
Senate Regulation 7: Regulations governing the assessment of taught programmes

7.1 These regulations apply to all taught programmes.

Internal examining

7.2 For each programme of study there will be a Head of School/Department responsible for the secure operation of assessment procedures and practices.

7.3 The internal examiners of the University are the members of the academic staff of the University. Other individuals may be approved for this purpose in relation to programmes delivered with collaborative partners on the authority of Senate under Ordinance 29.

7.4 Internal markers may include associate tutors, honorary lecturers, and postgraduate research students.

7.5 Marking shall be undertaken in accordance with agreed written criteria. All marking schemes and processes, regardless of format, should secure reliability and transparency through the use of assessment criteria, rubrics or marking grids to which all markers and students have access.

7.6 Outcomes for students shall be measured against the written criteria and not adjusted against a statistical distribution.

7.7 All summative assessment shall be subject to the same regulatory principles and procedures.

7.8 Student anonymity shall be preserved during the marking of all formal examinations. Summative coursework will be marked anonymously unless in the view of the department there are sound educational reasons for not doing so, for example to provide developmental feedback, or the type of assessment makes anonymous marking impractical. The marking processes for programmes of study will be reviewed through the annual and periodic review processes.

7.9 Boards of Examiners will have responsibility for the appropriateness of marking practices for the modules for which they carry responsibility and shall put in place explicit arrangements for the internal reconciliation of differences between internal markers against the written criteria.

7.10 All summative work which contributes towards the calculation of a student's degree classification shall be subject to a system of moderation by an internal examiner in one of the formats set out under (b) to (e) below. The University has adopted these definitions of marking practices:

- (a) **Single marking:** Work is marked by a single marker. This practice may only be adopted for work which does not contribute to a student's overall degree classification.
- (b) **Double marking:** two markers work to the same mark scheme. They may either (a) mark blind in parallel, or (b) the second marker reviews the reliability of the first marker's comments and gradings (rather than directly evaluating the students' work). An agreed mark must be reached for each piece of assessment. Double marking increases marking and feedback turnaround times, and should therefore only be used where close scrutiny of individual work is required; sampling or moderation should normally be sufficient. If there is an unresolved disagreement between the two markers, then another individual marker should be involved.
- (c) **Sampling:** work is marked by the first marker and a sample of work is seen by a second marker who blind marks (samples can be a random selection, a stratified random sample from different grade boundaries, borderline cases between grade boundaries, or other samples as appropriate). If there is an unresolved disagreement between the two markers, then another individual marker should be involved.
- (d) **Moderation:** work is marked by a first marker. A second marker receives a full set of marks of the work and a sample of work (samples selected as described above in sampling) against which to test the robustness of the marking. They do not directly evaluate the students' work.

- (e) **Blind marking:** work is provided to second markers or moderators as original copies without any grades or comments from the first marker.
 - (f) **Peer marking:** where summatively assessed, students who mark other students' work within a cohort should follow the same guidelines for first markers as described above. Second marking, sampling or moderation by internal examiners should be applied to ensure fairness and reliability.
 - (g) **Automated marking:** Work is marked automatically by electronic or other means (either through Blackboard or through some other approved system).
- 7.11 As part of its responsibility for ensuring the appropriateness of marking for modules for which it is responsible, a Board of Examiners shall take particular care to ensure that marking practices produce reliable outcomes in modules, such as a project or dissertation, where marking is divided between multiple markers.
- 7.12 Any first marking not undertaken by an internal examiner, such as first marking undertaken by an associate tutor, shall be subject to a system of moderation by an internal examiner.
- 7.13 Postgraduate research students, including Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA) and Graduate Research Assistants (GRA) may assist with teaching and assessment on programmes with the following restrictions:
- (a) they may not serve as members of Panels or Boards of Examiners;
 - (b) they may not act as sole markers of any piece of work which contributes to a final degree classification;
 - (c) responsibility for valid assessment outcomes rests entirely with the internal examiners.
- 7.14 Evidence must exist (and be retained for review purposes) which demonstrates that scrutiny of marking standards has taken place.
- 7.15 The full range of the marking scale and all marks on the scale may be used.
- 7.16 The marks of modules and their component assessments, as approved in the module specification, will be expressed to two decimal places, according to the rounding conventions of the University's central student record system. Credit Weighted Average (CWA) marks calculated from these marks will be published as integers, according to the rounding conventions of the University's central student record system, and progression and award classification decisions will be based on these published marks.
- 7.17 The University's Policy for the return of assessed work sets out the requirements for providing feedback to students.

External examining

- 7.18 External examiners are appointed to provide impartial and independent advice and informed comment on the University's standards and student achievement in relation to those standards.
- 7.19 There shall be at least one external examiner for each award-bearing programme, including for the award of credit. This shall include awards made with or through a partner institution. An external examiner may be appointed for several related programmes.
- 7.20 The number of external examiners for any particular programme shall be sufficient to cover the full range and complexity of the syllabus and the size of the student cohort.
- 7.21 For awards resulting from study both on campus and by distance learning, the external examining arrangements should be such to ensure that the Board of Examiners is able to make judgements about the comparability of standards across both cohorts.

Criteria for appointment

7.22 The University will apply the national criteria for the appointment of external examiners as set out in the relevant section of the QAA Quality Code; these are reproduced below in regulations 7.23-7.28.

7.23 Nominations for external examiners will demonstrate appropriate evidence of the following:

- (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) 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) meeting applicable criteria set 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.

7.24 Individuals in the following categories or circumstances will not be appointed as external examiners:

- (a) a member of the University's Council or of the governing body of a partner institution, 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 institution 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.

- 7.25 The duration of an external examiner's appointment will normally be for four years, with an exceptional extension of one year to ensure continuity.
- 7.26 An external examiner may be reappointed in exceptional circumstances but only after a period of five years or more has elapsed since the end of their last appointment.
- 7.27 External examiners normally hold no more than two external examiner appointments for taught programmes/modules at any point in time.
- 7.28 Retired staff can be considered if they provide sufficient evidence of continuing involvement in the academic area in question, and with current developments in higher education teaching, learning and assessment.

Appointment and briefing

- 7.29 External examiners shall be appointed by Senate following nomination by the Head of School/Department and a process of detailed scrutiny.
- 7.30 Each external examiner shall receive a letter of appointment setting out the period of appointment and the specific programmes/modules/awards for which s/he is responsible.
- 7.31 Briefing material in the following areas will be provided:
- (a) relevant institutional and programme regulations;
 - (b) the University's external examining and assessment regulations;
 - (c) school/department information such as student programme handbooks, examination papers, marking and classification criteria;
 - (d) a copy of the previous year's external examiner's report and the departmental response.
- 7.32 Additional briefing material will be provided to external examiners when changes to the University's regulations are approved by Senate.
- 7.33 The division of labour between departments and the Quality Office in providing briefing material to external examiners shall be clearly set out.
- 7.34 An external examiner may resign at any time but is required to give three months' notice in writing to the Quality Office.
- 7.35 An external examiner may be removed from office should s/he fail to meet the requirements of the role.
- 7.36 The name, position and institution of external examiners shall be provided in programme information to students. Students are not permitted to initiate direct contact with External Examiners.

Role and responsibilities

- 7.37 The University expects its external examiners to provide informative comment and recommendations upon whether or not:
- (a) the University is maintaining the threshold academic standards for its awards in accordance with the framework for higher education qualifications and relevant subject benchmark statements;
 - (b) the assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against intended outcomes of the programme(s) and is conducted in line with the University's policies and regulations;

- (c) the academic standards and the achievement of students are comparable with those in other higher education institutions of which the external examiners have experience.
- 7.38 An external examiner will also be asked to identify areas of good practice or opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students.
- 7.39 An external examiner will report on standards at both the module and award level.
- 7.40 The role of an external examiner is set out in paragraphs 7.37 and 7.38 above. They are, however, not involved in the assessment or examination of the work of individual students and are not therefore the final arbiter for the award of marks/grades either within a module or for the final award.
- 7.41 External examiners are invited to comment of the standard of marking against the written criteria but may not seek, or be invited, to raise or lower the marks assigned to individual students. They may, however, ask for marks to be revisited by the internal markers against the written criteria across a full cohort if they consider that there is sufficient evidence to support under- or over-marking, or if they have concerns about the robustness of marking.
- 7.42 External examiners shall be provided with sufficient evidence of intended assessment patterns and instruments to agree the appropriateness of the assessment strategy for the module.
- 7.43 External examiners shall consider samples of students' assessed work, together with the marks agreed by the internal markers.
- 7.44 An external examiner shall receive sufficient material to form a view as to whether the internal marking has properly assessed student performance against appropriate standards. Samples of work made available to the external examiner for a module should be sufficient to provide confidence in the standard of marking and the achievement of students, and should normally be 10% of the pieces of assessment and provide samples across the range of student achievement.
- 7.45 External examiners should be consulted about access to non-written assessment and attendance at any live assessment events.
- 7.46 An external examiner may be required to access student performance during assessed school experience, clinical or other work-placement, irrespective of location.
- 7.47 An external examiner shall be an equal member of a Board of Examiners and shall participate in the transaction of the Board's business.
- 7.48 An external examiner shall endorse, or not, the decisions of the Board of Examiners to indicate that s/he is satisfied with the conduct of the assessment process, rather than to signal agreement with every individual assessment decision.

Reporting and payment

- 7.49 Each external examiner shall provide an annual formal written report to the Vice-Chancellor at the end of each assessment cycle.
- 7.50 The format and content of external examiners' reports shall be determined by the University to ensure that reports are consistent with the core responsibilities of the external examiner.
- 7.51 Reports shall:
- (a) confirm whether the University is maintaining the threshold academic standards for its awards in accordance with the framework for higher education qualifications and relevant subject benchmark statements;
 - (b) confirm whether the assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against intended outcomes of the programme(s) and is conducted in line with the University's policies and regulations;

- (c) confirm whether the academic standards and the achievement of students are comparable with those in other higher education institutions of which the external examiners have experience;
 - (d) confirm whether sufficient evidence was received to enable the role to be fulfilled;
 - (e) state whether issues raised in previous reports have been appropriately addressed;
 - (f) address any issues specifically required by any relevant professional body;
 - (g) provide an overview at the end of the term of office.
- 7.52 External examiners' reports shall be made available in full to students, with the sole exception of any confidential report made directly to the Vice-Chancellor.
- 7.53 A school/department shall provide a detailed written response to each external examiner's report and make full use of the reports during annual monitoring activities.
- 7.54 Senate will receive from the Academic Policy Committee an annual digest of the comments made by external examiners for all taught programmes and will identify any areas for further action.
- 7.55 The University has the right to reject the view of an external examiner, but should only do so after careful consideration of the issues raised.
- 7.56 An external examiner has the right to raise matters of serious concern with the Vice-Chancellor in a confidential report.
- 7.57 Where an external examiner has a serious concern relating to the academic standards of a programme and has exhausted all published applicable internal procedures, including the submission of a confidential report to the Vice-Chancellor, s/he may invoke the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) Concerns Scheme.
- 7.58 Senate shall periodically agree a schedule of fees for external examiner responsibilities and this shall be applicable to all external examiners.
- 7.59 The annual fee will be paid on receipt of the written report from an external examiner.
- 7.60 The University shall reimburse the expenses incurred by an external examiner during the course of their duties.

PANELS AND BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

- 7.61 There shall be a standard formal agenda for meetings of Panels and Boards of Examiners. The business of Panels and Boards remains confidential to the membership.
- 7.62 Panels and Boards shall make decisions on the basis of evidence of student achievement.
- 7.63 Each Panel and each Board will normally be provided with a standard data set drawn from the SITS record. The data will include the outcomes of each module being considered by the Panel; and the profile of each student for whom a progression or award decision is to be made by the Board.
- 7.64 A Panel or a Board may defer a decision in relation to an individual student if insufficient information about the performance of the student is available. The Panel or Board may authorise the Chair to make a decision on its behalf, as soon as practically possible, once the relevant information becomes available. For Boards, this will include making recommendations for intermediate awards, where appropriate.

Panels of Examiners: Function

- 7.65 The function of a Panel of Examiners is to:

- (a) consider patterns of achievement for individual modules, and confirm that appropriate marking processes have taken place in line with the definitions given in para 7.10 above;
- (b) approve the award of re-assessment opportunities;
- (c) approve module outcomes for report to one or more Board of Examiners;
- (d) agree the release of provisional module outcomes to students, with the exception of midsummer marks on campus-based programmes, which shall only be released following the meeting of the Board of Examiners.

- 7.66 Panels of Examiners are directly responsible to the Boards of Examiners to which they contribute marks for the conduct of their business.
- 7.67 Module and component marks presented to a Panel of Examiners will have been carefully considered by the markers who will have made informed academic judgments such that the overall module outcomes fairly reflect the levels of attainment of the students. This should be done by carefully assessing the students' work against written criteria.
- 7.68 Scaling, or norm referencing, of module outcomes may take place only in exceptional circumstances or where this has previously been agreed by a Programme Approval Panel for the purposes of professional accreditation. Scaling should not be used, for example to adjust for variations in student achievement across modules or academic years. Any scaling shall be justified to the Panel of the Examiners and subsequently to the Board of Examiners.

Panels of Examiners: Composition

- 7.69 The Chair of a Panel of Examiners shall be appointed by the Head of School/Department.
- 7.70 The composition of a Panel of Examiners shall consist of the module convenor, or exceptionally a named deputy, for each of the modules included in the remit of the Panel.
- 7.71 The minimum requirement for attendance at the Panel of Examiners shall be the Chair and the convenor, or exceptionally a named deputy, for each of the modules under consideration. The Chair of the Panel is responsible for ensuring that each module is appropriately represented at the meeting.

Panels of Examiners: Schedule of meetings

- 7.72 A Panel of Examiners shall be convened for one or more modules. The frequency of Panel of Examiners' meetings will depend on the nature of the provision under consideration, but will be at least twice during the year in order to fit with the patterns of meetings of Boards of Examiners.
- 7.73 For campus-based modules the Panel will meet at the end of each semester block of teaching and assessment. For distance learning modules and, where appropriate, some taught postgraduate provision, the timing of the Panel meetings will take into account the patterns of teaching across the programme. Where programmes operate linear progression criteria the number of required meetings of a Panel of Examiners may be reduced by authorising the Chair of the Panel to undertake the function of the Panel to approve the award of re-assessment opportunities, on the recommendation of the programme leader.
- 7.74 A separate Panel of Examiners shall not be convened in the September re-assessment period unless, in the judgement of the Chair of the Board of Examiners, there is a significant number of re-assessment outcomes under consideration, for which a separate analysis of patterns of student achievement could be usefully undertaken. Where a Panel is not held, the consideration of marking and moderation practice shall be undertaken by the Board of Examiners.
- 7.75 Once module marks have been confirmed by a Panel of Examiners they may not be adjusted for individual students.

Boards of Examiners: Function

- 7.76 A Board of Examiners shall be convened for each programme, or set of programmes, to consider the performance of students which contributes to an award of the University, including the award of credit.
- 7.77 Boards of Examiners are directly responsible to Senate for the conduct of their business.
- 7.78 The function of a Board of Examiners is to:
- (a) confirm the module outcomes received from one or more Panels of Examiners;
 - (b) consider the academic performance of individual students as it relates to progression or award decisions;
 - (c) agree progression from one stage of a programme to another;
 - (d) agree awards and their classification.
- 7.79 All members of the Board are equal; no particular weight shall be given to the views of the external examiner(s). An external examiner has no veto in relation to decisions in relation to individual students. If a vote in any particular case is necessary, the Chair shall have the casting vote.
- 7.80 Boards of Examiners shall not adjust marks.
- 7.81 A Board of Examiners shall convene a Mitigating Circumstances Panel which will be responsible for the consideration of mitigating circumstances for individual students (see para 7.98 onwards).
- 7.82 The Board may determine the winners of departmental prizes, and nominate students for consideration for the award of College or University prizes.

Boards of Examiners: Composition

- 7.83 A Board of Examiners shall consist of the following members:
- (a) the Chair, which shall be a senior member of the academic staff of the department, appointed by the Head of School/Department, who is on the University's Register of Approved Chairs having completed University Examination Board chair training within the last three years;
 - (b) normally two members of each Panel of Examiners contributing module outcomes to the Board, one of whom shall normally be the Chair of the Panel;
 - (c) the Programme Leader or Chair of the Board of Study or equivalent for each programme to be considered by the Board;
 - (d) for boards where awards are being made, external examiners for each of the subjects or groups of subjects included in the remit of the Board;
 - (e) such other members of the academic staff nominated by the Head of School/Department, as are necessary to make informed progression and award decisions.

The following shall also be in attendance at a meeting of the Board of Examiners:

- (f) A representative of the Academic Registrar, normally a senior member of the administrative staff of the University, shall attend each meeting of a Board of Examiners where awards to students are under consideration to ensure that the proceedings of the Board are carried out in accordance with the regulations. The business of the Board may not be transacted in the absence of the Academic Registrar's Representative (ARR);
- (g) a Secretary to the Board, provided by the department, who shall take notes which shall include an account of any discussion in relation to difficult cases.

- 7.84 The minimum requirement for attendance at Board of Examiners shall be 75% of the members named under (a), (b), (c) and (d) above and must include the Chair. Where a board is meeting to consider progression only external examiners described under (d) are excluded from this requirement.
- 7.85 The members of a Board of Examiners shall be agreed annually.
- 7.86 The University expects that all relevant External Examiners for the programmes under consideration shall be present at a meeting of a Board of Examiners, either in person or via a means of electronic conferencing (e.g. Skype), where awards are being made to students. On occasions when the Board of Examiners is expecting to consider progression decisions only, external examiners are not required to attend.
- 7.87 Exceptionally, when unable to attend a meeting of the Board of Examiners, an individual external examiner shall be required to submit written comments on the outcomes of modules, and the performance of candidates so that these views may be taken into account during the meeting.

Boards of Examiners: Schedule of meetings

- 7.88 A Board of Examiners shall normally meet at the end of each level of the programme. For undergraduate campus-based students this will be at the end of the academic year in June and again following the re-assessment period in September; for taught postgraduate students this will be at the end of the taught component and again at the end of the programme; for distance learning programmes, this will be twice a year, in June and November, to ensure that students are able to attend graduation ceremonies.
- 7.89 All recommendations for an award shall be recorded by the Secretary to the Board; this shall constitute the definitive record against which results are entered into the SITS student record and notified to students, and shall be held by the Registry, according to the University's retention schedule.
- 7.90 The Secretary to the Board shall ensure that the lists of recommended awards are signed by the Chair and those external examiners present at the meeting.

Late submission of coursework

- 7.91 Students are expected to submit work by published deadlines, with the exception of where there is accepted evidence of mitigating circumstances.
- 7.92 Where a student experiences a sudden illness or other serious and unforeseen event or set of circumstances which causes them to miss a deadline for assessed work they should report this to their department using the Mitigating Circumstances Form. Where the effect of the mitigating circumstances is such that it is unclear when the student might be able to submit the course work s/he should be advised to submit the work as soon as possible and that the regulations concerning mitigating circumstances as set out from paragraph 7.97 below will be applied to ensure that there is no penalty for the late submission.
- 7.93 Mitigating Circumstances Panels are allowed to set a revised submission date where it is possible to do so on the basis of the evidence provided. Where there are exceptional and urgent circumstances the Chair of the Mitigating Circumstances Panel is authorised to set this revised submission date. This will be reported to the Mitigating Circumstances Panel at its next meeting. If a student fails to submit by the revised date then penalties for late submission shall be applied in line with para 7.95, unless further accepted mitigation has been submitted.
- 7.94 Departments should consider late submissions of coursework on an ongoing basis so that where mitigation is submitted after the deadline students can receive prompt decisions as to whether their mitigating circumstances have merited no penalty for the late submission. Similarly, if mitigating circumstances cause an assessment to be missed entirely, students should receive prompt decisions as to whether the non-participation in that assessment can be excused or an alternative assessment provided.

- 7.95 In cases where there are no accepted mitigating circumstances, late submission of coursework shall lead automatically to the imposition of a penalty. Penalties shall be applied as soon as the deadline is reached. The University's penalty scheme is as follows:
- (a) a deduction of 10% of the maximum mark available from the actual mark achieved by the student shall be imposed upon expiry of the deadline;
 - (b) a further deduction of 5% of the maximum mark available from the actual mark achieved by the student shall then be imposed on each of the next subsequent working days;
 - (c) The subsequent 24 hour periods described under (b) above shall apply from the expiry of the initial deadline. For example, where a deadline is 14:00 on Wednesday, a 10% penalty shall be deducted at 14:01 on Wednesday, and a subsequent 5% shall be deducted at 14:01 on Thursday;
 - (d) Under (a) and (b) above penalties shall be applied until the pass mark for the assessment has been reached (40% for undergraduate work and 50% for postgraduate work), after which point no further penalties shall be applied unless the work is deemed to be a non-submission (see (e) and (f) below);
 - (e) for undergraduate programmes: any piece of work submitted 11 or more working days after the expiry of the deadline will not be marked but will be assigned a mark of zero and deemed to be a non submission;
 - (f) for postgraduate programmes: any piece of work submitted 9 or more working days after the expiry of the deadline will not be marked but will be assigned a mark of zero and deemed to be a non submission;
 - (g) 'available marks' in this context means the maximum marks available for the piece of work (for example, 100 would be the available mark in a percentage marking scheme);
 - (h) 'working day' in this context means a period of twenty four hours or part thereof from Monday to Friday inclusive, excluding public holidays and University closure days.
- 7.96 Where required for practical reasons the range and timing of penalties for the non-completion of certain forms of assessment such as presentations may be determined by departments in the light of local circumstances, but should be applied according to agreed procedures. In cases where the turnaround time for marking is less than ten days, departments are also authorised to introduce appropriate variations to the scheme set out above.

Mitigating circumstances

- 7.97 The University recognises that students may suffer from a sudden illness or other serious and unforeseen event or set of circumstances which adversely affects their ability to complete an assessment or the results they obtain for an assessment. In such cases the mitigating circumstances regulations and procedures may be applied. These regulations are designed to ensure the fair and consistent treatment of all students.
- 7.98 The University defines mitigating circumstances as follows. A mitigating circumstance is a serious or significant event which is unforeseen and/or unpreventable and could have significantly impaired the academic performance of a student in one or more assessed activities, possibly over a period of time. Mitigating circumstances may include medical matters or events directly affecting someone other than the student.
- 7.99 Departments must ensure that the University's regulations on mitigating circumstances procedures are published in course handbooks along with relevant deadlines for the submission of documentary evidence in advance of Boards of Examiners. The deadline will be normally not later than five working days after the assessment deadline to which it relates.

- 7.100 The University requires that students keep their department(s) informed at all times of any personal circumstances that may impact upon their ability to study or undertake assessments. Students are responsible for ensuring that their department(s) are notified of any mitigating circumstances at the time they occur and for supplying supporting documentation as soon as possible, and no later than any published deadline.
- 7.101 If students are unable to attend an examination or other assessment event because of mitigating circumstances they must inform their department through completion of a mitigating circumstances form, including evidence, within five working days or by the published deadline, whichever is sooner. If a student is initially unable to provide evidence they are required to submit the mitigating circumstances form within the abovementioned time period. The Department will then set a deadline for receipt of the required evidence.
- 7.102 Where a programme utilises multiple small scale assessments such as laboratories or regular class tests, departments may allow students to self-certify for absence or non-submission of such assessments on a limited basis, before application of the process outlined under para 7.101. Multiple absences or non-submission on the basis of mitigating circumstances will however be considered under the processes outlined above and require the submission of evidence.
- 7.103 Evidence submitted in support of a claim for mitigating circumstances should be in English. Where the original is in another language students are responsible for ensuring that it is submitted with a verified translation. Medical evidence submitted in support of a claim for mitigating circumstances should be provided by a qualified medical practitioner.
- 7.104 The University reserves the right to verify the authenticity of any evidence submitted.
- 7.105 Failure to divulge information and provide evidence at the appropriate time or the inability of the University to verify documentary evidence may mean that there is insufficient evidence for mitigating circumstances to be taken into account.
- 7.106 Boards of Examiners will establish a Mitigating Circumstances Panel to consider submissions. Membership of Panels will be determined by Heads of Department and will be drawn from the internal examiners. Up to five members of the internal examining staff may be members of the Mitigating Circumstances Panel, from which three members shall be required to be present for a Panel meeting to take place. Panel meetings may take place virtually or by correspondence where there is a need for swift decision making. The membership will normally include the Chair of the Panel of Examiners and the person responsible for processing mitigating circumstances claims.
- 7.107 Mitigating circumstances panels will meet throughout the academic year. The frequency of meetings shall be determined according to the provision within each individual department, with a view to ensuring that students will receive the outcome of their mitigating circumstances submission in a timely fashion. Mitigating Circumstances Panels will consider cases on the basis of documentary evidence and will operate under delegated powers from the Board of Examiners.
- 7.108 Mitigating circumstances panels will be responsible for determining whether sufficient grounds have been established and for making recommendations to Panels of Examiners on whether mitigation should be applied to the outcomes of specific pieces of students' assessment. Mitigating Circumstances Panels will do so without evidence of the student's performance at module level.
- 7.109 Departments shall keep a formal record of the discussions and recommendations of Mitigating Circumstances Panels.
- 7.110 Panels of Examiners will accept the recommendations of Mitigating Circumstances Panels but will not be expected to receive evidence. Panels of Examiners will determine the outcome of a module for an individual student in the light of the Mitigating Circumstances Panel's recommendation.
- 7.111 Where mitigating circumstances are accepted by a Mitigating Circumstances Panel, it shall not make a judgement about the extent to which accepted mitigating circumstances have affected a student's

performance; marks will not be adjusted and there will be no tariff. Mitigating Circumstances Panels make one of the following recommendations to the Panel of Examiners for each individual assessment:

- (a) In the event an assessment has not been undertaken or has been failed, provide a student with the opportunity to take the affected assessment(s) as if the first time i.e. a 'sit' or 'submit', allowing them to be given the full marks achieved for the examination or assessment, rather than imposing a cap;
- (b) waive late submission penalties;
- (c) in the event an assessment is outstanding or failed, determine that there is sufficient evidence of the achievement of the intended learning outcomes from other pieces of assessment in the module(s) for an overall mark to be derived;
- (d) note the accepted mitigation for the module(s) and recommend that the Board of Examiners takes this into account when considering borderline or near borderline cases at the point of award and classification.

7.112 Where it is not possible to replicate the original assessment, exercise discretion and flexibility to make the reassessment different from the original assessment type whilst ensuring that all intended learning outcomes of the module are still achieved.

7.113 The module marks released following the meeting of the Panel of Examiners should clearly identify results where mitigation has been considered and applied.

Disability and long-term conditions

7.114 The University will make reasonable adjustments to assessment arrangements for students who have notified it of long-term medical conditions or disability. Where there is a marked deterioration in a pre-existing condition that a student believes has or will have an impact on a piece of assessment, this should be notified using the mitigating circumstances procedures set out above.

7.115 Students with long-term medical conditions, specific learning difficulties and disabilities should seek support from the AccessAbility Centre to ensure that any reasonable adjustments may be made to assessment arrangements, which may include agreement of a personalised work schedule. Recommendations for adjustments will be informed by a report from an external assessor, such as an Educational Psychologist.

7.116 Any such reasonable adjustments will be subject to the overall requirement that academic standards must be maintained.

7.117 For time-constrained summative assessment one or more of the following examples of adjustments may be appropriate:

- (a) additional time, usually an additional 15 minutes per hour;
- (b) breaks during the examination;
- (c) provision of an amanuensis;
- (d) provision of word processing facilities;
- (e) provision of Braille papers;
- (f) provision of a separate examination room.

7.118 For other forms of assessment, support is available from the AccessAbility Centre throughout the academic year to assist students in preparing for and completing assessment activities to published deadlines.

7.119 Any reasonable adjustments will be made up to the point of assessment. Coversheets for assessed work will be utilised for the purpose of providing appropriate feedback in the light of a student's disability or condition.

Publication of results

7.120 For distance learning programmes and for semester one of campus-based programmes, provisional module marks shall be published online, from the SITS record after they have been approved for release by the Panel of Examiners. For campus-based programmes, semester two provisional marks will not be released following the Panel meeting and shall be published online, from the SITS record, once approved for release by the Board of Examiners.

7.121 The Secretary to the Board shall, in liaison with the Registry, ensure that recommendations for awards are entered onto the SITS record immediately following the meeting of the Board of Examiners. These awards shall normally be published online by the Registry to students within two working days. The date of the Board of Examiners' meeting shall be the award date for the student.

7.122 Module and award results will not be released to those students in debt to the University.

Conferral and certification of awards

7.123 The conferral of an award shall take place either at a Degree Congregation held in January or July, or at a meeting of the Senate. Students will normally be expected to have their degree conferred at the Degree Congregation soonest after their award date.

7.124 Certificates shall be produced and dispatched to graduates following each conferral.

7.125 Those students for whom conferral takes place at a meeting of the Senate shall also be invited to attend the next Degree Congregation.

7.126 A summative Higher Education Achievement Report will be produced for undergraduate graduating students.