% (x 80% weighting) = 50.4

Total – 61.4, Total Module Grade – **61%**

Example 3: 2 Elements: 25% Exam, 75% CWK (with components)

(Element) **Examination 25%** (1 hour) (sessional exam)	(Element) **Coursework 75%** component – presentation (40%) (15 mins) component – reflection (60%) (1500 words)

Exam score: 80% (x 25% weighting) = **16** Coursework
Score:

- Presentation - 65% (x 40% weighting) = 26

- Reflection - 85% (x 60% weighting) = 51
- Total – 26 + 51 = 77% (x 75% weighting) = **57.75**

Total – 73.75, Total Module Grade = **74%**

Example 4: 1 Element: 100% Coursework (with components)

(Component) **Class Test 25%** (1 hr)	(Component) **Class Test 25%** (1 hr)	(Component) **Class Test 25%** (1 hr)	(Component) **Class Test 25%** (1 hr)

Example weighted calculation:
Class test score: 35% (x 25% weighting) = 8.75
Class test score: 52% (x 25% weighting) = 13

Class test score: 63% (x 25% weighting) = 15.75
Class test score: 78% (x 25% weighting) = 19.5

Total – 57, Total Module Grade = **57%**

Due consideration must be given to the scheduling of assessment elements and components over the semester/year to avoid bunching and high-pressure points.

Additionally, where a component task is associated with low weighting, the timing of the component and its weighting must be considered as some students may strategically avoid attempting the task if they have passed the overall module threshold pass level through other tasks.

When calculating overall marks in the context of module resit assessments, any previously passed component marks must be included with resit component marks.

8. Changes to Assessment

Any proposed changes to a module assessment during the approved period of validation must be given due consideration as changes could have substantial implications for the module and programme curricula, or for resourcing. Module descriptors will include an outline of approved assessment elements. An element is identified as coursework and/or examination. Any proposed change of an assessment element i.e., adding an element or changing an element from coursework to examination or vice versa, must undergo scrutiny and approval (see 9.1).

Module Coordinators will have some flexibility with the design of an approved element. When describing an assessment in a Module Descriptor, it is important to design-in flexibility to enable annual changes to the themes of coursework to ensure that the tasks are authentic and have currency (i.e., static assessment themes have an increased risk of academic misconduct). Additionally, and in line with inclusive assessment design, module coordinators are encouraged to consider optional modes of delivery e.g., oral presentation or video presentation or narrated PowerPoint presentation; this provides students with a degree of choice in the delivery of the assessed task. The associated marking scheme must be given careful consideration to ensure that multiple modes of delivery are given equal value within the scheme so as not to disadvantage any student and ensure they can equally

meet the learning outcomes of the module. With careful construction of the assessment marking scheme, there is no reason why students cannot be offered the opportunity to select between unrelated assessment modes e.g., Poster Presentation, Video Presentation. For support developing an integrated assessment marking scheme contact: assessment@ulster.ac.uk.

8.1 Process for approving changes to assessment elements

Updated versions of a module assessment are submitted to the Faculty for consideration and approval through the CMS accompanied by Form CA3. Procedures for consideration of revisions should include appropriate scrutiny at Faculty level under the auspices of the Faculty Learning & Teaching Committee or equivalent. Consideration must include assuring continued alignment between the assessment and the module learning outcomes, and the module outcomes to the wider programme outcomes. Current, and prospective students if appropriate, should be consulted and the CA3 should evidence this consultation and feedback from students. Programme Directors and Module Coordinators are reminded that higher education providers are subject to the Competition and Market Authority (CMA) oversight and extensive consumer protection regulation. Changes to what we deliver to students, how we deliver, what is core and what is optional and how we assess students can form part of the student contract. It is particularly important that changes are not made unilaterally and without following the process for updating the CMS.

Reading lists can be updated in the CMS without CA3 approval.

All approved assessment changes must subsequently correspond with details articulated on the CMS and updated on OLP.

Once assessment changes are approved by the Faculty and the impact of potential changes have been mapped to the programme specification, the CA3 should be sent via the CMS to the CCEA for authorisation. ASQEC is informed of all authorisations. The Strategic Marketing Unit and Central Admissions are also notified so that prospective and current applicants can be informed of approved changes to published information in accordance with the expectations of consumer protection law. The Library, Module Office, Examinations Office and Timetabling Officer Central Timetabling Unit and Banner Teams are notified as appropriate. Faculties should ensure that information for current students, if appropriate, is updated following approval.

Dates for submission of curriculum revisions (CA3s) to CCEA are set by the Learning Enhancement Directorate in consultation with faculties each year. Curriculum modification dates are available via the CCEA webpage.

Later forms are accepted for the following:

- changes to coursework / examination weighting which have been recommended by the external examiner - not later than one month prior to the start of the semester for Semester 1 and Semester 2 modules, or by 14 June for Semester 3 modules.

9. Internal and External Quality Review of Assessments

9.1 Internal Review of Assessments – key principles

The Learning Enhancement Directorate and all Faculties will have procedures in place for robust internal quality review of assessment designs and processes. Internal review takes several forms:

- Initial appraisal of assessments at the point of design via University evaluation/approval panels. (see planning and approval process). New course proposal forms (CA1) are signed off by Executive Dean/Associate Dean (AQSE) on behalf of the Faculty. Revalidation forms (CA6a) are signed off by the Programme/Subject Director, Associate Head of School and Associate Dean (AQSE).

- Programme/module revision via CA3 process. CA3 forms are approved and signed off by the Programme Director and the Associate Dean (AQSE).

- Centralised assessment review as a potential outcome of the annual CAQE process (Continuous Assurance of Quality Enhancement).

- Internal review of draft examination papers, marking schemes, coursework briefs and marking criteria prior to submission to the External Examiner to ensure assessment information aligns with pre-approved methods and details recorded within CMS and module handbooks. Schools will establish internal collection and quality review processes before distribution to the External Examiner for their consideration.

- Annual review by Programme/Subject Committees (or sub-groups) through annual monitoring meetings. Actions arising from meetings will be documented.

  Programme/subject committees are responsible for ongoing review of the performance of programmes in the light of evidence available to them at programme and module level. Programme performance statistics to inform review by programme/subject teams are provided centrally by the Centre for Quality Enhancement.

  Programme/subject committee annual monitoring meetings should consider all available information including student demographic data, statistical performance data, external examiner reports, PSRB and employer engagement, student feedback, DLHE and NSS results. These factors will influence further enhancement planning (via CA3) and/or the identification of good practice for dissemination.

Table 3: Excerpt From Programme Approval Management & Review Handbook 2021 (pg 18):

128 All Faculties should have a committee with responsibility for the Faculty-level oversight of the programme management system and this should be clearly stated in its terms of reference. In addition, these should include the identification and dissemination of good practice. Faculties should ensure that course/subject committee meetings are held, are well attended and effective and that communication channels for issues and the dissemination of good practice are in place. **129** Faculties are expected, through their normal processes and existing committee structure to undertake strategic reviews of data (e.g. NSS, non-continuation, graduate outcomes) as and when provided.

Assessment quality considerations for internal review panels should include:

- Clear alignment of assessment strategies with quality frameworks and University strategic priorities (see section 3).
- Clear alignment of assessment methods with module and programme level outcomes.
- Specific regulatory and professional requirements and exemptions to norms.

- The portfolio of assessments across the programme to ensure the mix of methods and delivery conditions are appropriate for the discipline area, while providing students with equal opportunities to demonstrate their learning and achievements.
- Accessibility of assessment methods across the programme and the quality of student guidance and support.
- The consistent provision of coursework briefs, marking schemes and rubrics and formative feedback.
- Consistency and quality of assessment information conveyed to students including format and clarity of briefs, marking schemes and rubrics, and the consistent quality of feedback. Assessment information must be free from typographical and/or calculation errors. Submission instructions should comply with Ulster expectations or identify that an approved exemption is in place.
- The level of assessment scaffolding provided to offer formative support and guidance for students to build their confidence and capability.
- Assessment size, workloads and equivalence, scheduling, and adherence to assessment parameters.
- The continued fair distribution of assessment tasks across the academic period.
- Reasonable adjustments procedures and communications.
- Currency of assessment information held on the Curriculum Management System and module database
- Availability of a schedule of assessment dates by level and module (see appendix 3).
- Assessment performance, student achievement and risks of academic misconduct.
- The identification of innovative and effective practice for dissemination.

And for examinations, peer reviews should check:

- Appropriateness of formulation and clarity of questions.
- Appropriate coverage of module content and alignment with learning outcomes.
- Appropriateness and level of difficulty of questions aligned with level of study.
- Appropriate use of discriminating questions.
- The regular rotation of questions to avoid excessive repetition from previous papers.
- The appropriate number of questions for the time allocated.
- The appropriate weighting of questions and a clear indication to students of the marks available for each question.
- Accuracy of marking schemes and consideration of alternate responses to questions.

Revisions to previously approved programme or module assessment strategies will be undertaken through the programme revision process using the CA3 form. Proposed changes to assessment via CA3 will also prompt a review in the context of the wider programme to ensure scheduling, workloads and alignment with outcomes are not affected negatively.

The HoS will be responsible for ensuring in the event of ill-health or similar that students are provided with the appropriate assessment.

Assessment documentation for programmes offered by partner institutions may be reviewed by the Faculty Partnership Manager and/or a Faculty subject expert.

Further guidance

- Course and Subject Management (opens in new window)
- Continuous Assurance of Quality Enhancement (opens in new window)

9.2 Initial Internal Review of Draft Assessments prior to External Examiner Review

All draft summative assessments leading to an Ulster award must undergo an internal school-level review prior to their submission to the External Examiner.

Each school must confirm draft review mechanisms with the relevant AD (AQSE) for the forthcoming academic year.

Schools may determine their preferred timeline for internal review of drafts, but it must take place sufficiently early in the academic calendar to ensure that modifications can identified and actioned in time. Approved assessment briefs must be available to students from day one of a given module.

Assessment documentation for Externals Examiners must be pre-checked for the following:

Table 4:

A schedule of assessments by level	The schedule will record each approved module assessment element and/or component per level and semester (see appendix 1), and should include: • Method • Weighting • Date of submission and marks/feedback due date
Range of documentation	Programme assessment documentation will include draft examination papers and marking plans, coursework briefs and marking criteria/rubrics. Examination questions must be clear and unambiguous. Coursework briefs will be checked for clarity.
Compliance with CMS	Module assessment details should be checked to ensure they comply with details recorded on the CMS and the Online Prospectus.
Compliance with Module Handbook	Module assessment details should be checked to ensure they comply with details recorded in the module handbook.
Appropriate number of scripts	The number and range of examination and coursework scripts comply with the appropriate moderation process (see section 15).
Exemptions	Modules with approved exemptions to assessment parameters are clearly indicated
Proofing	Examination scripts and coursework briefs and marking schemes will be checked to ensure they are free from error and that formatting is accurate.

Assessment documentation for programmes offered by partner institutions may be reviewed by the Faculty Partnership Manager and/or a Faculty subject expert.

9.3 External Examiner Review of Draft Assessments

Module Coordinators are responsible for proof-reading their draft exam papers and coursework assessment schemes and for complying with internal review processs (9.2). Heads of School will ensure assessment documentation is presented consistently and accurately to External Examiners.

All draft examination papers and coursework assessment schemes for the modules in each External Examiner's area of responsibility are approved by the External Examiner in advance. Assessments should be drafted early enough in the academic cycle to allow sufficient time for the External Examiner to scrutinise and approve them before the module begins.

- Coursework assessment briefs and criteria/rubrics should be made available to the External Examiner in advance of the commencement of the presentation of a module
- Examination papers should be made available for review by week 3 (per relevant semester).
- Final formatted versions will be submitted to the Examinations Office by week 8

Supplementary (resit/referred) papers should be prepared at the same time as the main paper and submitted to the EE at the same time.

Draft assessments with accompanying marking schemes and, where appropriate, indicative points for content of answers are sent to the External Examiner for approval. The exact nature and extent of involvement must be discussed and agreed with External Examiners in advance. The External Examiner should be advised that, if comments are not received within three weeks, the University will assume that the draft is approved.

The External Examiner should be provided with an assessment schedule and all components of assessment for each module. Documentation will be signed off by the Programme Director.

Communication from the External Examiner to review and implement any required changes should be via the School/Dept office, in consultation with Programme Director, and not with individual Module Coordinators. Module Coordinators will reflect upon recommendations and implement changes.

Copies of External Examiners comments will be supplied to Module Leaders. Required changes will be incorporated, recommendations will be considered and if necessary, discussed with the Programme/Subject Director or Associate Head of School.

Approval of a draft examination paper should be received from the External Examiner before it is submitted to the Examinations Office.

The Head of School is responsible for ensuring that all assessments once approved by the External Examiner are held securely.

Process for providing External Examiners A-code access to Blackboard, via A3M

Further information can be found on the External Examiners webpages.

10. Coordinating Assessments with the External Examiner

All assessments contributing to the final award or to PSRB competencies will be preapproved by an External Examiner.

Summative Examinations are normally scheduled during Exam Week and are coordinated through the Examinations Office. Programme/Subject Directors will receive a timetable for the processing of examination papers at the beginning of each academic year. The deadlines for exam and coursework papers are set out below:

Table 2: Deadlines for submission of assessment papers

Autumn/Spring Semester	**Week**
Submission to External Examiners of:	
Coursework briefs and marking criteria	Pre week 1
Examination scripts for approval, including resit papers	Week 3
Submission to Examinations Office of approved assessment papers for printing	Week 8
August/September Supplementary Examinations	
Submission to Examinations Office of approved examination papers for printing	Last Friday in June
Intensive Summer Semester	
Submission to Examinations Office of approved examination papers for printing	Last Friday in June

Module Coordinators will be responsible for drafting and compiling exam papers in consultation with the module team. Examination papers should follow the prescribed format using the template available from the Examinations website.

Module coordinators will also be responsible for drafting coursework assessment briefs and marking schemes prior to the launch of a module, to be reviewed by the External Examiner. Assessment information will be made available on the module Blackboard Ultra site. External Examiners can access the Module Blackboard Ultra site to review draft briefs and rubrics.

Process for providing External Examiners A-code access to Blackboard, via A3M

11. Programme Regulations, Examinations Policies and Procedures

General Programme Regulations are derived from University award regulations and can be found on the dedicated Learning Enhancement webpages. The regulations are effective from September 2024.

Examinations policies and procedures, including appeals, extenuating circumstances procedures, and breach of examination regulations can be found on the dedicated Student Administration webpages.

11.1 Assessment Process and Boards of Examiners procedures

Information on assessment process and Boards of Examiners procedures can be found on dedicated Student Administration webpages.

12. Accessibility and Special Arrangements

12.1 Inclusive Assessment

Where feasible, academic staff should aim to design accessible, flexible, non-biased methods of assessment that meet the needs of diverse learners including learners across cultures, and with varied physical and language abilities.

12.1.1 Non-biased methods

An assessment threshold should be gauged on achievement of the specified learning outcomes and should not be unduly influenced/weighted by any non-relevant knowledge, skills, or attributes. Additionally, assessment contexts should be equally familiar to all students, using plain language that conveys a common meaning for all students.

12.1.2 Inclusive Assessment briefs

Assessment briefs and instructions must be simple, concise, clear, unambiguous and intuitive. All text and non-text items must be legible, using font size that can be viewed by persons with low vision.

Read the guide on Assessment briefs and instructions

12.1.3 Inclusive assessment design

Inclusive assessment design allows all students to meet the learning outcomes through various assessment options without the requirement of adjustments. This flexible design approach might include for example, a portfolio approach, a choice of options approach, or an approach negotiated between the student and member of staff (also see section 6.2).

12.1.4 Alternative assessment

Alternative assessment is where a different assessment task is offered to meet the specific needs of an individual student while meeting the same learning outcomes and assessment criteria. An example could be a video presentation rather than a live presentation to a group.

12.2 Contingent Assessment

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005 extends protection against disability discrimination to people being educated in Northern Ireland. As a 'responsible

body', the University has a legal responsibility for ensuring that discrimination in education does not take place.

A disability is defined as 'a physical or mental impairment which has substantial and longterm, adverse effects on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.' This definition may include people with a wide range of physical and learning disabilities, mental health or medical conditions.

In accordance with SENDO (NI) 2005, the University anticipates any barriers which may exist for disabled students by encouraging inclusive, alternative assessment design and through contingent approaches which facilitate reasonable adjustments.

Where an assessment practice places a disabled student at a substantial disadvantage compared with other students, it is the duty of the University to take such steps as are reasonable to prevent this disadvantage. This duty is both anticipatory and reactive.

12.2.1 Anticipatory Steps

Proactively designing inclusive, and accessible assessments will minimise the chance of any student being disadvantage through the assessment process (see section above on inclusive assessment). Proactive inclusive assessment design accommodates the needs for all students including those with undisclosed disabilities and may include elements of student choice in how the learning outcomes are to be achieved.

12.2.2 Reactive Steps

Whenever a member of staff within the University (or other associated responsible body) becomes aware of an individual student's disability, they have a duty to meet that individual requirement by making reasonable adjustments.

Student Wellbeing AccessAbility Advisers can make reasonable adjustment recommendations (opens in new window) (RARs) based on the specific needs of individual students and will communicate these to Schools and Departments. RARs can include the following types of support:

- Assessment support
- Learning support
- Library support
- Access considerations and physical adaptations
- Support providers/additional study support
- Use of assistive technology

A reasonable adjustment may also mean the provision of an alternative assessment method which enables the same learning outcomes to be met. Furthermore, it is always a reasonable step to grant an exemption from one or more components of an examination or assessment where that exemption is the only reasonable step that could be taken.

The University is exempt from making reasonable adjustments where competence standards are to be applied.

12.3 Competence Standard

Equalities legislation defines a competence standard as:

'An academic, medical or other standard applied for the purposes of determining whether or not a person has a particular level of competence or ability.'

Under SENDO 2005 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Higher education institutions are responsible for developing non-discriminatory competence standards and designing programmes to address these standards. Professional qualifications bodies also have a duty not to discriminate against disabled people. Consequently, they are required to review the competence standards for all their qualifications to ensure that the manner in which they are measured (rather than the competence standard itself) does not exclude disabled people from being able to meet them (i.e. bearing in mind what reasonable adjustments could be made to the process without affecting the competency being measured).

It is important for University staff to liaise with the relevant professional qualifications body to ensure that their competence standards have been reviewed in light of the SENDO Amendment Regulations.

Further Guidance

- Disability Discrimination Code of Practice for FE and HE
- SENDO and RAR training (opens in new window) for staff
- Alternative exam support strategies (opens in new window) (Student Wellbeing)
- Making the language of assessment inclusive (opens in new window) (QAA, 2022)
- Case Studies in Inclusive Assessment (opens in new window) (QAA Collaborative, 2022)
- Student Helplines
- Inspire – mental health and wellbeing support hub
- Student Wellbeing Resources

12.4 Assessment Co-Design

The Student Charter guides staff and students to:

- Create and encourage collaborative learning opportunities through participation and interaction with staff and students
- Support and develop a culture of continuous learning and high performance through effective partnership

Programme teams should aim, where possible, to include students as key stakeholders in assessment design. Transparency and open dialogue around assessment will help staff and

students to share an understanding about the nature, purpose and process of assessment. Approaches to assessment co-design may involve collaborative design of assessment, student choice in assessment, student representation in the quality assurance of assessment, and transparency and shared dialogue around assessment practice to encourage learner engagement and self-regulation. Examples of assessment co-creation may include:

- Assessment briefings that encourage peer to peer and staff to student dialogue around the nature of the task and the criteria
- Peer and self-assessment
- Student co-design of marking rubrics
- Marking sample assessments
- Choice between two or more equivalent assessments
- Students designing a small proportion of exam questions (e.g. Peerwise)*
- Students designing their own artefact to meet the learning outcomes
- Student stakeholder representation during programme design/re-design
- Effective Student representation mechanisms
- Programme team responding to student feedback on assessment (e.g., 'you said, we did approach)

* Note – where students are to collaboratively design a proportion of examination questions, the examination answer plan must indicate:

- the proportion of emergent questions that will be included in the plan
- A rationale for their inclusion e.g., student questions selected due to highest relevance with examinable themes

13. Module Assessment Parameters

At the module level, all assessments will comply with the following parameters, as identified in the Integrated Curriculum Design Framework, unless exemptions have been approved by the Head of School.

- Modules of any credit value will typically Include a maximum of 2 elements of summative assessment. A single element of assessment may comprise more than one weighted component but will generate one overall element mark. Elements (including components) will meet workload equivalency for the module credit level. • Assessments will be distributed proportionately across the semester/academic year, giving due consideration to student and staff workloads and to avoid pressure points.

- Assessment tasks will aim to ensure equity and consistency in workload across modules of the same level and credit value.

- Module Handbooks and associated online learning spaces will describe the assessment elements, components, their weightings and schedules as appropriate. They will provide a strong rationale for the selected method(s)* including why they have been chosen to best meet the learning outcomes. Briefings will define assessment size and limits and will provide clarity on format, submission methods and deadlines.

- Module Handbooks will provide clear and accessible statements of expected standards of performance for coursework tasks at each level and mark/grade band (e.g. marking rubrics (opens in new window)).

- Formative activities will be scheduled to provide timely feedback for students. All modules should have at least one formative activity which generates timely feedback.

- Class tests, as coursework, are not facilitated through the Examinations Office therefore due consideration must be given to their facilitation. All Class Tests will implement RARs where appropriate. The Programme Director will be responsible for ensuring appropriate RAR support is in place.

- Due consideration must be given to the nature and grading of group work assessment, with greater emphasis given to the 'process' of group engagement over the final group 'product'. Transparent evidence of individual student contribution to group work should be gathered to ensure fair marking. (see example peer evaluation form). If a module is assessed wholly or mostly by group work, a minimum of 25% should be based on individual contribution. Due consideration must be given to assessment workload equivalence and the relative size of individual and group components of assessment.

Students should have regular timetabled slots in which (assessable) group work can take place. The teaching team should be present in scheduled sessions (in person or online) to ensure that students can be given feedback on their group work and how to improve it. Where a student fails to participate in group assessment, they should receive a mark representative of their contribution. The success of the remainder of the group cannot be diminished by students who fail to participate.

Particular consideration must be given to the use of group work during the final year of study, where assessment contributes significantly to final degree classification or award grading. Greater emphasis/weighting on individual contribution must be generated in this context.

Example Peer-evaluation form for group work (appendix 4)

14. Assessment Information for Students

Essential information will be made known to students through their programme of study and in advance of each assessment task. Staff and students should aim to work collaboratively to develop a shared understanding of the purpose of assessment and the associated marking criteria.

At a module level, key information will be made available from day one of the module, allowing students to make decisions about how they approach the assessment and the standards to which they are expected to conform.

In each module handbook, it is expected that students will be provided with:

- Module learning outcomes, showing alignment with relevant programme level outcomes, the associated assessment task(s) and marking criteria/rubrics. Students should be clear about what constitutes a good performance in a particular assessment.

- Explicit, transparent, and timely assessment briefs including assessment weightings, workload/wordcount and associated marking criteria where appropriate.

- An approved, timely and accurate schedule of summative assessment elements.

- Timely, regular, and accessible formative feedback opportunities to enhance assessment literacy and learner development.

- Explicit information on submission deadlines, the procedures for submission, processes for reasonable adjustments, and the schedule for summative feedback.

- Explicit information on late submissions and the Extenuating Circumstances process.

- The date, time and collection point of any marked physical artefacts with feedback.

- A schedule of relevant assessment tutorials.

- Contact details for relevant module team members, Study Advisors and Academic, and Wellbeing support Services.

- Information on the nature and implications of academic misconduct.

Assessment information will be provided to students through relevant University regulations, any specific programme regulations, programme/subject and module handbooks and Blackboard Ultra learning spaces. Policies and regulations will be reinforced throughout the duration of a programme and will be explicit, transparent, and accessible to all intended audiences.

Timely feedback and feedforward will be issued to students to help them gauge and enhance their performance in each assessment task.

15. Assessment Workload and Limits

Students will be given a clear indication of the maximum length of a piece of assessed work to help them manage their time and work effort.

The workload may relate to word counts, time limits, page limits, etc. depending on the nature of the assessed task. Students should ensure their work does not exceed the set workload limit to enable appropriate time-on-task and to minimise excessive marking workloads for staff.

Module Assessment strategies will consider:

- The relevant workload for the associated module credit value as outlined in the Workload Equivalence Guide (opens in new window), to ensure equity and consistency of workload across courses.
- The appropriate scheduling of assessments. Summative Examinations may typically take place during the dedicated examination period, but other forms of assessment should be distributed across the module duration to avoid bunching of deadlines.

Requirements in relation to the length of a piece of assessed work will be defined within module handbooks. Requirements should be expressed in the unit most appropriate to the learning outcomes of the module e.g., word count, number of pages, duration of recording / video, etc.

Clear instructions in relation to requirements, including e.g., timings, font size, spacing, margins and what is included / excluded from calculations must be provided in the assessment brief and care should be taken to ensure these instructions are unambiguous and easily understood.

Guidance on assessment limits and word counts should also be explicit about words or any other elements excluded from the count. Course teams will agree on elements to be excluded from the count, as appropriate for the discipline area and the nature of the assessed task.

This holistic approach will help to ensure consistency and clarity for students. An example of elements that may be excluded from the count are as follows:

- Title
- Content pages
- Headers and footers
- Reference list/bibliography
- AI log
- Appendices
- Tables, graphs, diagrams

- Title sequence/credits
- abstracts

Due to variations in assessment design, where excluded word limit components within a given assessed task vary from the standard identified by the wider course team, the module coordinator must make this variation explicit within the module handbook and associated assessment brief.

As directed through module handbooks, students will be responsible for declaring the word count/workload limit on their submitted work and in accordance with the assessment brief.

If the word count/workload has been deliberately and significantly falsified, this may be considered academic misconduct and appropriate procedures may be invoked.

Word counts can be verified through Blackboard Annotate, Turnitin, or by word-processing software.

15.1 Exceeding Assessment Limits

Marking rubrics will typically incorporate criteria relating to the structural and procedural expectations for a piece of coursework. Where submitted work does not meet the required standard expected of a given grade boundary then marks will be deducted through the application of the rubric grading scheme.

Coursework that falls significantly below the prescribed work limit will not generate a specific penalty as there is an inherent risk of students self-penalising due to insufficient evidence of meeting the assessment criteria. Marking criteria will identify the level of performance and will allocate marks accordingly.

Where submitted work exceeds the agreed assessment limit, a margin of up to +10% of the work limit will be allowed without any penalty of mark deduction.

If the work submitted is significantly in excess of the specified limit (+10%), there is no expectation that staff will assess the piece beyond the limit or provide feedback on work beyond this point. Markers will indicate the point at which the limit is reached and where they have stopped marking. A mark will be awarded only for the content submitted up to this point. No additional deduction or penalty will be applied to the overall mark awarded. The student is self-penalising as work will not be considered/marked.

16. Coursework Submission Methods

Students are expected to submit all components of assessment on time, as detailed in the handbook for each module. All coursework should be submitted through Blackboard Ultra except where this is not practicable on account of the nature of the assignment. Students must ensure they have read and comply with the Academic Misconduct Procedure in relation to the production and submission of assessments. They should be made aware

that in submitting an assessment they are confirming they have read and comply with the Academic Misconduct Procedure.

Coursework shall be submitted by approved dates as specified on the programme assessment schedule within the Programme handbook.

The university has harmonised assessment submission days and times. All assessments will from 2024/25 be submitted:

- Monday – Friday.
- Not during published vacation periods for the programme.
- Not on Bank Holidays or a day that the University is closed.
- All assessment submissions should be scheduled by 12pm (noon) UK time.

Programme teams must indicate that submission dates and times are in GMT UK time. Overseas Affiliate colleges will use the equivalent time for submission. These requirements ensure that students will be able to access support at the university in the immediate run up and post submission.

16.1 Online Submission

To ensure a consistent experience for students, online submission of assignments should be used, where practical and appropriate.

Academic staff should set up assignment submission areas within their modules in Blackboard Ultra. These should be contained within a clearly defined content area within the Blackboard Ultra Module area that is consistently named. Ulster's Blackboard Ultra template uses the term 'Assessment and Feedback', and it is recommended that the following naming convention is used:

Coursework # Title (##% for example: ○
Coursework 1: Reflective Journal (30%) ○
Coursework 2: Portfolio (70%)

Clear instructions should be added to the drop-box providing information about the assignment expectations and how to contact the team with any queries.

Students must comply with the following declaration of academic integrity at the point of submission:

"I declare that this is all my own work. Any material I have referred to has been accurately referenced and any contribution of Artificial Intelligence technology has been fully acknowledged. I understand the importance of academic integrity and have read and understood the University's General Regulation: Student Academic Integrity and the Academic Misconduct Procedure. I understand that I must not upload my work before,

during or after submission to any unapproved plagiarism detectors or answer sharing platforms, or equivalent, and that only University-approved platforms should be used."

Blackboard Ultra supports a range of online submission options mainly Blackboard Assignment and Turnitin. The Blackboard Assignment tool allows submission of multiple file types, group work, peer review, video, audio and draft work. The tool also supports the widest variety of marking and feedback options including video, audio and digital annotation.

Note: Turnitin is a third-party tool and can be susceptible to instability at peak times. Using core Blackboard tools reduces the risk of instability.

If your assessment design requires specific functionality, the Centre for Digital Learning Enhancement (CDLE) can provide guidance to help select the most appropriate technology. CDLE can also provide support and guidance for making reasonable adjustments and for inclusive assessment design. Online guidance is available at:https://ulster.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/Ultra/pages/2303393793/Assessment+types For extenuating circumstances, CDLE recommends using a separate submission drop box.

Guidance on assessment managing bbl spaces:

- Building out your own Blackboard Module Template
- Assessment and Feedback via Blackboard guidance
- How to create a Turnitin Dropbox in Blackboard Learn ULTRA: guidance and video tutorial
- How to create a Blackboard Assignment: guidance and drop box video tutorial
- How to create an assessment template for a practical assessment
- How to give feedback via Turnitin: guidance and video tutorial
- How to give feedback via Blackboard assignments: guidance and video tutorial
- How to upload a video of a performance/photo/art and provide feedback: through a grade column for Blackboard assignment and through gradebook feedback
- How to create an offline submission and use it to mark physical /live assessments: guidance and video tutorial
- The Centre for Digital Learning Enhancement are more than happy to work with colleagues to develop bespoke solutions for setting up assessments in Blackboard

For further information and support in relation to setting up assessments on Blackboard please contact The Centre for Digitial Learning Enhancement.

16.2 Non-Electronic Submission

It is recognised that there will be occasions when assessment cannot practically be submitted online, and exceptions are expected. Where assessment could be submitted online, any exemptions should be agreed by discussion at the local level with the Head of

School, and with Dean Learning Enhancement and PVC (AQSE). Requests can be made via assessment@ulster.ac.uk.

Non-electronic forms of submission may be due to:

A. Lack of suitability for online submission

- Some forms of written assessment may not be suitable for online submission. Decisions on inclusion/exemption of forms of written assessment will be based on local discussion with the Head of School and Associate Dean (AQSE)
- Some Dissertations may not be suitable for online submission and feedback
- Where an exemption applies, alternative arrangements will be put in place for the submission
- In these instances, academic teams must still use the Gradebook within

  Blackboard Ultra to return student marks and feedback **B. Reasonable adjustment**

  or other accessibility matter.

For non-electronic submissions, students should know:

- Where, when and to whom work must be submitted.
- Acceptable formats of submission and other procedural requirements.
- Students must be issued with dated proof of submission. An example submission sheet is provided in appendix 5.

If an assessment is practical in nature, marks and feedback must be recorded in Blackboard Ultra to ensure that students have the most complete and accessible route to feedback. Feedback should include the associated assessment rubric/marking criteria to indicate how marks were allocated.

Responsibility for the receipt of coursework lies with the Module Coordinator. Faculties/School policy will clarify responsibilities for managing the process based on the academic, administrative and technical staff resources available.

16.3 Late Submission of Coursework

Students should be made aware of the rationale for assessment deadlines within the University context and the need to manage student cohorts fairly. Late coursework submissions may impact on the timely progression of students through examinations boards and the overall management of student and staff workloads. Additionally, the timely submission of work requires the organisational and time management skills expected by future professions and employers.

Coursework must be submitted by the dates specified. Coursework submitted after the deadline, without prior approval, is not normally accepted.

The Programme/Subject Director is the member of staff authorised to approve requests for late submissions, on behalf of the Course/Subject Committee. Students who fail to submit coursework, whether or not this is due to authenticated medical or compassionate circumstances, must notify their Course/Subject Director by the date on which the coursework was due to be submitted.

Where a student fails to submit coursework owing to extenuating circumstances, or where a student considers that their performance has been affected by extenuating circumstances, they should ensure that written medical evidence or evidence of other circumstances is presented to the Programme/Subject Director by the date on which the work was due to be submitted.

It is the student's responsibility to submit all relevant information regarding extenuating circumstances preferably via the EC1 form (obtainable from the relevant Faculty Office or School Office). Information supplied after the deadline may not be taken into account.

Where coursework is adversely affected as a direct result of a disability-related cause, this should not unjustifiably impede a student's subsequent academic progress. It is important that the practical arrangements for submission of assignments are transparent and fully accessible for students with disabilities. The procedures relating to extenuating circumstances should not present a barrier to equality. Flexible deadlines for coursework may be considered to accommodate the needs of these students.

16.4 Changing Assessment Due Dates

Programme assessment schedules are approved at the point of validation and revalidation. Schedules are also included in Programme and Module Handbooks available to students. Planned changes to assessment schedules will be approved via the CA3 process. Members of the programme team are not permitted to cancel approved assessment elements at short notice or change the agreed due date of an examination or major piece of coursework (element) without the prior approval of the appropriate Associate Dean (AQSE) or, in their absence, the Dean of Learning Enhancement. A sound rationale must be provided for changing the due date and in such cases, the date will be extended to ensure students are not disadvantaged. The relevant Associate Dean or Dean of Learning Enhancement will report such changes to the PVC for Academic Quality Student Experience (during regular update meetings) for central recording.

17. Video recording Assessments

A programme team, Department, School, or Faculty may deem it appropriate to video record assessments to support internal marking, moderation, and/or External Examiner oversight. Recorded assessments may include for example:

- Performances
- Oral assessments
- Laboratory Practical assessments

- OSCEs (Objective Structured Clinical Examination)
- Presentations
- Pitches

In this context and in compliance with GDPR (opens in new window):

- Students will be notified in advance that the assessment will be recorded.
- Students will be informed about the purpose of the recording, its use, and the length of time it will be retained.
- The recorded content will only be made available to those deemed necessary for marking and moderating student assessed work.

Students may not opt out of appearing in recordings for summative activities that form part of a programme award unless a student has an exemption under Reasonable Adjustments Recommendations.

Ulster Terms & Conditions will make clear to students that assessments may be recorded for quality assurance purposes. Students will accept this as a condition.

Recordings of assessments will be retained for the period stipulated in the University's records retention and disposal schedule 2.6 (opens in new window).

18. Marking Schemes and Feedback

Performance is generally recorded in percentage marks, but it may be recorded on a pass/fail basis. The pass mark in undergraduate modules is 40%. In postgraduate modules (level 7) it is 50%. In 'Extended' Master's degrees, candidates must achieve 50% to progress from the level 6 Graduate Certificate stage to the level 7 Master's stage. A recognised standard-setting methodology may be used in some programmes such as MBBS Medicine, in keeping with sector standard practice.

Draft marking schemes must be prepared for all coursework at the point at which the assessment is designed. Marking schemes are subject to internal scrutiny and sent to the External Examiner together with the draft assessment briefs for approval.

Marking schemes include examination answer plans, and coursework marking criteria or rubrics. Coursework marking criteria and rubrics will be incorporated into assessment briefings and into student feedback on submitted work.

It is not unusual for an examination marking scheme to be revised slightly after reviewing an early sample of the student work. This ensures that unanticipated but valid alternative answers can be considered and accommodated where appropriate.

Any amendments must record and be made known to the wider marking team and to the External Examiner to ensure consistency in marking. coursework marking criteria may be adapted year on year for continual enhancement and/or in response to variations in the assessment method or theme.

Further Information

- how to write assessment rubrics can be found here: Guidelines for Marking Rubrics (opens in new window)

Information on how to produce an assessment rubric in Blackboard Ultra can be found here:

- How to construct rubrics on Blackboard (opens in new window)
- Creating grading schemas (opens in new window)
- Turnitin assignment tool (including quickmarks) (opens in new window)
- Marks and Feedback using Turnitin Feedback Studio (opens in new window)
- Turnitin assignment settings including rubric feature (opens in new window)

18.1 Issuing Marks and Feedback

Online Return of Marks and Feedback

Summative assessment marks will be recorded via Banner Faculty Grade Entry, in accordance with the guidelines for academic staff.

Each summative assessment event must be recorded in Blackboard Ultra within 20 working days of submission.

Where a coursework element has different components, each of these attracts a mark and contributes to the final award. Each component and each mark must be recorded in Blackboard with the corresponding feedback. Further clarification as to individual module requirements can be obtained from assessments@ulster.ac.uk.

Marks should be returned to all students within the given cohort on the same date, and the release of marks should be delayed until all marks are populated. Blackboard Ultra provides a Post Grades option to control release of marks.

There are supported technologies which can be used for providing feedback digitally. Alternative feedback methods can still be used to support reasonable adjustments for both staff and students:

- Blackboard Ultra Assignment
- Turnitin
- Both tools provide options to provide marks and feedback for an offline assignment
- Other Blackboard tools such as graded discussions and journals

The release of marks should be accompanied by the following statement:

“Marks provided on Blackboard Ultra are provisional, subject to ratification by the Board of Examiners and may be subject to change.”

All assessment marks and feedback will be returned to students through Blackboard within 20 working days of submission. It is the Head of School’s responsibility to ensure that

internal moderation is completed and that all marks and feedback are returned as per University policy.

Students must be kept apprised by the HoS/AHoS (subject to the normal rules of confidentiality), as to why there is a delay to the return of feedback and marks.

Associate Deans (AQSE) must be notified where feedback and marks are not returned during the 4-week period (20 working days). Each School must have a mechanism in place to monitor the operation of issuing summative feedback and marks, managed and updated by the School Office. This information will be centrally collected for quality purposes.

Marks and Feedback through Turnitin Feedback Studio

18.2 Feedback

Feedback from simple formative/diagnostic or staged assessment strategies should be made available early in a module e.g., by week 4, to allow students to action plan for improved performance in the module and related modules. This early formative approach is particularly important during the first year and can be achieved through automatically graded self-assessment methods on BBL Ultra for efficiency. Student completion of formative assessments can provide evidence of ongoing engagement and commitment to the programme.

Digital feedback should be issued via Blackboard using methods described in 16.1. Students should receive an agreed set of general comments from internal markers and a single mark following moderation.

Feedback should include transparent evidence of how the mark has been calculated through the associated assessment marking scheme and has addressed the stated learning outcomes. The feedback provided should always be consistent with the overall classification. The consequences of failure must be articulated clearly, and timely support opportunities must be identified. The use of rubrics and criteria help with generating aligned feedback.

Further guidance on feedback: seven
principles of good feedback practice
Jisc Principles of Good Assessment and Feedback

18.2.1 Considerate Marking and Feedback

The following guidance is influenced by the British Dyslexia Association to ensure that reasonable steps are taken during marking to ensure all students have an equal opportunity to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes.

- Students should not be penalised significantly for minor errors that do not hinder the reader's ability to understand the content of the academic written work. Marking schemes should minimise criteria weighting associated with spelling, grammar, and

punctuation unless they form a competence standard. The weight of marking should focus on understanding of the subject content, reasoning, or other specialist skills, and coherence of expression.

- Marking criteria/rubrics will be made explicit in the module handbook, module Blackboard area and during briefings. Criteria must be explained to students, so they are aware of the significance of their mark (and the consequences of any failure). Feedback comments will link to marking criteria where appropriate.

- Constructive comments using a positive tone and straightforward language will be provided to identify strengths and areas for improvement or enhancement. Concrete examples should be offered, explaining how and why an expected standard has not been met.

- Feedforward comments will be provided to encourage students to apply these enhancements and to work through their corrections independently. Comments may direct students to appropriate literature, lecture handouts or other learning resources, sources of information and mechanisms for support.

- Where students have failed an assessment on a second attempt, a face-to-face tutorial should be provided.

Additionally, Student Wellbeing has generated guidelines for marking assessments for students with disclosed Dyslexia. Consideration must also be given to SpLD students including delivering oral presentations to allow for difficulties with e.g., organisation, sequencing and fluency, and reading from notes.

Where students have formally disclosed Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs), assessment feedback will explicitly state that it is written in accordance with Reasonable Adjustments. A standardised feedback statement is as follows:

"*The marker has provided feedback in accordance with assessment and feedback best practice and in recognition of your SpLD, has not penalised significantly for minor errors that do not hinder the reader's ability to understand the content of the academic written work."*

18.2.2 Efficient Feedback

Feedback should be effective and efficient, so staff should aim to devise methods which maximise the quality of feedback whilst minimising efforts on their part. Some suggestions are:

- To develop a generic feedback document which addresses the assessment criteria associated with the work. Examples of good practice and common errors or weaknesses can be identified within the document. Individual pieces of work can then be annotated using e.g., a numbering system where individual students can then be directed to specific points on this system. Consequently, these systems (documents) can become a valuable learning resource for students.

  If using Turn-it-in, these generic comments can be saved as Quick Mark comments and can be dragged onto the assessment and positioned in the appropriate location together with other commonly used feedback. Generic feedback sheets should also contain space for individualised comments.

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- For offline marking, the use of a feedback proforma that can be uploaded to Blackboard Ultra that brings attention to the student's strengths and weaknesses of their work (Appendix 6).

  Providing early feedback to the whole class within a timetabled slot, or online via a recorded session, to identify and explain common strengths and weaknesses. Students can then relate to this feedback when they review their own individualised written feedback. Written feedback may then be more streamlined as the whole group feedback provides detailed explanatory context.

- Recording specific comments; more extensive specific comments can be given than in writing. Here, the tone of the voice can be a great support when explaining to a student the reasons why a poor grade was given. The Blackboard Ultra Assignment tool provides audio and video feedback functionality. This tool is very popular with students, and it can be a very efficient method of giving feedback. By using dictation functionality on your computer, you can transcribe the video/audio feedback to create written feedback at the same time.

- Making use of tools in Blackboard Ultra including the Blackboard Assignment tool and Turnitin. Different tools offer different efficiencies through functionality such as reusable comments, general feedback, digital annotation and Rubric feedback. The Centre for Digital Learning Enhancement (CDLE) can provide guidance to help select the most appropriate technology for your use case.

Guidance on flexible and efficient digital feedback methods in Blackboard and Turnitin can be found here

18.2.3 Engaging students with Feedback

Students should be encouraged to engage with the feedback process. Often this starts when students access their online feedback via the Blackboard Ultra gradebook.

- Students should be able to question the comments and the mark given; they are more likely to be accepting of a lower grade if they are clear how and where they have lost/failed to achieve marks. Students must always be given the opportunity to come and discuss their work with the member of staff privately - even the best students may learn something from these discussions.

- Feedback should facilitate and encourage self-assessment. For example, students could be invited to identify areas on which they would value feedback.

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- Some subject areas have found it useful to require students to provide an explanation of how previous feedback has been incorporated in a subsequent assignment. This is attached at the end of the piece of work.

- Staff will also wish to consider the point in the module when it is no longer appropriate to continue providing formative feedback due to this providing an unfair advantage to students who request regular feedback on all edits of draft work. A 10% limit on draft work for formative feedback may be considered.

  Staff should be reassured that offering to meet students to discuss their performance and feedback does not equate to the opening of a negotiation about the mark awarded. The programme regulations and appeals policy at Ulster do not allow for appeals against academic judgment.

- Where a student has passed a module, they are not permitted to re-take the assessment to improve their mark (save for in cases of valid ECs where it may be reasonably assumed that operative circumstances at the time could have impaired student performance).

18.2.4 Giving Feedback on Written Examinations

University regulations state that "f*or the purpose of providing feedback on examination performance, candidates may be given access to examination scripts in the presence of a member of academic staff. Candidates are not permitted to retain examination scripts*."

Students will benefit from gaining an understanding about why they achieved a certain result. This may be particularly true for failing students requiring resits. In such cases, the member of staff should run through the examination script with the student highlighting errors, good points, irrelevant parts of the answer, poor examination technique, etc. Under no circumstances should the student take the script away or be left alone with the script. Staff may find it useful to give such feedback generally to students to assist with examination technique.

Group feedback on an exam may be generated within a timetabled slot, or online via a recorded session, to identify and explain common strengths and weaknesses.

Markers and moderators are encouraged to put comments on examination scripts if and where appropriate.

18.3 Anonymous Marking

Written examinations are currently subject to anonymous marking.

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Anonymity is lifted after the marking process is complete before meetings of Boards of Examiners and progress boards.

While anonymous marking is not always feasible for coursework, it is generally encouraged where appropriate and practicable. Faculties are expected to have their own methods for safeguarding student anonymity during the process, but it should be lifted when internal marking is complete for the purpose of student feedback.

Further information on locating bias in HE marking practices (opens in new window) (Adv HE).

Further considerations about anonymous marking (opens in new window) (Enhancement Themes, QAA Scotland 2020).

19. Moderation

The moderation of assessed work is a quality assurance process that ensures marking procedures remain transparent, consistent, and impartial. Where two internal markers independently come to an agreement on a student's mark, there is greater confidence in the reliability of the mark.

The marking and internal moderation of student assessed work may be undertaken internally by all academic staff (full and part-time) i.e., Professors, Readers, Senior Lecturers, Lecturers and Recognised Teachers who make a significant contribution to teaching on the programme and are members of the Course/Subject Committee. Other persons may be included as members of the Course/Subject Committee and may mark, and moderate student assessed work at the discretion of the Faculty. The Faculty must be satisfied that such members are sufficiently experienced to be competent at marking and moderation. The Board of Examiners will ensure that the assessment of students is conducted appropriately.

In the case of a module taught by more than one tutor, moderation amongst members of the module team will be adequate so long as the process is clearly evidenced. In the case of a module taught by only one tutor, the Head of School/Associate Head of School will appoint an internal moderator.

Internal moderation methods may vary across Faculties depending on the nature of assessment. In certain circumstances (e.g. to assist a new member of staff or where the marking practice of a member of staff is being developed), double marking rather than monitoring may be preferred and/or the typical sample size may be exceeded. In some cases, marking teams will discuss and agree their marking standard early in the marking process to ensure consistency.

Module descriptors will indicate and describe the method of moderation.

Moderation requires:

- an explicit set of marking criteria
- a set of weightings for each criterion
- in many cases, an indication of the content of the answer (but not for example, in a dissertation); and an explanation of standards required e.g. for each degree classification

Typical moderation variations are identified below (note that specific disciplines can have alternative moderation methods):

- **Dual marking:** where two markers are assigned to assess **different aspects** of an assessment, e.g. in student projects, one marker assesses for process and the other for content.
- **Moderation by Sampling**: In this instance, a moderator will receive a sample of marked work with grades and feedback attached. The moderator will review this representative

sample to validate the marks and to check the overall standards and consistency of marking, and the quality of feedback.

- **Double Marking**: each script is marked by two markers (same as 100% monitoring). The second marker has sight of the first marker's marks. The final mark is determined by agreement between the two markers.
- **Double Blind Marking**: similar to double marking except that the second marker does not have sight of the marks awarded by the first marker. This is typically undertaken for dissertations.
- **Arbitration**: In individual cases where the marker and moderator are unable to agree a mark, the Programme Director will identify an arbiter who will determine the mark and feedback recorded. In this case, the feedback sheet will include the arbiter's name.

19.1 Moderation Range and Volume

All projects/dissertations (Level 6 undergraduate and Level 7 postgraduate) shall be double marked internally.

For all work except project/dissertation:

At all levels and for both coursework and written examinations, the assessment of all work which is first marked as failed shall be moderated.

In addi□on, a sample of at least 10% of the remainder across grade boundaries shall be selected for modera□on, subject to the following:

- where there are fewer than 12 scripts in total, all scripts shall be selected
- where there are 12 or more but fewer than 60 scripts in total, a minimum of 12 scripts shall be selected
- where there are more than 150 scripts in total, normally a maximum of 30 scripts shall be selected
- the scripts shall be selected in a random manner subject to at least two being selected from each of the classification bands
- the sample shall include work at classification/grade boundaries, and all fails

Internal Moderation must be completed during the 20-working day marking period and any alterations to marks must be made before marks are shared with an External Examiner and released to students.

19.2 Evidencing Moderation

The process of internal moderation must be shared with an External Examiner whose role is to confirm that

- assessment practice and marking have been fair and transparent,
- that internal moderation has taken place, and
- that appropriate feedback is being provided to students.

The role of the External Examiner does not include an additional layer of marking.

Following moderation, an internal moderation form should be completed for each module assessment confirming:

- The number of scripts within the samples, and the sampling range
- Evidence of internal moderation to show that marks are consistent, fair and appropriate for the level of study
- Evidence of arbitration where necessary
- Evidence of appropriate feedback to students including clear guidance on strengths, areas for development, and the extent to which the learning outcomes have been achieved.

The External Examiner will have access to all internally moderated work including moderation forms for all relevant modules. The External Examiner will discern the number of scripts to review from each sample in order to complete their quality monitoring process.

Moderation, External Examiner Review and release of marks will be concluded before Examination Boards. Marks are validated at examination boards.

20. Academic Misconduct

Programme teams will aim to promote academic integrity throughout the programme. Resources are available on the Academic Integrity SharePoint.

Where academic misconduct is suspected, staff should follow the Student Academic Misconduct Procedure.

Students should be made fully aware of the nature and implications of academic misconduct. It is not appropriate to penalise a student for suspected academic misconduct if that allegation has not been through formal scrutiny of the allegation per the procedure. Advice can be obtained from the Student Academic Affairs Team.

Consideration should be given to the risks of academic misconduct, the student experience and the various factors that can lead a student into the temptation of cheating (see guidance on academic integrity (opens in new window) and guidance on AI (opens in new window)). Students should be allowed to access Originality Reports in Turnitin for formative support.

Assessment strategies should be designed to mitigate the risks of cheating e.g.:

- Staging smaller assessment components over the semester/year to provide opportunities for timely and constructive feedback (including self or peer assessment).
- Adhering to appropriate assessment workloads and scheduling and avoiding bunching of assessments within the semester/academic year.
- Providing unambiguous assessment briefs and formative support.
- Designing assignments with a specific focus e.g. specific or localised events and experiences, current affairs, personal reflections, and avoiding descriptive essays.
- Designing assessments that focus on the process of learning rather than the product of learning.
- Refreshing assignment topics annually where feasible and generating large question pools for examinations to enable regular rotation of questions.
- Including evidence of student engagement in group work e.g. group learning agreements and meeting/engagement logs.
- Providing regular guidance and signposting to academic writing skills and study support
- Generating question banks for online examinations, where questions can be randomised during the examination to reduce the risk of collusion.
- Retiring questions from examination question banks after a period of time and replacing with new questions.
- Generating multiple versions of an examination, each with a different question order.

Mitigating the risks of cheating through Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools:

AI tools can enable creative assessments, support personalised learning and offer efficiencies for teaching staff. AI literacy is also a 21st century skill. However, there is increasing difficulty in ensuring the authenticity and integrity of students' work. AI detection tools (e.g., Turnitin AI detection tool) have been shown to be unreliable. Therefore, to help mitigate these risks:

- Programme teams must provide students with clear guidance on the appropriate use of AI tools in assessments, its limitations, and appropriate referencing methods. Guidance for staff and students is available on the GenAI webpages.

- programme teams should identify categories of assessment where:
  - AI tools are prohibited e.g., examinations
  - AI tools are permitted, with caution, as an assistive tool, e.g. search engine, planning tool, testing code, etc.
  - AI tools are integral to the assessment task e.g., generating AI content for subsequent analysis

The programme team must be transparent in their approaches to using AI within assessments and provide clarity through programme and module handbooks, Blackboard Ultra sites and assessment briefs. Where AI tools are permitted, students should indicate how and where they were used during their assessed task.

Students must be directed to University guidance on acknowledging and referencing AI tools (opens in new window).

Wherever possible, a suitable variety of assessment methods should be used to minimise the risk of academic misconduct, including through AI misuse. Supplementing assessment strategies with video recordings, podcasts, poster presentations, e-portfolios, wikis, can mitigate the risks of AI misuse. A multimodal approach to assessment design across a programme should be encouraged.

Additionally, a flipped classroom approach can free-up classroom time to support facilitated group activities and discussions/debates. Assessed tasks can include evidence of in-class activity to verify engagement. Assessment topics based on the most current or local or particularly niche areas are less likely to be identified by Gen AI.

Programme assessment strategies should include process-orientated designs which assess metacognitive skills, rather just than assessing an end-product. For example:

- Portfolio style assessment demonstrating the progression of draft work and including various sources of feedback and personal reflections on progress, revisions, personal learning, and action planning.

- Reflective/reflexive pieces e.g., a video account explaining how the learning outcomes have been met, including evidence of learning engagement and personal growth. A live stream could include Q&A from the assessors.

- Process notebooks to supplement an assessed artefact/product. The notebooks document steps taken to develop the end product and the associated process of inquiry.

- Proactively using GenAI tools to generate an output which is subsequently evaluated against pre-determined criteria. Students can generate their own evaluation criteria in groups during classroom time. Criteria can be included as an assessed component. Student negotiations, including evidence of conversations, can also be captured as part of the task.

- Patchwork text assessment where a series of ‘formative’ tasks are woven together with a linking narrative which typically includes tutor and/or peer feedback within the text, and critical reflection on this feedback.

- Staged assessment tasks e.g., stage 1, the student identifies links to key concepts and theories plus challenges associated with a complex case study. The student receives feedback from their tutor and/or peers (in class) and for stage 2, makes recommendations to address the issues. For stage 3, the student shares their final implementation plan during a live or video presentation.

- Annotated bibliographies and/or evidence of literature search methods.

Jisc and academic partners have generated a menu of assessment methods to support authentic assessment methods to reduce the risk of academic misconduct.

21. Re-Assessment

The nature and consequences of failure in assessment are identified within General Programme Regulations or within Programme Specifications, where these are required by PSRB. Students are permitted to retake resit/repeat deferred modules at the earliest available opportunity following a Board of Examiners. The module handbook must provide guidance on how a failed module is to be reassessed and should be made available to students via Blackboard Ultra.

Reassessment of coursework at levels 3 and 4 will typically involve the re-working of the original assessment task to enable students to reflect on and respond to feedback received.

Reassessment of coursework at other levels may involve either a re-working of the original task or the completion of a new task depending on the nature, size, and scope of the coursework and the relative risks of collusion.

Reassessment of examinations will typically require a new resit examination.

The Module Coordinator is responsible for determining the appropriate method of reassessment. Methods should be raised and discussed at validation/revalidation panels to consider mitigating potential risks of collusion.

Students are permitted to retake repeat/deferred modules at the earliest available opportunity.

Typically, a new drop box should be made available to relevant students in Blackboard Ultra for resubmission purposes.

21.1 In-Module Assessment Recovery (IMAR)

IMAR applies where a student has submitted an element of coursework by the submission date but fails to achieve the necessary pass mark in the piece of work. In these circumstances, the Module Coordinator may offer an opportunity to avail of IMAR within the module schedule, before the Board of Examiners. The student can then decide whether to rework and resubmit this element using the feedback provided on the first submission,

or to wait and resubmit after the Board of Examiners. In either case, resubmitted work will be capped.

IMAR is not offered in all modules nor all elements of coursework and cannot be used in examinations.

Please note:

- Students may elect to avail of IMAR on one occasion for each piece of coursework where IMAR is offered. Module handbooks will indicate if IMAR is available*.
- IMAR will only be offered if the coursework component has been submitted in time for the original assignment date.
- The maximum mark for a successful IMAR submission will be capped at the minimum pass mark for the module.
- It is the student's decision as to whether to undertake reassessment during the module.
- The IMAR resubmission date will be agreed but will normally be made within 10 working days of the date of feedback and discussion with the Module Coordinator for the module.

Table 6 *IMAR details within Module Handbook

In this module IMAR applies to the coursework(s) listed below: [*please edit below as required to make text module specific]* 1. Coursework 1: XXXXXXXXXXXXX 2. Coursework 2: XXXXXXXXXXXX

22. Retention of Examination Scripts, Coursework and Feedback

22.1 Retention of Examinations

Examination data is considered as an individual's personal data under GDPR therefore individual students have the right to access their examination data if it is held by the University. While examination scripts are exempted from data protection access rights, examination personal data includes provisional and agreed marks or overall results of assessed work, the associated feedback, and notes about individual candidates from Examination Boards.

Programme teams are responsible for the safe retention of examination scripts while they are under their control. Scripts will be retained for at least 6 months following the relevant Board of Examiners. For the purposes of archiving and review, samples may be retained for longer periods. Student marks are retained for 6 years following completion of a student's module or programme. Boards of Examiners and External Examiner reports (appendix 7) are retained for 6 years. Module teams will have access to online exam submissions while they

retain access to their Blackboard module areas. Historical drop boxes can also be accessed within Turnitin.

Where a student will benefit from examination feedback to improve performance and exam technique, the student can make an office hours appointment with a relevant member of staff. The staff member should review the examination script with the student highlighting errors, strengths, gaps, poor technique, etc. Under no circumstances should the student take a script away or be left alone with either a paper-based or online script.

The Examinations Office share exam scripts with the library at the end of each semester following the examination period. Past exam papers can be accessed online by Ulster University staff and students via: https://library.ulster.ac.uk/exampapers/ and with a user ID and network password. Exam papers can be searched by programme reference number (CRN), module number or keywords in the module description.

22.2 Retention of Coursework

Submitted coursework is the physical property of the University. Subject to University regulations on intellectual property, students retain the copyright and intellectual property of the coursework submitted for any form of assessment.

It is common practice to return coursework to students for feedback purposes. Students should always be given the opportunity to discuss their work and feedback with the member of staff privately.

Programme teams are responsible for the safe retention of assessment documents while they are under their control. Retention schedules are as follows:

- Assessment papers - retained for current academic year + 5 years.
- Completed Exam Scripts – retained until completion of exam +6 months.
- Individual student feedback on academic progress and general academic guidance – retained until end of student relationship +6 years.
- Records documenting submitted/completed summative assessments – retained until confirmation of marks/grades +6 months.
- External Examiner Liaison – retained for termination of appt + 1 year.
- BoE and EE reports – retained for current academic year + 6 years.

For further information, refer to UU Schedule Checker

23. Assessment of Industrial and Clinical Placement

The preparation, organisation and assessment of placement will vary among Faculties and programmes within the University. However, all programmes incorporating an element of work experience should aim to meet the following expectations:

- In the assessment of placement, each programme should have a clear assessment strategy statement on how the placement is to be assessed and accredited. It should

meet the learning outcomes of the placement experience and comply with the relevant professional accreditation.

- Assessment should ensure parity of marking procedure and treat all students equally regardless of the perceived quality of the placement.
- Assessment of placement should reflect quality of learning and should be based on evidence supplied by the three principal participants – student, visiting Academic Supervisor/Tutor, Employer Supervisor/Practice Educator.
- All parties involved should be aware of their responsibilities in the assessment process.
- The assessment mechanisms should encourage students to reflect upon their own learning and performance through the use of:
    - Student written work such as logbooks and diaries. ○ Academic supervisor evaluation.
    - Employer Supervisor/Practice Educator and visiting Academic Supervisor evaluation.

23.1 Assessment of Work-Based Learning/Industrial Placement (non-clinical)

Where it is used, Work-based learning (WBL) is an integral process within programmes. The process (learning model) includes placement preparation, reflection and evaluation of the WBL experience itself and feedback into final year study. On a more general level, the ethos behind WBL is an intention to raise students' awareness of their skills and needs, encourage them to reflect on their experience in the light of this heightened awareness and enable them to identify and focus on what and how they have learned. The ultimate outcome is moving towards becoming a "reflective practitioner."

23.2 Learning outcomes of placement year

Upon successful completion of the 60 credit Level 5 placement module, students will be able to:

1. Solve work-based problems underpinned by subject-specific related theory and contribute to the employer organisation.

2. Demonstrate professional standards, ethics and etiquette in collaborative work environments.

3. Critically reflect on the professional learning experience and self-development in the context of career decision making.

4. Communicate effectively to a variety of audiences using appropriate written, verbal, or digital delivery methods.

23.3 Industrial placement assessment strategy

The assessment strategy for industrial placement is based on evidence supplied by the three principal participants – student, academic supervisor, industrial/professional supervisor. Two standard models for the assessment of the placement year have been agreed by the Learning and Teaching Committee, from placement year 2015/16 (revised May 2018) as follows:

Model 1

The precise nature of the work is specified by individual course teams.

Students are required to produce a maximum of two pieces of academic work that demonstrate their achievement of the module learning outcomes in a subject-appropriate way. Student Projects may take the form of written reports, presentations, design and digital artefacts - other alternatives may be specified.

Student Project (50%)

This should comprise:

- Student Project - short description required
- Method of feedback

Employer Assessment (20%) This should comprise:

- Employer Assessment – short description required
- Method of feedback

Academic Supervisor Assessment (30%)

This should comprise:

- Placement Visitor Assessment – short description required
- Method of feedback

Cues for assessing the student project can be found in the Appendices: 7.1, sample pro forma for student project assessment, 7.2, associated assessment criteria and 7.3, report form. Where the employer assessment is conducted independently, appendix 7.4 offers parameters within which to make judgements.

To pass the module a student must achieve a mark of 40%.

Model 2

Subject to the requirements below for both Academic and Competency Assessment, individual course teams may differ in the nature of the set work, the number of required submissions and the scheduling of the assessment process. The precise nature of the work is specified by individual course teams. At least one submission is at or near the end of the placement period and enables the student to reflect upon their experience.

23.4 Academic Assessment:

Students are required to produce a maximum of two pieces of academic work that demonstrate their achievement of the module learning outcomes in a subject appropriate way. Academic work may take the form of written reports, presentations, design and digital artefacts - other alternatives may be specified.

Academic Assessment x

This should comprise

- Short description of the type of work involved
- An indication of its percentage contribution
- Method of feedback

Assessment is carried out by subject academics using a numeric scale.

23.5 Competency Assessment:

Students are required to demonstrate their achievement of a range of competencies that may include generic employability skills and attributes, as well as subject specific ones. The list of competencies to be assessed is specified by individual course teams. A successful student must normally demonstrate achievement of the specified competencies before the end of the placement period. If necessary, a student may be given more than one opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the competencies.

Assessment is carried out by the Academic Supervisor, typically during a visit to the placement workplace. Competency judgements are made by the Academic Supervisor, giving due weight to employer observations, and with reference to corroborative evidence sources such as: student placement journal, samples of student work, observation of student at work, and discussion with student and employer.

Competency judgements are recorded as either pass or fail.

To pass the module, a student must pass both the academic and competency assessments. A successful student's percentage mark in the module is based upon their academic assessment alone.

The assessment criteria for the year in placement are set at Level 5 in degrees (see Appendix H2). The Diploma award is made upon successful completion of the associated degree. It is graded overall with a Pass awarded at 40%, Pass with Commendation at 60% and Pass with Distinction at 70%. *Placement and Study Abroad.*

23.6 Assessment of Study Abroad with Particular Reference to Europe and other Non-English Speaking Countries

The experience of studying abroad has proved to be exceedingly valuable through the introduction to a new culture and new academic approaches. The assessment of this period and its integration with the period of home study do, however, present a number of

challenges which vary according to the course, the student and the host institution concerned. The University adopted in 2002 a Protocol (now Policy 2015) for Quality Assurance in respect of University study or other experience outside the United Kingdom. This provides more information on issues relating to assessment. Certain potential areas of difficulty and measures that may be taken to counter them are outlined below.

23.6.1 Prior Briefing

An extensive pre-departure briefing is essential. In addition to other aspects of the period of study abroad it should cover the precise nature of the system in which the students will find themselves and should give clear details of the work which they are expected to complete. Any such briefing will be complemented by clear and unambiguous written material for reference by the student to supplement any lapses in memory and act as a reminder of what is required when the student is away from the University.

Assessment in the Host Location and its Relationship to the Ulster Programme.

The European ideal is that marks for study in Europe will be simply transferred to the home institution, as a situation of trust will obtain between third level institutions in Europe.

A number of issues may arise relating to the student, their prior study, their linguistic ability and knowledge of the language of the target community. In certain cases, no account may be taken in the host institution during the marking process of the fact that these are not native speakers of the target language; in certain instances, the students' linguistic level may not permit them to take examinations with local students on the same terms. It is also likely that the quality assurance mechanisms may be different. There may well not be any sort of double marking or External Examiner review in the host institution as in many countries a lecturer's marks are considered sacrosanct and not subject to scrutiny. While the judgements of experienced staff in these systems are normally reliable and beyond reproach, in certain cases there may be unchecked idiosyncratic marking.

Such variations reflect a possible danger that the student may be disadvantaged by the different nature of the two systems. It is important that staff and students be aware of the differences in the host country and that account be taken of this when setting up schemes for assessing work completed within another academic environment. It will also be necessary to consider the host country and university marking patterns and to decide appropriate equivalents for the UK marking and grading system.

23.6.2 University Responses

A number of responses may be found on the part of staff within the University to the above situation.

Students may be given work to undertake for the University as well as certain study units within the host institution. This will mean that there is a counterbalance to any work done

for the institution abroad. Such pieces of work might be a dissertation or shorter study. An oral examination on return may be particularly useful for language students but a presentation may also perform a valuable function in some other areas.

It may be possible for the University to agree with the host institution that papers undertaken by exchange students are made available for scrutiny by home staff and by our External Examiners. This has been possible in some cases but is frequently not feasible (and may be considered to run counter to the spirit of European co-operation and ECTS).

In certain programmes, staff have found it appropriate for students to work in a laboratory or similar situation in the host institution under the guidance of staff there on a project which the students will write up as a project or dissertation for their home university award**.**

24. Assessment of Study Abroad: Diploma in International Academic Studies (DIAS)

Students spend an approved period studying at a host institution where they will complete an agreed number of credits as specified for the associated programme of study and/or study abroad option. These must be equivalent to the undergraduate credit load of the host institution. For programmes within Europe, students must complete 60 ECTS across the academic year. For programmes outside of Europe, please confirm the necessary credit load with the Global Engagement Office: studyabroad@ulster.ac.uk.

Students must submit a transcript from the host institution upon completion and must undertake the relevant Ulster University assessment.

Candidates are assessed using a combination of methods appropriate to the associated programme of study and/or study abroad option. Normally this comprises:

a) transcript from the host institution indicating that a minimum of 60% of courses studied have been awarded a pass mark. Where necessary, a grade conversion document can be provided by the Global Engagement Office; and

b) submission of an Ulster University project with clear learning outcomes and mark scheme as agreed before departure.

Grade conversion guidance must be provided to the student if requested and additionally there should be a clear rationale and assessment criteria for the Ulster University project.

The assessment criteria for the project are set out in Appendix X.

Normally, the student's performance overseas (component A) will have a 60% weighting and the reflective Ulster University project (component B) will have a 40% weighting. The overall pass mark for the DIAS will comprise one aggregate mark. The results of candidates shall be graded by order of merit as Pass with Distinction, Pass with

Commendation and Pass. The following shall be the minimum percentages used in determining the overall gradings of candidates:

- Pass with Distinction 70%
- Pass with Commendation 60%
- Pass 40%

24.1 Work and Study Abroad

An example of such an arrangement is where students follow the Study USA programme and also may spend some time in industry, e.g. Hospitality, Hotel and Tourism students. The assessment of such students for the award of a Diploma in International Academic Studies should cover both elements drawing on the guidance above.

Note: this Assessment Code of Practice can be stored as an adjunct to the General Programme Regulations and will link to other interrelated policies e.g., APEL, Academic Misconduct, EE, EC1 form.

25. References:

- British Dyslexia Association [online**]** available at**:** https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/

- Deeley, S. J., & Bovill, C. (2017) Staff-student partnership in assessment: enhancing assessment literacy through democratic practices. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education* 42(3) 463–477.

- Jisc (2022) Principles of Good Assessment and Feedback [online] https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/advice-and-guidanceassessment.pdf?sfvrsn=ca29c181_4

- QAA Quality Enhancement Project (2022) Inclusive Assessment Attributes. Available at: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/members/inclusive-assessment-attributes.pdf

- Quality Assurance Agency (2018) UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Advice and Guidance, Assessment. Available at: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/qualitycode/advice-and-guidance-assessment.pdf?sfvrsn=ca29c181_4

- Waterfield, J and West, B (2006) 'Inclusive Assessment in Higher Education: A Resource for Change' University of Plymouth: Plymouth (SPACE Project)

26. Appendices

Appendix 1: Viva Voce in the context of suspected cheating

As part of an investigation of alleged cheating or plagiarism, a candidate's knowledge may be tested in a 'viva' interview with examiners.

Where a member of staff suspects that a piece of coursework contains plagiarised material, it should normally be double marked. The piece of work may be submitted to the *Turnitin* detection system, or other detection system as appropriate, if it has not already been screened as part of the submission process. The member of staff should also consult texts and other members of staff in order to ascertain if plagiarised material is present. (It may also be appropriate at this stage to alert the module coordinator, if not the tutor concerned, and the Course/Subject Director to the suspicion of plagiarism.) Academic judgement should be exercised in order to determine if plagiarism of a very minor nature may be attributed to incorrect referencing techniques and should be penalised as such, rather than as plagiarism.

Staff may also wish to ask the student to attend an interview to discuss the piece of work. Best practice recommends that more than one member of staff should be present when interviewing a student. A record of the meeting should be kept. Failure on the student's part to attend for interview cannot be taken as conclusive proof of plagiarism, although this should be noted on the student file.

Care should be taken in the conduct of the interview. Sometimes it will be sufficient to suggest to the student that their work is rather more sophisticated or advanced than one would normally expect for the level or wonder if he or she has perhaps relied a little too much on sources. In discussion with the student, it is important to approach the matter delicately. One should leave open the possibility that one may be wrong and phrase the question as an enquiry. One does not want the student to be able to say that he or she was accused without foundation and it is also easier for some students to confess if the question is put gently. Students then often admit that this was in effect the case. Others may brazen the matter out.

Where plagiarism is still suspected but not admitted after an interview (or indeed if an interview is judged inappropriate), it may be necessary to have recourse to methods such as a viva to test the student's actual knowledge and understanding of the material. Sometimes, staff may choose to wait until a slightly later stage in the assessment process when the student's overall profile becomes clearer before undertaking a viva. For longer pieces such as dissertations contributing to a final award, the External Examiner is likely to be consulted if the internal staff cannot prove the allegation of plagiarism.

Where a member of staff is satisfied that there is plagiarised material in a student's work, he/she should bring this formally to the attention of the module co-ordinator (if not the tutor concerned) who should inform the Course/Subject Director.

The Course/Subject Director may make such further enquiries as may be necessary. The student should have the opportunity to provide further information, evidence that the work has not been plagiarised, by way of an informal appeal process. The Course/Subject Director should consult with the module co-ordinator and member of staff and, if they agree that plagiarism has occurred, the student should be penalised in accordance with the Framework of Penalties for Plagiarism Offences (see below). The student should be informed accordingly and a note placed on the student's file (using the 'Record of Plagiarism Offence' form (see below). The implications of the offence for fitness to practise should also be considered where appropriate, in accordance with the Ordinance on Fitness for Practice.

The student has the formal right of appeal as provided for in the Regulations Governing Examinations in Programmes of Study following the meeting of the Board of Examiners, or under the Ordinance on Student Discipline, as appropriate.

Appendix 2: A note about Examinations and Class Tests

Careful consideration should be given to the selection of time-constrained, invigilated examinations, or tests as methods of assessment.

The exam will be considered a 'high stakes' assessment which may cause higher levels of anxiety for students, and this form of assessment can be low in levels of assessment validity and reliability.

Potential Challenges with Exams and Tests	**Potential Benefits of Exams and Tests**
Assessment validity can be impacted as some exam/test designs may lead to rote/surface level learning. High pressure environments may not be a reliable indicator of student capability overall** Dependence on one form of assessment across a programme limits the development of a wider range of skills Dependence on one form of assessment method across a programme amplifies the limitations of that method May limit the opportunity for feedback	Efficient way to assess breadth (but not necessarily depth) of knowledge A way to encourage students to learn foundational terms and concepts required for future learning Good questions can assess applied skills such as decision making, strategic planning, problem solving, data processing rather than just memory Practical skills assessments (e.g., OSCEs) can assess a wide range of skills and competencies Invigilated assessments provide some confidence that the assessed work is being undertaken by the individual candidate.

**The potential impact of invigilated, time constrained exams/tests

- A fear of negative outcomes may lead to negative, distracting thoughts during the exam
- Poor experiences of previous exams can impact on confidence levels, anxiety and performance
- Time limitations can heighten feelings of pressure and will impact on the flow of thought
- The poor phrasing of questions or the overall structure of a paper may lead to misinterpretations and/or the increased potential for hidden fails
- The misalignment between exam/test content and module content will lead to underprepared students

- Large, end of term exams will be reliant on students adopting robust exam and study strategies – some students will need significant support for this
- The current state of health of the student, including undisclosed disabilities, will impact performance which will be exacerbated in high pressure environments.

These factors can lead to poor motivation and concentration, causing problems with recall and increased errors during the assessment

(Race et al, 2004; Trifoni & Shahini, 2011; Putwain, 2024).

Ulster encourages rich and diverse assessment strategies which measure the application of diverse knowledge, skills and attributes across our diverse student body. Any single assessment method has its limitations. For this reason, one method of assessment must not dominate a programme assessment strategy. A programme should not become reliant on any one form of assessment as the limitations of this method will be compounded and inclusive design will be obstructed.

The conditions that should be met to justify using class tests and examinations.

The examination and class test methods will be considered appropriate forms of assessment if:

- Competency examinations are specifically evidenced as being favoured by PSRB's.
- Examinations/tests are justified as being the most appropriate method to meet the associated learning outcome(s) within the context of the module and programme. Typically, examinations or tests will be aligned with knowledge recall and application which are associated with lower order skills i.e., levels 3 and 4.
- The associated programme assessment strategy demonstrates a broad range of assessment methods to develop a range of knowledge, skills and attributes, providing all students with opportunities to demonstrate their learning.
- The associated module includes another element of assessment which is an alternative to an examination or class test.
- As with any form of assessment, a framework of timely and supportive formative opportunities (opens in new window) is made available to all students to enable feedback, reflection, action planning and assessment resilience. A form of mock exam or class test should also be made available to students to enable familiarisation of assessment format and timing. Exam study guidance (opens in new window) must also be shared with students.
- Students are clear about the source of examinable content i.e., whether question topics are sourced from classroom content, directed and/or independent study, or prior learning.

- Reasonable adjustment (opens in new window) (RA) recommendations are communicated and applied as appropriate and implemented in a timely and supportive way.
- Students with similar RA support plans for exams/tests may be placed in the same room to support feelings of inclusion.
- Student-facing programme and module information signposts to appropriate support services.
- There is robust internal and external scrutiny of draft examination/test papers to ensure that content, format and layout are clear, unambiguous and to minimise the risk of hidden failure. Examination/test answer plans should accommodate unanticipated responses that can be proven to answer the question as written.
- If and where feasible, some degree of topic choice is provided within the exam/test question structure.
- The quantity of exam/test questions is reasonable for the timeframe identified.
- Exam question banks are built and maintained to enable question shuffling which mitigates the risk of collusion in the context of staggered exams and resits. Examination structures can also aim to randomise questions to reduce the risk of cheating, particularly where there is limited spacing between candidates.
- Exam and test questions are concise, written clearly, using Plain English. (opens in new window)
- If multiple choice questions (MCQs) are used, avoid double-negatives.
- Open book examinations are considered. This method includes support and reference material which can reduce stress levels and promote knowledge and skills application rather than just memory recall.

Appendix 3: Assessment Schedule <u>EXAMPLE</u> Template

Level 4 Sem 1

MODULE	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Xmas	EXM	EXM
MOD101 20c								CWK (50%)				CWK (50%)			
MOD102 20c									Class test (25%)						Exam (75%)
MOD103 20c							CWK *20%*							CWK 80%	

A programme assessment schedule is typically generated within documentation for programme approval/reapproval. A simple example is indicated in the table above. Each Faculty/School should aim to manage a process that maintains current versions of programme assessment schedules which aligns with information within the CMS and programme handbooks.

Appendix 4: Peer Evaluation Form for Group Work

Your name: Module: Assessment Task: Date:

Write the name of each of your group members in a separate column. For each person, indicate the extent to which you agree with the statement on the left, using a scale of 1-4 (1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=agree; 4=strongly agree). Total the numbers in each column.

Evaluation Criteria	**Group member:**	**Group member:**	**Group member:**	**Group member:**
Attends group meetings regularly and arrives on time.				
Contributes meaningfully to group discussions.				
Completes group assignment tasks on time.				
Prepares work in a quality manner.				
Demonstrates a cooperative and supportive attitude.				
Contributes significantly to the success of the project.				
TOTALS				
Comments				

Reflections on team dynamics:
Consider how effectively the grouped worked together, including negotiations, time on task, any tensions or inappropriate and detrimental behaviours. Please provide a clear rationale for your reflections:

Reflections for the future:
Consider what you have learned from working in a group on this project that you will carry into your next group experience:
Adapted from a peer evaluation form developed at Johns Hopkins University (October 2006)

Appendix 5 Coursework Submission Sheet

FACULTY OF …….

COURSEWORK SUBMISSION SHEET **University Date Stamp**

This sheet must be completed in full and a□ached to the front of each piece of assessment before submission to XXX

Student's Name .....

Registration No.....

Programme Title.....

Module Code/Title .....

Lecturer .....

Date Due.....

(NB: Latest hand-in time is by 12pm UK time on the due date)

Submitted work is subject to the following assessment policies:
Coursework must be submitted by dates as specified by the Programme/Subject Committee.

Students may seek prior consent from the Programme/Subject Director to submit coursework after the official deadline; such requests must be accompanied by a satisfactory explanation, and in the case of illness by a medical certificate.

Coursework submitted without consent after the deadline will not normally be accepted and will therefore receive a mark of zero.

"I declare that this is all my own work. Any material I have referred to has been accurately referenced and any contribution of Artificial Intelligence technology has been fully acknowledged. I understand the importance of academic integrity and have read and understood the University's General Regulation: Student Academic Integrity and the Academic Misconduct Procedure. I understand that I must not upload my work before, during or after submission to any unapproved plagiarism detectors or answer sharing platforms, or equivalent, and that only University-approved platforms should be used."
Student's Signature…… Date……

COURSEWORK RECEIPT – **Not** valid unless stamped

Student's Name .....

Module Code and Title .....

It is the student's responsibility to retain a copy of this receipt

Appendix 6 Offline Marking Coursework Feedback Sheet Template

Coursework Feedback Sheet (Undergraduate)

(School/Dept XXX)

(Programme Title)

Student ID Number		
Module Name and Code		
Module Coordinator		
Coursework Title		
% Weighting of Coursework		
Submission Deadline		**Date Submitted:**
Extension Request Approved	YES NO N/A	
Reasonable Adjustment Applied	YES N/A	
Module Learning Outcomes		

1.
2.
3.
4.

Assessment Criteria	**1st Class 80-100%**	**1st Class 70-80%**	**2:1 60-69%**	**2:2 50-59%**	**Threshold Pass 40-49%**	**Fail 0-39%**
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						

Provisional Mark Awarded:

This assignment mark is provisional and is subject to ratification by the Board of Examiners.

Marker Comments:	
Strengths and evidence of achieving the learning outcomes:	
Actions for improvement and feed forward to future work:	
Signed (1st Marker)	Date:
Signed (Moderator)	Date:

Appendix 7: Placement assessment documents

7.1 EXTERNAL ASSESSOR'S REPORT FORM

1 Name of External Assessor	**Academic Session**
2 Address	
3 Telephone Number **4 Email address**	
5 Title of programme(s) and/or Honours subject*	
6 Name of Director	
7 Number of External Examiners reporting on each of the above programmes	
8 Partner Institution (if applicable)	
9 Subject areas of strands+	

A programme is a distinct integrated course of study leading to an award. Subjects contribute to a range of combined undergraduate honours degree programmes. They have designated titles.

For programmes, please state subject areas covered. For Honours subjects within combined degrees, please state whether Single Honours, Major, Main and/or Minor subject strands.

NOTE: HEADINGS 1-9 SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY THE FACULTY BEFORE THE FORM IS FORWARDED TO THE EXTERNAL EXAMINER. (HEADINGS 4 - 9 MUST BE COMPLETED IN FULL.) Guidance notes on completion of report form

You are asked to submit your report using this form to Professor Odette Hutchinson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Student Experience), within one month of attending the last meeting of the Board of Examiners in each academic session.

Please send the completed report form by e-mail to: eereports@ulster.ac.uk

Your comments are sought on the areas indicated. Specific issues that may be addressed under each heading are itemised, and the University would be grateful if you would respond fully in each section. A checklist, as recommended by the UUK/GuildHE Review of External Examining (2011), has been included for your use. Please indicate if any comments made in your previous report have not been addressed. Your report need not be restricted to the areas specified, and you should

feel free to comment in Section 10 on any other matters that you consider relevant. Please distinguish between suggestions for consideration and recommendations for action by the Programme/Subject Committee. If you prefer, you may produce a word-processed report using the headings included in this form instead of using the actual form.

Your report will be considered on behalf of the Senate in the first instance by the appropriate Programme/Subject Committee(s) and you will receive a response to the substantive matters that you raise. Your report and the response will be considered subsequently as part of the Annual Monitoring process. The report (or a summary) will also be discussed with student representatives and the report will be made available in full to all students on the programme. You are asked not to identify individual students or staff members by name.

In addition, you may choose to submit a confidential report to the Deputy Vice Chancellor or the Vice-Chancellor.

Final report
At the end of your period of appointment as External Examiner, it would be helpful if your final report would draw attention in Section 10 to any significant developments or changes in standards relating to the programme or subject which you observed during your appointment and include if appropriate any suggestions for modification to the programme of study. A copy of your final report will be sent to your successor as External Examiner.

Your claim form should be sent to the relevant Faculty Office.

1 YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE QUALITY REVIEW PROCESS

Please include comments on: the sufficiency of the information given concerning your role as External Examiner; the usefulness of relevant documentation received (including regulations and assessment criteria); the opportunity given to approve examination papers and coursework assignments; opportunities for inspection and adequacy of samples of examination scripts and coursework submissions; attendance at oral examinations, student performances or presentations; involvement in meetings of examiners; and the conduct of the Board of Examiners. (The attached checklist may assist you.)

---

2 APPROPRIATENESS OF THE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE PROGRAMME OR SUBJECT AND MODULES

Please comment on whether the structure and content of the programme/subject strand and its component modules are coherent and appropriate to the level of the qualification,

the subject area, and the particular aims of the programme/subject. Please include reference to national subject benchmarks, the national qualifications framework, the programme specification, professional practice standards as they relate to the award and other relevant information. The University's learning and teaching strategy expects programmes to be underpinned by current and appropriate discipline-specific and pedagogic research and scholarship. Have you found evidence of research/ scholarship informing the curriculum and its pedagogy?

---

3 ASSESSMENT DESIGN

Please comment on whether the methods of assessment, marking, and classification (if applicable) are appropriate to the aims, intended learning outcomes, structure, and content of the strand; whether the assessment criteria, marking schemes and classification are set at the appropriate level; whether the method of final assessment allows for appropriate discrimination between candidates; and student awareness of the assessment scheme and criteria. Please include reference to national subject benchmarks, the national qualifications framework (including outcome classification descriptions for Level 6 Honours degrees, where applicable), the programme specification, professional practice standards as they relate to the award and other relevant information.

---

4 MARKING STANDARDS AND FEEDBACK

Please comment on whether the internal marking was conducted rigorously and impartially, with the schemes for marking and classification being consistently applied and feedback that justifies the mark awarded; whether the final assessment of the candidates was fair and in accordance with the criteria for marking and classification (including classification descriptions for Level 6 Honours degrees, where applicable); and the consistency of standards applied across modules.

---

5 GENERAL QUALITY OF CANDIDATES' WORK

Please comment on your overall impression of the quality of the candidates and their achievements and whether you are satisfied that the general quality of work reflects the

level of qualification and the aims and intended outcomes of the strand. Please include reference to national subject benchmarks, the national qualifications framework, the programme specification, professional practice standards as they relate to the award and other relevant information.

---

6 STUDENT LEARNING

Please comment on whether the range of assessment methods and outcomes provides evidence of effective student learning. Please include reference to national subject benchmarks, the national qualifications framework, the programme specification, professional practice standards as they relate to the award and other relevant information.

---

7 COMPARABILITY WITH PROGRAMMES OF STUDY AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Based on your experience, please indicate whether you consider that the standards of the strand and its assessment, and of student performance, are comparable with those at other institutions. Please include reference to national subject benchmarks, the national qualifications framework, the programme specification, professional practice standards as they relate to the award and other relevant information.

---

8 ADMINISTRATION OF THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Please comment on the procedures followed and the administrative arrangements and their appropriateness and effectiveness, and the adequacy of the support provided to you.

---

9 STUDENT CONSULTATION

Please list any matters identified by you or by students (where you have met them) which might be appropriate for discussion with students at the Staff/Student Consultative Committee(s) or through other means.

---

10 OTHER COMMENTS

Please indicate what you consider to be the best features of the , its strengths and weaknesses. Add any other comments which you would wish to make, including possible improvements, based on your experience elsewhere. Please distinguish between recommendations and suggestions for consideration.

Any use or publication of the report is the sole responsibility Ulster University.

Signature: Date:

7.2 External Assessor's report checklist
Programme materials

Did you receive:	Y	N	N/A
a. Programme/subject handbook(s)			
b. Programme regulations (these may be in the programme/subject handbook)?			
c. Module descriptions (these may be in the programme handbook)?			
d. Assessment briefs, coursework marking criteria and exam marking schemes?			
e. A schedule of assessments by level and module including types and weightings?			

Draft assessment papers

a. Did you receive or gain access to all the draft papers in good time?
If not, was this at your request?

b. Was the nature of the assessments appropriate for the associated level and outcomes?

c. Was the schedule of assessments appropriate?

d. Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?

Dissertations/project reports

a. Was the choice of subjects for dissertations appropriate

b. Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate?

Moderating examination scripts

a. Did you receive or gain access to an appropriate number of scripts?

If you received a sample of scripts, was the method of selection satisfactory?

b. Were the general standard and consistency of marking and feedback appropriate?

c. Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?

Coursework/continuously assessed work

a. Was sufficient coursework made available to you for assessment?

b. If you received a sample of scripts, was the method of selection satisfactory?

c. Were the methods and general standard and consistency of marking and feedback satisfactory?

Orals/performances/recitals/appropriate professional placements

a. Were suitable arrangements made for you to conduct orals and/or moderate performances/recitals/appropriate professional placements?

Final examiners' meeting

a.	Were you able to attend the meeting?		
b.	Was the meeting conducted to your satisfaction?		
c.	Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Board of Examiners?		

Signed:
Date:

7.3 Academic and Employer Supervisor's Report

Name of Student:

Name of Employer Organisation:

Name of Supervisor:

Name of Visiting Academic:

Assessment date:

Checklist	Yes/No	Comments
Training / Experience Programme Arranged		
Employer Supervisor Appointed		
Student Interviewed		
Company Representative Interviewed		
Health and Safety checklist inspected		
Student accommodation satisfactory		
Changes to the training/experience programme		

Comments on the student and programme

In order to assess the overall performance of students on placement we have identified a number of areas that we would wish you to ask the supervisor to grade or comment on: Grades:

A: Outstanding (consistently exceeded the standard expected of a placement student; first class)
B: Very Good (frequently exceeded the standard expected of a placement student; upper second class)
C: Good (always achieved (at least) the standard expected of a placement student; lower second class)
D: Satisfactory (achieved (at least) the minimum accepted standard for a placement student; third class)
E: Unsatisfactory (did not achieve the minimum accepted standard for a placement

Grades	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
Initiative					
Enthusiasm					
Productivity					
Quality of Work					
Attendance/punctuality					
Time management					
Interpersonal and team skills					

Noted Strengths/Abilities:

Noted areas for improvement:

Any other relevant information:

Please rank the overall performance of the student by recording a Pass/Fail result.

Signature of Employer Supervisor:

Signature of Visiting Academic Tutor:

(Please attach the student's work summary sheet when returning this form to the Placement Tutor).

7.4 Employer Supervisor's Evaluation

Student Name:……. **Year of Employment:** ……../……

Organisation: ……

Interest in Work

High interest in job. Very enthusiastic.	More than average amount of interest and enthusiasm for	Satisfactory amount of interest and enthusiasm for job.	Interest spasmodic. Occasionally enthusiastic.	Little interest or enthusiasm for job.

Comment .....

Initiative

Asks for new jobs. Looks for	most matters. Acts voluntarily in frequently what to do next.	routine matters. Acts voluntarily in	Must be told Relies on others. Usually needs to work to do.	be told what to do. Self-starter.

Comment .....

Organisation and Planning

excellent job of planning and	work well. Usually organises and organising.	amount of planning Does normal plan work	fails to organise and More often than not plan work organising	to organise Consistently fails effectively.

Comment .....

Ability to Learn

Exceptionally quick.	Quick to learn.	Average.	Slow to learn.	Very slow to learn.

Comment .....

Quality of Work

in performing done in a Very thorough work. Very few	Good work with few errors. Usually thorough.	review. Has normal Work usually passes amount of errors.	amount of errors for More than average a trainee. errors if any.	Work usually careless manner. Makes errors often.

Comment .....

Quantity of Work

productive in with Highly comparison	in comparison other students. More than expected student.	in comparison with Expected amount of other students.	productivity for a Less than expected other students.	in comparison with Very low in comparison with other students.

Comment .....

Judgement

good. Decision sense. Usually good in routine undependable. Jumps to Exceptionally

Uses good common Judgement usually Judgement often Poor judgement.
based on makes the right situations. conclusions
thorough decision. without sufficient analysis of knowledge. problem.

Comment .....

Dependability

be depended depended upon in depended upon in unreliable, needs Unreliable.

Can always Can usually be Can only be Somewhat
upon in any most situations. routine situations. above average situation. checking.

Comment .....

Relations with Others

helpful. Works well with associates.

others are Congenial and harmonious under normal circumstances.

Most relations with

Comment .....

Verbal Communication Skills

Good.

Satisfactory.

Comment .....

Written Communication Skills

Good.

Satisfactory.

Comment .....

Acceptance of Criticism and Suggestions Satisfactory Unsatisfactory	Comments …… ……
Professionalism Appropriate Inappropriate	Comments …… ……
Attendance Satisfactory Unsatisfactory	Comments …… ……
Punctuality Always on time Irregular time keeping	Comments …… ……

Overall Performance

Grades: A - **Outstanding** (consistently exceeded the standard expected of a placement student; first class)

B - **Very Good** (frequently exceeded the standard expected of a placement student; upper second class)

C - **Good** (always achieved (at least) the standard expected of a placement student; lower second class)

D - **Satisfactory** (achieved (at least) the minimum accepted standard for a placement student; third class)

E - **Unsatisfactory** (did not achieve the minimum accepted standard for a placement student; fail)

Please rank the overall performance of the student by allocating a grade in the range A to E as above. Bear in mind that a grade of A is associated with a 1st Class Honours classification and is normally only achieved by a small number of students in any particular year grouping.

Outstanding	**A-**	**A**	**A+**
Very Good	**B-**	**B**	**B+**
Good	**C-**	**C**	**C+**
Satisfactory	**D-**	**D**	**D+**
Unsatisfactory	**E-**	**E**	**E+**

Additional Comments, Projects undertaken, etc. which may be helpful in assessing the placement student.

Do you feel the academic knowledge and level of transferable skills evident initially in the placement student are adequate and, if not, what changes would you like to see implemented by the course team?

As we are constantly trying to improve the placement process to the benefit of all the parties involved, can you please provide feedback on your experience of the placement process itself and make recommendations on how it may be improved.

Future Participation: do you wish to be contacted by the University concerning the employment of placement students next year? Yes / No

Rated by..... **Title**

Signed..... **Date**