Ulster
University

EXTERNAL EXAMINERS'

HANDBOOK

September 2021

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

EXTERNAL EXAMINERS' HANDBOOK

FOREWORD

The University is pleased to welcome you as a new external examiner.

This handbook has been produced to provide guidance on your role as external examiner. I hope that you find it useful and that your experience at the University will be enjoyable.

The handbook derives its authority from the University's Charter, Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations as well as the operational procedures which have been approved by relevant University committees. It has taken account of the final report and recommendations of the Universities UK / GuildHE Review of external examining in universities and colleges in the UK (March 2011) and of the chapter of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education dealing with external examining (December 2012).

Should you have any questions about your appointment please contact the appropriate Examinations Office at the address below. If your query is related to the programme, please contact the Course or Subject Director for the course or subject to which you have been appointed.

G KENDALL
Acting Head of Academic Office

For courses at Belfast and Jordanstown   For courses at Coleraine and Magee
For courses in Partner Institutions

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the University

The University of Ulster was founded in 1984 by Royal Charter as a result of a petition from The New University of Ulster and the Ulster Polytechnic. The University is based on four campuses, at Belfast, Coleraine, Jordanstown, and Magee College, Londonderry. Most provision at the Jordanstown campus is moving to Belfast from September 2021. The University now brands itself as Ulster University.

Staff and Student Population

The student population has grown from 11,182 in 1984/85 to 27,063 (inclusive of off-campus University students) in 2020/21. The 2020/21 population, broken down by mode of attendance and by University campus, is as follows:

Campus	BELFAST	COLERAINE	JORDANSTOWN	MAGEE
Full-time	1,890	3,212	9,120	3,640
Part-time	418	1,178	4,578	858

There were 2,169 full-time students of the University at the Birmingham and London campuses of QAHE, and 18 part-time and eight full-time at City University College, Doha, Qatar. Both partners are Affiliate Colleges of the University and teach franchised courses.

The University employs 2,659 staff: 1,265 academic and research staff and 1,394 support staff.

The University's Objects and Strategic Plan

The objects of the University, as stated in its Charter are:

> "to advance education through a variety of patterns, levels and modes of study and by a diversity of means by encouraging and developing learning and creativity, for the benefit of the community in Northern Ireland and elsewhere; to preserve, advance and disseminate knowledge and culture through teaching, scholarship and research, and to make available the results of such research; and to promote wisdom and understanding by the example and influence of corporate life."

The Strategic Plan (2016) identifies four broad priority areas: civic contribution, academic excellence, global vision, and operational excellence. Excellence in teaching will provide students with a high-quality, challenging and rewarding learning experience that equips them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to:

- demonstrate critical intellectual enquiry
- progress in their chosen career or entrepreneurial endeavour
- adapt to change
- become responsible global citizens making meaningful contributions to professional communities and wider society.

Student engagement and success are key. The student experience will be enhanced through the provision of well-designed, flexible, inclusive, relevant programmes and curricula.

The following Objectives have been set for Teaching Excellence and the Student Experience:

Teaching Excellence

- Define the unique attributes of an Ulster University graduate and our curriculum, to prepare graduates to be engaged contributors to a global and inter-connected society.
- Develop and deliver innovative curricula using contemporary methods of pedagogy that foster diversity, differentiation, and increased opportunities for access.
- Embrace the opportunities presented through emergent technologies to facilitate and complement teaching and learning practices.
- Support and develop our staff to deliver excellence in teaching and learning.

Student Experience

- Nurture vibrant, diverse student communities that take pride in Ulster University and who have a deep sense of belonging and identity.
- Create an environment that facilitates creative, independent learning and inquiry, economically important skills, knowledge and intellectual capital.
- Provide a shared vision and understanding for all staff and students that view students as partners in our educational provision.
- Provide campuses and spaces that stimulate and encourage an engaged student and staff community.

The University's Strategy for Learning and Teaching Enhancement (2019) aligns with the Plan and builds on existing practice through a framework for ongoing and new enhancement projects which contribute to the achievement of three overarching aims:

- better learning experience for students;
- better working lives for staff;
- better outcomes for students and society.

The University has agreed (2011) the following statement of the expected qualities of its graduates.

University of Ulster graduates will demonstrate:

- subject-specific knowledge and skills informed by current research and professional/ vocational practice;
- flexibility, creativity and an entrepreneurial approach to problem-solving;
- self-confidence, global citizenship, appreciation of sustainability matters, ethical leadership, and a commitment to life-wide learning, professionalism and employability;
- effective collaborative working, communication skills and the capacity for reflective practice, including the ability to give and receive feedback.

A set of Principles underpinning the Ulster Student Experience (2015) has been drawn up to articulate the aspirations of a range of existing and developing strategies as they affect the student experience. They reflect the Graduate Qualities and focus on the academic curriculum. The following areas are covered: the Ulster Learning Model (an overarching Principle which incorporates the pedagogic approach to learning and the partnership nature of student engagement in learning and teaching); Employability; Internationalisation; Digital Literacy; Research/Teaching Nexus; Ethics and Sustainability.

Academic Organisation

The University re-organised its academic structures into four Faculties from 2017/18: Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment; Life and Health Sciences; and Ulster University Business School. The activities of Faculties extend across the campuses. The academic staff within Faculties are grouped by cognate subject areas; these groupings, of which there are 23, are called schools (departments in the Ulster

University Business School). There are 15 Research Institutes. A Doctoral College has been established to support PhD researcher education.

The Distributed Education Board has oversight of quality and standards in certain courses and modules which are managed and delivered by central departments.

University Government

The University's constitutional framework is derived from its Charter, and is set out in Statutes and Ordinances.

The Council

The Council is responsible for the management and administration of the revenue, staff and property of the University. Its membership comprises academic and non-academic staff, the President of the Students' Union, and a majority of persons external to the University. The Council's committees include a Resources Committee, a Governance and Remuneration Committee and an Audit Committee.

The Senate

The Senate has responsibility for the ordering of the University's academic affairs in teaching and research and for the regulation and supervision of the education of its students. The Senate is composed mainly of academic staff, with provision for representation of non-academic staff and students. It works through a number of committees which include the Learning and Teaching Committee and the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee.

Faculty Boards

Each faculty has a board which advises and reports to Senate on all matters relating to the organisation of education, teaching and research in the faculty, including curricula and examinations and on the progress and conduct of its students. The Executive Dean of the Faculty chairs the faculty board.

University Management Structure

Senior Officers

The Chancellor is the Head of the University and presides over meetings of the Court, and has authority to confer degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic distinctions.

The Vice-Chancellor is the chief academic and administrative officer of the University and chairs the Senate and the Senior Leadership Team. There is a Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Academic Operations and Portfolio Development, for Academic Quality and Student Experience, and for Research.

The Vice-Chancellor and other Senior Officers including Executive Deans form the Senior Leadership Team. It has roles and responsibilities identified in the Council's Delegated Authority Framework.

Executive Deans of faculties are responsible for the academic and administrative leadership of their faculties. Heads of School are responsible to the Dean for all matters relating to the teaching and research activities in their schools. They work in conjunction with the Directors of the Research Institutes. Three Associate Deans in each faculty with responsibility for Education,

Global Engagement or Research, support the Deans. Each faculty and school has an office whose staff provide an administrative support service.

A Provost has responsibility for each campus.

Course and Subject Management

Each course is administered by a course committee, comprising staff who contribute significantly to the teaching of the course. Members of the course committee may be drawn from a number of schools and faculties. The course committee is responsible to a faculty board for the organisation and effective management of the course. The committee is chaired by a course director, who is also the key point of contact for the external examiner. The duties of the course director are detailed in Appendix 1.

In certain undergraduate Honours subjects, provision is organised and delivered on a subject basis. Students take combinations of Major, Main and Minor subject strands, to form Major/ Minor, Joint or Combined (three Minor) Honours degrees. There is no integration between the subjects taken as in Single Honours courses, but there is internal coherence and progression within each subject strand. Such provision is managed by a subject committee, chaired by a subject director. The duties of the subject director are set out at Appendix 2. A campus co-ordinating group, comprising subject directors and led by a director of combined studies (Appendix 3), addresses cross-subject matters.

The course or subject committee puts in place arrangements for student support and guidance, in accordance with University policy, in particular with regard to student induction, studies advice, access to staff, and student consultation.

The course committee (excluding student members), with the external examiner(s), becomes the board of examiners for the course and as such determines the assessment results and academic progression and final awards of students. For subject-based Honours degrees, a two-tier system operates. The subject board of examiners, comprising internal and external examiners, determines assessment results for all students and progression and awards in the case of Single Honours candidates only. For all other students, a campus progress and award board receives the results from subject boards and makes these decisions.

The delivery of individual modules is managed by module co-ordinators.

Administrative Departments

The University has a number of central administrative departments, some of which operate within an academic portfolio.

1.2 **University Awards: Programme Structure and Delivery**

The University's award-bearing provision is modular in structure and delivered in semesters. The minimum criteria for awards (certificates, diplomas, degrees at undergraduate and postgraduate levels) are specified in terms of entry qualifications, duration, credit points and level. The University's scheme of awards accords with the national Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) set out in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education maintained by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). This Framework aligns with the Framework for Qualifications of the European higher education area.

Semesters

The academic session at the University is semester-based. The year is organised into three semesters: autumn, spring and summer. While the majority of programmes are taught in the first two semesters, there are opportunities for students on some courses to use an intensive summer semester to vary the pace of their study, or to bridge the gap between a lower level course and the corresponding stage of a related degree course at the University. Some courses require extended dates of attendance. Full-time Master's programmes last a full calendar year.

The first two semesters each comprise 12 weeks of teaching and a three-week examination period. The spring semester has an additional one-week revision period. The intensive summer semester is eight weeks in duration. The full summer semester follows the standard pattern. If a course has no examinations the examination period may be used for other activities.

Qualifications and Credit Framework; Modular Structure

The University has adopted a modular structure and a credit framework for the delivery of its courses and undergraduate Honours subject strands.

The University's current Qualifications and Credit Framework (Appendix 4) replaces the frameworks in use from 1992 to 2001 and from 2002 to 2008. For each University award, the framework identifies the minimum credit volume, the range of credit levels for modules contributing to the award, the minimum credit points required at the highest level and the maximum permitted at the lowest level within the range, and the pass mark used. The place of the award in the national Framework for Higher Education Qualifications is also identified. Other expectations (entry qualifications; duration; progress; consequences of failure; and classification) are specified in award and course regulations. Generic University award regulations are found at ulster.ac.uk/about/governance/ordinance-and-regulations. Templates for course regulations are found on the Academic Office website: ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice/regulation-templates

Qualifications and Generic Qualification Descriptors

The University expects its awards to meet the generic outcomes for the relevant qualification described in the FHEQ (Appendix 5). Further information on the FHEQ is available on QAA's website. Each specific course has its own aims and learning outcomes set out in a programme specification.

Credit Levels and Generic Credit Level Descriptors

Modules are assigned a particular level. The level is an expression of relative demand, complexity and depth of learning and student autonomy.

The University formally adopted in 2002 the Northern Ireland Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (NICATS) level descriptors to describe levels. The University's levels reflect those commonly in use in the rest of the university sector. These are now known as EWNI (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) levels. They were recommended in the higher education credit framework for England published by QAA in August 2008 and are set out at Appendix 6.

The following equivalences for credit and qualification levels apply:

University Credit Levels (2009 onwards)	FHEQ (2008 onwards)	FHEQ (to 2008)
1	-	-
2	-	-
3	-	-
4	4	Certificate
5	5	Intermediate
6	6	Honours
7	7	Master's
8	8	Doctoral

The levels encompass the post-16 education systems across both the further and higher education sectors, and starts at 'Entry' level. Entry level and Level 1 are not used in University courses (with the exception of a particular introductory level 1 Mathematics module in Access to Higher Education courses). Level 2 is only used in Access Diplomas, but at least 60 credit points in the final year of such courses must be at Level 3.

Modules and Credit Points

A module is a component of a course or honours subject with its own approved aims, learning outcomes and assessment methods. Each module is usually taught and assessed within a semester, but modules may be delivered across the academic year and assessed in semesters 2 or 3 ('long-thin' modules). Credit points and a credit level, appropriate to the module's content and learning outcomes, are allocated in accordance with the overall requirements of the award. Credit points are a notional expression of student effort hours (inclusive of class contact, practicals, fieldwork, private study, assessment). Notionally 10 hours of student effort equate to one credit point.

Modules are either compulsory or optional within the programme structure.

Student performance in modules and the course overall is generally measured in percentage marks, although achievement may be recorded on a pass/fail basis. The University confers its qualifications on students who complete modules amounting to the specified number of credits at the appropriate levels for the award, in accordance with course regulations, and achieve the specified standard of performance to fulfil the learning outcomes of the course.

Module Size

Taught modules may have any value in multiples of five credit points. There is a minimum size of 10 credit points in award-bearing courses but 20 is encouraged as the normal minimum size. Stand-alone short courses (including modules contributing to the University's Certificate of Personal and Professional Development or Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development frameworks) may be offered as 5 credit-point modules.

Periods of placement which are assessed in relation to the learning objectives of the course may carry credit points. The placement may be integrated with an existing module or considered equivalent to taught modules. The allocation of credit points should not be made mechanistically in relation to the time spent on placement but should be related to the learning objectives of the module; there may be periods during placement when the student is gaining experience, which does not contribute to the fulfilment of intended learning outcomes.

Study Load

One hundred and twenty credit points represent the normal workload for a full-time programme of study in the standard academic year and 180 credits for study across a full calendar year.

Normally 60 credit points of study are undertaken in each semester. This amounts to some 36-42 hours of study per week. Courses of significantly longer duration comprise additional modules, taken during the summer semester.

In some circumstances, individual full-time students may seek to vary their semester load. This is permitted at the discretion of the course/subject committee, provided that, for full-time students, the overall requirements for the year are met and a minimum of 40 credit points is studied in each semester.

In part-time courses, a maximum of 90 credit points may be studied in the academic year or 135 in the full calendar year (notionally 30 hours per week).

The special intensive, eight-week summer semester allows study of modules amounting to 40 credit points (50 hours per week) full-time or a maximum of 20 points for part-time studies (25 hours).

<u>Module Teaching Patterns</u>

The balance between lectures, seminars, tutorials, projects, laboratory and fieldwork is not prescribed. Course/subject teams organise teaching to meet the intended outcomes. There are conventions in subject areas and common patterns are often followed on a weekly basis. Teams are expected to take account of the needs of student groups in considering the disposition of various learning and teaching methods. The University Senate had noted the merits of front-loading contact time in first year undergraduate teaching to ease the transition from school. A first year undergraduate teaching policy was approved in 2008. Courses which do not have written examinations may use the designated period in the semesters for other activities.

Use of Modules at Pre-HE level in Undergraduate Programmes, and Undergraduate Modules in Postgraduate Programmes

The University's 2002 Framework introduced some latitude in the specifications for awards. This is mainly because ab initio study may not be easily accommodated within the expectations of the usual level. Consequently, some modules are permitted at a lower level than would normally be expected in an HE qualification. The following restrictions apply:

Lowest Level

The lowest level permissible in undergraduate programmes other than Access Diplomas is Level 3.

The lowest level permissible in postgraduate programmes is Level 6 (except for integrated Master's degrees and the MBBS).

<u>Maximum at Lowest Level</u>

With the exception of the courses identified below, integrated Masters and the MBBS, the maximum volume at the lowest level is:

in courses with 120 or more credit points:	30 credit points
in courses with fewer than 120 credit points:	20 credit points
Foundation and Associate Bachelor's degrees:	40 credit points

Access Diploma courses are usually made up of modules at Levels 2 and 3, with at least 60 credit points at Level 3. An introductory mathematics module at Level 1 may be used.

In Honours degrees, particularly in Art and Design or to accommodate international students from countries where school-leaving qualifications do not equate to A level standard, an integrated foundation year (Year '0') at Level 3 may be included.

From 2016, the concept of 'extended' Master's degrees has been approved. These allow additional study of at least 60 credits at Level 6 to be integrated at the start of the course.

Postgraduate Programmes

From 2003 intake, in accordance with the national framework, all courses using Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma or Master's award titles must be postgraduate in level. These awards have a minimum of 60, 120, 180 credit points respectively. The Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) at the University is a graduate entry course leading to a Level 7 qualification which follows the common convention of a Bachelor's award. The lowest undergraduate level which may be included (except in integrated Master's and the MBBS) is Level 6. A 60-point dissertation is a common feature of Master's courses but it is not a requirement. Integrated Master's courses (MBiomedSci, MChiro, MEng, MOptom, MPharm and MSci) are first degrees with postgraduate outcomes as the final level. They comprise modules at Levels 4, 5, 6 and include a project/dissertation, and a period of work-based learning is an integral part of the curriculum.

Courses which are postgraduate in time and intended as conversion courses are presented as Graduate Certificates or Graduate Diplomas, with a minimum 60 or 120 credit volume respectively. A Level 7 dissertation does not form part of such courses (see below – Undergraduate courses, Level 6). (The 'extended' Master's degree (see above) fully integrates such a preparatory period.)

Undergraduate Programmes

Within the three main qualification levels, the following awards are available.

Level 4

Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)

Normally 120 credits at Level 4, but with a maximum of 30 credit points at Level 3. This award replaces the former Diploma comprising 120 credit points at Level 4.

Level 5

Foundation degree (FdA, FdEng, FdSc)
Associate Bachelor's degree (AB)
Advanced Diploma (AdvDip)
Advanced Certificate (AdvCert)

The Foundation degree and Associate Bachelor's degree comprise a minimum of 240 credit points, generally at Levels 4 and 5, but with a maximum of 40 credit points at Level 3. The Foundation degree is intended for vocational areas of study. It must include at least 40 credit points of work-based learning.

The University has withdrawn from provision of DipHEs, HNDs and HNCs. The Foundation degree and Associate Bachelor's degree took their place.

Level 6

This level comprises Honours degrees, Graduate Diplomas and Graduate Certificates and non-Honours degrees.

The Honours degree has a minimum of 360 credit points (with at least 120 at Level 6, and a maximum of 30 at Level 3 except for those which include an integrated foundation year). A substantial project/dissertation is a normal component of the final level of Honours degrees. All Honours degrees are expected to ensure that a period of work-based learning is an integral, compulsory part of the curriculum.

Graduate Diplomas and Certificates have a minimum non-Honours degree entry requirement. They comprise 120 and 60 credit points respectively at Level 6, but with a maximum of 30 or 20 credit points at Level 3 permitted. They are based largely on undergraduate material and taken usually by those who are already graduates in another discipline. They have replaced postgraduate conversion courses.

The non-Honours degree has 360 credit points, with at least 60 at Level 6 and a maximum of 30 at Level 3. None is currently offered.

Other Undergraduate Qualifications

The award titles of Certificate and Diploma are available for courses of 60 or 120 credit points respectively, which do not fulfil the minimum requirements for other awards. Access to HE courses, comprising 120 credit points at Levels 1 to 3, use the title 'Access Diploma'.

Associate Awards

The Diploma in International Academic Studies and the Diploma in Professional Practice or Professional Practice (International) are associate awards available to Honours and non-Honours degree students for integrated periods of study abroad or placement respectively, lasting at least 25 weeks.

These awards are not made independently of another qualification.

Combined Honours Degrees

In addition to the provision of integrated Single Honours degrees, the University's modular framework for Honours degrees allows the combination of certain subjects. These subjects offer one or more of the following:

a)   a single honours course (modules amounting to 120 credit points in the subject at each of Levels 5 and 6);

b)   a major subject strand (modules amounting to 80 credit points in the subject at each of Levels 5 and 6);

c)   a main subject strand (modules amounting to 60 credit points in the subject at each of Levels 5 and 6);

d)   a minor subject strand (modules amounting to 40 credit points in the subject at each of Levels 5 and 6).

Greater flexibility may be built into first year (Level 4 and 3), to facilitate delayed and informed choice by allowing students to select up to three subjects at that level.

Honours degrees are therefore available as:

Single Honours;
Major/Minor Honours (two-thirds/one-third weighting of two subjects);
Joint Honours (equal weighting of two main subjects);
Combined Honours (equal weighting of three minor subjects).

There is no integration between subjects in combined programmes, although there is internal coherence and progression within each subject strand.

Titles

The subject of study is named in the course title after the award. In accordance with national guidance, qualification titles should not normally combine more than three subjects. Where subjects have approximately equal weight they are joined by 'and' ('X and Y' or 'X, Y and Z': two main subjects or three minor subjects). In major/minor combinations, the minor subject is linked to the major subject by 'with'. This applies where the minor subject represents one quarter or one third of the course. This weighting should be reflected at levels 5 and 6 in undergraduate degrees.

QAA guidance has proposed that 'Combined Studies' should be reserved for courses involving study of more than three significant components. Within the University, the 'Combined Honours' designation may be retained as a summary title where three subjects are selected from a range. Awards would specify the three subjects.

Exit Awards

Each award-bearing course requires a statement of overarching aims and objectives, representing a coherent programme of study for a course or subject strand. This also applies to interim exit awards, which, where available, are not made simply for the accumulation of credit. Students who leave without completing the requirements for a named award may receive a transcript of their studies. Exit awards normally carry the same subject title as the main award.

Web-Supported Module Delivery

Two definitions are used to describe modules delivered or supported online.

- FULLY ONLINE – There is no face-to-face on campus component. All content, activities and interactions are integrated and delivered online. The assumption is made that the student may never attend a campus throughout the duration of the module.

No year 1 module may be delivered fully online in full-time undergraduate campus-based programmes.

- BLENDED LEARNING – Although online participation is required for these programmes, face-to-face interactions remain. In this instance, online participation may include all or some of the following:

- accessing key course documents;
- using online course material, which contains major educational content;
- interaction and communication (synchronous and asynchronous) between staff and students or among students;
- online assessments (formative or summative).

Certificate of Personal and Professional Development and Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development

The Certificate of Personal and Professional Development award provides a framework for students who have successfully completed stand-alone credit-bearing modules in the form of short courses at Levels 3 or 4 to receive a Certificate qualification. There is no requirement for integration between modules nor of a coherent programme of study. This award is formal recognition of accumulation of credit (60 credit points) from approved modules within the framework. A Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development provides a similar framework at Level 7.

1.3 Collaborative Provision

The University operates a number of types of partnership in relation to its course provision. It may use the premises and resources of another body to offer courses to its own students off-campus at 'outcentres'. It may also contract with that institution so that some of its staff are designated as 'Recognised Teachers' to teach and assess the University's students. The University may 'franchise' a course to an institution. The curriculum of such courses is developed by the University and its content and assessment are identical to the home courses. Currently two institutions, which have the status of Affiliate College, have been permitted to offer such courses. Students on a franchised course or one offered at an outcentre are full members of the University with the same rights as other students studying at one of the University's campuses, although there are some restrictions for those overseas.

Institutions may be permitted to develop their own courses leading to University awards. Such 'validated' courses conform to the University's modular course structure and qualifications and credit framework, and course management is modelled on the University's arrangements. Responsibility for course delivery and students rests with the institution concerned. Students belong to that institution, but are also accorded the status of 'Associate Student' of the University and have second-level access to the University's Library resources. In 2020/21 there were nearly 5,000 Associate students studying for University awards.

The University is responsible for assuring the standards of all provision leading to its awards and it applies the same principles of quality assurance to these courses as to its own. The University appoints at least one external examiner to each course.

A Faculty Partnership Manager is an ex officio member of the course committee at the institution. This person, who is appointed from the academic staff of the associated University faculty, provides a focus for the development, monitoring and enhancement of collaborative activity, taking account of University and faculty strategic priorities. He/she is the identified link between the faculty and partner institution and co-ordinates provision of subject-specific advice with other faculty staff where appropriate. At course level the Partnership Manager has responsibility for, inter alia, providing advice and guidance on admission and enrolment; learning and teaching and assessment arrangements including internal and external moderation; monitoring resources; reviewing student support arrangements; and is involved in course planning, evaluation, revision, quality monitoring and revalidation activities. A Faculty Head of Partnership has this role for courses franchised to QAHE.

Where more than one college offers a programme and in particular if separate examination papers are set, drafts are usually reviewed by the Faculty Partnership Manager and nominated subject expert if appropriate before moderation by the external examiner.

Central departments give information and guidance on administrative procedures.

A small number of courses are offered by the University with another institution jointly and lead to a joint award.

1.4 Equality of Opportunity

The University's Equality Scheme outlines its commitment to Section 75 of the Northern Ireland (1998) Act. Under the Act, the University must fulfil its objectives as a teaching, research and examining body within the provision of its Charter and Statutes in a way which promotes equality of opportunity and good relations.

Section 75 of the Act requires the University, in carrying out all its functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation
- between men and women generally
- between persons with a disability and persons without, and
- between persons with dependants and persons without

The University is committed to ensuring Equality of Opportunity. The Charter states that … "persons shall not be excluded by reason of religious belief, political opinion, race or sex from admission as members ... of the University ... or any advantage or privilege thereof; preference shall not be given on the grounds of religious belief, political opinion, race or sex".

The University's Admissions Policy states that it strives to be an inclusive learning environment and welcomes and encourages applications from persons with a disability. It makes reasonable adjustments to support the candidate's studies, through a needs assessment process. This may include adjustments to the form or conditions of assessment.
Equality monitoring data for students are analysed in respect of gender, religion, ethnicity, disability, and social class.

External examiners are asked to complete an Equal Opportunities monitoring form in respect of themselves when submitting their first expenses claim form.

2   ASSURING STANDARDS

2.1   Principles of Standards Assurance and Quality Management

The University aims to operate an integrated system of standards assurance and quality management and enhancement which makes an effective contribution to the achievement of the University's objectives and which underpins the academic planning process. The system must be sufficiently robust to maintain the defined standards of the University's awards, to satisfy internal quality management and enhancement objectives, and to comply with the mandatory requirements of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and to satisfy the expectations of external statutory or regulatory bodies. The following Principles have been approved by the University.

In relation to standards the system seeks to ensure that:

- the academic standards of the programmes of study offered by the University are appropriate to their related awards;
- the University's programme structures accord with the requirements of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and all awards conform to the approved structure;
- the standards of awards are kept under review to ensure the continued validity of the award and that student achievement is commensurate with these;
- standards are externally benchmarked and validated through, inter alia, the input of external examiners and Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) and by reference to relevant national subject benchmarks;
- the learning resources provided are sufficient to support students in achieving the award for which they are registered.

In relation to quality the system seeks to ensure that:

- the processes in place for programme approval, monitoring and review are working effectively;
- the views of students, staff, academic subject peers, employers and PSRBs are fully integrated into the process of programme planning, development and change;
- appropriate quality management arrangements are in place to ensure that all aspects of learning resources are working effectively in support of student learning;

- timely and appropriate action is taken where change is necessary or where matters of concern have been identified;
- excellence in teaching is recognised and rewarded;
- excellence in research and the support of research study is promoted;
- good practice and innovation are recognised and promulgated.

The key operating principles of the system are that:

- all formal processes are linked to the appropriate point in the management structure at which decisions can be taken about the specified action required within the timescale identified;
- all issues raised through the formal processes and any action taken are recorded and reported appropriately;
- formal processes are applied rigorously to all programmes of study and subjects, including provision in partner institutions;
- the implications of the quality processes for faculties are the subject of consultation before implementation and the effectiveness of processes is reviewed regularly.

2.2 Responsibility for Standards

The Senate is responsible for ordering the academic affairs of the University.

In respect of taught courses, the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee keeps under review and advises Senate on matters relating to the examination and assessment of students, the overall structure of course provision, standards for awards, and the initial approval and revalidation of courses offered by the University and under collaborative arrangements with other educational institutions, as well as the ongoing monitoring of the quality of provision. The Learning and Teaching Committee has interest in curriculum design and development including assessment practice. The Committees consult with faculties in conducting their business.

The University has in place various structures and processes which are designed to assure the standards of its taught provision and meet the expectation of internal University consistency by reference to the University's generic statements of standards, and also to fulfil national generic and subject benchmarks. There are general University regulations for each award and specific course regulations must conform to these regulations. The regulations specify minimum thresholds with regard to entry requirements, duration, assessment and award. The University's Qualifications and Credit Framework sets out minimum requirements in terms of credit points and levels for each award and makes explicit the relationship between awards within an overall hierarchy. The University's programme approval system, the appointment of external examiners and accreditation by appropriate professional, statutory and regulatory bodies contribute to the assurance of standards.

The faculties are responsible to Senate for the quality of provision within their subjects. Within each faculty and school, additional quality assurance procedures may exist to support University-wide arrangements. All faculty boards have established their own sub-committees to consider learning and teaching and quality assurance and enhancement matters. The operation of the range of quality assurance processes is governed by a comprehensive set of University regulations, codes of practice, handbooks, and guidelines which are readily accessible to staff and students.

The responsibilities of boards of examiners are detailed in sections 3 and 4.

The University keeps under review its policies and procedures in the light of developments in the national quality agenda, and takes account of national standards as described in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, the national subject benchmarks, and the requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies.

2.3 Course Evaluation and Revalidation

The University operates systematic course approval and re-approval processes. At the core of the initial evaluation procedure is the preparation of a course document by a course planning committee with its members drawn from those who are to teach on the course. They may come from different schools or faculties depending on the content. The document provides information on aims and intended learning outcomes, content, structure, regulations, learning and teaching, and assessment methods and physical and human resources. It is discussed with the course planning committee by an evaluation panel usually chaired by a senior member of University staff and including two external members. Evaluation panels are expected to give an independent, thorough and critical but constructive assessment of the proposal as set out in the document, and to make recommendations regarding approval.

A process of subject-based revalidation was introduced from 2002/03. This is normally organised by groupings of cognate courses and undergraduate Honours subjects in revalidation units. The primary purpose of revalidation is the re-affirmation of the standards set for the awards and the provision within a subject unit and their continuing currency and relevance to the University's strategic aims and objectives. The revalidation schedule follows a regular five-year cycle. Revalidation panels receive external examiner reports from the previous two years.

2.4 Course Revisions

The external examiner is expected to be consulted about proposals for changes to a course or subject during its period of approval. These are generally approved by the appropriate body within the faculty. However, proposed revisions in the following areas also require consideration by the University's Academic Planning Advisory Group before final approval is given: course title, location, mode of attendance, revisions which have implications for central resources. Departure from University regulations and principles require consideration by the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee.

2.5 Annual Monitoring and Module Monitoring

The 'Programme Management System' is used for monitoring internal courses, those offered at outcentres and franchised courses. The System's methodology locates responsibility for the ongoing review of programmes and enhancement of the student learning experience with the academic staff delivering the programme, the course or subject team. Rather that operating an annual one-off exercise, Course/Subject Committees consider quality indicators (including statistical data, external examiner reports, professional, statutory and regulatory body and employer engagement, student feedback and National Student Survey (NSS) results) on an ongoing basis as and when they are available throughout the year.

Annual monitoring activities are therefore embedded within Course/Subject Committee agendas and the reports of their meetings across the year provide Faculty management and the University with information on the operation of course monitoring. Existing committee structures within the Faculty and University permit the flow of issues and good practice from Course/Subject Committees to the appropriate decision-making point.

The process does not remove from the Faculty and University responsibility for oversight of quality monitoring. However, the focus of their responsibility is to ensure the effective operation of Course/Subject Committees and the effectiveness of debate and communication through the committee structures. The University has introduced a Continuous Assurance of Quality Enhancement process through which all qualitative and quantitative data is reviewed on receipt and followed up in detail with relevant course teams.

Provision in partner colleges is monitored at University level in the same way.

Module Monitoring is based on an initial analysis of statistical data about student progression and achievement carried out each semester by the Head of School after the first sit examinations, thus allowing time to correct problems before the module is delivered again. Those modules identified as 'outliers' through significantly lower or higher levels of student performance than expected are subject to more detailed scrutiny, which may involve seeking student evaluation and feedback, and results in an action plan for improvement. The action plan developed by the Head of School in consultation with the module co-ordinator is sent to the relevant course/subject committee so that progress on action points can be monitored.

2.6 Quality of Teaching and the Student Learning Experience

Considerable emphasis is placed on the quality of teaching. Applicants for new academic posts are required at interview to give a brief presentation from a list of topics. Full-time staff appointed who have little or no previous experience of teaching in third level education or an appropriate teaching qualification, are required to undertake the University's Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Practice in order to develop their pedagogic and related skills. An MEd has been available from January 2019.

A range of other staff development programmes is available for other categories of staff with teaching roles as part of a coherent initial and continuing professional development framework. Heads of School are required to report annually on the teaching and examining of staff on probation. Performance in teaching is one of the criteria for staff promotion.

In addition to the National Student Survey a University-wide student questionnaire scheme has been used for a number of years to evaluate student perceptions of teaching with reports provided to individual staff, Heads of School and at University level. The aim is to secure enhancement of practice and the outcomes inform staff development decisions. A new online student survey on the quality of teaching which focuses on the module was launched in 2008/09. A systematic peer-observation of teaching scheme has been developed to assist new staff in the evaluation of their teaching and a peer-supported review process operates for experienced staff. A Distinguished Teaching Fellowship Award Scheme is in place.

The University published in summer 2001 an Assessment Handbook. It is updated on a regular basis. The Handbook, which is issued to all academic staff, is intended to be an introductory practical guide and a key reference document promoting good practice. It addresses assessment principles and strategies, the advantages and disadvantages of different forms of examination and coursework, the use of marking schemes and moderation, and University regulations and procedures.

Principles of Assessment and Feedback for Learning have been adopted (see 5.1).

The Centre for Higher Education Research and Practice encourages engagement with the scholarship of learning and teaching and provides a focus for initiatives and dissemination in the context of the University's Strategy for Learning and Teaching Enhancement which aims to enhance the quality of the student learning experience through a range of projects. An integrated curriculum design framework has been developed.

A Learning and Teaching Support Charter sets out the University's commitments to students, and its expectations of them, in relation to learning, teaching, and assessment. It supplements the University's general Student Charter.

3 ROLE OF COURSE/SUBJECT EXTERNAL EXAMINER AND BOARD OF EXAMINERS

The University appoints at least one external examiner for each award-bearing course or undergraduate Honours subject. External examiners play an important role in assuring the quality and standard of the University's awards. Their key functions are to ensure that the standard of the University's award is maintained and that students are treated fairly in the

assessment process. Where applicable, external examiners are expected to have due regard for professional practice standards as they relate to the award. The University also expects course/subject committees to consult the external examiner when proposing changes to the content, structure or regulations for a course or subject strand during its period of approval (see 2.4). External examiners may also assume responsibility for credit-bearing short course modules, including those delivered within the Certificate of Personal and Professional Development or Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development frameworks.

3.1 Appointment

Course and subject external examiners are appointed by the Council on the recommendation of the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee on behalf of Senate after consideration of nominations from faculty boards. External examiners may be drawn from a wide range of institutional or professional contexts and traditions in order to ensure that the course benefits from a breadth of scrutiny. Exceptionally nominees who do not fulfil all the criteria may be appointed provided that appropriate arrangements are put in place to support the external examiner. In recommending external examiners for appointment consideration is given to the following national criteria. Every external examiner is expected to have:

a)   knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality;

b)   competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study, or parts thereof;

c)   relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate;

d)   competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures;

e)   strong reputation, sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command the respect of academic peers and, where appropriate, professional peers;

f)   familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed;

g)   fluency in English, and where programmes are delivered and assessed in languages other than English, fluency in the relevant language(s) (unless other secure arrangements are in place to ensure that external examiners are provided with the information to make their judgements);

h)   met applicable criteria set out by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies;

i)   awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula;

j)   competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

Normally each module is the responsibility of only one external examiner; nominees should not be proposed for a cognate course except in this context. No more than two external examinerships should normally be held at any point in time.

Course/subject directors are responsible for submitting nomination forms to the Faculty Board or the appropriate sub-committee of the Board. The form includes relevant information on the proposed external examiner's experience as an examiner. The Examinations Office issues a

letter of appointment. You may be asked by the faculty to give formal consent to respect commercial confidentiality in relation to intellectual property matters in a particular course.

To avoid potential conflicts of interest, nominees should not be appointed if they are covered by any of the following categories:

a)	a member of a governing body or committee of the University or one of its collaborative partners, or a current employee of the University or one of its collaborative partners;

b)	anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme of study;

c)	anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study;

d)	anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study;

e)	anyone significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme(s) or modules in question;

f)	former staff or students of the University unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the external examiner have completed their programme(s);

g)	a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another institution;

h)	the succession of an external examiner by a colleague from the examiner's home department and institution;

i)	the appointment of more than one external examiner from the same department of the same institution.

Should you become aware of a conflict of interest following appointment, this should be drawn to the attention of the course/subject director and the Examinations Office.

Appointments are for a period of not more than four years but may exceptionally be extended for one year. A period of five years should have elapsed before a former external examiner is exceptionally nominated for reappointment.

The University may terminate an appointment early, if an examiner fails to fulfil his or her duties, for example through non-attendance at Boards of Examiners, failure to submit an annual report or provision of false information. If your circumstances change and you wish to resign, please address a formal letter of resignation to the Examinations Office, giving reasonable notice whenever possible, normally at least three months effective from the end of the current academic session.

In common with other universities, the University is required by the UK Immigration Regulations (2008) to verify the right to work in the UK of any person undertaking work for the University irrespective of the type or nature of that work. If you have not already done so, you will need to bring acceptable documentary evidence for verification and copying on your first visit, generally in the form of a UK or EEA passport or a work permit/certificate of sponsorship. Further advice is available from the Faculty Office.

3.2 Duties

The duties of course external examiners, and of subject external examiners for Honours degrees, include:

a) consultation with the internal examiners, through the course/subject director, in relation to the approval and moderation of examination papers and other forms of assessment;

b) consideration of the standard of marking of examination papers and other forms of assessment and reporting to boards of examiners on such revisions of the marking as they consider necessary;

c) attendance with one or more internal examiners as determined by the board of examiners at oral examinations;

d) attendance at meetings of course/subject boards of examiners;

e) confirmation of results, progress decisions and, where applicable, the pass and classified lists of candidates including recommendations for awards of degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic distinctions. (A 'two tier' system operates in respect of combined Honours degrees, where undergraduate subject external examiners are responsible for award recommendations in respect of Single Honours candidates only. Similarly, recommendations for candidates for the Certificate of Personal and Professional Development or Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development are also considered by a separate award board);

f) submission of an annual report to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Student Experience), in the first instance;

g) such other duties as the Senate may specify from time to time.

3.3 Participation in the Assessment Process

While the University has agreed that, for Honours degrees, external examiners may elect, if they so wish, not to be involved in the examining process for first year undergraduate modules (Levels 3 and 4) which do not contribute to the grading of a final or exit award, their involvement is welcome. All other modules, and Level 3 and 4 undergraduate degree modules which do contribute to exit awards, require the involvement of external examiners.

Normally each module is the responsibility of only one external examiner.

In order that external examiners are able to fulfil their duties, the course or subject director should ensure that, subject to the above proviso regarding first year undergraduate degree modules:

a) all draft examinations papers and coursework assessment schemes for the modules in each external examiner's area of responsibility are approved by the external examiner in advance. Draft examination papers are expected to be moderated internally before they are sent. (The deadline for submission of draft papers to external examiners is week 3 of the semester. Final versions are submitted to the Examinations Office by week 8.) External examiners have the authority to consider and approve all coursework in advance but are not required to approve every piece of coursework set in the module. The nature and extent of involvement in approval of the coursework assessment scheme must be discussed and agreed in advance;

b) external examiners have access to all examination scripts and coursework for the modules in their area of responsibility;

c) where it is agreed that the external examiner should see a selection of the scripts and coursework, the principles for such a selection are agreed in advance; external examiners

are given enough evidence to determine that internal marking and classifications are of an appropriate standard and are consistent; external examiners should see a sample from the top, the middle and the bottom of the range. They must sample the work of candidates at classification boundaries. They should also see all work assessed internally as failed.

From 2016/17 the University's policy for its own internal provision is the online submission of all coursework (where practicable for the form of assignment) through Blackboard Learn, the virtual learning environment, with all marks and feedback available online by 2018/19. You may be asked to review coursework submissions and feedback through the VLE as part of your moderation.

You may attend with one or more internal examiners oral examinations or other performances or presentations which form part of the assessment scheme.

External examiners are expected to evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of assessed material in providing evidence of how students' work meets specified learning outcomes and to check the quality and consistency of internal examiners' judgements.

Discretionary interviews may be held with selected students to assist you in judging the standards of assessment and the quality of student learning. (You should discuss the basis of selection and the form of interview with the course or subject director.) It will be made clear to students that such interviews are not in themselves part of the assessment process and will not contribute to their individual results.

In light of this information, in fulfilment of your moderating role, external examiners may recommend adjustments to provisional marks (in accordance with duty 3.2.b). It is important to take account of the implications for the whole cohort to ensure equitable treatment. External examiners may request additional marking of candidates' work. (See also 3.5 regarding disagreement between internal and external examiners.)

The University has adopted a Code of Practice on Admission, Examining and Assessment, which addresses situations where a member of staff has a personal interest, involvement or relationship with a student. The member of staff is expected to inform his/her head of school and the relevant course/subject director. The member of staff should not normally have advance sight of examination questions in all modules in the relevant year of study and it is preferable that he/she does not undertake assessment of the student's work. Where a member of staff is involved in assessment of the student's work, he/she should not normally be involved in the preparation of examination papers associated with the module. The examination paper should be prepared independently of the member of staff (in the context of the module's learning and teaching plan) and must be approved by both the head of school and the relevant external examiner.

In such cases, all of the student's assessed and examined work in the particular year is double marked and forwarded to the external examiner. A small representative sample across all modules for that year group is also double marked and forwarded to the external examiner. The member of staff withdraws temporarily from any meeting, including the board of examiners, when the student's specific case is being discussed.

3.4   Visits and Induction

The University provides for up to two visits per year to take place. In exceptional cases, with the approval of the Dean of the faculty, additional visits may be arranged. A new external examiner is expected to commence his/her period of appointment with an induction visit during the first year. This is organised centrally by the University. If the external examiner is unable to attend this induction, a separate visit and briefing should be organised early in the first year of appointment. At the time of your first visit, you should bring relevant documentation to confirm your right to work in the UK (see 3.1).

The University stresses the importance of early induction and the subsequent ongoing dialogue between the external examiner and the course/subject director, in ensuring a clear understanding by the external examiner of the programme's objectives, regulations and procedures on the one hand, and on the other the understanding by the course/subject team of the external examiner's expectations with regard to his/her involvement in assessment processes and the fulfilment of responsibilities.

In 2019/20 meetings of Boards of Examiners were held online on account of the Covid-19 pandemic. From 2019/20 arrangements have been revised to permit the routine organisation of online boards. It has been agreed that boards of examiners should normally be held in a face-to-face format in the first year of a new external examiner's period of appointment. The option for you to visit the campus in other years for a physical meeting remains.

Students are informed about the role of the external examiner, and of the identity of those associated with their course. While they are advised that it is inappropriate to contact external examiners directly, you may choose to meet with students as part of your visit. (Please refer any unsolicited contact from students to the University.) If you are responsible for an online course you may also wish to have discussions with students. You are asked to advise the course director at the earliest opportunity, so that the necessary arrangements may be made. The University will provide you with access to its virtual learning environment to help with the moderation of the assessment of coursework assignments, in accordance with University policy for online submission and feedback (see 3.3).

3.5   Boards of Examiners

Course boards of examiners determine students' results in assessment and on behalf of the Senate of the University or on behalf of the validated institution, the academic progress of students, and make recommendations regarding their final award.

The duties of a course board, as set out in regulations, are as follows:

a)   to determine the module results obtained by candidates;

b)   where such results lead directly to a degree, diploma, certificate or other academic distinction, to forward to the Senate and, where appropriate, to external bodies, lists of successful candidates, classified in accordance with the relevant course regulations, with recommendations for the award of degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic distinctions;

c)   to determine on behalf of the Senate or of the institution the academic progress of students on the basis of their performance in examinations and other forms of assessment;

d)   to ensure that the examination and assessment of candidates are conducted in accordance with regulations and procedures prescribed by the Senate;

e)   to deal with such other matters as the Senate may refer to them from time to time.

Undergraduate subject board of examiners are concerned solely with the confirmation of results of Honours degree students, except in the case of Single Honours degree students, where they also consider progress and final classification.

The duties of a subject board are as follows:

a)   to determine the module results obtained by candidates;

b)   to forward the results to the progress and award board of examiners; or, where candidates are enrolled for a Single Honours degree, to determine on behalf of the Senate the academic progress of students on the basis of their performance in examinations and other forms of assessment, or where such results lead directly to a degree, to forward to the Senate and, where appropriate, to external bodies, lists of successful candidates,

classified in accordance with the relevant course regulations with recommendations for the award of degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic distinctions;

c)   to ensure that the examination and assessment of candidates are conducted in accordance with regulations and procedures prescribed by the Senate;

d)   to deal with such other matters as the Senate may refer to them from time to time.

Where there is unresolved disagreement in the board between internal and external examiners about results or classification, the chair of the board and the external examiner(s) are asked to make reports to the Senate. Senate will make a decision which may involve the appointment of a new external examiner to moderate assessment. In this case results will remain provisional until the examining process is concluded.

The course or subject board comprises all internal examiners, the relevant Head of School, and the external examiner(s). It is chaired by the Dean or Associate Dean of the faculty or by a head or associate head of school in the faculty other than that in which the course/subject is located. In his/her absence, the board is chaired by a person appointed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Student Experience).

Results in credit-bearing short-course modules, including those which contribute to the Certificate of Personal and Professional Development or Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development, are also confirmed by boards of examiners. Awards are determined by a separate award board.

At partner institutions, for a validated course the board is usually chaired by a senior member of the college staff who has received appropriate training. A representative from the relevant University faculty attends the board. A senior member of the Faculty chairs the board for a franchised course. The board normally meets at the campus of delivery, but alternative arrangements may be approved, where:

- courses are part of a larger network (which may include the University);
- an external examiner has responsibility for more than one course in a network;
- the faculty chooses to chair the board and holds the meeting at the University.

In such cases, a preliminary meeting involving the local internal examiners is held and a record of the meeting kept. The relevant Faculty Partnership Manager is invited to attend this meeting. A formal report with recommendations regarding progress and award is then made to the final meeting of the board which takes place at a single location and involves the external examiner(s) and at least the course directors from each centre. There must be University representation at all boards of examiners including supplementary boards. This might be through attendance of the Faculty Partnership Manager, a subject contact person or nominee, or the (Associate) Dean or head of school if chairing the meeting.

3.6   Attendance at Boards of Examiners

Boards of examiners usually meet once annually to consider student progress and award. For courses which take place in the September-June period, this meeting takes place in May/June. A supplementary (resit) board meets in August. A board of examiners meets to consider Summer semester results in September. For Master's courses and other courses with a different pattern, the final meeting may take place at a different time.

Boards do not normally meet at the end of the Autumn semester (Semester 1), as progress from the Autumn to the Spring semester (Semester 2) is automatic. However, course/subject committees meet to review performance of students and to arrange interviews for students who require advice and guidance. These committees are empowered to determine 'first sits' to be taken in semester 2 for students who had extenuating circumstances which affected their performance in semester 1. They also confirm progress for students who have been successful in repeated assessments or make recommendations to the Faculty Board regarding discontinuation of repeating students who have failed at the final attempt.

In a small number of courses boards are exceptionally allowed to meet at the end of each semester. In 'accelerated' part-time foundation degrees, for which there is automatic progress between each of the three semesters in the year boards only meet at the end of the third semester. There is no supplementary examination period in the summer.

External examiners are entitled to attend meetings of the boards of which they are members. They are expected to be present at all meetings where the performance of candidates in assessment which contributes to final results is being considered. Attendance at supplementary boards is not required but it is expected that the external examiner is consulted.

In linked Postgraduate Diploma and Master's courses, the following procedures apply. Each faculty is authorised to determine whether the external examiner should attend for either the Postgraduate Diploma or Master's stage, or for both. If the faculty decides on attendance for only the Postgraduate Diploma stage the following conditions should be fulfilled:

a) there is no requirement for oral examination associated with the Master's award;

b) the Master's dissertation/project component only remains to be examined;

c) the external examiner moderates the work for the dissertation/project.

If the faculty decides on attendance for only the Master's stage:

d) the board of examiners, without the external examiner, reviews candidates' results in the taught modules, with the external examiner's role being to moderate the work and endorse the results, decisions regarding progress and supplementary examination, and recommendations, where appropriate, for the award of the Postgraduate Diploma;

e) the Master's results and recommendations for award are considered by the full board of examiners on the basis of both the taught modules and the dissertation/project.

In exceptional circumstances, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Student Experience) may approve arrangements for the external examining of a course and final award decisions during the absence of external examiners. This may include the submission of written reports or the appointment of substitute examiners. Where absence is authorised, the external examiner is required to provide written confirmation of the moderation of the results and agreement to proposed awards.

3.7 Conduct of Business at Boards of Examiners

Sample agendas for course and subject boards are given at Appendix 7.

Preliminary meetings of internal examiners to consider the performance of candidates are arranged by the course/subject director. These may involve the external examiner.

Provisional results for the year, including the results from the Autumn semester, are presented on computerised results sheets. For integrated courses candidates are listed alphabetically within year, within course. For subject strands for combined honours degrees candidates are listed alphabetically within year, within course, within subject. Percentage marks are provided under the following headings for each module:

CW: coursework
EX: examination
TOT: total (weighted overall mark)
GR: grade (where applicable).

Whole numbers only are used in presenting module marks, year averages and aggregate marks with the usual convention for rounding decimal points observed: to 0.49, down; 0.5 and above, up. Fail marks are highlighted in bold. An overall mark is included for each student who is not in the final year of the course. This is the average mark of all modules for which the student has enrolled in the current year.

(In undergraduate Honours and Integrated Master's degrees during a transitional period for pre 2018 entrants, the classification is based **either** on the existing algorithm deriving from performance in final level modules amounting to 120 credit points or includes a specific Level 5 (and Level 6 for integrated Master's) contribution approved by a professional body, **or** on a new standard algorithm of 70% from Level 6 and 30% from Level 5 with the better mark being used. In integrated Master's degrees the algorithm is 50% Level 7, 30% Level 6 and 20% Level 5. The two algorithms are also being applied on account of the 2020 pandemic for students taking Level 5 modules in 2019/20 and 2020/21.

An aggregate mark and award classification (which are subject to confirmation by the board) are provided, together with an explanation of the calculation used to give the student the better outcome (see above paragraph). The classification mark is based on the appropriate weightings of levels with the weighting of each module based on its credit value. At each applicable level, each total module mark is multiplied by the module's credit points to give the total 'mark credits' for the module. The total mark credits are then added together and divided by the total module credits to give the average mark for the level rounded to two decimal points. This mark is then multiplied by the appropriate percentage weighting for the level (70% or 30% at Level 6 and 5 respectively for undergraduate degrees or 50% or 30% or 20% at Levels, 7, 6 and 5 respectively for integrated Master's degrees) to give the weighted level mark rounded to two decimal places. The weighted level marks are added together to give the final summary mark. This figure is then rounded to the nearest whole number for display on the course result sheets.

The classification mark is not provided for the small number of courses where a non-standard algorithm is used, or where the modules passed at the final level do not equal 120 credit points. It is the responsibility of the course director (subject director in respect of Single Honours candidates in subject-based provision) to ensure that the final award mark is calculated in accordance with the appropriate award regulations.) The Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) is an unclassified award.

The following standard reports are available for boards and for external examiners:

- mean and standard deviation data for each module, based on its occurrence within a course year group;
- whole-module means and standard deviations (all students enrolled on a module across courses);
- number of results within mark bands and minimum and maximum marks for each module by course or by course and year;
- final year candidates ranked in aggregate award mark order (Honours degrees only).

In addition to confirming results, course boards, or subject boards which are considering the performance of Single Honours candidates, determine in accordance with regulations the academic progress of each candidate using the codes (known as Academic Standing (AST) codes) at Appendix 8 and, where the course has been completed successfully, recommend an award and its class. For students in non-final years of full-time undergraduate courses a provisional AST of P1 (proceed) is displayed on course result sheets where all modules have been passed. These decisions are subject to confirmation by the board. This does not apply in

certain Nursing courses and for students who may be proceeding to a placement year, for which different codes are used.

Provisional ASTs and awards arising from preliminary meetings of boards and updates to this information are recorded on the master copy of the course results sheet for use by the chair.

The chairperson on behalf of the board and the external examiner(s) give confirmation of the results and, as applicable, the progress decisions and recommendations for awards, and that the assessment processes have been carried out in accordance with the University's regulations and conventions. Where exceptionally the external examiner has been unable to attend, the results sheet or a 'Confirmation of Awards' pro forma is signed off by the external examiner to confirm approval of the decisions.

Subject boards forward the results of all candidates other than Single Honours candidates to the campus progress and award board. Its role is described under 4 below.

Any recommendations for award made at the supplementary board of examiners require the prior written confirmation of the external examiner's approval, so as not to delay the publication of results. The 'Confirmation of Awards' form is available for this purpose.

3.8 Prizes

Boards of examiners make recommendations for the award of prizes associated with the course.

4 ROLE OF CHIEF EXTERNAL EXAMINER AND PROGRESS AND AWARD BOARD

For subject-based Honours degree provision, where different subjects may be combined for Major/Minor, Joint and/or Combined (three Minor) Honours awards, a two-tier system of external examining and boards of examiners operates. Results of candidates in each subject are considered by a subject board of examiners and are moderated by a subject external examiner (see 3). Following confirmation, they are forwarded to a campus progress and award board of examiners. This board includes a chief external examiner who is concerned with ensuring fairness and impartiality in the application of award regulations and procedures.

For credit-bearing short-course modules which contribute to the Certificate of Personal and Professional Development or the Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development, module results, which have been moderated and confirmed at subject level, are received by an overarching award board.

4.1 Appointment

Chief external examiners are appointed by the Council on the recommendation of the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee on behalf of Senate. The criteria for appointment as set out in 3.1 apply. In addition, a chief external examiner must have experience of external examining, and for combined Honours awards, examining at Honours degree level.

For the combined Honours degrees, campus Directors of Combined Studies are responsible for submitting nominations. Chief external examiners for the Certificate of Personal and Professional Development and Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development are nominated by a Distributed Education Board. The Examinations Office issues a letter of appointment.

Appointments are for a maximum period of four years. Only exceptionally will a chief external examiner be considered for re-appointment, and after a period of five years has elapsed.

4.2 Duties

The duties of chief external examiners include:

a) consideration of the standards of awards for combined undergraduate honours degrees or the Certificate of Personal and Professional Development or Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development;

b) attendance at meetings of campus progress and award boards of examiners;

c) confirmation of progress decisions, the pass and classified lists of candidates including recommendations for the award of degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic distinctions;

d) submission of an annual report to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Student Experience) in the first instance;

e) such other duties as the Senate may specify from time to time.

The chief external examiner does not have responsibility for the approval and moderation of assessment within subjects nor for the determination of results of candidates in modules.

4.3 Progress and Award Board

Progress and award boards of examiners determine on behalf of the Senate of the University the academic progress of Major/Minor, Joint or Combined Honours Degree students, and make recommendations regarding their final awards.

The duties of the progress and award board are as follows:

a) to receive module results from subject boards of examiners;

b) where such results lead directly to a degree, diploma, certificate or other academic distinction, to forward to the Senate and, where appropriate, to external bodies, lists of successful candidates, classified in accordance with the relevant course regulations, with recommendations for the award of degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic distinctions;

c) to determine on behalf of the Senate the academic progress of students on the basis of their performance in examinations and other forms of assessment;

d) to ensure that the examination and assessment of candidates are conducted in accordance with regulations and procedures prescribed by the Senate;

e) to deal with such other matters as the Senate may refer to them from time to time.

The Board includes all subject directors for the undergraduate honours subjects contributing to Major, Main and/or Minor subject strands on the campus, the director of combined studies and the chief external examiner. It is chaired by a Dean.

The award boards for the Certificate of Personal and Professional Development and the Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development receive results from candidates who have completed successfully modules to the value of 60 credit points and make recommendations to Senate for the award. These boards comprise Faculty representatives and are chaired by the chair of the Distributed Education Board.

4.4 Attendance

The board meets to consider student progress and awards in June. A supplementary board meets in August. In addition, the board meets after the semester 1 examination period to consider decisions in respect of possible first sits in semester 2 and progress decisions for student who have repeat assessments in semester 1 from the previous year.

The chief external examiner is entitled to attend all meetings of the board and is required to attend the main meeting in June. Attendance is not required at the other meetings, but the chief external examiner must be consulted about decisions. In exceptional circumstances, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Student Experience) may approve arrangements for external examining during the absence of the chief external examiner. This may include the submission of a written report or the appointment of a substitute examiner.

4.5 Conduct of Business at Progress and Award Board

A sample agenda for the meeting of the board is given at Appendix 9.

The results of candidates, confirmed by the subject boards of examiners, are forwarded to the progress and award board. The meeting determines, in accordance with the generic combined Honours degree award regulations, the academic progress of each candidate using the codes at Appendix 8 or recommends an award and its class. Provisional results are presented as at 3.7.

The chairperson and external examiner on behalf of the board give confirmation of the progress decisions and recommendations for awards, and that decisions have been made in accordance with award regulations.

5 ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES

5.1 Principles of Assessment and Feedback for Learning

The University adopted in 2011 the following principles. Assessment and feedback for learning should:

a) help to clarify, from the early stages of a programme, what good performance means (goals, criteria, standards);

b) encourage 'time and effort' on challenging learning tasks which recognise the importance of learning from the tasks, not just demonstrating learning through the tasks;

c) deliver timely learner-related feedback information that helps students to self-correct and communicate clear, high expectations and professionalism;

d) provide opportunities for students to act on feedback and close any gap between current and desired performance through complementary and integrated curriculum design and pedagogic practice;

e) ensure that all assessment has a beneficial, constructive impact on student learning, encouraging positive motivational beliefs, confidence and self-esteem;

f) facilitate the development of self- and peer-assessment skills and reflection on learning, to enable students to progressively take more responsibility for their own learning, and to inspire a lifelong capacity to learn;

g) encourage interaction and dialogue around learning and professional practice (student-student, lecturer-student and lecturer-lecturer) including supporting the development of student learning groups and peer learning communities.

The implementation of these principles will influence curriculum design, delivery and educational practice, such that students and staff become co-creators and collaborators in learning.

In addition, as part of the University's transition policy, the University expects that the development of academic skills, including learning to learn, is embedded as an integral part of the first-year full-time undergraduate curriculum as a minimum and that study skills are explicitly assessed in the first year.

5.2 Assessment Policies and Practices

Modules are assessed by formal (usually written) examination or by coursework or by a combination of these assessment elements. The details are contained in course/subject regulations and module documentation. The coursework element of a module may include one or more components, such as practical work, submission of essays, exercises, seminar papers, reports, class tests or the production of artefacts and designs. Oral examinations may be treated as either coursework or formal examinations.

In 2017/18 the University agreed principles for curriculum design, which includes an expectation that there are normally no more than two items of assessment in a module. Guidelines on the workload equivalence for different assessment types have been developed.

Assessment criteria and marking schemes guide markers.

In certain instances, overseas exchange students, who are not studying for a University award, may have a different form of assessment from that specified in the module assessment scheme, for example by the substitution of additional coursework for the examination.

Reasonable adjustments may be made to course delivery and assessment to meet the needs of disabled students, or in exceptional extenuating circumstances. Some students may be given extra time or provided with assistive technology.

Coursework which is submitted after the prescribed date, without permission, is not accepted.

The University encourages the use of group work but feedback from students and some external examiners identified dissatisfaction with regard to its assessment, especially where a single group mark was given. Consequently, the University's Learning and Teaching Committee (2010) gave the following guidance, that in modules which contribute to an award classification and where group work is a component of assessment, normally at least 25% of each student's assessment result in the group work shall be based on his or her individual contribution.

A formal policy on the penalties to apply when a prescribed word limit is exceeded was adopted in 2018:

+10% - no penalty;
+>10 - 20% - 5% reduction (from percentage mark)
+>20 - 30% - 10% reduction
+>30 - 40% - 15% reduction
+>40 - 50% - 20% reduction
+>50 - maximum mark of 40% UG or 50% PG

The University operates a policy to ensure the anonymity of examination scripts during the marking process. Partner institutions are also required to apply anonymity for written examinations. Anonymous marking of coursework is encouraged where practicable and

appropriate. In this case, it ends after marking is completed. This guards against bias during the marking process but allows feedback to be given.

In support of equity, validity and reliability in the assessment process, internal moderation is operated. The following principles apply:

a) Internal Moderation of All Work except Project/Dissertation

i) 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 addition, a sample of at least 20% (10% during 2020/21 and 2021/22 Covid-19 pandemic) of the remainder shall be selected for moderation, 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 the classification boundaries.

ii) Form of Moderation

Faculties shall determine the type of moderation, taking account of the form of the assessment, the subject area, and the level of study. Moderation may either involve double-marking or monitoring.

Double-Marking: a process whereby each script is marked by two markers. The final mark is determined by agreement between the two markers. Faculties/subject areas may determine whether the second marker has sight of the first marker's marks or not (blind double-marking). In the case of oral examinations and presentations a panel of members may agree a single mark.

Monitoring: a system whereby one person marks an assessment and a second person 'validates' the mark and feedback given by the marker. (This may be more appropriate for courses with a technical subject base with a reasonably precise specification of the required answers and marking schemes.)

In certain circumstances (e.g. to assist a new member of staff or where poor marking practice has been identified), double-marking may take place rather than monitoring and/or the sample size above may be exceeded.

b) Internal Moderation of Projects/Dissertations

All projects/dissertations (Level 6 undergraduate and Level 7 postgraduate) shall be double-marked. (In 2020 and 2021, on account of the pandemic, a 10% sample was allowed for 20 credit point projects/dissertations, in 2021/22 any requests to continue this mitigation are to be considered by ASQEC.)

5.3 Pass Marks and Mark Bands

Performance is generally recorded in percentage marks, but it may be recorded on a pass/fail basis. This is common in certain practice-related modules.

The pass mark in undergraduate modules is 40%. In postgraduate modules (Level 7) it is 50%. Level 6 modules which contribute to postgraduate courses have a 40% pass mark. However,

in 'extended' Master's degrees with a substantial Level 6 component candidates must achieve an overall mark of 50% in order to progress to the Level 7 stage.

A weighting may apply to the calculation of the overall module result. The University defines a pass in a module as the achievement of the overall pass mark for the module, with a minimum mark of not less than five per cent below this threshold in each assessment element (coursework and examination). Course/subject teams have the option of requiring this standard in both elements for 'core' modules. It may also be required in specified coursework components. In supplementary (resit) examinations, the actual mark or the pass mark, whichever is the lower, is recorded.

The University has adopted the generic assessment criteria at Appendix 10 to define mark bands for the following ranges. Subjects may use their own specific statements aligned to these criteria. In 2019, the Quality Assurance Agency published nationally agreed classification descriptions for the different classes in bachelor's honours degrees as Annex D to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications. These are available at qaa.ac.uk.

Undergraduate	Postgraduate
80 - 100	70 - 100
70 - 79	60 - 69
60 - 69	50 - 59
50 - 59	45 - 49
40 - 49	31 - 44
35 - 39	0 - 30
0 - 34	

5.4 Final Awards and Final Award Bands

In 2001 the University adopted the principle that the summary classification in Honours degrees represents the 'exit velocity' of the students and therefore should be determined by achievement at the highest credit level. This was extended to all awards from 2009/10 intake. The final classification represented the University's summative assessment of the student on the basis of the most recent evidence at the most challenging level; the full transcript evidences achievement in each module at the time it was taken. A small number of exceptions were allowed in Honours degrees, if a professional body requires a Level 5 contribution. The basis for Honours degree classification has been reviewed and now includes a Level 5 contribution of 30**%**. The contributions from Levels 5 and 6 in integrated Master's degrees are 20 and 30% respectively. For students admitted directly to Level 5 with exemptions, at least 60 credits must be taken at the University for Level 5 to count. The new algorithm applies from 2019 graduation but students admitted prior to 2018/19 have the most favourable outcome from their current and the new classification algorithm. (The two algorithms are also being applied on account of the pandemic for students taking Level 5 and Level 6 modules in Integrated Master's in 2019/20 and 2020/21.)

In an Honours degree with more than 120 credits at Level 6, the Faculty may propose that only 120 credit points are used to calculate the final award. At postgraduate level, in Master's degrees including those of more than 200 credit points the overall mark and class band are usually determined by results from all Level 7 modules. Some longer Master's courses use the final 120 credit points. The Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) is an unclassified award.

The percentages used to determine overall gradings/classifications of final awards are set out in the following table:

Overall Percentage	Honours Degree, including	Degree, Graduate Certificate/Diploma,	Integrated Master's Degree	Master's Degree,

	Integrated Master's degree	Advanced Certificate/ Diploma, Certificate, Diploma, Access Diploma	(to 2012 intake)	Postgraduate Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate
At least 70%	Class I	Pass with Distinction	Pass with Distinction	Pass with Distinction
At least 60%	Class IIi	Pass with Commendation		Pass with Commendation
At least 50%	Class IIii		Pass	Pass
At least 40%	Class III	Pass		

From 2013, the University adopted Honours divisions to classify the MPharm, and such classification was introduced in other integrated Master's degrees from 2013 intake, and earlier with the consent of each cohort. A Commendation band was introduced for postgraduate awards from 2015/16.

To be eligible for a particular class of degree or for Commendation or Distinction, candidates must pass all module and achieve the requisite mark in their overall summary result. In calculating the overall mark each module's contribution is weighted according to its credit value. Contributions are detailed in a table in course regulations. For the award of Distinction in Master's courses, a mark of at least 70% must be obtained in the overall average and in the dissertation (where available). Integrated Master's candidates must achieve 50% in each Level 7 module to be eligible for the degree.

Boards do not have discretion to award a class of degree or grade where the marks do not warrant it (for example IIi for 58% or 59%). The Board should ensure that through its moderation process, including the involvement of external examiners, the overall results, the module marks and the class of degree accord.

Many courses have interim 'exit' awards, relating to performance in earlier levels/stages within a course. These are available for students who do not progress to, or are unsuccessful in, the final stage assessments. They relate to coherent programmes of study with defined learning outcomes.

5.5 Viva Voce and Oral Examinations

Oral examinations may form part of the normal assessment strategy for a module or course. The Senate in April 2015 has decided that discretionary *viva voce* examinations are no longer to be used to reach decisions on individual candidates through the provision of supplementary evidence. Discretionary interviews with selected candidates may be used for benchmarking purposes, in order to assist you to confirm a general judgement on the appropriateness and consistency of marking standards (see 3.3). The principles for selection of candidates and the form of the interview should be agreed with you. In exceptional individual extenuating circumstances, an oral examination may substitute for the normal form of assessment as a reasonable adjustment.

5.6 Consequences of Failure

The University through its regulations for awards seeks to ensure that all students following courses leading to the same award are treated consistently and fairly. These specify rules governing progress and the consequences of failure. Templates exist to support the production of specific course regulations.
The severity of penalties and the timing of supplementary examinations/re-submission of coursework are related to the number of modules failed and, in course of more than one year's duration, the semester and/or year in which they were first taken. Key points are given below.

Two-year, three-semester part-time Foundation degrees and the part-time BSc Hons Computing Systems have automatic progression between the three semesters in each year with no supplementary examination period in the summer and have different rules in respect of e). The particular requirements of the MBBS are set out in the award regulations.

The concept of condonement of failure was removed from 2009/10. The key principles relating to progress and failure are summarised below.

Progress

a)   Students must successfully complete all assessments in one year before proceeding to the next year of the programme, except that failure in up to 20 credit points may be carried into the next year in undergraduate courses.

b)   Progress between Semester 1 and Semester 2 is automatic except in certain courses with clinical placement. In two-year, three-semester part-time Foundation degrees, progress to semester 3 is also automatic.

Requirement to Repeat

c)   Only failed components in modules are repeated. Except for 'first sits', the maximum mark allowed in repeated assessment is the pass mark. The overall module result may therefore exceed the pass mark threshold.

Number of Repeat Attempts

d)   In pre-final years of undergraduate degrees and Access courses, two repeat attempts are permitted (subject to a decision to discontinue studies based on volume of failure as summarised in f) below) except in practice placement modules in Social Work and certain Allied Health Profession degrees where only one repeat opportunity is allowed. In all other courses (undergraduate certificates and diplomas, postgraduate certificates, diplomas and Master's degrees) and in the final year of undergraduate degrees and Access courses, one repeat attempt is permitted. Students who fail the assessment in a placement or intercalary year are not permitted to progress to the final year of the associated degree. Students who are required to withdraw as a consequence of failure are not permitted to apply to re-enter the course, in full or part-time mode, in the next academic year.

Timing of Supplementary Examinations or Resubmission of Coursework

e)   At the first attempt, if modules up to and including 60 credit points are failed and attendance is not required, resit examinations normally take place in August so as to allow progress to the next year, without loss of time, if the candidate is successful. Otherwise they are scheduled to take place in the appropriate semester in the next year, as summarised below at f). Students are permitted to carry failure in modules to a value of 20 credit points into the next year, except as in f) below for prerequisites and in BSc Hons Computing Systems (part-time mode), where different rules have been approved. In two-year, three-semester part-time Foundation degrees, all resits and resubmissions are scheduled for the following academic year, as there is no supplementary assessment period in the summer.

f)   <u>Number of Credit Points</u>   <u>Timing of Resits or withdraw</u>

                                                                        (September Intake)

<u>Undergraduate Courses (except final year)</u>:

Failure at first attempt (usually considered at June Board)

Up to and including 60 credit points	August
70 to 80 credit points	Next academic year

(Exceptionally second year students may be permitted to commence a placement year, pending the completion of supplementary assessments.)

More than 80 credit points	Withdraw from the programme

Failure at second attempt - pre-final year in degrees and Access courses (usually considered at August Board, unless year retaken)

Up to and including 20 credit points	Proceed and carry failure to repeat in next year (unless a prerequisite which a professional body requires to be passed in order to progress)
Up to and including 40 credit points (except as above)	Next academic year
More than 40 credit points	Withdraw from the programme

<u>Failure in Final Year</u>

Up to and including 40 credit points	August
More than 40 credit points	Withdraw from the programme

<u>Postgraduate Courses:</u>

Up to and including 60 credit points	August
Between 60 and 90 credit points	Next academic year
More than 90 credit points	Withdraw from the programme

<u>Discretion</u>

g)   In summary, the board must apply the course regulations. Its discretion is limited to choosing whether to allow students to commence a placement year with resits pending (f above), and whether to accept evidence of extenuating circumstances and consequently whether to allow first sits or resits (5.7 below).

5.7   **Illness and Other Extenuating Circumstances**

Candidates are expected to present evidence of illness or other extenuating circumstances which may have affected their performance not later than five days after the date of a written examination. For other forms of assessment, it must be presented by the date on which the work is due to be submitted. Evidence of ill health for periods longer than five days must normally be authenticated by a medical certificate. Self-certification is accepted for shorter periods.

Statements are submitted using a structured form (EC1) and guidelines are available to students. The Student Support service may, with the consent of the candidate, provide a statement. University-wide guidance on dealing with extenuating circumstances has been agreed. This gives examples of circumstances which may or may not be accepted.

The detailed circumstances are not usually discussed at a board of examiners. These are considered by a school/course/faculty panel which make a recommendation in light of the evidence and the likely impact on performance. If it accepts the case, the board of examiners may permit the candidate to complete, take as for the first time with no cap on the mark, or repeat the assessment at a later date. (Course/subject board in respect of candidates in a single honours strand in a Modular Subject.) The board may permit students to carry more than the maximum 20 credit points (see 5.6e). At the final stage of a course, the board may recommend an Aegrotat award (5.8 below), or permit the candidate to complete, take or repeat the assessment at a later date. In some exceptional circumstances the form of assessment may be varied. The board is not permitted to increase marks obtained by candidates on account of extenuating circumstances. (A subject board of examiners also receives this information for other than Single Honours candidates, but does not make a progress or award decision as this is the responsibility of the second-stage progress and award board – see 4.3 and 4.5. This allows the board to note those students whose particular circumstances may have affected their performance.)

In the case of first semester performance, course committees are empowered to make first sit decisions for such students, to ensure that this opportunity is available in the second semester. For students on combined Honours degrees, first sit decisions from semester 1 are taken by the progress and award board which meets early in the second semester.

5.8   Aegrotat and Posthumous Awards

The Aegrotat award is not permitted for the Diploma in Professional Practice or Diploma in International Academic Studies and for certain qualifications which relate to a protected title for a health or care profession. For all other awards, an Aegrotat may only be awarded if the board is satisfied that a candidate in the final stage of assessment would have qualified, had it not been for illness or other sufficient cause.

Aegrotat awards are rarely made. To recommend such an award, a board must be confident that the candidate has sufficient knowledge, skills and understanding of the subject to warrant the degree without the evidence from completion of all the prescribed assessments. Boards need to take account of the work that has already been submitted or examinations taken at the final level, if any. The board may assess the candidate by whatever means it considers appropriate. The University does not specify the proportion of the final level which should have been completed. The board should also be satisfied that the candidate is unable to return within a reasonable period to complete studies. The Aegrotat award is not classified. Before recommending the award, the candidate must have signified his or her willingness to accept it. Lower level/stage 'exit' awards, for which assessments have been completed, may be available.

In recommending a posthumous award, the board must have sufficient evidence that, had the student survived and completed the course, he or she would have been eligible for the award.

5.9   Student Access to Examination Documents

The final pass and conferment lists are in the public domain and are published on the University's website, in the press, and in graduation programmes. Individual results, progress decisions and marks are available to students at the end of each semester through their student record.

The deliberations of course/subject committees and boards of examiners, including the process of moderation, are strictly confidential and must not be disclosed to students.

Under the General Data Protection Regulation, students do not have rights of access to their examination scripts, but they have rights of access to examination marks including records of marks gained in particular questions or papers. Examiners' comments may also be provided.

The University has agreed that, for the purposes of providing feedback on examination performance, students may be given access to their scripts, in the presence of a member of staff.

5.10 Appeals

A student may request a review of a decision of the board of examiners, on the following grounds:

a) on the basis of evidence of extenuating circumstances, which was not in the possession of the board at the time of its initial decision;

b) on the basis of procedural or other irregularities in the conduct of the examinations.

An appeal may not be made to challenge the academic judgement of the examiners or to raise complaints about the delivery or management of the course.

Appeals from University students based on new information about extenuating circumstances are heard by faculty panels. Appeals on the basis of procedural or other irregularities are considered by a panel comprising a Senior Officer and a Dean and head of school not involved with the original decision. Partner institutions have similar arrangements for appeals from their students, but such students also have a subsequent right of appeal to the University in relation to procedural irregularities.

If the appeal is successful, the candidate may be permitted to complete, take or repeat the assessment at a later date.

5.11 Cheating and Plagiarism

The University has procedures for dealing with reports of alleged offences in connection with examinations and other forms of assessment under the Ordinance on Student Discipline. Following faculty investigation, cases may be dealt with through academic penalties and/or disciplinary penalties if the candidate has engaged or attempted to engage in conduct for the purposes of gaining an unfair advantage. These penalties may include a decision to disallow the work undertaken and/or a recommendation to the board of examiners that, if it decides to permit the candidate to repeat the work, there should be a delay of one year. A graduated framework of penalties in respect of plagiarism is in place. Guidance on plagiarism, academic writing and referencing is part of student induction and contained in student handbooks. The University has subscribed to the Turnitin electronic detection system.

6 EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

Course and subject external examiners are invited to comment on the course/subject and the modules for which they have responsibility at the meeting of the board of examiners. You are required to submit a written report to the University within one month of attending the last meeting of the board of examiners in each academic session. You are asked to comment in particular on the quality of the candidates' work and their level of achievement; the assessment process; marking schemes and standards; the teaching, organisation, syllabus, coherence and structure of the course. Please comment fully under each of the headings. Failure to submit a report will lead to termination of appointment.

A standard report form is used (Appendix 11a). The report incorporates the recommendations of the UUK/GuildHE Review of External Examining (March 2011), and the relevant chapter of the UK Quality Code and includes a checklist. The report should preferably be submitted

electronically and the form can be downloaded at ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice/external-examiners. External examiners are asked not to identify individual students or staff by name in the report. Reports are an important part of the University's quality assurance processes and copyright belongs to the University.

External examiners with responsibility for a network of courses are asked to provide a composite report with supplementary comments for each location (Appendix 11b). Due account should be given to the need for specific detail and, where a number of partner institutions are involved, confidentiality.

Reports are distributed to the relevant Dean and course/subject director (and partner institution and subject partner manager, if applicable) and are considered as part of the programme management and annual monitoring processes. A written response to the report should be sent to the external examiner by the course/subject director within three months of receipt. For courses in partner institutions, the response is made by the college on course and institutional issues. If issues are raised in relation to faculty support, the relevant University faculty will respond. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Student Experience) communicates with the external examiner if appropriate. An annual report providing an overview of external examiners' reports is made to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee.

At the end of the period of appointment, external examiners are requested to draw attention to any significant developments or changes in standards and, if appropriate, to make suggestions for modification to the course. A copy of the final report is sent to the external examiner's successor.

The chief external examiner's report from is given at Appendix 12. Chief external examiners are asked to comment in particular on standards and comparability with other institutions. The report for combined Honours degrees is considered by the campus Co-ordinating Group and the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee.

External examiners may choose to submit a confidential report to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Student Experience) or the Vice-Chancellor. If you have serious concerns about issues relating to standards and you are not satisfied with the response you receive from the University, you may avail of the procedures of the Quality Assurance Agency for concerns about standards and quality in higher education. There may be occasions when a concern is a matter for the relevant professional or regulatory body rather than the QAA.

Student and other access to report

Following the review of the national Quality Assurance Framework in 2006/7, universities and other higher education institutions are expected to share external examiners reports as a matter of course with student representatives, for example through consultative committees. The University requires staff-student committees or student representation on the course/subject committee for all full-time provision. In part-time courses formal consultative committees are not a requirement, and various alternative forms of consultation are in place. Discussion of the external examiner's report and the response to it is undertaken through these arrangements.

From 2007/8 the report, or a summary prepared by the course/subject director, and the team's response are discussed with student representatives. Where a summary is made, this should not be selective and must include a comment under each heading within the full report. This approach is particularly useful where several externals report on one course.

In addition, in accordance with the recommendations of the UUK/GuildHE Review of 2011 and the UK Quality Code, your report, and the course committee's response, is made available in full to all students of the course, with the exception of any confidential report you submit. For University courses, this is usually through the course support area within the virtual learning environment. While your name and institution are included, your contact details and signature

are redacted from the report before it is uploaded. Students are not expected to contact you about your report. They should be referred to the University, if they do.

Some or all of the contents of a report may be released as a consequence of a request for access under the Freedom of Information Act.

7   FEES, EXPENSES AND TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

The annual fees for external examiners are approved by the Resources Committee for the University Council. They are notified in the letter of appointment. Fees are only paid on submission of the annual report.

The appropriate faculty or school offers to make travel and accommodation arrangements for external examiners for courses offered by the University. Partner institutions may make arrangements for external examiners. You may make your own arrangements or your institution may make them for you. In the latter case, your institution should invoice the University directly. The University's insurance policy does not cover your journey to and from the University's campuses. You should ensure that you have travel insurance if you consider it necessary.

Expenses are refunded in accordance with approved rates.

Claims for fees and/or expenses should be submitted using a University claim form and with receipts attached. The form is available at ulster.ac.uk/finance/visitors/external-examiners, which also provides a flow chart on the process. Payment is made on receipt by the Finance Office of a properly documented and authorised claim. As bank transfers are made on a monthly basis you should submit your form as soon as possible. External examiners are asked to complete a HESA Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form with their first claim. Verification of the right to work in the UK is undertaken each time a claim for a fee is made. Tax and national insurance are normally deducted at source at the basic rate.

The claim for expenses should be submitted through the School Office (or Director of Combined Studies for chief external examiners) at the conclusion of your visit, or as soon as possible thereafter. The claim for the fee (and expenses if not already submitted) should be made at the time that the annual report is submitted. If you have any difficulty with your claim, please contact the School in the first instance.

8   DATA PROTECTION AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACTS

The University does not routinely publish the identity of its external examiners. Consequently, as your name and role with the University are not in the public domain, any request for such information from external bodies or individuals will not normally be met. Your name, position and institution will be made known to the students on the course for which you are responsible. Students are not expected to contact you directly, unless you wish to engage with them in this way.

9   BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This checklist details the course or subject-specific material which the course/subject director provides to external examiners:

- course/subject documentation, describing aims and objectives of the course/subject strands, syllabuses and learning and teaching methods and course and award regulations;
- previous year's annual monitoring report;
- previous external examiner's report(s);
- detailed information on the modules for which the external examiner is responsible and the number of students taking these modules. (Note that modules may contribute to courses other than those referred to in the letter of appointment. Some modules are offered as short courses);

- the assessment strategy for the course and assessment methodology for the particular modules;
- proposals for involvement (including sampling of scripts and consideration of coursework);
- logistics including the dates of meetings and arrangements for despatch of draft examination papers, marking schemes, sample scripts and coursework;
- advice on the format in which results will be provided;
- other relevant documents which may include the school's learning and teaching strategy, and the reports of professional bodies or accrediting panels.

Chief external examiners receive from the director of combined studies a list of the subjects on offer on the campus and whether they are available in Major, Main or Minor strands and a copy of the Honours degree award regulations. They will be informed of the dates of meetings and the form in which results are presented.

10   ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

The advice contained in this handbook is based on the documents listed below. These may be obtained through the course/subject director or accessed on the University's website:

ulster.ac.uk/about/governance/ordinance-and-regulations
ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice
ulster.ac.uk/studentadministration/staff/examinations-office

University Charter
Ordinance XXVI: University Examinations
Ordinance XXVIII: Recognition of Institutions
Ordinance XXIX: Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates and Other Academic Distinctions
Regulations Governing Examinations in Programmes of Study
Code of Practice on External Examining
General Regulations Applying to Student Awards (Prizes)
Regulations for Degrees and Honours Degrees
Regulations for the Degree of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS)
Regulations for Foundation Degrees and Associate Bachelor's Degrees
Regulations for the Certificate of Higher Education
Regulations for Diplomas and Certificates
Regulations for Diploma in Professional Practice
Regulations for Diploma in International Academic Studies
Regulations for Advanced Diplomas and Advanced Certificates
Regulations for Graduate Diplomas and Graduate Certificates
Regulations for Postgraduate Diplomas and Postgraduate Certificates
Regulations for Postgraduate Programmes of Study leading to the Award of Master's Degrees
Regulations for Extended Master's Degrees
Notes of Guidance on Student Appeals
Procedures for Dealing with Reports of Alleged Offences in Connection with Examinations and other forms of Assessment
Plagiarism Policy and Procedures
Programme Approval, Management and Review Handbook
Partnership Handbook
Assessment Handbook (copy provided on appointment)

Strategy for Learning and Teaching Enhancement

Useful information from the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education:

Institutional and Collaborative Audit reports

UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Advice and Guidance on External Expertise and Assessment
Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
Annex D: Outcome classification descriptions for FHEQ Level 6
Subject Benchmark Standards

Concerns scheme
These documents are available from QAA's website: qaa.ac.uk/

Other Resources

UUK/GuildHE Review of External Examining arrangements in universities and colleges in the UK (2011): universitiesuk.ac.uk/

Advance HE (Higher Education Academy): Fundamentals of External Examining (2019): heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/external-examining

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

DUTIES OF COURSE DIRECTORS

1   The Course Director is responsible to the Board of the Faculty for the organisation and management of the course.

2   In particular the Course Director:

i)   acts as chair of the Course Committee;

ii)   in consultation with Head(s) of School as appropriate, keeps under review the provision of human and physical resources for the course;

iii)   liaises with Heads of School to ensure that a Module Co-ordinator is appointed for each course module;

iv)   ensures that the Course Committee carries out its functions as approved by Senate and is responsible in collaboration with other members of the Course Committee for:

a)   preparation of course publicity material and co-ordination of the Course Committee's contribution to the University's overall course publicity programme;
b)   ensuring that information held on the module database is updated to take account of revisions which affect the modules taught in the course;
c)   oversight of the selection of applicants in accordance with the University's admission policy;
d)   the timetabling of the course;
e)   arrangements for student induction programmes, including the preparation and distribution of course handbooks and other material to students;
f)   ensuring that students are adequately informed of both general health and safety matters and those specific to their course of study and for communicating relevant information to them;
g)   in consultation with the Head of School, allocation of advisers of studies to students;
h)   the regular review of student attendance and progress and presentation of reports on these matters to the Course Committee, including evidence of extenuating circumstances submitted by students in relation to performance in examination and assessment in semester 1, and to the Faculty Board in respect of students deemed withdrawn on account of non-attendance for an (aggregate) period of four weeks;
i)   implementation of the Course Committee's decision regarding the method of staff/student consultation;
j)   submission to the Faculty Board of nominations for the appointment of external examiners;
k)   collation of draft examination papers and collaboration with external examiners in the approval and moderation of examination papers and coursework;
l)   consideration of requests for permission for late submission of coursework;
m)   arrangements for meetings of Boards of Examiners and for the attendance of external examiners;
n)   arrangements for the preparation of students' results profiles for presentation to the Board of Examiners;
o)   communicating to unsuccessful students the Board of Examiners' decisions about their performance and progress;
p)   preparation for consideration by the Course Committee of a draft response to the report(s) of external examiner(s);
q)   preparation and submission of appropriate documentation, for initial consideration by the Course Committee, for annual monitoring and revalidation, and for proposed revisions to the course;
r)   arrangements for liaison with external bodies.

v)   acts as the coordinator of Approved Absence and Independent Study Programme for talented athletes.

The Course Director undertakes such other duties as the Board of the Faculty may specify.

Courses Offered by Partner Institutions

The Course Director and Course Committee have the above responsibilities modified to relate to the institution. Nomination of external examiners (2 iv) j)) however remains the responsibility of the University Faculty Board.

DUTIES OF SUBJECT DIRECTORS

1   The Subject Director is responsible to the Board of the Faculty for the organisation and management of the subject offered as Single Honours, Major, Main and/or Minor strands.

2   In particular the Subject Director:

    i)   acts as chair of the Subject Committee;

    ii)   in consultation with Heads of School as appropriate, keeps under review the provision of human and physical resources for the subject;

    iii)   liaises with Heads of School to ensure that a Module Co-ordinator is appointed for each subject module;

    iv)   in conjunction with Advisers of Studies ensures that students follow an agreed route to a named award;

    v)   ensures that the Subject Committee carries out its functions as approved by Senate and is responsible in collaboration with other members of the Subject Committee, the Faculty and the central service departments of the University for:

        a) preparation of subject publicity material and co-ordination of the Subject Committee's contribution to the University's overall course publicity programme;

        b) ensuring that information held on the module database is updated to take account of revisions which affect the modules taught in the subject;

        c) oversight of the selection of applicants in accordance with the University's admission policy;

        d) the timetabling of the subject;

        e) arrangements for student induction programmes, including the preparation and distribution of subject handbooks and other material to students;

        f) ensuring that students are adequately informed of both general health and safety matters and those specific to the subject, and for communicating relevant information to them;

        g) in consultation with the Head of School, allocation of advisers of studies to Single Honours and Major/Minor students;

        h) the regular review of student attendance and progress and presentation of reports on such matters to the Subject Committee, including evidence of extenuating circumstances submitted by students in relation to performance in examination and assessment in semester 1, and to the Faculty Board in respect of students deemed withdrawn on account of non-attendance for an (aggregate) period of four weeks;

        i) implementation of the Subject Committee's decision regarding the method of staff/student consultation;

        j) submission to the Faculty Board of nominations for the appointment of external examiners;

        k) collation of draft examination papers and collaboration with external examiners in the approval and moderation of examination papers and coursework;

        l) consideration of requests for permission for late submission of coursework on behalf of the Subject Committee;

        m) arrangements for meetings of Boards of Examiners and for the attendance of external examiners;

        n) arrangements for the preparation of students' results profiles for presentation to the Board of Examiners;

        o) communicating to unsuccessful students the Board of Examiners' decisions about their performance and progress;

        p) preparation for consideration by the Subject Committee of a draft response to the report(s) of external examiner(s);

        q) preparation and submission of appropriate documentation, for initial consideration by the Subject Committee, for annual monitoring and revalidation, and for proposed revisions;

        r) arrangements for liaison with external bodies.

    vi)   acts as the coordinator of Approved Absence and Independent Study Programme for talented athletes.

The Subject Director undertakes such other duties as the Board of the Faculty may specify.

Appendix 3

DUTIES OF DIRECTOR OF COMBINED STUDIES

1   The Director of Combined Studies is responsible to the Campus Co-ordinating Group for the co-ordination of the undergraduate subjects contributing to Major, Main and Minor Honours degree combinations.

2   The Director of Combined Studies:

  i)   acts as chair of the Campus Co-ordinating Group;

  ii)   in conjunction with the Co-ordinating Group, ensures that students are properly registered on an approved combination for a named award;

  iii)   ensures that the Co-ordinating Group carries out its functions as approved by Senate, and is responsible in collaboration with other members of the Co-ordinating Group, relevant faculties and schools and the central service departments of the University for:

    a)   identifying any restrictions on possible combinations;

    b)   making contributions to the University's overall course publicity programme;

    c)   oversight of the selection of applicants in accordance with the University admissions policy;

    d)   co-ordination of scheduling of subject modules;

    e)   arrangements for student induction programmes;

    f)   in consultation with Heads of School, allocation of advisers of studies to students taking two Main or three Minor Subjects;

    g)   submission to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee of nominations for the appointment of Chief External Examiner;

    h)   arrangements for meetings of the Campus Progress and Award Boards of Examiners and for the attendance of the Chief External Examiner;

    i)   presentation of the results profile of combined students to the Progress and Award Board of Examiners for Combined Honours subjects;

    j)   communication to unsuccessful students of the Board of Examiners' decisions about their progress;

    k)   preparation for consideration by the Campus Co-ordinating Group of a draft response to the report of the Chief External Examiner and of an annual report on the operation of campus combined provision;

    l)   in conjunction with the other campus Directors of Combined Studies, submission of an annual report to the Learning and Teaching Committee.

The Director undertakes such other duties as the Senate may specify, and consults with Directors on other campuses on matters of mutual interest.

One Director is a member of the Learning and Teaching Committee.

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

QUALIFICATIONS AND CREDIT FRAMEWORK [2009]

FHEQ = Framework for Higher Education Qualifications designed by Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, third edition 2014.

AWARD	QUALIFICATION LEVEL (FHEQ)	MINIMUM OVERALL CREDITS	TYPICAL RANGE OF CREDIT LEVELS	MINIMUM NO OF CREDITS AT HIGHEST LEVEL	MAXIMUM NO OF CREDITS AT LOWEST LEVEL	PASS MARK %	OTHER REQUIREMENTS/COMMENTS
Access Diploma	-	120	1, 2, 3	60	10	40	
Certificate of Personal and Professional Development	-	60	3, 4	-	60	40	Award framework for short course modules.
Certificate	4	60	3, 4	-	60	40	At least 40 at 4 to be higher education award.
Diploma	4	120	3, 4	-	120	40	At least 90 at 4 to be higher education award.
Certificate of Higher Education	4	120	3, 4	90	30	40	
Diploma in Professional Practice/ Professional Practice (International)	5	60	5	60	60	40	Associate Award.
Diploma in International Academic Studies	5	120	3, 4, 5	90	30	40	Associate Award.
Foundation Degree	5	240	3, 4, 5	100	40	40	Must include 40 credits of work-based learning at Level 5.
Associate Bachelor's Degree	5	240	3, 4, 5	100	40	40	
Advanced Diploma	5	120	3, 4, 5	90	30	40	
Advanced Certificate	5	60	3, 4, 5	40	20	40	
Non-Honours Degree	6	360	3, 4, 5, 6	60	30	40	
Honours Degree	6	360	3, 4, 5, 6	120	30	40	More at Level 3 if includes integrated foundation year.
Graduate Diploma	6	120	3, 4, 5, 6	90	30	40	Graduate entry.
Graduate Certificate	6	60	3, 4, 5, 6	40	20	40	Graduate entry.
Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery	7	780	5, 6, 7	190	175	40	50% pass mark at Level 7
Integrated Master's Degree	7	480	3, 4, 5, 6, 7	120	30	40	50% pass mark at Level 7 (from 2003 intake). More at Level 3 if includes integrated foundation year.
Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development	7	60	7	60	-	50	Award framework for short course modules.
Postgraduate Certificate	7	60	6, 7	40	20	50	40% pass mark at Level 6 from 2016/17.
Postgraduate Diploma	7	120	6, 7	90	30	50	40% pass mark at Level 6 from 2016/17.
Master's Degree	7	180	6, 7	150	30	50	40% pass mark at Level 6 from 2016/17.
Extended Master's Degree	7	240	6, 7	180	-	50	From 2016/17. 40% pass mark in Level 6 modules which form preliminary stage. 50% required to progress to second stage.
Professional Doctorate	8	540	7, 8	420	120	50	From 2010/11

The highest level in a range is typical: modules from higher levels may contribute to lower level awards, eg 60 at 4 and 60 at 5 = Certificate of Higher Education. The minimum and maximum number of credits relate to a course with the minimum overall credits. Some degrees may include an additional foundation level comprising level 3 modules. The HE credit levels used by the University are those specified in the England, Wales and Northern Ireland (EWNI) credit guidelines. They are identified by a sequence of numbers from 4 to 8. Levels below Higher Education are also used as indicated. The 2009 levels correspond to those used in the University's two earlier frameworks as follows:
1, 2, 3 = A; 4 = 1/B; 5 = 2/C; 6 = 3/D/M1; 7 = M/M2; 8 = D.
The University ceased to offer DipHEs and Edexcel HND and HNC courses from 2008.
The mark for the award of DPP and DIAS was revised from 50% from 2015/16 placement year.

Appendix 5

QAA: Framework for Higher Education Qualifications

The QAA provides the following generic descriptors of higher education qualifications in the Framework. The descriptors are in two parts: the first being a statement of outcomes, the achievement of which is assessed and which a student should be able to demonstrate for the award of the qualification; the second is a statement of the wider abilities that a student should be expected to have developed. Each descriptor identifies a particular qualification at that level which should meet the descriptor in full. The descriptor can also be used as a reference point for other qualifications at that level.

There are five levels of higher education qualifications awarded by institutions in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 4: Certificate of Higher Education

Certificates of Higher Education are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with their area(s) of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret these within the context of that area of study;

- an ability to present, evaluate, and interpret qualitative and quantitative data, to develop lines of argument and make sound judgements in accordance with basic theories and concepts of their subject(s) of study.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to their area(s) of study and/or work;

- communicate the results of their study/work accurately and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments;

- undertake further training and develop new skills within a structured and managed environment;

and holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility.

Holders of a Certificate of Higher Education will have a sound knowledge of the basic concepts of a subject, and will have learned how to take different approaches to solving problems. They will be able to communicate accurately and will have the qualities needed for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility. The Certificate of Higher Education may be a first step towards obtaining higher level qualifications.

Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 5: Foundation Degree

Foundation degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of their area(s) of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed;

- ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context;

- knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in the subject(s) relevant to the named award, and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study;

- an understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis;

- effectively communicate information, arguments, and analysis in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist audiences, and deploy key techniques of the discipline effectively;

- undertake further training, develop existing skills and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within organisations;

and holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.

Holders of qualifications at this level will have developed a sound understanding of the principles in their field of study, and will have learned to apply those principles more widely. Through this, they will have learned to evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems. Their studies may well have had a vocational orientation, enabling them to perform effectively in their chosen field. They will have the qualities necessary for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.

Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 6: Bachelor's degree with Honours

Bachelor degrees with Honours are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study, including acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline;

- an ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline;

- conceptual understanding that enables the student:

  o to devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of a discipline;

  o to describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or equivalent advanced scholarship, in the discipline;

- an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge;

- the ability to manage their own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (for example refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline).

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- apply the methods and techniques that they have learned to review, consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge and understanding, and to initiate and carry out projects;

- critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete), to make judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution - or identify a range of solutions - to a problem;

- communicate information, ideas, problems, and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences;

and holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:

  o the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;

  o decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts;

  o the learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature.

Holders of a bachelor's degree with Honours will have developed an understanding of a complex body of knowledge, some of it at the current boundaries of an academic discipline. Through this, the holder will have developed analytical techniques and problem-solving skills that can be applied in many types of employment.

The holder of such a qualification will be able to evaluate evidence, arguments and assumptions, to reach sound judgements, and to communicate them effectively.

Holders of a bachelor's degree with Honours should have the qualities needed for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility, and decision-making in complex and unpredictable circumstances.

Bachelor degrees with Honours form the largest group of higher education qualifications. Typically learning outcomes from these programmes would be expected to be achieved on the basis of study equivalent to three full-time academic years and lead to awards with titles such as Bachelor of Arts, BA Hons or Bachelor of Science, BSc Hons. In addition to bachelor's degrees at this level are short courses and professional 'conversion' courses, based largely on undergraduate material, and taken usually by those who are already graduates in another discipline, leading to graduate certificates or graduate diplomas.

Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 7: Master's degree

Master's degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice;

- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship;

- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;

- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
  - o to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline;
  - o to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences;

- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level;

- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level;

and holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
  - o the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;
  - o decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations;
  - o the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

Much of the study undertaken for master's degrees will have been at, or informed by, the forefront of an academic or professional discipline. Students will have shown originality in the application of knowledge, and they will understand how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research. They will be able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, and they will show originality in tackling and solving problems. They will have the qualities needed for employment in circumstances requiring sound judgement, personal responsibility and initiative in complex and unpredictable professional environments.

Master's degrees are awarded after completion of taught courses, programmes of research, or a mixture of both. Longer, research-based programmes often lead to the degree of MPhil. The learning outcomes of most master's degree courses are achieved on the basis of study equivalent to at least one full-time calendar year, and are taken by graduates with a bachelor's degree with Honours (or equivalent achievement).

Master's degrees are often distinguished from other qualifications at this level (for example, advanced short courses, which often form parts of continuing professional development programmes and lead to postgraduate certificates and/or postgraduate diplomas) by an increased intensity, complexity and density of study. Master's

degrees – in comparison to postgraduate certificates and postgraduate diplomas – typically include planned intellectual progression that often includes a synoptic/research or scholarly activity.

Some master's degrees, for example in science, engineering and mathematics, comprise an integrated programme of study spanning several levels where the outcomes are normally achieved through study equivalent to four full-time academic years. While the final outcomes of the qualifications themselves meet the expectations of the descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 7 in full, such qualifications are often termed 'integrated master's' as an acknowledgement of the additional period of study at lower levels (which typically meets the expectations of the descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 6).

Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 8: Doctoral degree

Doctoral degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication;
- a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;
- the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems;
- a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas, or approaches;

and holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.

Doctoral degrees are awarded for the creation and interpretation, construction and/or exposition of knowledge, which extends the forefront of a discipline, usually through original research. Holders of doctoral degrees will be able to conceptualise, design and implement projects for the generation of significant new knowledge and/or understanding. Holders of doctoral degrees will have the qualities needed for employment that require both the ability to make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, and innovation in tackling and solving problems.

Doctoral programmes that may include a research component but which have a substantial taught element (for example professional doctorates) lead usually to awards that include the name of the discipline in their title (for example EdD for Doctor of Education or DClinPsy for Doctor of Clinical Psychology). Professional doctorates aim to develop an individual's professional practice and to support them in providing a contribution to (professional) knowledge. The titles PhD and DPhil are commonly used for doctorates awarded on the basis of original research. Achievement of outcomes consistent with the qualification descriptor for the doctoral degree normally requires study equivalent to three full-time calendar years.

First degrees in medicine, dentistry and veterinary science comprise an integrated programme of study and professional practice spanning several levels. While the final outcomes of the qualifications themselves typically meeting the expectations of the descriptor for a higher education qualification at Level 7, these qualifications may often retain, for historical reasons, titles of Bachelor of Medicine, and Bachelor of Surgery, Bachelor of Dental Surgery, Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine or Bachelor of Veterinary Science. The use of the title 'Dr' by medical doctors is a historical abbreviation for the profession; it does not indicate a qualification at doctoral level.

Appendix 6

SUMMARY OF EWNI GENERIC CREDIT LEVEL DESCRIPTORS
(Source: NICATS Manual, 2002 and HE credit framework for England, 2008)

The level descriptors should be seen as a developmental continuum in which preceding levels are necessarily subsumed within those which follow. Level 4 – 8 are relevant to HE learning.

Learning accredited at this level will reflect the ability to:

Entry level - employ recall and demonstrate elementary comprehension in a narrow range of areas, exercise basic skills within highly structured contexts, and carry out directed activity under close supervision.

Level 1 - employ a narrow range of applied knowledge, skills and basic comprehension within a limited range of predictable and structured contexts, including working with others under direct supervision, but with a very limited degree of discretion and judgement about possible action.

Level 2 - apply knowledge with underpinning comprehension in a number of areas and employ a range of skills within a number of contexts, some of which may be non-routine; and undertake directed activities, with a degree of autonomy, within time constraints.

Level 3 - apply knowledge and skills in a range of complex activities demonstrating comprehension of relevant theories; access and analyse information independently and make reasoned judgements selecting from a considerable choice of procedures in familiar and unfamiliar contexts; and direct own activities, with some responsibility for the output of others.

Level 4 - develop a rigorous approach to the acquisition of a broad knowledge base; employ a range of specialised skills; evaluate information, using it to plan and develop investigative strategies and to determine solutions to a variety of unpredictable problems; and operate in a range of varied and specific contexts, taking responsibility for the nature and quality of outputs.

Level 5 - generate ideas through the analysis of concepts at an abstract level, with a command of specialised skills and the formulation of responses to well defined and abstract problems; analyse and evaluate information; exercise significant judgement across a broad range of functions; and accept responsibility for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes.

Level 6 - critically review, consolidate and extend a systematic and coherent body of knowledge, utilising specialised skills across an area of study; critically evaluate concepts and evidence from a range of sources; transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills and exercise significant judgement in a range of situations; and accept accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes.

Level 7 - display mastery of a complex and specialised area of knowledge and skills, employing advanced skills to conduct research, or advanced technical or professional activity, accepting accountability for related decision-making, including use of supervision.

Level 8 - make a significant and original contribution to a specialised field of inquiry, demonstrating a command of methodological issues and engaging in critical dialogue with peers and accepting full accountability for outcomes.

Table of generic level descriptors

Level	Intellectual skills and attributes	Processes	Accountability
Entry	• Employ recall and demonstrate elementary comprehension in a narrow range of areas with dependency on ideas of others. • Exercise basic skills. • Receive and pass on information.	• Operate mainly in closely defined and highly structured contexts. • Carry out processes that are repetitive and predictable. • Undertake the performance of clearly defined tasks. • Assume a limited range of roles.	• Carry out directed activity under close supervision. • Rely entirely on external monitoring of output and quality.
1	• Employ a narrow range of applied knowledge and basic comprehension. • Demonstrate a narrow range of skills. • Apply known solutions to familiar problems. • Present and record information from readily available sources.	• Show basic competence in a limited range of predictable and structured contexts. • Utilise a clear choice of routine responses. • Co-operate with others.	• Exercise a very limited degree of discretion and judgement about possible actions. • Carry restricted responsibility for quantity and quality of output. • Operate under direct supervision and quality control.
2	• Apply knowledge with underpinning comprehension in a number of areas. • Make comparisons. • Interpret available information. • Demonstrate a range of skills.	• Choose from a range of procedures performed in a number of contexts, some of which may be non-routine. • Co-ordinate with others.	• Undertake directed activity with a degree of autonomy. • Achieve outcomes within time constraints. • Accept increased responsibility for quantity and quality of output subject to external quality checking.
3	• Apply knowledge and skills in a range of complex activities, demonstrating comprehension of relevant theories. • Access and evaluate information independently. • Analyse information and make reasoned judgements. • Employ a range of responses to well defined but often unfamiliar or unpredictable problems.	• Operate in a variety of familiar and unfamiliar contexts using a range of technical or learning skills. • Select from a considerable choice of procedures. • Give presentations to an audience.	• Engage in self-directed activity with guidance/evaluation. • Accept responsibility for quantity and quality of output. • Accept limited responsibility for the quantity and quality of the output of others.

4	• Develop a rigorous approach to the acquisition of a broad knowledge base. • Employ a range of specialised skills. • Determine solutions to a variety of unpredictable problems. • Generate a range of responses, a limited number of which are innovative, to well defined but often unfamiliar problems. • Evaluate information, using it to plan and develop investigative strategies.	• Operate in a range of varied and specific contexts involving creative and non-routine activities. • Exercise appropriate judgement in planning, selecting or presenting information, methods or resources.	• Undertake self-directed and a limited amount of directive activity. • Operate within broad general guidelines or functions. • Take responsibility for the nature and quantity of outputs. • Meet specified quality standards.
5	• Generate ideas through the analysis of information and concepts at an abstract level. • Command wide ranging, specialised technical, creative and/or conceptual skills. • Formulate appropriate responses to resolve well defined and abstract problems. • Analyse, reformat and evaluate a wide range of information.	• Utilise diagnostic and creative skills in a range of technical, professional or management functions. • Exercise appropriate judgement in planning, design, technical and/or supervisory functions related to products, services, operations or processes.	• Accept responsibility and accountability within broad parameters for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes.
6	• Critically review, consolidate, and extend a systematic and coherent body of knowledge. • Utilise highly specialised technical or scholastic skills across an area of study. • Utilise research skills. • Critically evaluate new information, concepts and evidence from a range of sources.	• Transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills in a range of situations. • Exercise appropriate judgement in a number of complex planning, design, technical and/or management functions related to products, services, operations or processes, including resourcing.	• Accept accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes.
7	• Display mastery of a complex and specialised area of knowledge and skills. • Demonstrate expertise in highly specialised and advanced technical, professional and/or research skills.	• Conduct research, or advanced technical or professional activity. • Design and apply appropriate research methodologies. • Communicate results of research to peers.	• Accept accountability in related decision making including use of supervision.
8	• Make a significant and original contribution to a specialised field of inquiry.	• Demonstrate command of methodological issues. • Communicate results of research to peers and engage in critical dialogue.	• Accept accountability in related decision making including use of supervision.

SAMPLE AGENDA FOR COURSE BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

COURSE(S):

A meeting of the Board of Examiners for the above course(s) will be held on DATE at TIME in LOCATION.

AGENDA

1   Attendance

To note the attendance of internal examiners and the external examiner(s), and the arrangements for external examining in the absence of an external examiner (if applicable).

2   Regulations

To note the course regulations (and modules where the pass mark must be achieved in each assessment element or component).

3   Evidence of Extenuating Circumstances

To receive evidence of extenuating circumstances submitted by or on behalf of examination candidates.

4   Receipt and Consideration of Candidates' Results

4.1   To note any changes to overall module marks following moderation.

4.2   To confirm the results of candidates in examinations and coursework for which the Board is responsible including marks for elective modules.

4.3   To determine the overall results and the academic progress of candidates.

4.4   To forward to Senate recommendations for awards to candidates who have successfully completed their courses of study and who have satisfied the conditions specified in Ordinance XXIX on University awards.

5   Publication of Results

To note the arrangements for (a) publication of progress and award decisions and marks; and (b) communication of decisions to unsuccessful candidates.

6   Appeals (based on submission of new information)

6.1   To note the dates on which appeals shall be heard.

6.2   To note the composition of the Appeals Panel. [It comprises the Executive Dean or Associate Dean or a Head or Associate Head of School (other than the school in which the course is located) or chair of Distributed Education Board as Chairperson, accompanied by the Head of School in which the course is located or another senior member of the board of examiners and Course Director, or exceptionally their nominees.]

7   Supplementary Examinations

To make arrangements for supplementary examinations.

8   Prizes and Awards

To make recommendations for prizes and awards.

9   Comments from Internal and External examiners

To receive comments from internal and external examiners in relation to the course(s).

SAMPLE AGENDA FOR SUBJECT BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

Undergraduate Honours Subject: NAME at CAMPUS

A meeting of the Subject Board of Examiners will be held on DATE at TIME in LOCATION.

AGENDA

1   Attendance

To note the attendance of internal examiners and the external examiner(s) and the arrangements for external examining in the absence of an external examiner (if applicable).

2   Regulations

To note the remit of the Board and its responsibilities in accordance with Examination Regulations.
To note modules where the pass mark must be achieved in each assessment element or component.

3   Evidence of Extenuating Circumstances

To receive evidence of extenuating circumstances submitted by or on behalf of examination candidates.

4   Receipt and Consideration of Candidates' Results

4.1   To note any changes to overall module marks following moderation.

4.2   To confirm the results of candidates in examinations for which the Board is responsible.

4.3   To determine the overall results and the academic progress of Single Honours degree candidates (if applicable).

4.4   To forward to Senate recommendations for awards to Single Honours candidates who have successfully completed their courses of study and who have satisfied the conditions specified in Ordinance XXIX on University awards.

5   Publication of Results

To note arrangements for (a) the publication of progress and award decisions and marks; and (b) communication of decisions to unsuccessful candidates. [For combined Honours candidates, this follows the decisions of the Progress and Award Board. For Single Honours candidates (if applicable), this follows the meeting of the Subject Board.]

6   Appeals (based on submission of new information)

6.1   To note the dates on which appeals shall be heard.

6.2   To note that the Chairperson of the Campus Progress and Award Board (as Chairperson) accompanied by the Director of Combined Studies and Subject Director(s) or exceptionally their nominees shall comprise the Appeals Panel for combined Honours candidates. (For Single Honours candidates (if applicable), it is the Executive Dean or Associate Dean or Head or Associate Head of School (other than the School in which the subject is located) as Chairperson, accompanied by the Head of School in which the subject is located or another senior member of the board of examiners and Subject Director, or exceptionally their nominees.)

7   Supplementary Examinations

To make arrangements for supplementary examinations.

8   Prizes and Awards

To make recommendations for prizes and awards.

9   Comments from Internal and External Examiners

To receive comments from internal and external examiners in relation to the subject.

ACADEMIC STANDING (AST) CODES FOR RECORDING ACADEMIC PROGRESS AT BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

Successful Leavers

AST	DESCRIPTION
S1	Course completed and award obtained.
S2	Exit with lower award on a linked higher-level course and not eligible to apply for readmission to the same/similar course or part-time version of the course in the next academic year.
S3	Completion of course or period of study (no University award).
	For Nursing Courses Only
SA	Course completed, award obtained and record professional award.
SB	Completion of course or period of study (no University award) and record professional award.
SC	Exit with lower award on a linked higher-level course and record professional award. Not eligible to apply for readmission to the same/similar or part-time version of the course in the next academic year.

Proceed

AST	DESCRIPTION
P1	Proceed to the next year/stage of the course in the next academic year.
P2	Proceed to the next year/stage of the course in the same academic year.
P3	Proceed to the next year/stage of the course in the next academic year but required to take or retake specified examination(s) and/or coursework.
P5	Student has satisfied the examination requirements for the course and is eligible to proceed to a linked higher-level course in the next academic year. (e.g. PgDip to Master's Degree).
P6	Student has satisfied the examination requirements for the course and is eligible to proceed to a linked higher-level course in the same academic year.
P9	Dissertation in progress and within the normal duration as specified in the course handbook. Proceed to next academic year. No fee due (Master's courses only). This code has limited application and is <u>not</u> to be used when an extension of time has been granted or an EC1 submitted.
	For Nursing Courses Only
PA	Proceed to the next semester but required to take or retake specified examination(s) and/or coursework. (Pre-registration Nursing courses only.)
PC	Proceed to the next year/stage of the course in the next academic year and record professional award.
PD	Student has satisfied the examination requirements for the course and is eligible to proceed to a linked higher-level course in the next academic year and record professional award.

	For Courses with a Placement Year
P4	Proceed to placement year but required to take or retake specified examination(s) and/or coursework.
P7	Permitted to proceed to final year due to extenuating circumstances. Final award will not include DPP(I)/DIAS. Student otherwise in good academic standing.
P8	Proceed to final year without placement, as placement is optional.

PP	Proceed to placement year.
PE	Exempt placement - sufficient effort but unable to obtain placement.
PF	Exempt placement - extenuating circumstances.
PG	Exempt placement - prior work experience.
PH	Exempt placement – HND/Foundation degree containing a placement element.
PL	Proceed and taking leave of absence.
PN	Decision on progression to placement deferred.
PX	Proceed to final year, exempt placement or placement is optional, but required to take or retake specified examination(s) and/or coursework.

Transfer

AST	DESCRIPTION
T1	Recommend transfer on educational grounds to another course [e.g. BEng to MEng (student in good academic standing). Transfer route explicitly identified in course regulations].
T2	Recommend transfer on educational grounds to a lower level course e.g. MEng to BEng (progress on current course not permitted). Cannot be used to transfer from one Honours degree to another.
T3	Student record amendment form (SRAF) requesting transfer to another programme completed by student earlier in the year.

Decision Deferred/Resit

AST	DESCRIPTION
D1	Resubmit coursework and/or retake examinations before the start of the next academic year.
D2	First sitting of examinations and/or extension of period of time granted to submit coursework/project/dissertation due to authenticated medical or other extenuating circumstances before the start of the next academic year (no fee to be charged).
D3	Combination of resit/resubmission and first sit/first submission prior to the start of next academic year.
D4	Resubmit coursework and/or retake examinations before the start of the next academic year, but for exceptional reasons exempt from payment of resit fee.
D5	Submit dissertation by a specified date in the next academic year due to authenticated evidence of medical or other extenuating circumstances (postgraduate courses only).
D6	Resubmit dissertation by a specified date prior to the start of the next academic year (postgraduate courses only).
D7	Decision on progress deferred due to insufficient information.

Non-progressing - Progress to Next Stage Not Permitted

AST	DESCRIPTION
N1	Retake year in full with attendance, as for the first time, where there is authenticated evidence of medical or other extenuating circumstances.
N2	Retake year in part with attendance, as for the first time, where there is authenticated evidence of medical or other extenuating circumstances. Take specified examinations and/or coursework.
N3	Retake year in part with attendance and repeat specified examinations and/or coursework for failed modules.

N4	Repeat specified examinations and/or coursework for failed modules, without attendance, during the next academic year.
N5	Take specified examinations and/or coursework during the next academic year, without attendance (first sitting/submission because of authenticated extenuating circumstances).
N6	Resubmit dissertation by a specified date during the next academic year (postgraduate courses only).
NP	Take placement year in full with attendance as for the first time, due to extenuating circumstances.

Unsuccessful Leavers

AST	DESCRIPTION
U1	Fail and required to withdraw from the course and not eligible to apply for readmission to the same course in the next academic year.

Early Leavers

AST	DESCRIPTION
L1#	Withdrawn - recorded by the Board of Examiners as having withdrawn from the course.

 # Leaver code to be entered in addition to L1: 01 - Health reasons, 02 - Financial reasons, 03 - Personal reasons, 04 - To take up employment, 05 - Course unsuitable, 06 - Transfer to another Ulster course, 07 - Transfer to another institution, 12 – Unknown, 14 – Visa issues.

ACADEMIC STANDING (AST) CODES FOR RECORDING STUDENT PROGRESS AT THE END OF THE FIRST SEMESTER

AST	DESCRIPTION
F1	Take for the first time examinations and/or submit coursework, in May/June or August ('first sit').
F2*	Proceed to the next year of the course in Semester Two of the current academic year and reverse semesters.
P1*	Proceed to the next year/stage of the course in the next academic year.
T1	Recommend transfer on educational grounds to another course (student in good academic standing).
T2	Recommend transfer on educational grounds to another lower level course (progress on current course not permitted). Cannot be used to transfer from one Honours degree to another.
U1*	Fail and required to withdraw from the course and **not** eligible to apply for readmission to the same course in the next academic year.
L1#	Withdrawn – recorded by the course/subject committee or Progress and Award Board as having withdrawn from the course.

* May only be used for students who have repeated examinations and/or coursework from the previous academic year.
 # Leaver code to be entered in addition to L1 as above.

Appendix 9

SAMPLE AGENDA FOR CAMPUS PROGRESS AND AWARD BOARD

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

A meeting of the Campus Progress and Award Board on the   campus will be held on
[DATE]   at   [TIME]   in   [LOCATION]

AGENDA

1   Attendance

To note the attendance of Subject Directors and the Chief External Examiner (or the arrangements for external examining in the absence of the Chief Examiner).

2   Regulations

To note the remit of the Board and its responsibilities in accordance with the examination regulations.

To receive generic award regulations in accordance with the template for the modular Honours framework.

To note that Subject Directors will report modules where the pass mark threshold standard must be achieved in each assessment element or component.

3   Evidence of Extenuating Circumstances

To receive evidence of extenuating circumstances submitted by or on behalf of examination candidates.

4   Receipt and Consideration of Candidates' Results

4.1   To receive from Subject Boards the results of candidates in assessments.

4.2   To determine the academic progress of candidates.

4.3   To forward to Senate recommendations for awards in respect of candidates who have successfully completed their courses of study and who have satisfied the conditions specified in Ordinance XXIX on University awards.

5   Publication of Results

To note the arrangements for (a) publication of progress and award decisions and marks; and (b) the communication of decisions to unsuccessful candidates.

6   Appeals (based on submission of new information)

6.1   To note the dates on which appeals shall be heard.

6.2   To note that the Chairperson accompanied by the Director of Combined Studies and Subject Directors or, exceptionally, their nominees shall comprise the Appeals Panel.

6.3   To agree with the Chief External Examiner his/her involvement in the process.

7   Supplementary Examinations

To note arrangements for supplementary examinations.

8   Comments from Internal and External Examiners

To receive comments from the Chief External Examiner and other examiners of the Board.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – QUALITATIVE-BASED WORK

Level 3

Classification	% Range	Content (Analysis and Enquiry)	Application of Theory	Knowledge and Understanding	Evidence of Reading	Referencing & Bibliography	Communication / Presentation Skills
I [Outstanding Work]	80 – 100	Excellent description and discussion of views, issues and information with evidence of critical evaluation and some original thinking	Evidence of detailed, relevant application of theory, where applicable	Detailed knowledge and depth of understanding of principles and concepts	Evidence of reading appropriate supplementary sources	Accurate referencing and bibliography	Excellent presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using an accurate, coherent style
I [Excellent Work]	70 – 79	Detailed description of main issues and information with evidence of evaluation	Evidence of relevant application of theory, where applicable	Knowledge and understanding of principles and concepts	Evidence of reading some supplementary sources	Appropriate referencing and bibliography	Good quality presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using an accurate and logical approach
II (i) [Good Quality Work]	60 – 69	Description of main issues and information with occasional evidence of discussion	Occasional relevant application of theory	Adequate knowledge of key principles and concepts	Evidence of directed reading only	Adequate referencing and bibliography	Acceptable presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a competent style with appropriate vocabulary
II (ii) [Acceptable Work]	50 - 59	Description of main issues and material only	Limited evidence of relevant application of theory	Elementary knowledge of key principles and concepts	Limited evidence of directed reading	Limited referencing	Adequate presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a largely clear if basic style with adequate vocabulary
III [Adequate Work]	40 – 49	Limited description of main issues and material only	Very limited evidence of relevant application of theory	Limited and/or inconsistent knowledge of key principles and concepts	Evidence of minimal reading only	Limited referencing	Weak presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a basic and inconsistent approach
Fail (marginal) [Limited Work]	35 – 39	Omission of some relevant material	Little or no evidence of relevant application of theory	Little evidence of knowledge of key principles and concepts	Little or no evidence of reading	Little or no referencing	Poor presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, adopting a basic style with inconsistent/ inaccurate vocabulary
Fail [Unacceptable Work]	0 – 34	Insufficient and largely irrelevant material	No evidence of relevant application of theory	No evidence of knowledge of key principles and concepts	No evidence of reading	No referencing	Inadequate presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, adopting a very basic approach with many inaccuracies and errors in spelling, vocabulary and syntax

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – QUALITATIVE-BASED WORK

Level 4

Classification	% Range	Content (Analysis and Enquiry)	Application of Theory	Knowledge and Understanding	Evidence of Reading	Referencing & Bibliography	Communication / Presentation Skills
I [Outstanding Work]	80 – 100	Excellent description and discussion of views, issues and information with evidence of critical evaluation and some original thinking	Evidence of detailed, relevant application of theory, where applicable	Excellent knowledge and depth of understanding of principles and concepts	Evidence of reading a wide range of appropriate supplementary sources	Excellent referencing and bibliography	Excellent presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using an accurate, logically structured, expressive style
I [Excellent Work]	70 – 79	Detailed description of main issues and information with evidence of evaluation	Evidence of relevant application of theory, where applicable	Knowledge and depth of understanding of principles and concepts	Evidence of reading appropriate supplementary sources	Accurate referencing and bibliography	Good quality presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a clear, coherent style with appropriate vocabulary
II (i) [Good Quality Work]	60 – 69	Description of main issues and information with occasional evidence of discussion	Occasional relevant application of theory	Knowledge and sound understanding of the key principles and concepts	Evidence of directed reading and some supplementary sources	Appropriate referencing and bibliography	Acceptable presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a largely clear and coherent style with appropriate vocabulary
II (ii) [Acceptable Work]	50 - 59	Description of main issues and material only	Limited evidence of relevant application of theory	Basic knowledge of the key principles and concepts only	Evidence of directed reading	Adequate referencing and bibliography	Adequate presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a largely clear if basic style with adequate vocabulary
III [Adequate Work]	40 – 49	Limited description of main issues and material only	Very limited evidence of relevant application of theory	Adequate knowledge of key principles and concepts only	Limited evidence of reading	Limited referencing and bibliography	Weak presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a basic and inconsistent approach
Fail (marginal) [Limited Work]	35 – 39	Omission of some relevant material	Little or no evidence of relevant application of theory	Limited and or inconsistent knowledge and understanding of key principles and concepts	Evidence of minimal reading only	Inadequate referencing and bibliography	Poor presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, adopting a basic style with inconsistent/ inaccurate vocabulary
Fail [Unacceptable Work]	0 – 34	Insufficient and largely irrelevant material	No evidence of relevant application of theory	Little or no evidence of knowledge and understanding of the key principles and concepts	Little or no evidence of reading	Little or no referencing and bibliography	Inadequate presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, adopting a very basic approach with many inaccuracies and errors in spelling, vocabulary and syntax

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – QUALITATIVE-BASED WORK

Level 5

Classification	% Range	Content (Analysis and Enquiry)	Application of Theory	Knowledge and Understanding	Evidence of Reading	Referencing & Bibliography	Communication / Presentation Skills
I [Outstanding Work]	80 – 100	Extensive critical insightful evaluation and synthesis of a range of views, issues and complex information which demonstrates original and reflective thinking	Evidence of detailed, relevant application of theory, and/or empirical results, where applicable	Excellent knowledge and depth of understanding of principles and concepts	Evidence of reading a wide range of supplementary sources	Excellent referencing and bibliography	Exceptional presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using an accurate, coherent, original style
I [Excellent Work]	70 – 79	Critical evaluation and synthesis of views, issues and information which demonstrates some originality	Clear evidence of relevant application of theory, and/or empirical results, where applicable	Comprehensive knowledge and depth of understanding of principles and concepts	Evidence of reading a range of supplementary sources	Comprehensive referencing and bibliography	Excellent presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using an accurate, coherent, expressive style
II (i) [Good Quality Work]	60 – 69	Evaluation and synthesis of main issues and information	Appropriate application of theory and/or empirical results, where applicable	Knowledge and sound understanding of principles and concepts	Adequate evidence of reading supplementary sources	Appropriate referencing and bibliography	Good quality presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a clear, coherent style with appropriate vocabulary
II (ii) [Acceptable Work]	50 - 59	Accurate description of main issues and information, with some evaluation	Occasional relevant application of theory and/or empirical results	Knowledge and understanding of key principles and concepts only	Evidence of directed reading and some supplementary sources	Adequate referencing and bibliography	Acceptable presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a largely clear and coherent style with appropriate vocabulary
III [Adequate Work]	40 – 49	Description of main issues and information only	Limited evidence of relevant application of theory and/or empirical results	Basic knowledge and understanding of key principles and concepts only	Evidence of directed reading only	Limited referencing and bibliography	Adequate presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a largely clear if basic style with adequate vocabulary
Fail (marginal) [Limited Work]	35 – 39	Omission of some relevant information with weak and/or incomplete explanation	Very limited evidence of application of theory and/or empirical results	Limited and/or superficial knowledge and understanding of key principles and concepts	Evidence of minimal reading only	Inadequate referencing and bibliography	Poor presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, adopting a basic style with inconsistent/ inaccurate vocabulary
Fail [Unacceptable Work]	0 – 34	Insufficient and largely irrelevant information with inadequate explanation	No evidence of application of theory and/or empirical results	Little or no knowledge and understanding of key principles and concepts	Little or no evidence of reading	Little or no referencing and bibliography	Inadequate presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, adopting a very basic approach with many inaccuracies and errors in spelling, vocabulary and syntax

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – QUALITATIVE-BASED WORK

Level 6

Classification	% Range	Content (Analysis and Enquiry)	Application of Theory	Knowledge and Understanding	Evidence of Reading	Referencing & Bibliography	Communication / Presentation Skills
I [Outstanding Work]	80 – 100	Critical insightful evaluation and synthesis of a wide range of views, issues and complex information which demonstrates an original and reflective approach	Extensive evidence of relevant and perceptive application of theory, and/or empirical results, where applicable	Exceptional knowledge and in-depth understanding of principles and concepts	Extensive evidence of researching and integrating appropriate supplementary sources	Outstanding referencing and bibliography	Outstanding presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using an accurate, coherent, sophisticated style
I [Excellent Work]	70 – 79	Critical evaluation and synthesis of a wide range of views, issues and information which demonstrates original and reflective thinking	Evidence of extensive relevant application of theory, and/or empirical results, where applicable	Excellent knowledge and depth of understanding of principles and concepts	Evidence of extensive research and reading of supplementary sources	Excellent referencing and bibliography	Excellent presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using an accurate, coherent, expressive style
II (i) [Good Quality Work]	60 – 69	Critical evaluation and synthesis of a range of views, issues and information	Evidence of relevant application of theory and/or empirical results, where applicable	Comprehensive knowledge and depth of understanding of principles and concepts	Evidence of research and reading a range of supplementary sources	Comprehensive referencing and bibliography	Good quality presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a clear, coherent and expressive style with appropriate vocabulary
II (ii) [Acceptable Work]	50 - 59	Accurate description of main issues and key information, with some critical evaluation	Occasional relevant application of theory, and/or empirical results where applicable	Appropriate knowledge and understanding of principles and concepts	Evidence of making use of directed reading and some supplementary sources	Adequate referencing and bibliography	Acceptable presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a largely clear and coherent style with appropriate vocabulary
III [Adequate Work]	40 – 49	Limited evaluation and description of main issues and information	Limited evidence of relevant application of theory and/or empirical results	Basic knowledge of key principles and concepts only	Evidence of basic reading only	Limited referencing and bibliography	Adequate presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a largely clear if basic style with adequate vocabulary
Fail (marginal) [Limited Work]	35 – 39	Omission of some relevant information with weak and/or incomplete explanation	No evidence of relevant application of theory and/or empirical results	Limited and/or superficial knowledge of key principles and concepts	Minimal evidence of reading	Inadequate referencing and bibliography	Poor presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, adopting a basic style with inconsistent/ inaccurate vocabulary
Fail [Unacceptable Work]	0 – 34	Insufficient and largely irrelevant information with inadequate explanation	No evidence of application of theory and/or empirical results	Insufficient evidence of key principles and concepts	Little or no evidence of reading	Little or no referencing and bibliography	Inadequate presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, adopting a very basic approach with many inaccuracies and errors in spelling, vocabulary and syntax

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – QUALITATIVE-BASED WORK

Level 7

Classification	% Range	Content (Analysis and Enquiry)	Application of Theory	Knowledge and Understanding	Evidence of Reading	Referencing & Bibliography	Communication / Presentation Skills
Distinction	70 – 100	Critical insightful evaluation and synthesis of a wide range of views, issues and complex information which demonstrates a highly original and reflective approach. Demonstrates the ability to pursue research at Doctoral level	Extensive evidence of advanced, relevant and perceptive application of theory, and/or empirical results, where applicable, informed extensively by current research and practice in the area	Exceptional knowledge and conceptual understanding of complex and/or specialised principles and concepts and the development and advancement of ideas and practice	Extensive evidence of integrating supplementary sources	Outstanding referencing and bibliography	Outstanding presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using an accurate, coherent, sophisticated style
Commendation	60 – 69	Critical evaluation and synthesis of a wide range of views, issues and information which demonstrates original and reflective thinking	Clear evidence of relevant applications and/or empirical results, where applicable, informed by current research and practice in the area	Wide knowledge and depth of understanding of complex and/or specialised principles and concepts and the development of ideas and practice	Evidence of extensive reading of supplementary sources	Comprehensive referencing and bibliography	Excellent presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using an accurate, coherent, expressive style
Pass	50 – 59	Some critical evaluation and synthesis of a range of views, issues and information	Evidence of relevant applications and/or empirical results, where applicable with some links to current research in the area	Appropriate knowledge and depth of understanding of key principles and concepts with some understanding of their development in practice	Evidence of reading supplementary sources	Adequate referencing and bibliography	Acceptable presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a largely clear and coherent style with appropriate vocabulary
Fail (marginal)	45 – 49	Some evaluation and synthesis of issues and information	Occasional relevant applications and/or empirical results, where applicable	Basic knowledge and depth of understanding of key principles and concepts only	Limited evidence of reading	Limited referencing and bibliography	Adequate presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, using a largely clear if basic style with adequate vocabulary
Fail	31 – 44	Limited evaluation and description of main issues and information	Limited applications and/or empirical results, where applicable	Limited and/or superficial knowledge of key principles and concepts	Minimal evidence of reading	Inadequate referencing and bibliography	Poor presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, adopting a basic style with inconsistent/ inaccurate vocabulary
Fail	0 – 30	Insufficient and largely irrelevant information with inadequate explanation	Little or no evidence of relevant application and/or empirical results	Virtually devoid of any evidence of knowledge and understanding	Little or no evidence of reading	Inadequate referencing and bibliography	Inadequate presentation, verbally, electronically and/or in writing, adopting a very basic approach with many inaccuracies and errors in spelling, vocabulary and syntax

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – QUANTITATIVE-BASED WORK

Level 3

Classification	% Range	Knowledge and Understanding	Problem Solving	Calculations	Analysis and Interpretation	Presentation of Work
I [Outstanding Work]	80 – 100	Evidence of knowledge and understanding of key theories, principles and concepts	Competent in the use of appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems. Can work beyond routine context or complexity	Able to demonstrate the steps taken, very few errors in calculations, using recognised methods to formulate solutions	Evidence of analytical and interpretation in familiar contexts, evaluating outcomes and deriving conclusions	Well directed presentation, logically structured
I [Excellent Work]	70 – 79	Knowledge and understanding of most key theories, principles and concepts evident	Able to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems and those of some complexity	Demonstrates the steps taken, few errors in calculations, using recognised methods	Reasonable evidence of use of analytical and interpretative skills in familiar contexts, evaluating outcomes and making judgements	Clearly presented, logically structured
II(i) [Good Quality Work]	60 – 69	Adequate knowledge and understanding of most key theories, principles and concepts evident	Able to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Errors in the steps taken or in the calculations, recognised methods not always used correctly	Some evidence of use of analytical and interpretative skills in familiar contexts, evaluating outcomes and making judgements	Competent presentation and structure
II(ii) [Acceptable Work]	50 – 59	Knowledge and understanding of key theories, principles and concepts is limited	Ability to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems is limited	Steps taken in calculations lack clarity, recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	Limited evidence of the use of analytical and interpretative skills.	Limited presentation and/or structure
III [Adequate Work]	40 – 49	Knowledge and understanding of key theories, principles and concepts is very limited	Very limited ability to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Steps taken in calculations are incomplete, calculations largely incorrect, recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	Little evidence of analysis and/or incorrect interpretation	Poor presentation, and/or structure
Fail (marginal) [Limited Work]	35 – 39	Lack of knowledge and understanding of key theories, principles and concepts	Not able to or does not use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Steps taken in calculations are incomplete or/and incorrect, recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	No analysis and/or interpretation	Very poor presentation and inadequate structure
Fail [Unacceptable Work]	0 – 34	No evidence of knowledge or understanding of key theories, principles and concepts	Does not use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Steps taken in calculations are incorrect, recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	No analysis and/or interpretation	Unacceptable presentation and structure

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – QUANTITATIVE-BASED WORK

Level 4

Classification	% Range	Knowledge and Understanding	Problem Solving	Calculations	Analysis and Interpretation	Presentation of Work
I [Outstanding Work]	80 – 100	Substantial knowledge and clear understanding of major theories, principles and concepts	Able to identify more complex problems and competent in the modelling of standard problems	Clear demonstration of the steps taken, few errors in calculations, using recognised methods to formulate solution	Evidence of analysis and interpretation of new and seen data in conclusions derived	Very well directed presentation, logically structured
I [Excellent Work]	70 – 79	Evidence of knowledge and clear understanding of a range of theories, principles and concepts	Competent in the use of appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Able to demonstrate the steps taken, errors in calculations, using recognised methods to formulate solutions	Reasonable evidence of analytical and interpretation in evaluating outcomes and deriving conclusions	Well directed presentation, logically structured
II(i) [Good Quality Work]	60 – 69	Knowledge and understanding of key theories, principles and concepts evident	Able to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Errors in the steps taken in calculations, recognised methods used incorrectly	Some evidence of use of analytical and interpretative skills in evaluating outcomes and making judgements	Clearly presented, logically structured
II(ii) [Acceptable Work]	50 – 59	Knowledge and understanding of key theories, principles and concepts limited or inconsistent	Limited ability to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Steps taken in calculations lack clarity recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	Limited evidence of the use of analytical and interpretative skills.	Competent presentation and structure
III [Adequate Work]	40 – 49	Knowledge and understanding of key theories, principles and concepts very limited	Very limited ability to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Steps taken in calculations are incomplete, calculations largely incorrect, recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	Little evidence of analysis and/or incorrect interpretation	Poor presentation, and structure
Fail (marginal) [Limited Work]	35 – 39	Lack of knowledge and understanding of key theories, principles and concepts	Not able to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Steps taken in calculations are incomplete or/and incorrect, recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	No analysis and/or interpretation	Very poor presentation and inadequate structure
Fail [Unacceptable Work]	0 – 34	No evidence of knowledge or understanding of key theories, principles and concepts	Does not use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Steps taken in calculations are incorrect, recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	No analysis and/or interpretation	Unacceptable presentation and structure

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – QUANTITATIVE-BASED WORK

Level 5

Classification	% Range	Knowledge and Understanding	Problem Solving	Calculations	Analysis and Interpretation	Presentation of Work
I [Outstanding Work]	80 – 100	Comprehensive knowledge and clear understanding of major and complex theories, principles and concepts	Competent in both the identification and modelling of more complex problems	Applies appropriate techniques, and demonstrates innovation and creativity in formulating substantially correct solutions	Clear evidence of analysis and interpretation of new or abstract data and in conclusions derived	Excellent, well directed presentation, logically structured
I [Excellent Work]	70 – 79	Substantial knowledge and clear understanding of major theories, principles and concepts	Able to identify more complex problems and competent in the modelling of standard problems	Clear demonstration of the steps taken, few errors in calculations, using recognised methods to formulate solutions	Evidence of analysis and interpretation of new and seen data in conclusions derived	Well directed presentation, logically structured
II(i) [Good Quality Work]	60 – 69	Evidence of knowledge and clear understanding of a range of theories, principles and concepts	Competent in the use of appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Able to demonstrate the steps taken, errors in calculations, not always using recognised methods to formulate solution	Reasonable evidence of analysis and interpretation in evaluating outcomes and deriving conclusions	Clearly presented, logically structured
II(ii) [Acceptable Work]	50 – 59	Knowledge and understanding of key theories, principles and concepts evident	Able to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Errors in steps taken in calculations, recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	Some evidence of analytical and interpretative skills in evaluating outcomes and deriving conclusions	Neat presentation and structure
III [Adequate Work]	40 – 49	Knowledge and understanding of key theories, principles and concepts limited or inconsistent	Limited ability to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Steps taken in calculations are incomplete or largely incorrect, recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	Very limited use or incorrect use of analytical and interpretative skills	Weak presentation and structure
Fail (marginal) [Limited Work]	35 – 39	Knowledge and understanding of key theories, principles and concepts very limited	Very limited ability to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Steps taken in calculations are incomplete and incorrect recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	Little or no analysis and interpretation	Poor presentation and inadequate structure
Fail [Unacceptable Work]	0 – 34	Lack of knowledge and understanding of key theories principles and concepts	Not able to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Steps taken in calculations are incomplete and incorrect recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	No analysis or interpretation.	Unacceptable presentation and structure

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – QUANTITATIVE-BASED WORK

Level 6

Classification	% Range	Knowledge and Understanding	Problem Solving	Calculations	Analysis and Interpretation	Presentation of Work
I [Outstanding Work]	80 – 100	Comprehensive depth of knowledge and clear understanding of major and complex theories, principles and concepts	Very competent in both the identification and modelling of more complex problems	Techniques are appropriately and effectively used demonstrating innovation and creativity in formulating substantially correct solutions	Evidence of excellent analysis and interpretation of new or abstract data and in conclusions derived	Excellent, well directed presentation, logically structured
I [Excellent Work]	70 – 79	Comprehensive knowledge and clear understanding of major and complex theories, principles and concepts	Competent in both the identification and modelling of more complex problems	Applies appropriate techniques, and demonstrates innovation and creativity in formulating mainly correct solutions	Clear evidence of analysis and interpretation of new or abstract data and in conclusions derived	Well directed presentation, logically structured
II(i) [Good Quality Work]	60 – 69	Substantial knowledge and clear understanding of major theories, principles and concepts	Able to identify more complex problems and competent in the modelling of standard problems	Clear demonstration of the steps taken few errors in calculations using recognised methods to formulate solution	Evidence of analysis and interpretation of new and seen data in conclusions derived	Clearly presented, logically structured
II(ii) [Acceptable Work]	50 – 59	Evidence of knowledge and clear understanding of a range of theories, principles and concepts	Competent in the use of appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Able to demonstrate the steps taken, errors in calculations, may not always using recognised methods to formulate solution	Reasonable evidence of analysis and interpretation in evaluating outcomes and making judgements	Neat presentation and structure
III [Adequate Work]	40 – 49	Knowledge and understanding of key theories, principles and concepts limited or inconsistent	Able to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Steps taken in calculations lack clarity, calculations have numerous errors, recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	Limited use of analytical and interpretative skills	Weak presentation and structure
Fail (marginal) [Limited Work]	35 – 39	Very limited knowledge and understanding of key theories, principles and concepts	Limited ability to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Steps taken in calculations are incomplete or largely incorrect, recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	Little or no analysis and interpretation	Poor presentation and structure
Fail [Unacceptable Work]	0 – 34	Little or no evidence of knowledge and/or understanding of key theories, principles and concepts	Very limited ability to use appropriate techniques to identify and model standard problems	Steps taken in calculations are incomplete and incorrect, recognised methods not used or used incorrectly	No analysis or interpretation	Unacceptable presentation, and structure

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – QUANTITATIVE-BASED WORK

Level 7

Classification	% Range	Knowledge and Understanding	Problem Solving	Calculations	Analysis and Interpretation	Presentation of Work
Distinction	70 – 100	Systematic understanding of specialised and/or applied areas of theoretical or research based knowledge	Independent and professional in the approach taken to complex problem solving	Can use a large range of techniques appropriately and demonstrates innovation and creativity in complex and unpredictable situations	Very high level of competence in analysing and interpreting complex or incomplete data and in communicating the outcome	Excellent well directed presentation, logically structured
Commendation	60 – 69	Clear understanding of specialised or applied areas of theoretical or research based knowledge	Largely independent and professional in the approach taken to complex problem solving	Uses techniques effectively and demonstrates innovation and creativity in complex situations	Competent in analysing and interpreting complex or incomplete data and in communicating the outcome	Clearly presented, logically structured
Pass	50 – 59	Demonstrates understanding of specialised or applied areas of theoretical or research based knowledge	Reasonably competent in solving of complex problems	Uses techniques effectively and demonstrates some innovation or creativity in complex situations	Reasonably competent in analysing and interpreting complex or incomplete data and in communicating the outcome	Neat presentation and structure
Fail (marginal)	45 – 49	Limited understanding of specialised or applied areas of theoretical or research based knowledge	Solve complex problems only with some guidance or direction	Some errors in techniques used, work lacks innovation or creativity, reliance on routine procedures	Limited ability to analyse and/or interpret complex or incomplete data and in communicating the outcome	Weak presentation and structure
Fail	31 - 44	Very limited understanding of specialised or applied areas of theoretical or research based knowledge	Limited ability to solve complex problems	Many errors in techniques used, no innovation or creativity shown, reliance on routine procedures	Little or no analysis and interpretation of complex data, poor presentation of results	Poor presentation and structure
Fail	0 – 30	Has not grasped the theoretical or research base of the subject	Very limited ability to solve complex problems	Inability to use techniques, routine procedures have errors	No analysis or interpretation of complex data, poor or very poor presentation of results	Unacceptable presentation, and structure

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

Belfast/Jordanstown/Coleraine/Magee
(delete as appropriate)

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT FORM

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

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

⁺9   For courses, 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 Course/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 Course/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 course. 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 Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Student Experience) 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 course 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 MODERATION 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 COURSE OR SUBJECT AND MODULES
Please comment on whether the structure and content of the course/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 course/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 courses 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
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 course/subject 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
Please comment on whether the internal marking was conducted rigorously and impartially, with the schemes for marking and classification being consistently applied; 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 course/subject 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 course/subject 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 course/subject, 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 of the University of Ulster.

Signature: Date:

External examiner's report checklist

	Y	N	N/A

Programme materials

Did you receive:

a. Course/subject handbook(s)?

b. Programme regulations (these may be in the course/subject handbook)?

c. Module descriptions (these may be in the programme handbook)?

d. Assessment briefs/marking criteria?

Draft examination papers

a. (i) Did you receive all the draft papers?

   (ii) If not, was this at your request?

b. (i) Were the nature and level of the questions appropriate?

   (ii) If not, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?

c. Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?

Marking examination scripts

a. (i) Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts?

   (ii) If you did not receive all the scripts, was the method of selection satisfactory?

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

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

Dissertations/project reports

a. Was the choice of subjects for dissertations appropriate?

b. Were the method and standard of assessment appropriate?

Coursework/continuously assessed work

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

b. Were the method and general standard of marking and consistency 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 _____

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT FORM (SUBJECT NETWORK)

	Academic Session
1 Name of External Examiner	
2 Address	
3 Telephone Number **4 Email address**	
5 Title of course	
6 Course codes	
7 Names of Course Directors	
8 Number of External Examiners reporting on the course	
9 Partner Institutions	
10 Subject areas	

NOTE: HEADINGS 1 - 10 SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY THE FACULTY BEFORE THE FORM IS FORWARDED TO THE EXTERNAL EXAMINER. (HEADINGS 5 - 10 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/Guild HE 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 Course/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.

As you have responsibility for a subject network, for each section please provide a general comment, followed by a separate comment for each college/campus/location where you deem it appropriate to comment on specific instances of the provision.

Your report will be considered on behalf of the Senate in the first instance by the appropriate Course Committee 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 course.   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 Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Student Experience) 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 course 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 MODERATION 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.)

General comments:

Specific College/Campus/Location comments where appropriate:

_____

2   APPROPRIATENESS OF THE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE COURSE AND MODULES
Please comment on whether the structure and content of the course and its component modules are coherent and appropriate to the level of the qualification, the subject area, and the particular aims of the course. 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 courses 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?

General comments:

Specific College/Campus/Location comments where appropriate:

_____

3   ASSESSMENT
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 course; 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.

General comments:

Specific College/Campus/Location comments where appropriate:

_____

4   MARKING STANDARDS
Please comment on whether the internal marking was conducted rigorously and impartially, with the schemes for marking and classification being consistently applied; 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.

General comments:

Specific College/Campus/Location comments where appropriate:

_____

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 course. 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.

General comments:

Specific College/Campus/Location comments where appropriate:

_____

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.

General comments:

Specific College/Campus/Location comments where appropriate:

_____

7 COMPARABILITY WITH PROGRAMMES OF STUDY AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS
Based on your experience, please indicate whether you consider that the standards of the course 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.

General comments:

Specific College/Campus/Location comments where appropriate:

_____

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.

General comments:

Specific College/Campus/Location comments where appropriate:

_____

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 or through other means.

General comments:

Specific College/Campus/Location comments where appropriate:

_____

10 OTHER COMMENTS
Please indicate what you consider to be the best features of the course, 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 of the University of Ulster.

Signature: Date:

Academic Office
April 2021

[External examiner's report checklist – as page 70.]

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

CHIEF EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT FORM

Campus:	**Academic Session:**
Name of External Examiner:	
Name of Director of Combined Studies:	
Address:	

<u>**Guidance notes on completion of report form**</u> **(This form should only be used by the campus Chief External Examiner for undergraduate Honours provision or by the Chief External Examiner for the Certificate of Personal and Professional Development or the Postgraduate Certificate of Personal Development)**

You are asked to submit your report using this form to Professor Odette Hutchinson, Academic Quality and Student Experience, within one month of attending the meeting of the Progress and Award Board of Examiners.

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 case. Please indicate if any comments made in your previous report have not been adequately addressed. Your report need not be restricted to the areas specified, and you should feel free to comment in Section 6 on any other matters that you consider relevant. **Please distinguish between suggestions for consideration and recommendations for action.** 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 Campus Co-ordinating Group and you will receive a response to the substantive matters that you raise. Your report and the response will be considered subsequently by the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee. The membership of the Campus Co-ordinating Group includes the Subject Directors for the subjects contributing to the combined undergraduate Honours programme on the campus.

Your report in full will be made available to all Combined Honours students.

In addition, you may choose to submit a confidential report to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Student Experience) or the Vice-Chancellor.

<u>**Final report**</u>

At the end of your period of appointment as Chief External Examiner, it would be helpful if your final report would draw attention in Section 6 to any significant developments or changes in standards which you observed during your appointment, and include if appropriate any suggestions for modification.

A copy of your final report will be sent to your successor as Chief External Examiner.

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

1   YOUR ROLE
Please include comments on: the sufficiency of the information given concerning your role as Chief External Examiner; the usefulness of relevant documentation received (including award regulations) and the opportunities provided to enable you to discharge your responsibilities including attendance at and involvement in meetings of examiners.

_____

2   CONDUCT OF MEETING
Please comment on whether the Progress and Award Board was conducted rigorously and impartially, with the regulations for student progress, failure, and final classification being consistently and correctly applied.

_____

3   STANDARDS
Please comment on any issues to which you would wish to draw attention.   Please draw attention to any significant indicators relating to overall performance within subjects compared by strand (Major, Main, Minor) or between subjects.

_____

4   COMPARABILITY WITH PROGRAMMES OF STUDY AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS
Based on your experience, please indicate whether you consider that the standards of the awards and of student performance are comparable with those at other institutions.   Please include reference to the national qualifications framework.

_____

5   ADMINISTRATION OF THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS
Please comment on the procedures followed and the administrative arrangements and their effectiveness.

_____

6   OTHER COMMENTS
Please indicate what you consider to be the best features of the combined Honours scheme strengths and weaknesses. Add any other comments which you would wish to make including its 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 of the University of Ulster.
_____

Signature: Date:
_____

Academic Office
April 2021