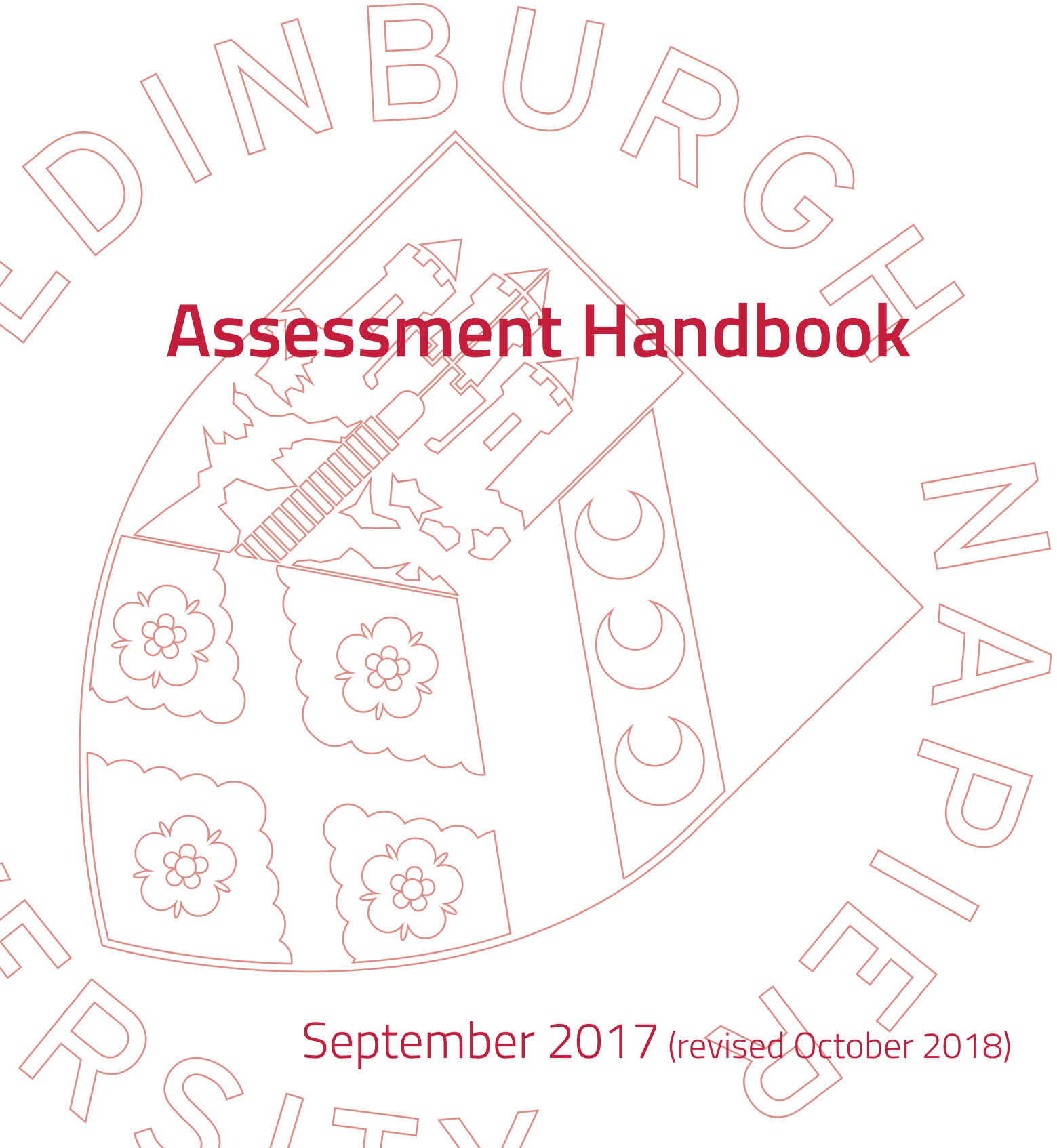
Edinburgh Napier
UNIVERSITY

Assessment Handbook



September 2017 (revised October 2018)

Contents

Introduction

This *Assessment Handbook* is designed to serve as a working document comprising guidance on good practice in respect of assessment, codes of practice, and links to key data such as the University Regulations. It should be read in conjunction with the *Assessment and Feedback Design Guidelines* available at http://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/dlte/resources/Pages/assessment.aspx. This document is now only available online from the Department of Learning and Teaching Enhancement.

The document is structured as follows:

Section 1: Principles of assessment provides a general overview of assessment and looks at a set of conditions underpinning our assessment practices at Edinburgh Napier University.

Section 2: Assessment design and setting looks at different types of assessments that we can use with our students and is linked to Appendix A: Code of Practice for Assessment Setting.

Section 3: Implementing and marking assessment focuses on anonymous assessment (see Appendix D: Code of Practice on Anonymous Assessment); granting extensions for coursework and penalties for late submission; reassessment; academic integrity and plagiarism at Edinburgh Napier University; and penalties for academic misconduct. Linkages to relevant University Regulations and Codes or Practice are also signposted.

Section 4: Assessment of students with disabilities, long term health conditions or specific learning differences examines three distinct approaches: contingent, alternative and inclusive. The inclusive approach is advocated.

Section 5: Code of Practice Appendices points to information relating to the conduct of Boards of Examiners and provides a list of sources including: Appendix G: Code for the Conduct of Boards of Examiners, Appendix E: Code of Practice on the Moderation of Marks and Grades, Appendix F: Code of Practice on the Scaling of Marks and Grades and the current University Academic Regulations.

Suggested verbs and phrases for writing SCQF learning outcomes may be found in Appendix B and the University's assessment brief pro forma is in Appendix C. Codes of Practice for Effective Group, Peer and Self-Assessment may be found in Appendices H (i), H (ii) and H (iii) respectively.

Section 1: Principles of assessment

Overview

Assessment at Edinburgh Napier University is underpinned by six principles:

1. Promotion of learning (assessment should promote as well as measure learning)
2. Programme coherence (assessments should encourage the gradual and planned development of skills and attributes)
3. Clarity (assessments should be clear in their requirements, procedures and rationales)
4. Inclusivity (assessment must not unfairly prejudice the chances of students with diverse backgrounds and needs)
5. Validity (assessments should test and measure what they state they do – the learning outcomes – rather than some proxy or un-written alternative, such as recall)
6. Reliability (summative assessments must provide information that can be benchmarked and compared with public standards and has some degree of repeatability).

These principles of assessment are in alignment with Edinburgh Napier University's regulatory principles (in particular Section A2.3, on assessment), the *Academic Strategy 2020* (2015) and the QAA UK Quality Code Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning (2013). These principles of assessment are approved by the University's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee.

Promotion of learning

- The design and development of curricula, learning and teaching methods, and modes of assessment are fully aligned, to promote student learning and evaluate learning outcomes.
- All modules incorporate formative assessment wherever possible, with the primary purposes of developing and consolidating knowledge, understanding, skills and competencies and providing students with constructive and timely feedback (or rather feedforward that informs subsequent summative assessments).
- While summative assessments have the primary task of fairly and reliably evaluating knowledge and skills, they also act as a prime driver of student behaviour. Hence they are carefully designed to maximise deep learning, rather than mere recall or strategic approaches to learning.

Programme coherence

- Modules, and levels of study, complement each other, with the learning from assessments and feedback in each designed to accompany other assessment and feedback in the programme.
- Assessment and feedback builds on previous experiences, looking for deliberate pathways by which students have the chance to experience key assessment types and carry forward the feedback from them to use in similar but increasingly sophisticated or demanding contexts.

Clarity

- An assessment brief is published for each summative assessment task. Appendix C: Assessment Brief Pro forma is underpinned by Appendix A: Code of Practice for Assessment Setting and stipulated in the University's Regulations Section A3.1. This is written and disseminated to students and staff to provide clarity regarding the criteria by which students will be assessed, its size/time limit, weighting, and arrangements and dates for submission and return.
- Published module marking/grading criteria are applied to all summative assessments.
- Approved module descriptors include a clear statement of the type(s) of assessment required and their alignment with learning outcomes.
- The timings and the types of assessment and feedback are communicated clearly, in programme and module assessment maps, and the rationale for designing our assessment and feedback is articulated in programme handbooks.

Inclusivity

- The conduct of summative assessment is subject to procedures and approaches which safeguard against dishonest or illegitimate practices.
- Across their programme of study, students have the opportunity to engage in diverse assessments that maintain academic standards and recognise differing learning and communication styles.
- Assessment arrangements may be varied to provide an inclusive curriculum to meet the needs of individual students, for instance students with a disability.
- Anonymous marking/grading of all examinations and the principles of anonymity in assessment are applied wherever appropriate in accordance with Appendix D: Code of Practice on Anonymous Assessment.
- To ensure parity and fairness among different markers, elements of questions, student cohorts and different bands, moderation takes place in accordance with Appendix E: Code of Practice on the Moderation of Marks and Grades.

Validity

- In order to ensure validity, module and programme approval processes ensure that curriculum design aligns assessment to module learning outcomes.
- Assessments are judged according to published marking/grading criteria that are an expression of all or some of the module learning outcomes and cross-refer to relevant level descriptors.
- The validity of the assessment system is subject to University-wide quality assurance procedures, including peer support and review; a key element is the external examiner system.

Reliability

- Assessment is predicated on the academic judgement of professional staff supported by appropriate professional development activity.
- Academic judgement is reached through the systematic application of assessment criteria, grade and level descriptors.
- Assessment is subject to the process of internal moderation of marks, independent scrutiny of assessment processes by external examiners, and cross-institutional analysis of assessment outcomes.

Section 2: Assessment design and setting

Criteria of good assessment

There is general agreement that any sound scheme of assessment should satisfy five criteria. Assessment should be:

- valid
- reliable
- practical and cost-effective
- fair
- useful.

Validity

An assessment procedure can be said to be valid when it measures what it is supposed to be measuring. A valid assessment should assess what has actually been covered in the curriculum – what the students have actually done. A common failure of validity involves setting high-level learning outcomes (such as ‘evaluate’ or ‘criticise’) but then testing these in ways that can be achieved with simple recall.

To improve validity:

- choose assessment methods that are appropriately matched to the learning outcomes being tested; for example, if you want to test for understanding you need to require students to demonstrate it, rather than testing them simply on memorisation
- carefully map the assessment requirements onto the module learning outcomes, content and teaching methods
- use a range of different assessment methods
- establish effective supervision measures and security precautions, to guard against cheating.

Reliability

Even though an assessment is valid, it may not be reliable. Reliability refers to consistency of measurement – the extent to which a particular question or examination will produce consistent results under different but comparable conditions.

Assessor reliability – where the assessment is being marked or graded by a range of markers. To avoid unreliability, it is vital to have a system of moderation to monitor any disparities.

To improve reliability:

- check that all questions are clearly phrased and pitched at the right level for the student group
- check that time restrictions are realistic and fair
- make sure that any assessment instructions are as simple, clear and as unambiguous as possible
- take time to produce a well-constructed marking scheme which has been agreed with colleagues and has explicit criteria
- organise a marking standardising workshop with colleagues where you can try assessing the same papers and comparing judgements
- keep the choice of questions within a paper to a minimum
- if using less reliable assessment methods, increase the number of questions and allow candidates more examination time.

Practicality and cost-effectiveness

To achieve total reliability is very difficult in practice. Increasing reliability and validity often requires the expenditure of staff time which can be both expensive and in short supply.

To ensure practicality and cost-effectiveness:

- estimate the staff time required to implement the assessment scheme (is it affordable?)
- check whether all resources are available
- check that all members of the assessment team have the skills necessary to administer, mark and grade the assessment
- check that you are in a position to interpret the results accurately.

Fairness

To be fair to all students, an assessment must accurately reflect the range of expected behaviours as described by the module outcomes. Students should know exactly how they will be assessed. As per Appendix A: Code of Practice for Assessment Setting, an assessment brief should provide the information about each assessment task they are expected to undertake (see Appendix C: Assessment Brief Pro Forma).

To improve fairness:

- choose assessment methods that are appropriately matched to the learning outcomes
- explain to students how they are to be assessed
- be open with students about the content to be covered
- be open with students about the marking criteria.

Usefulness

Students should find assessment useful in that it contributes to the effectiveness of the learning process. It should do this in two different ways; by getting students to carry out tasks that facilitate learning (revising materials covered in lectures, writing essays, carrying out problem-solving assignments and so on) and by providing them with feedback on how they are progressing, thus helping them to identify their strengths and weaknesses.

To improve usefulness:

- think of assessment as an integral part of the learning process
- use authentic assessment approaches as much as possible – those that mirror the skills and attributes needed in the workplace or in broader life. Mueller (2008) defines authentic assessment as a form of assessment in which students are asked to perform real-world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills
- maintain and explain the standards required
- meet the turnaround targets that are set in the student charter and other documents
- give feedback to students on their strengths and weaknesses.

Formative assessment

Formative assessment should be designed into your module to facilitate the provision of feedback to students on how they are progressing and providing constructive guidance to inform their development. Building in formative assessment early into your module is a valuable way of promoting timely engagement with learning materials and signalling areas requiring further development. If you expend effort on feedback on formative tasks, rather than summative ones, then this feedback can become *feedforward*, directly informing subsequent assessments.

Definition

Whilst there are many approaches to – and definitions of – formative assessment we use the following definition to help ensure clear understanding and consistency across the University:

> *Explicit and planned activities that feature throughout a programme, usually within a module, and are designed for all students studying it. Formative assessment is not credit-bearing. Its purpose is to provide high-quality feedback to students on their current knowledge and skills so that these can be developed and demonstrated in subsequent summative assessments.*

Summative assessment

Summative assessment is the use of assessment to measure the level of achievement that a student has reached at a given point in time, such as the end of a particular module. It is used to explicitly measure the achievement of learning outcomes.

Planning module assessment

Consider the student experience of assessment across a trimester, year and programme; take a programme-focused approach to assessment design. It's important to plan for diversity in assessment methods used as this gives the student increased opportunity to demonstrate their particular skills. See *Selecting Methods of Assessment* (Oxford Brookes University, undated) for ideas, available at https://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocsld/resources/methods.html

Consider the module learning outcomes and the variety of methods available to you along with their relative advantages and disadvantages.

Consider the timing of assessments across the trimester – use assessment mapping to avoid bunching of assessments with the same deadline.

Consider how your module assessment aligns with the Programme Assessment Strategy and your school ethos for learning, teaching and assessment.

Take time-zone differences and cultural holidays into account when setting assessment submission deadlines.

The following table, taken from the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2007) offers some suggestions for the types of assessment which align with a variety of learning outcomes and which could be considered in the design of assessment.

Choosing assessments to align with learning outcomes and the development of employability/graduate skills

Emerging opportunities for students	Examples of assignments and assessment
To learn how to communicate information and ideas other than the written word, by presenting their work orally or in mixed-media form, in front of a 'live' audience of their tutor and fellow students.	Seminar, poster, video, video conferencing or other multimedia presentations.
To develop a 'sense of audience', by gaining practice in how to communicate information and ideas to individuals and groups beyond their lecturers, tutors or fellow students.	Talks to school pupils learning the same subject; a report to a community on a project or initiative; a guide for the public; letter of advice to...(about policy; public health matters…); prepare a briefing paper.
To gain experience of working on set questions and problems under pressure, but with more time to reflect or to consult notes and other resources, and/or less reliance on memory than under traditional exam conditions.	Take-home exams; open-book tests or exams; seen questions; taken-when-ready tests.
To learn how to prepare for, plan, implement, analyse and report on a substantial inquiry, experiment, survey or investigation which pushes at the boundaries of their understanding within a subject area or discipline.	Major and extended projects or dissertations.
To review in a systematic way how effectively they have learned, and so identify and remedy strengths, gaps and misconceptions in their knowledge and understanding.	Computer-based self-testing using multiple-choice questions and other forms of online tests; self-assessment.
To acquire expertise in carrying out everyday academic/study tasks, in the use of applications of information and communications technology (ICT) which have become well-established in professional, commercial and industrial workplaces.	Spreadsheets; bibliographic and other databases; slide and poster design software; project planning; web design; online surveys.
To become more accomplished at systematically documenting (and reviewing what can be learnt from) observations, experiences, reflections and insights when engaged in an ongoing task or activity.	Project, fieldwork, placement, studio or laboratory diaries; annotated bibliography; learning agreement; reflective logs/journals; portfolios; workbooks.
To develop skills in the progressive interchange, debate, reformulation and refinement of information and ideas online.	Contributions to a web/bulletin board or online forum, and comments on/responses to others' contributions.

Emerging opportunities for students	Examples of assignments and assessment
To become more adept within a subject area at writing in different forms, formats and 'genres', and mastering the distinctive requirements and conventions associated with these.	Designs or proposals; book reviews; case reports or case studies; web pages; journal articles; newspaper/ magazine/newsletter articles; produce an A–Z of…
To take a more active role in an aspect of assessment, and so enhance their capacity to review and apply criteria for assessment, to judge the quality of their own and others' work, to give constructive feedback, and to reflect on how that work might be improved in consequence.	Peer feedback on assignments; self-evaluation of a presentation; peer-generated criteria on a community project; peer-marked laboratory reports.
To gain a better grasp of the benefits and challenges of working collaboratively and co-operatively, while also gaining insights into how others tackle questions, define problems, organise tasks or communicate ideas.	Group problem-solving; joint book reviews; team presentations; role-plays; collaborative projects and exhibitions.
To learn how to review, reorganise, polish and enhance ongoing work in response to periodic feedback from others (eg lecturers, tutors, student peers, experienced professionals, a sample audience).	Ongoing designs, proposals or plans; draft-and-revise assignments; dissertation chapters; patchwork texts.
To develop interpersonal skills and may also develop oral skills and research skills (if combined, for example, with a project).	Group assessment.

Sources: Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2007); Miller (undated b)

Assessment workload

The assessment load, and the effort required from students to complete that load successfully, should be broadly equivalent across modules which have the same credit value. This does not mean all assessments are the same, but that students are not having to sacrifice work in one module to compensate for excessive assessment in another. Using assessment quantity benchmarks and ensuring regular peer review of assessment types and loads can help achieve this broad consistency.

Assessment quantity benchmarks are simply that – benchmarks. They have no reality or substance outside a process in which a module planner asks the question: *in setting the assessment load for this module, is the general effort required by the student to complete its assessment approximately equivalent to that which – in my professional experience – I know would be required by the assessment quantity benchmarks?* For this reason, some standard and probably familiar assessment methods are used to set the benchmark: written coursework and formal examination. Note, however, that these assessment types

are often inappropriate; the benchmark and guidance here are intended to help ensure equivalence of effort between disciplines and modules, not to ensure consistency in the types of assessments used.

In setting the assessment load for a 20-credit module, staff should compare it to the following quantity benchmarks: about 4000 words of coursework or a two and a half hour examination (adapted from Edinburgh Napier University, May 2007). Please note that the purpose of these benchmarks is to help programme and module teams in discussions of appropriate assessment workload to ensure broad consistency; they are *not* intended as prescriptive.

The following tables, benchmarked against two other higher education institutions, are presented for staff wishing more detailed assessment quantity benchmarks, particularly in relation to different volumes of weighting of assessment.

Coursework

	Assessment weighting	**Suggested upper limit**
20-credit module	100%	4000 words
20-credit module	70%	3000 words
20-credit module	50% or below	2000 words

Formal examination

	Assessment weighting	**Suggested upper limit**
20-credit module	100%	2.5 hours
20-credit module	70%	2 hours
20-credit module	50% or below	1 hours

Assessment feedback: Marks and grades

Edinburgh Napier University's Student Charter states the commitment to provision of assessment feedback within three working weeks. It is permissible to give marks or grades as well as comments at this time, though it is vital that students are made aware that, in the case of summative assessment, these are unratified marks and grades and they are only confirmed at the meeting of the Module Board of Examiners. This may be done by annotating all feedback that includes marks or grades with a standard statement on their unratified nature, and staff and students should be aware that the Module Board has the power to raise or lower marks or grades *for the whole cohort only* (ie not for individual students), and that this may happen for a number of reasons (see Appendix F: Code of Practice on the Scaling of Marks and Grades). It may be helpful to include statements relating to marks in programme and module handbooks.

Providing marks and grades, in addition to more extensive feedback, may be helpful even for formative assessment in that it clearly indicates to what extent the student's work has met the required standard. Without that the student may not be sure how well he or she has done, even if the work is annotated with genuinely helpful comments.

If moderation of marking is done in accordance with Appendix E: Code of Practice on the Moderation of Marks and Grades, then there is less chance of a set of marks being inappropriate and subject to change at the Module Board.

Ratified module marks are released after the Module Board and before the Programme of Examiners and that can cause difficulties in that anxious students consult module or programme leaders about reassessments before their status is fully decided. For example, a Programme Board may compensate a failed module, or accept mitigating circumstances, so staff and student must wait until the Programme Board results are available before discussing reassessment requirements.

The Code of Practice for Assessment Setting

Appendix A: Code of Practice for Assessment Settings is essential in order to achieve acceptable standards of quality and consistency for student.

Section 3: Implementing and marking assessment

Overview

This section contains information relating to:

- Extensions for coursework
- Reassessment
- Academic integrity and plagiarism at Edinburgh Napier University
- Penalties for academic misconduct.

Reassessment is discussed within the University's Academic Regulations (see in particular Section A7).

Academic misconduct is discussed within the Student Disciplinary & Fitness to Practise Regulations, available from the current Edinburgh Napier University Academic Regulations at http://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/dlte/Regulations/Pages/Regulations.aspx

Extensions for coursework

If students experience problems with summative coursework that can be resolved with a little more time then they can apply to module leaders for extensions of up to 10 days. See the Fit to Sit – Extenuating Circumstance.

Reassessment

Underpinning principles and regulations

Undergraduate students will be entitled to one reassessment opportunity for each module at all levels, with Board of Examiners having the discretion to permit one further attempt in exceptional circumstances.

Students will be allowed to proceed to the next level carrying no more than 20 failed credits.

Attempts at reassessment are time-limited and a compulsory reassessment opportunity is set out within the Sections A, B and C of the current Academic Regulations.

The requirements for passing at reassessment, reassessment of components, the capping of reassessment marks, together with all other related information, are contained within the current Regulations.

Responsibilities

The process of formally communicating to students regarding the details of reassessment falls within the remit of School Support Service.

Schools continue to be responsible for ensuring that the reassessment assessment brief contains accurate and current information.

Schools are responsible for providing full academic and other support for students who are undertaking reassessment.

Support for students undertaking reassessment

All students are entitled to individual feedback on request which indicates how they might successfully meet assessment requirements.

Feedback and support should be planned with the needs of all students in mind and should not inadvertently exclude some students purely through the mechanism adopted.

Students should make every effort to respond positively to the methods adopted through the School scheme, but make it clear if there are good and acceptable reasons why the methods are not appropriate to them.

Instruments of reassessment: reworked exams

Where the original assessment included a traditional written examination, it is permissible for the Module Board of Examiners to approve the use of a ‘reworked exam’ as an assessment instrument. A reworked exam is an assessment where:

- the original exam that the student failed is used rather than a new one
- the student normally answers *all* the questions, regardless of the original exam rubric
- the student completes this work within a set period of time *but* not under exam conditions
- as with all reassessments, the mark or grade is capped

It is recommended that Module Leaders and Module Boards of Examiners consider carefully and on a case by case basis whether a reworked exam is an appropriate instrument of reassessment. It is suggested that use of reworked exams may be monitored by School LTA Committees.

Academic integrity and plagiarism at Edinburgh Napier University

At Edinburgh Napier University we recognise the challenges students face when entering higher education and we are committed to making the necessary resources and support available in order for Edinburgh Napier students to succeed in their studies. However, quite a lot is expected of the Edinburgh Napier student as well!

Edinburgh Napier University prides itself in upholding a high standard of academic integrity. For written work this entails ensuring that credit is given to the original authors of all source material and students are expected to demonstrate proper referencing practice in all their assessed work. Acquiring good referencing skills develops confidence in academic writing and helps prevent unintentional plagiarism. School-specific guides to referencing are available under Subject Guides at the Library website

It has been shown across the higher education sector that the emphasis in all successful plagiarism models lies in educating students first to help prevent and deter plagiarism, before systematic detection and finally disciplinary investigation and punishment, an approach that Edinburgh Napier University is committed to as well.

Edinburgh Napier's model includes:

- *Extenuating Circumstances and Fitness to Sit Regulations*
- School Academic Conduct Officers (ACOs)
- An Academic Conduct Officers' Forum
- Educational material for staff and students, including School-specific guides to referencing and the use of Turnitin®UK
- Relevant staff and student development sessions
- Use of text-matching software, Turnitin®UK.
- *Code of Practice for the Effective Use of Turnitin®UK*

For more information please access the *Be Wise, Don't Plagiarise!* website.

Penalties for academic misconduct

The University has a set of approved Student Conduct Regulations which guide both non-academic and academic misconduct.

Section 4: Assessment of students with disabilities, long term health conditions or specific learning differences

Overview

A significant change to discrimination law took place in October 2010 when an all embracing 'Equality Act' came into force. The Equality Act covers regulations governing the treatment of all groups defined as having 'protected characteristics', with disability being included as one of these groups. The Equality Act strengthened and consolidated disability rights and consequently, the legal obligations to address them. The Equality Act incorporated the provisions of the former Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) legislation.

Under the disability provisions of the Equality Act, disability is defined as:

> A physical or mental impairment that has a substantial, long term and negative effect on the ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

The legal requirements are complex but in summary, it is unlawful to discriminate against a person who is deemed as disabled under the law in the following ways:

- direct discrimination
- indirect discrimination
- discrimination arising from disability
- harassment
- victimisation
- failure to make reasonable adjustments.

The following extract is from advice provided by the Equality & Human Rights Commission on the reasonable adjustment duty:

> "You are required to take reasonable steps to:
>
> - Avoid substantial disadvantage where a provision, criterion or practice puts disabled students at a substantial disadvantage.
> - Avoid substantial disadvantage, where a physical feature puts disabled persons at a substantial disadvantage; this includes removing the physical feature in question, altering it or providing a reasonable means of avoiding it.
> - Provide an auxiliary aid where without one, disabled students would be put at a substantial disadvantage.

You owe this duty to existing students, applicants and, in limited circumstances, to disabled former students.

You cannot justify a failure to make a reasonable adjustment; where the duty arises, the issue is whether or not the adjustment is 'reasonable' and this is an objective question for the courts to ultimately determine.

The duty is an anticipatory and continuing one that you owe to disabled students generally, regardless of whether you know that a particular student is disabled or whether you currently have any disabled students. You should not wait until an individual disabled student approaches you before you consider how to meet the duty. Instead you should plan ahead and anticipate the requirements of disabled students and the adjustments that might need to be made for them. You are not expected to anticipate the needs of every prospective student but you are required to think about and take reasonable and proportionate steps to overcome barriers that may impede people with different kinds of disabilities. For example, while it may be appropriate for university to install a hearing loop in lecture theatres to anticipate deaf students' needs, they would not be expected to have a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter on the payroll."

More information can be found at the Equality and Human Rights Commission website available at https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/equality-act-2010-technical-guidance-further-and-higher-education

There is also a further 'General' Legal Equality Duty' and all public bodies must have 'due regard' to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Under the 'Specific Duties' of the Act (designed to help implement the general duties) there are also requirements in Scotland for HEIs to:

- report on progress on mainstreaming the general duty into all functions
- develop and publish a set of equality outcomes that cover all protected characteristics (or explain why not all protected characteristics are covered)
- assess the impact of policies and practices against the needs of the general duty
- gather and use information on employees
- publish gender pay gap information
- publish statements on equal pay for gender, race and disability
- have due regard to the general duty in specified procurement practices
- publish information in a manner that is accessible.

The Act also sets out that:

- meeting different needs also includes (among other things) taking steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities
- fostering good relations means tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups
- meeting the General Equality Duty may involve treating some people more favourably that others (eg as in the case of implementing reasonable adjustments for people with a disability).

These legal requirements and obligations are therefore very significant for the University's work and practices on student assessment (as well as for other aspects of supporting students with disabilities and specific additional needs).

This section focuses on three distinct approaches to assessment:

- contingent
- alternative
- inclusive.

According to Waterfield and West (2006) there are three distinct approaches taken:

a) Contingent approach where essentially students are assimilated into the existing assessment system – for example the use of extra time, scribes, spelling and grammar stickers, separate room etc.

b) Alternative approach where a number of alternative assessments, all capable of assessing the same learning outcomes, are available for students with a disability.

c) Inclusive approach where a number of alternative assessments, all capable of assessing the same learning outcomes, are available to all students.

Contingent approach

The contingent approach is viewed as a reactive one, placing students with a disability into a special category thereby subverting the equality of opportunity they aim to provide (Sharpe & Earle, 2000).

From their three-year longitudinal research of students (*n* = 800 both disabled and non-disabled and from a range of subject disciplines) Waterfield and West (2006) found that the contingent approach was poorly evaluated by students. Some 32.1% were ambivalent or dissatisfied with the special arrangements for examinations; 21.3% for 'in-class' tests and 26% for other forms of assessment. Waterfield and West caution their findings by stating that 'these statistics belie the level of student ambivalence and dissatisfaction as students engaged in a higher degree of self-censorship in responding to questionnaires, concerned that criticism might result in 'special arrangements' being withdrawn' (Waterfield & West, 2006: 106).

Specifically, Waterfield and West (2006) found:

- Assessment tasks requiring working in groups and mathematical calculations do not significantly disadvantage disabled students (p116).
- Disabled students perceive they are disadvantaged in assessments which rely on responding to spoken information – ensuring that the good practice of all spoken information produced in accessible written format would be sufficient in overcoming this (p117).
- Unseen time-limited examinations and 'in-class' tests pose particular difficulties for some disabled students (p122).
- Disabled students surveyed found writing for lengthy periods of time an especially unsatisfactory experience therefore 'offering additional time to disabled students who are not satisfied that they can write for lengthy periods of time is both inappropriate and counter-productive' (p122).

- Coursework with discussion was clearly perceived to be a satisfactory method of assessment (p143).
- The strength of negative feeling towards examinations was powerfully expressed; 'the concepts of anxiety, panic and stress are repeatedly used by both disabled and non-disabled cohorts of students through all phases of the Project to describe their feelings' (p145).

Alternative approach

The alternative approach, whilst reflecting the student's particular specific requirements and learning style, still conveys the message that having a disability means you are different. Waterfield and West (2006) argue that this approach is appropriate for one-off circumstances but inappropriate as a generalised approach as, like the contingent approach, it is counter-productive in terms of equality of opportunity.

One quotation from a third-year Edinburgh Napier student is illuminating:

> "…As for the special class available fitting it in around Uni and work may have proved difficult, but as I have tried really hard through my whole academic life to fit in and not look strange, (writing different, reading etc) the classes would make me feel like I was not normal at all and make me feel like I was disabled and I do not really see myself as being disabled."

Inclusive approach

The inclusive approach does not make an arbitrary distinction between 'disabled' and 'non-disabled' in the same way that it would make no distinction between students from 'traditional' and 'non-traditional' backgrounds. Quite to the contrary, in the pursuit of meeting the needs of the diverse student population, the inclusive approach to assessment is concerned with equity, regardless of disability, learning style or learning experience.

'The inclusive approach does not compromise academic standards but rather improves the chances for students to fairly demonstrate their acquisition of the learning outcomes, is also congruent with the social, cultural and legislative imperatives pressing the higher education sector to play an active role in creating a more inclusive society' (Waterfield & West, 2006: 19).

The purpose of inclusive assessment is to provide students who have a disability with the opportunity to develop their potential without giving them an unfair advantage over non-disabled students (Barrett, 1999). Embedding disability matters into the curriculum at the

outset, means that disability awareness is mainstreamed and all students engage in the inclusive practice (Adams, 2007).

Overall, the best way to design an inclusive assessment is to assume that you will have someone on your module who has not disclosed an impairment (Gravestock, 2006).

'Inclusive practice in assessment stems from careful consideration of learning outcomes, assessment criteria and ensuring that assessment practices are accessible when the programme/module is being developed. When reviewing existing assessment practices, the possibilities of both modification and of devising genuinely alternative strategies should be considered…providing choice of assessment method often mitigates the need to provide for many of the student cohort' (Cavanagh & Dickinson, 2006: 42–43).

Generally the most useful changes and adaptations to assessments is to provide a choice of assessment rather than providing an alternative.

Adams and Brown (2006: 187) advocate the following in order to achieve inclusive practice:

- Stop adopting practice which predominantly focus on adjustments and start thinking about inclusive curriculum and assessment design which offer all students choices that align with their abilities. All students are likely to benefit from the flexibility in time, mode and place that is often seen as the basis of making reasonable adjustments.
- Think inclusively when designing assessment instruments, so that alternatives are built in at the outset which enables disabled students to have an equivalent assessment experience. There are more innovative and effective alternatives to simply allowing extra time or assessing students in separate rooms, which are likely to benefit all students, not just those who are disabled.
- …inclusive practice is not only right but also highly effective… effective pedagogy for disabled students is effective pedagogy for all students.

Possible types of assessments

Across the sector, it is universally accepted that academic requirements and standards should not be compromised and therefore should be applied across the entire student population. 'Alternative assessment strategies should be pursued to minimise the impact of disability on a student's performance at assessment. Alternative assessments should accommodate the student's functional differences that arise as a consequence of disability, their methods of communication, learning styles and physical considerations. Using such approaches, disabled students will be better able to demonstrate their ability. Without alternative provision, assessment results will reflect the impact of the disability and prevent student's acquiring independence in their learning' (SWANDS, undated).

Waterfield and West (2006) found five assessment methods which were consistently identified as preferred choices for both disabled and non-disabled students:

- continuous assessment (particularly favoured by Arts and Science based students)
- coursework with discussion (particularly favoured by Arts based students)
- personal research projects (particularly favoured by Arts, Science and Social Science based students)
- essay assignments
- multiple choice (particularly favoured by Science based students).

Waterfield and West (2006) provide short case studies for the following alternative and inclusive assessments. The case studies contain a brief description of the assessment method; resources required; advantages for students and staff; issues arising from the use of the assessment method and some verbatim comments from students and staff. They are well worth exploring:

- video portfolio
- video presentation
- portfolio
- design report
- viva supplemented by coursework (additional information available)
- taped seminar report
- oral presentation of a research proposal
- end-of-module test or coursework or portfolio as assessment choice.

Pause for thought!

Consider the following quote from Gravestock (2006: 50)

> Some non-disabled students may consider that an alternative assessment which is set for a disabled student may be giving this student an unfair advantage. For example, there may be a number of non-disabled students who do not perform particularly well in formal examinations who may feel upset about the fact that an alternative to the formal examination is provided for some disabled students. The question to consider here is why shouldn't the alternative assessment be available to all students? If you have decided that the alternative assessment meets the intended learning outcomes and maintains academic standards, then why shouldn't all students have

the choice to undertake this particular form of assessment? If you decide that this is not appropriate, you need to ask yourself, why not? In the case of formal examinations, how important is it that the examination is time-bounded? What skills are being assessed? If it is the ability to work under pressure, what is the relative weighting of this skill compared with the others being tested, such as knowledge or construction of essays etc?

Students with disabilities, health conditions or specific learning needs

Edinburgh Napier University has a large population of students with disabilities, health conditions and specific learning difficulties. On average, the University supports up to 1600 students per year who have disclosed some kind of disability, health condition or learning difference. Support for students disclosing a difficulty is facilitated through the Student Wellbeing and Inclusion Team. Around half of the students supported have a specific learning difficulty, such as dyslexia. Visit the intranet pages for further details. Information is also available via MyNapier.

By the very nature of their difficulties, many of these students come to university not only with differing abilities and adaptation skills but in some cases with inherent differences in the area of literacy skills and a different approach to learning and / or learning styles. As such, these students have the potential to make an invaluable contribution to the educational environment in Edinburgh Napier University.

As part of its inclusiveness policy (and its duty under the Equality Act), the University has a responsibility to provide accurate details about the specifics of course content, individual modules and the respective assessment procedures, to its student body.

Students with disabilities, long term health conditions or specific learning difficulties who are equipped with key information prior to application, are in a better position to match their strengths and weaknesses with their preferred study option and make an informed choice about their programme of study. This does not, however, remove any obligations on the part of the University to continue to make anticipatory reasonable adjustments or develop greater inclusive practices. Students requiring guidance in their choice of study can be directed to the relevant staff in either, the School Disability Contact or the student's Personal Development Tutor. Further information is available at http://my.napier.ac.uk/Wellbeing-and-Support/Disability-and-Inclusion/Pages/Disability-and-Inclusion.aspx

Students requesting reasonable adjustments for examinations and assessments are required to register with the Disability & Inclusion Team and discuss and provide evidence of their particular needs. Evidence will often be the student's previous individualised education plan (or equivalent) from school or college. For students disclosing a disability or learning difficulty for the first time, or where no recent support statement is otherwise available, the Disability Advisor might be able to identify reasonable adjustments adequately for internal purposes. Alternatively, it might be necessary to refer the student to another accredited practitioner, for example, an Educational Psychologist for students with Specific Learning Difficulties or GP for students with disabilities and long-term health conditions. This information enables Advisers in the Disability & Inclusion Team to make recommendations for appropriate reasonable adjustments that meet the University's legal obligations; this information also forms the basis of an individually agreed 'Learning Profile' for each student.

Key recommendations for necessary reasonable adjustments contained in any diagnostic or assessment evidence, are incorporated into the student's individual Learning Profile and appropriate support measures are recorded, following discussion between the Adviser and the student. With the student's permission, the Learning Profile is forwarded to the student's School Disability Contact and the relevant School Support Team, for dissemination to all module staff who teach the student. This is important to help ensure that all support recommendations can be implemented at programme and module level and adjustments can also be made for class tests and assignments. Examination and assessment allowances are also notified to the Student Administration Team who deal with the University's formal examination arrangements.

Academic staff should be aware that processes to implement support may in some cases be lengthy. Students identified as requiring specific support as a reasonable adjustment for their difficulties (in particular where this involves SAAS or SFE funded support e.g. proofreading, study skills or other forms of personal support) may not always be able to access this support immediately. In such cases, a flexible approach to coursework over coursework deadlines, granting extensions etc. should enable the university to meet its reasonable adjustment duty and ensure students requiring support are not unfairly disadvantaged. The student's Adviser can be contacted if there are any queries.

Marking student work and treatment of spelling and grammar within examinations, class tests and assignments. The following guidance on marking assessments and examinations was circulated to staff in December 2009 by the Vice Principal for equality considerations:

> "When marking student work in coursework and examinations you will find some that is less clearly organised and expressed than you might wish and contains errors in spelling and grammar. What account you take of this will depend on the assignment brief. If it was stated that the assignment required to be expressed in correct written English and this aligned with the learning outcomes of the module then you should determine a mark within the range set for that element of the assignment. If there was no statement made in advance about correct written English, then you should read only for meaning and mark according to the extent to which the student has addressed the brief. In reading an examination script it is unlikely that the rubric specified correct written English so the marking should reflect the extent to which the student has answered the question insofar as you are able to discern by reading for meaning in the answer."

Staff should be aware that the University has a range of networked software to assist with spell checking and students are encouraged to become familiar with this wherever possible. However, the above guidance is intended to ensure that students are not unfairly disadvantaged in examinations, class tests or assignments as a result of a disability or other additional need.

The University's Student Administration team within the School Support Service co-ordinates assessment allowances for formal examinations. Students are informed of their allowances in different ways:

- Through discussion with an Adviser in the Disability & Inclusion Team
- Through receipt of a copy of their individual Learning Profile.

Embedding disability matters into the curriculum at the outset means that disability awareness is mainstreamed and all students engage in the inclusive practice (Adams, 2007).

Further information on the University's policies and systems for disability and inclusion is available at http://my.napier.ac.uk/Wellbeing-and-Support/Disability-and-Inclusion/Pages/Disability-and-Inclusion.aspx

Staff can access modular information about supporting students by logging on to Moodle Community and the 'Supporting students with disabilities and additional learning needs' modules.

The Disability & Inclusion Team can also provide further advice, information and guidance if staff have specific queries about supporting students.

Section 5: Code of Practice Appendices

Appendix A: Code of Practice for Assessment Setting

(Version 2, August 2017)

We need to ensure that all assessments set by the University incorporate good practice guidelines and have been moderated (and in that sense quality assured) in order to achieve an acceptable level of consistency for students.

Overview

The Code of Practice for Assessment Setting must be adopted.

- All assessments must be subject to an acceptable level of scrutiny and moderation.
- An *Assessment Brief* must describe a minimum amount of information that should be provided for students for each assessment task which they undertake.
- Schools/faculties have the discretion to design their own method of transmitting this information to students.
- See Appendix C: Assessment Brief Pro Forma

Summary of responsibilities

Module Leader	Dean of School	School Support Service
Drafting written examinations Disseminating details of written examinations Arrangements for in-class tests	Approving examination papers	Disseminating details of written examinations Conduct of written examinations
Developing assessment/ reassessment briefs Disseminating details of assessment/ reassessment briefs	Approving assessment/ reassessment briefs	
Returning coursework		

Introduction

This Code of Practice defines the minimum requirements at key stages of the assessment process. The procedures in this section cover examinations and coursework using the following definitions:

a) an **examination is defined** as a test of capacity and/or knowledge, set for individuals to attempt without recourse to assistance or to some or all other resources, and carried out within restricted conditions and a time limit

b) **coursework is defined** as including all other types of assessment which do not come under the definition of examination.

The procedures are designed to support the Edinburgh Napier University's *Academic Strategy 2015-2020*.

In exceptional cases and where necessary, a case for varying the procedures can be made in advance to the Convenor of the School LTA Committee. Any variations to procedures will be reported to the School LTA Committee.

Throughout these procedures, responsibilities are identified for individual members of staff, schools and professional services as appropriate.

Examinations

Examinations take several forms, including but not limited to:

a) written, oral, practical and digital examinations

b) end-of-module examinations (normally organised centrally and running during the examination period), and in-class tests (which are examinations organised locally and occurring outside the examination period)

c) closed-book and open-book examinations

d) unseen and seen examinations.

The type of examination employed for a module will have been decided at initial approval, where its validity as an appropriate form of assessment will have been considered. Whilst more 'traditional' closed, unseen written examinations are generally familiar to staff and students other types of examinations may pose new challenges. Special care must therefore be taken to ensure that they are:

a) transparent (candidates know what to expect and understand what is required of them)

b) equitable (the examinations safeguard against illegitimate practices, and are fair to all candidates)

c) reliable (staff know how to make appropriate academic judgments on performance).

Written examinations

Traditional examinations

Advantages of traditional examinations:

- they are relatively economical
- there is equality of opportunity – same tasks in same way, under same conditions
- we know whose work it is
- academic staff are familiar with exams
- cause students to get down to learning.

Disadvantages of traditional examinations:

- students get little or no feedback
- badly set exams encourage surface learning
- exam technique is too important
- exams only represent a snapshot of student performance, rather than a reliable indicator of it.

Source: Race (2007).

Drafting written examinations – responsibility: Module Leader

Module Leaders should ensure that:

a) examinations are consistent with the approved module descriptor, including length and weighting

b) examinations are designed to test achievement of the specific approved learning outcomes defined in the module descriptor, and allow candidates to demonstrate their degree of achievement in such a way that this can be reflected in the marking range

c) initial and reassessment examinations are normally prepared at the same time

d) examination arrangements are appropriate for disabled students or others for whom alternative arrangements have been approved.

Approving examination papers – responsibility: Dean of School

The Dean of School should devise a process which is appropriate to the context and needs of the School but which fulfils the overriding principle that all examination papers must be subject to a process of moderation and quality control. The external examiner will normally be involved in this process for Levels 9, 10 and 11 which should scrutinise:

a) the academic appropriateness of the examination in relation to module and programme learning outcomes

b) the academic appropriateness of the examination in relation to any other components of assessment within the same module

c) procedural appropriateness, with particular reference to consistency with the approved module descriptor, the clarity of the examination rubric, and any special instructions relating to materials or resources (for example, the use of calculators)

d) accuracy and the proof-reading of the paper.

Disseminating details of written examinations – responsibility: held jointly by Module Leaders and School Support Service

In disseminating a written examination paper:

a) candidates must be informed of the validated type, duration or size and weighting of the examination in module descriptors *(responsibility: Module Leader)*

b) candidates must be informed of the time and place of the examination *(responsibility: School Support Service)*

c) a similar paper or papers from a previous trimester/year or a model paper must be made available to candidates *(responsibility: Module Leader)*.

Conduct of written examinations – responsibility: School Support Service

The administration of examinations must be in accordance with the requirements of School Support Service as indicated at http://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/sas/StudentAdministration/Examinations/Pages/Examinations.aspx, and detailed in the *Invigilators Handbook* available at http://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/sas/StudentAdministration/Examinations/Pages/Invigilation.aspx. See also Appendix D: Code of Practice on Anonymous Assessment.

Open-book examinations

Open-book examinations are used to:

- overcome the memorising and surface learning problem
- assess critical thinking.

In open-book examinations students are allowed to take in the reference sources and materials they think they will need. This then allows examiners to concentrate less on student memorisation of particular information and more on questions which involve locating, retrieving, synthesising and applying information from a range of sources to the solution of specific problems. In this way students engage at a deeper level, and can be required by questions to demonstrate higher-order skills of analysis and judgement.

Useful advice when considering open-book examinations include the following.

- Decide whether to prescribe the books students may employ.
- Ensure that you set questions which require students to do things with the information available to them, rather than merely summarising it and giving it back.
- Focus the assessment criteria on what students have done with the information, and not just on them having located the correct information.
- Require application of knowledge wherever appropriate.

Special procedures for open-book examinations

Candidates must be informed in module handbooks/assessment briefs or their equivalent of the nature of the open-book examination. In particular, they must receive a statement of the materials which can be taken into the examination, including any specific materials excluded from the examination.

Where there is an intention to limit the amount or type of material which may be brought into the examination, this must be reasonable in the context of the assessment criteria, fair to all candidates, and capable of enforcement via normal invigilation processes without causing disruption to the conduct of the examination.

Open-book examinations will normally be unseen examinations.

Notification of the use of an open-book examination, and any implications for examination management (for example, required desk space) or invigilation (for example, checking for materials excluded from the examination) must be provided to School Support Service.

Seen examinations

In seen examinations, students are provided with, several days in advance of the examination, a set of background materials for the questions, often in the form of case studies. Students are then given several days in which to familiarise themselves with the materials before bringing them into the examination room, where they are asked to write up the case study or respond to a series of questions which require them to use the materials.

Special procedures for seen examinations

Candidates must be informed in module handbooks/assessment briefs or their equivalent of the nature of the seen examination, and the time and manner by which the examination paper will be disseminated.

Seen examinations must be disseminated in written format in a manner such that the paper is available to all candidates and a record is kept of its distribution. A copy should be available for each candidate to collect; copies should also be posted on relevant programme/subject notice boards and, where appropriate, made available electronically. It is the candidates' responsibility to ensure that they receive a copy of the examination.

Seen examinations must carry a warning against unauthorised collusion in the preparation of responses.

Where the setting of a seen examination could lead to particular pressure on certain learning resources, action should be taken in advance to minimise the impact.

Seen examinations will normally be closed-book examinations.

Notification of the use of a seen examination, and any implications for invigilation (for example, checking for notes illegitimately brought into the examination) must be provided to School Support Service.

Special procedures for in-class tests

With the exception of the role of School Support Service, in-class tests must be conducted following the same procedures as end-of-module examinations.

The *Module Leader* is responsible for ensuring that arrangements for in-class tests are equivalent to, and comparable with, those for centrally organised end-of-module examinations. This includes procedures for notifying candidates of the nature, time and place of such tests; the booking of appropriate accommodation; the security of reproduction and storage of the test paper; the procedures for invigilation; the arrangement of the room to restrict opportunities for cheating; and appropriate preparations for disabled

students. Examination booklets must be used, unless the examination is of a multiple-choice type with a special answer grid. It is recommended that Module Leaders take advice from School Support Service on preparation for in-class tests.

Practical examinations

Definition

A practical examination is one where candidates are required to undertake practical tasks which are assessed by observation. As with other types of examination, candidates attempt the tasks without recourse to assistance or to some or all other resources, and within restricted conditions and a time limit.

Where a candidate undertakes a practical task but is assessed on a report (for example, a laboratory report or field notebook), this is a form of coursework and procedures for coursework apply.

Preparing and approving the examination

A paper for the examination should be prepared, comprising a set of instructions for the tasks to be completed. The process of preparing and approving the examination paper should follow the procedures for written examinations.

Before the examination

Disseminating details of, and preparation for, the examination should follow the same procedures as in-class tests. Particular attention should be paid to making appropriate arrangements for candidates with special needs.

Procedures for seen examinations (if the paper is to be disseminated in advance) or open-book examinations (for example, if candidates are permitted to bring a laboratory notebook) may also apply.

Conduct of the examination

Since the candidate is assessed in the process of undertaking the examination, the conduct of the examination should follow the procedures employed for the assessment of transient forms of coursework (see paragraphs 51–53 below).

Viva/oral examinations

Advantages of the viva:

- issues can be followed up in depth and difficult areas can be clarified
- authenticity of the student's work can be checked – an important consideration given the increasing incidence of plagiarised work
- it is very useful when cases are borderline – a convincing viva can make the difference between a pass and a fail on occasions
- a wide range of skills are tested – verbal fluency, ability to think under pressure
- can alert teachers to aspects of the learning environment which may require attention.

Disadvantages of the viva:

- students can find them stressful and intimidating
- can be assessor-dominated
- 'halo effect' can operate where a student's strength or weakness in a particular field can affect the perception of other areas of competence.

As vivas are essentially individually tailored, care must be taken to ensure fairness with all questions being of a similar level of challenge.

Definition

An oral examination is one where candidates are required, individually, to respond orally to questions put by a tutor. As with other types of examination, candidates attempt this without recourse to assistance or to some or all other resources, and within restricted conditions and a time limit.

Preparing and approving the examination

A 'paper' for the examination should be prepared, comprising a set of questions which will be asked of candidates. The process of preparing and approving the examination 'paper' should follow the procedures as for written examinations.

To reduce the risks of collusion, it is normal to prepare a set of questions from which a sample will be selected for each candidate. In preparing and approving the 'paper', attention should be paid to devising a set of questions and selection procedure which will ensure that each candidate is given an equivalent challenge. The questions asked of a candidate must not be influenced by prior knowledge of the candidate.

To reduce the risks of collusion, it may also be necessary to establish arrangements which prevent contact between candidates who have already undertaken the examination, and those yet to undertake it.

Before the examination

Disseminating details of, and preparation for, the examination should follow the same procedures as in-class tests. Details should include instructions for candidates about arrangements which will reduce the risks of collusion (for example, restrictions on their movement/interaction with other candidates).

Special attention should be paid to making appropriate arrangements for disabled students.

Procedures for open-book examinations may also apply (for example, if candidates are permitted to bring a laboratory notebook).

Conduct of the examination

Since the candidate is assessed in the process of undertaking the examination, the conduct of the examination should follow the same procedures employed for assessment of transient forms of coursework.

Digital examinations

Further information on digital examinations and quizzes in Moodle is available at http://moodle.napier.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=1569

The success of any approach that includes online technology for assessment or coursework lies centrally in the provision of a meaningful and practical induction to the technologies used. Offered early in the trimester (week 1) short, informal induction activities that feature the relevant online tools will build student confidence and highlight potential technical problems early enough to be resolved in time for the formal activity or assessment task.

Objective self-test and exams

Online technology lends itself well to objective assessment (also referred to as computer-aided assessment or CAA), in which delivery, scoring and feedback are computer-assisted. While it is not recommended for CAA to form the entire assessment, students welcome online formative assessment opportunities to reinforce and monitor their learning progress independent of tutor contact.

Although multiple choice questions (MCQs) are most commonly associated with objective testing in the assessment of factual knowledge and skills, other types of questions can permit greater flexibility of content which probes for deeper levels of understanding as well. In addition, the closed range of possible answers allows for less laborious and more focused feedback.

The availability of MCQ types depends on the software system and can include (but is not restricted to):

- true/false questions
- assertion/reason questions
- multiple response questions
- and many variations thereof such as matching questions, ranking questions and simulations of real problems.

By embedding multimedia such as images, audio files, and video and making use of the customisable feedback settings and manual marking features (for essay style answers) CAA is well positioned to offer a learning experience that enables understanding and comprehension well beyond the rote or surface learning it is traditionally thought to be restricted to.

Specific issues to be aware of when planning for objective assessments in particular include:

- allowing ample time for writing clear, concise questions, plausible distractors and effective, detailed feedback
- securing the help of colleagues to pilot the questions and evaluate the feedback
- minimum hardware and software specifications
- server and connection requirements
- navigation and usage guidelines (ie student induction)
- necessary arrangements to account for disabilities
- for final (summative) exams: arrangement of timetabling, support, secure login/submission measures and invigilation; consideration of location and timescale for delivery (home, institution or flexible).

There are ample resources available online through the Higher Education Academy and the CAA Centre listed in the further reading section which readers are referred to for detailed, good practice guidelines and case study examples related to CAA question design, effective feedback and design considerations.

Key issues in designing online or blended forms of assessment

- Think about the kinds of assessment activities that are most appropriate for your students and your subject area. What can they realistically undertake working in the more autonomous online environment?
- Be mindful not to over-assess students online despite the pedagogic value of continuous engagement and periodic deadlines.
- Keep your guidance and assignment specifications as simple and concise as possible. Online, less really is more!
- Provide clear assessment criteria including the institutional plagiarism policy and handling procedures. QAA conformity of practice guidelines dictate that assessment processes need to be communicated clearly to overseas partners.
- Make support options explicit and transparent. Offer as many alternatives for communication as manageable (eg via email, phone, virtual office hours etc).
- Think inclusively:
    - do not use examples in coursework that are culturally biased
    - avoid provincial language and abbreviations (see also *Online Communication (Netiquette) Guidelines for Edinburgh Napier University Students* available at http://www2.napier.ac.uk/webct/staff/documents/netiquette_guidelines.pdf)
    - define key subject-related terms and abbreviations
    - take time-zone differences and cultural holidays into account when timetabling submission deadlines
    - do not assume students have the IT skills they need
    - consider the range of student lifestyles and schedules when imposing timeframes for participation
    - be mindful of disabilities and subsequent time/format/delivery requirements. Consult Edinburgh Napier's Accessible Learning Materials website when creating online content or applications.
- Consider carefully how students will submit their work. What electronic format is most appropriate or is there scope for a variety of options? Options include: email attachment, submission to an electronic dropbox or the Turnitin®UK submission box, link to a wiki (students will need to give you access), an audio clip, podcast or online image gallery.
- Technology can fail. When using technology it is imperative to have a contingency plan in place and to communicate the alternatives to submission formats, submission dates etc to your students in your module overview.
- External examiner processes must be consistent with normal institutional processes. In addition ensure that external examiner online access has been accounted for and

any materials to be reviewed are presented in a user-friendly and easily navigable way.

- Make use of question databanks available from most academic publishers through purchase of the relevant textbook. With Respondus® these are easily imported into Moodle/VLE.

Advantages of objective tests:

- Scoring between different markers is likely to be reliable and consistent.
- Scoring is rapid and therefore cost-effective in terms of staff time. Optical mark readers (OMRs) can be used to automate marking.
- Objective tests give the opportunity to test large areas of the syllabus and therefore cover a wide sample of course outcomes.
- They lend themselves to the development of institutional and national banks of questions which can be reused (reducing exam preparation time in the long term).
- Items can be tested beforehand, allowing the difficulty level of tests to be adjusted for particular contexts. Software can include statistical analyses of item, candidate and cohort performance.
- The need to provide choice of questions on the paper (which can reduce validity) is eliminated.
- The questions can be used to test speed of student thinking rather than speed of writing.

Disadvantages of objective tests:

- The initial design and preparation of tests is expensive, time-consuming and extremely difficult to do well. Sound multiple choice questions are more difficult to produce than conventional open-ended questions.
- Such tests can give a deceptive impression that they are easy to construct. This can seduce the novice into creating an amateurish and flawed test which does not sufficiently discriminate between more and less able students.
- Students can gain marks merely through guessing and luck.
- The assessor cannot perceive the reasoning that may have gone on behind the choice of a wrong answer.
- As evidence of handwriting is not required, it can be difficult to guard against cheating. Passwords for computer administered tests and bar coding of candidates can, however, minimise this particular difficulty.

Advantages of computer-assisted assessment:

- The possibility of frequent formative assessments which can have an effect on motivation and permit practise of skills. Learner performance can also be monitored.
- Learners can self-assess in their own time and at their own pace.
- Feedback is objective and can be immediate and tests can be repeated.
- Less staff time is used in marking and other administrative tasks.
- Test items and scores can be analysed readily.
- Graphics and multimedia can be used which is not possible with paper-based assessments.
- Randomisation of questions reduces the potential for cheating.

Disadvantages of computer-assisted assessment:

- Initial implementation of the system can be costly and time-consuming.
- You are totally reliant on hardware and software systems' performance.
- Participants require IT skills and familiarity with the assessment method.
- Assessors and invigilators require appropriate training.
- Academic and support staff must co-ordinate their efforts.

A digital examination is normally a multiple choice or short-answer paper which uses technology as a delivery vehicle rather than as the object of the test. The range and variety of such examinations is growing rapidly and they are thus resistant to the adoption of set procedures. In all cases, however, the nature, format and conduct of a digital examination must be explicitly approved by the mechanisms put in place by the relevant school (see paragraph number 8 on page 20).

Coursework

Coursework may take several forms, including:

a) written essays and reports
b) practical and creative work and visual presentations
c) practical field or laboratory-based work
d) professional practice
e) oral presentations
f) group work assignments
g) time-constrained assignments
h) reviews and annotated bibliographies.

Written essays and reports

Despite the fact that essays have notoriously low reliability and frequently have low validity, in some subjects the essay is the dominant form of assessment. Biggs and Tang (2007) state that there are four dimensions of criteria by which essays are judged: ideas; skills; organisation; and personal style.

Advantages of essays:

- Essays permit students a degree of freedom to organise and express their ideas in an individual style.
- The scope for the individual flair and originality of thought allows students of high ability to distinguish themselves.
- There is opportunity to test deep learning and the full spectrum of cognitive abilities (including interpretation, application, critique and evaluation).
- Essays can be used to test a wide range of learning outcomes and interdisciplinary relationships.
- Questions are comparatively easy to construct.
- Competent essay writing requires mastery of a range of key employability skills including communication, organisational and presentation skills.

Disadvantages of essays:

- Marking essays is difficult and time-consuming, particularly if useful commentary is to be added. Inter-marker reliability is often low, even when there are agreed assessment criteria.
- The length of time taken to write essays means that only a small number can either be completed as coursework or within exams. This severely restricts the coverage of topics and may mean that other important areas of the syllabus are neglected.
- The common convention of allowing students a degree of choice of essays can lead to ‘question spotting’ and to students avoiding assessment of areas of their own weakness. The many possibilities for question combination means that two students could, in practice, complete entirely different papers from the same set of questions. A paper requiring five questions from a choice of eight actually allows 56 different combinations. This merely exacerbates the problem of unreliability.
- Factors which may not be relevant to the assessment criteria, such as handwriting and grammar, have shown to influence the judgement of markers, lessening the validity of the assessment.
- The planning, structuring and writing of essays is an acquired skill in itself and, when students have acquired such skills, this may prove to be an unduly dominant

influence on markers in relation to more significant criteria relating to learning outcomes.

Advantages of reports:

- The usefulness of reports stems in great part from the daily use of reports for key purposes in many real-world professional and occupational settings. Report writing thus develops a skill which can have direct bearings on employability and subsequent career development.
- Reports can be integrated into activities where the primary activity, be it a laboratory practical, research, data analysis or project management, may not lend itself directly to observation and assessment.
- Students often appreciate the greater degree of control that they can have over the preparation of reports compared with other assessment methods.
- Reports can develop observation and recording skills and require organisational skills.

Disadvantages of reports:

- The writing up and the subsequent marking of reports, is costly in terms of both student and staff time.
- Part-time tutors, postgraduates, technical staff and employers all mark reports. Such a range, however, raises issues of consistency and marker reliability.
- Collusion and recycling of previously submitted material may be difficult to detect, too. The great variety of formats of report writing across (and sometimes within) disciplines means that careful guidance must be given to students on the conventions that are expected to be followed within a particular course and discipline.
- If related to field, labs and/or work placements consideration needs to be given to ethical and safety issues.

Practical and creative work and visual presentations

Student presentations and public performances are now widely used in higher and further education, and are increasingly being used in secondary education. The skills required of students when they have to prepare and deliver a presentation to a live audience differ considerably from those expected of them in traditional written examinations. The ability to give an effective presentation is now expected in most forms of modern professional life. For this reason the assessment of presentations is incorporated into courses across a wide range of disciplines. Performance tests can be viewed as a spectrum (Freeman & Lewis, 1998) with naturalistic situations (eg nursing or teacher education) at one end and artificial circumstances (eg in the laboratory or classroom) at the other.

Advantages of presentations and performances:

- They present no problem of authenticity as it is clear who is delivering.
- Knowing that the culmination of their work will be a public presentation or performance usually serves to motivate students strongly. The work is undertaken with commitment so as not to have their lack of preparation exposed to public scrutiny.
- As most academics know well, having to teach a topic or demonstrate a skill is often one of the most effective ways of learning it. The learning is usually at a deep level as explanation and demonstration require understanding and transformation of the material.
- Presentation skills are transferable to many other professional environments. Performing skills require account to be taken of each environment and audience.
- Presentations and performances can form the basis of group work – they can be undertaken, evolved and delivered on a collaborative basis.
- Though the aids, environment and media used differ, presentations themselves are appropriate in most disciplines.

Disadvantages of presentations and performances:

- The experience of having to give a presentation or performance can be stressful in itself. Being assessed at the same time can make the event doubly worrisome. Care should be taken to step and stage the process. Final-year oral project presentations without previous experience are cruel and invalid. Private performance before an invited audience is a step towards the public stage.
- The method can become difficult to manage with large groups, simply in terms of the time taken to get through everyone. This can be avoided to some extent by breaking the class or marking team down into smaller operational groups.
- Presentation and performance are to a great extent dependent on time and place. Should there be subsequent disagreement concerning the assessment of a presentation it is difficult to retrieve the original experience. A policy of recording all presentations on video as a means of reference may be intrusive or not technically feasible.
- In this form of assessment there is no way of making the candidate's work anonymous for the assessor. There is, therefore, an increased likelihood of subjectivity and bias creeping into the assessment process. To some extent this can be overcome by panels of markers, professional peer review and panel adjudication.

Poster displays or presentations can be conducted as an individual or a group exercise. Students are set a problem-solving task which will require investigation and discussion, but

instead of producing a final report or giving an oral presentation, they are required to display their findings as a poster. This might be a sheet of ordinary flipchart paper, or for more elaborate and protracted exercises, a professionally finished poster may be produced with high quality materials including computer-generated images, diagrams and graphs as well as text. Students are required to summarise complex findings into a limited space and communicate them clearly and simply. The degree of prior investigation and preparation can, however, be as extensive as that required for more elaborate reports. The method is appropriate for all disciplines.

Advantages of poster displays:

- Students gain feedback almost immediately.
- Assessment can be completed relatively easily and quickly against agreed criterion checklists, without taking up large amounts of the tutor's time.
- The learning process involves both activity and student interaction, and it can promote deeper learning.
- Students can be involved in the negotiation of assessment criteria and in their application (see the section on self- and peer-assessment), helping to encourage student responsibility for their learning.
- The process can be made anonymous if necessary, by dividing groups into two sets and having them assess each other's productions separately.
- Poster displays can help develop a range of useful key employability skills including summarising complex information into a clear form, communication and teamwork skills, design and presentation.
- The presentation material is not dependent on time and place. It can be retained and consulted at a later date, should need arise, or it can be incorporated within a portfolio for external moderation. The posters can also be displayed publicly beyond the classroom so that others may have the opportunity to benefit from students' work.

Disadvantages of poster displays:

- Although the assessment process is relatively speedy, the amount of time required for induction of students into the methodology and an understanding of its rationale can be extensive. On the first occasion the school or tutor will probably need to produce several examples to show students the kind of work they are required to produce. Thereafter, the work of previous cohorts can be used.
- Students will need to gain some insight into the assessment process in order to develop assessment criteria for the exercise. If peer assessment is to be used, they will need to understand and endorse the purposes and value of it to derive the full benefit of the exercise.

Professional practice

A recognised problem of many traditional forms of assessment is that they do not provide a sufficiently wide range of information about a student. To do this often requires a *variety* of modes of assessment. To resolve this problem, the building of portfolios of evidence is becoming more common.

Advantages of portfolios:

- Portfolios can tell you much more about students than most other forms of assessment, containing as they do diverse evidence that can demonstrate achievement of knowledge, a wide range of skills, personal attributes, values and attitudes.
- Whereas most other forms of assessment tend to measure achievement at a particular stage in the student's progress, portfolios can demonstrate development over a period of time.
- The fuller account provided often proves useful to employers seeking evidence of personal qualities and skills beyond the solely academic.

Disadvantages of portfolios:

- Portfolios can be very time-consuming to assess. They take a lot of looking at.
- Busy employers can find them too detailed and unwieldy for use in their selection procedures.
- Given their inevitably individual nature, they remain difficult to mark objectively as it is hard to devise a set of broad assessment criteria that will prove effective across a range of portfolios.
- Ownership or provenance of evidence in portfolios can sometimes be difficult to confirm, particularly where evidence is produced from work-based settings or collaborative activity. In this case supplementary oral assessment may be required, or verification from third parties.

Tips:

- It is important that intended learning outcomes are clearly and mutually agreed, along with the expected level of the work to be produced, and the nature of the evidence that students should gather.
- It's useful to specify a format for the portfolio – this assists students in assembling evidence and also makes the portfolio easier for the eventual assessor(s) to navigate.

- Portfolio assessment can be enhanced by requiring the student to critically reflect on how all the pieces of evidence work together to meet the learning outcomes.
- The use of a rubric of assessment criteria facilitates greater consistency across markers.

Oral presentations

Advantages of the viva:

- issues can be followed up in depth and difficult areas can be clarified
- authenticity of the student's work can be checked – an important consideration given the increasing incidence of plagiarised work
- it is very useful when cases are borderline – a convincing viva can make the difference between a pass and a fail on occasions
- a wide range of skills are tested – verbal fluency, ability to think under pressure
- can alert academics to aspects of the learning environment which may require attention.

Disadvantages of the viva:

- students can find them stressful and intimidating
- can be assessor dominated
- 'halo effect' can operate where a student's strength or weakness in a particular field can affect the perception of other areas of competence.

As vivas are essentially individually tailored, care must be taken to ensure fairness with all questions being of a similar level of challenge.

Group work assignments

Self-assessment is assessment of learners by themselves, and is a mode whose use seems certain to increase as students are given more and more responsibility for their own learning. All students should, for example, be actively encouraged to monitor their own progress by the ongoing checking of their performance against the objectives and learning outcomes of a course. Peer-assessment is assessment of learners by other learners, and is a mode of assessment that is becoming increasingly widely used in the more progressive of our colleges and universities. Such peer-assessment can either be formative or summative. It is particularly useful in the assessment of group projects and other forms of group work, where it enables the contributions of individual group members to be assessed – something that is extremely difficult to carry out fairly if only tutor assessment is employed.

Advantages of self- and peer-assessment:

- Though self-evaluation is a skill that is currently very much undeveloped at all levels of the education system it is, nonetheless, one which students will be obliged to practise in many situations throughout their personal and professional lives. Boud (2000) as mentioned earlier in this unit advocates 'sustainable assessment' in which students' self-assessment skills link strongly to lifelong learning.
- In many academic activities in which students are engaged, the assessment of the *processes* of learning and working are often best undertaken (and sometimes can only plausibly be undertaken) by the students themselves. Group project work has been mentioned and research methodology is a further example that readily comes to mind.
- Self- and peer-assessment can foster in students a sense of ownership of learning and responsibility for learning, which can be a motivating factor. Such learner autonomy reduces emotional dependence on the tutor.
- The processes of reflection, interchange of ideas, analysis and critical judgment in self- and peer-assessment make the experience a valid process of learning. Self- and peer-assessment can be seen to be at the heart of the development of other key transferable skills such as teamwork, leadership, creative problem-solving, design, effective communication and management.

Disadvantages of self- and peer-assessment:

- Students can put up initial resistance to the idea through lack of confidence in their own evaluative ability.
- Students (particularly fee-paying students) can feel that academics are neglecting their own duties as assessors by requiring students to participate in the process.
- Senior managers of educational institutions can need convincing of the validity and reliability of such methods (though, curiously, they do not seem to raise similar concerns about the invalidity and unreliability of traditional methods!).
- Less able students sometimes have a tendency to grade themselves too highly, particularly in new areas of learning. Conversely, more able students can tend to mark themselves down, particularly in areas in which they are experienced.
- There are dangers of student collusion (mutually awarding each other high marks) or student grudges (settling scores, literally, by 'getting even' and awarding the same low marks that others awarded them).
- In assessment of group work, less productive or less participative students can be 'carried' by the other members.

(See also the section on Practical and creative work and visual presentations within this Code of Practice.)

Reviews and annotated bibliographies

Advantages of reviews and annotated bibliographies:

- reviewing is an active process
- reviews are useful for revision
- reviewing involves important mental processes consistent with individuals constructing their own knowledge
- reviewing other papers and articles is useful practice for research writing
- reviewing helps students develop critical skills
- compiling annotated bibliographies is a way of requiring students to survey a considerable amount of material and can also be used as a formative assessment.

Disadvantages of reviews and annotated bibliographies:

- reviews are necessarily quite individual
- access to resources may be problematic
- reviewing individually can be lonely.

General procedures for coursework

Developing assessment briefs – responsibility: Module Leader

Each coursework assessment should be described to students using an assessment brief or its equivalent. The minimum expectations of information contained in such an assessment brief are given in Appendix C: Assessment Brief Pro Forma and may be used by staff where desired. Staff are welcome to use other types of assessment brief as long as they also contain the requirements set out in this Assessment brief pro forma.

Assessment briefs (see Academic Regulations, Section A3.1) should be compiled so that they:

a) are consistent with the approved module descriptor, including length and weighting

b) are designed to test achievement of the specific approved learning outcomes defined in the module descriptor, and to allow candidates to demonstrate their degree of achievement in such a way that this can be reflected in the marking range

c) include a set of assessment criteria.

Initial and reassessment coursework should be prepared at the same time.

Coursework arrangements may be varied for students with special needs or others for whom alternative arrangements are appropriate and approved.

Approving assessment briefs – responsibility: Dean of School

The Dean of School should devise a process which is appropriate to the context and needs of the school but which fulfils the overriding principle that all assessment briefs must be subject to a process of moderation and quality control. The External Examiner is not normally involved in this process but may be invited to comment at the discretion of the school. The process should scrutinise:

a) academic appropriateness in relation to module and programme learning outcomes

b) academic appropriateness in relation to other components of assessment within the same module

c) procedural appropriateness, with particular reference to consistency with the validated module descriptor, and the completeness of the assessment brief

d) accuracy and the proof-reading of the assessment brief.

Disseminating details of assessment briefs – responsibility: Module Leader

The assessment brief must be disseminated on an agreed schedule which allows the student an appropriate period to undertake and submit the assessment by the set deadline and in a manner such that the paper is available to all candidates. A copy should be available for each candidate to collect. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that they receive a copy of the assessment brief. A copy of the assessment brief must be lodged securely with the school office or equivalent.

Receiving coursework

The procedures for submitting coursework will have been published in the assessment brief. Normally, candidates will submit hard copy assignments with a cover sheet. This confirms that the work is ready for assessment. It also declares that the assignment is their own work, and has not been submitted for any other assessment.

In cases where the assessment is in a different format (for example, electronically submitted work, software, art object or oral presentation), the School must ensure there is an appropriate comparable procedure for confirming work is ready for assessment and making the declaration.

Returning work – responsibility: Module Leader

Return of coursework should be to a timetable congruent with the Student Charter, that is, no more than three weeks from the date of submission. General arrangements for return of work should be specified in the assessment brief.

Notes on special types of coursework

Transient assessments

Transient assessments are those where the object assessed is not an artefact (for example, a written document, art work or software) but something that exists temporarily and cannot be precisely repeated (for example, a performance or oral presentation).

In preparing the assessment brief, special attention must be paid to specifying the assessment criteria. This is particularly important for transient assessments, because it affects the preparations which will need to be made for second marking.

If there is an emphasis in the assessment criteria on aspects of 'delivery', then particular care must be taken in making arrangements for second marking. Since it is not possible to implement a selective or sample double-marking process, arrangements should be made for the second marker as well as the first marker to be present at the time the assignment is presented. An alternative approach, where this is feasible and appropriate, is to make a real-time recording of all assessments. Where a transient assessment is a significant element of Level 9, 10 or 11 work, the External Examiner should be invited to agree his or her involvement in the process.

Independent study, dissertation and project modules

Projects

The use of projects has long been popular with students, often because of the degree of individual choice of the project topic and because of the opportunity to explore in depth an area of personal interest at a steady pace.

Advantages of projects:

- The opportunity to study an area of personal interest often increases student motivation.
- Projects provide a context and space in which a deep learning approach can be encouraged.

- They provide a vehicle in which the key employability skills of planning, research, organisation, negotiation, time management and (in group projects) team skills and presentation skills can be enhanced.
- They can permit an interdisciplinary focus and allow presentation in various or combined media.
- The final product or write-up is available for professional or peer review.

Disadvantages of projects:

- Comparability and inter-marker reliability tend to be low.
- Academics can find themselves faced with a huge volume of individualised material to be assessed.
- Assessment can tend to focus more on the product submitted than on the process skills involved in its production.
- In group projects there can be difficulty in determining the contribution of individual group members, unless use is made of peer-assessment.
- Final-year students may devote too much time to their project, endangering the overall classification of their award.

Tips:

- Successful student projects require careful negotiation of the learning outcomes to be achieved and the nature of the material eventually to be presented for assessment.
- The criteria for assessment need to be as explicit and overt as possible.
- It can also help considerably if students are required to submit both a project plan and elements of the project in draft form at staged intervals. Though this might appear to be a way of increasing the overall assessment burden, it can in practice circumvent problems by providing students with guidance at an early stage. Moreover, the material eventually submitted is to some extent already familiar to the assessor.

Some types of modules involve the negotiation of some or all of the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, assessment topic and assessment criteria.

An Independent Study module normally requires all of these to be negotiated within limits set by the validated module descriptor. This may also be the case for Project modules. A procedure for negotiating and approving Independent Study proposals must be published by schools (or, if more appropriate, by programmes or subject groups) and made available to students. Approved proposals must be recorded in writing, and a copy kept by the student and Module Leader.

A Dissertation module, and some Project modules, involve negotiation of the specific assessment topic, though normally the learning outcomes, assessment tasks and assessment criteria will be stated in a validated module descriptor. Procedures and deadlines for developing and approving topics must be published using an assessment brief. There may be other procedures or deadlines which must be adhered to in the process of completing the module, such as submission of proposals and drafts, and attendance at advisory tutorials or workshops. These must also be published, along with clear statements about the implications if they are not followed. Instructions for submitting the work for assessment must also be made clear. Tutors acting as dissertation supervisors should keep records of all meetings with candidates, and copy them to candidates.

Group work

(See also section on Group work assignments above.)

Group work assessment refers to all work produced collaboratively by two or more students, and where a single piece of work is submitted by the group for assessment. In addition to the requirements for drafting an assessment brief for individually assessed work, written guidelines for group work must also stipulate:

a) permissible group size

b) how groups are to be formed (for example, selected by the tutor or by the students, and by what criteria)

c) weighting of the process/product in the allocation of marks

d) rules for managing group work, including procedures for documentation of group activity and student responsibilities (if any) for peer- or self-assessment

e) strategies and procedures for handling problems, including the breakdown of the group.

Work involving self-assessment or peer-assessment

(See also section on Group work assignments above.)

Where these forms of assessment are used, induction and practice for students in assessing their own work or that of others should be provided at the outset of the module and acknowledged in the assessment brief.

Please refer to the *Code of Practice for Effective Group Assessment, the Code of Practice for Effective Peer Assessment and the Code of Practice for Effective Self-Assessment* available in Appendices H (i), H (ii) and H (iii) respectively.

Assessment criteria and marking schemes

Assessment criteria are based on the learning outcomes and should clearly indicate what you expect from a student in terms of their assessment.

Assessment criteria are the dimensions used in making a judgement on how well or otherwise a student has performed in the assessment.

Assessment criteria must be explicit and it is important that students are aware of the assessment criteria at the outset of the module.

Explicit assessment criteria are critical to enabling consistent standards and judgements in marking to be maintained.

From explicit marking criteria, students become aware of what is expected of them from their assessment and they also provide a framework for markers to indicate where students can improve their performance.

The process of determining the marking criteria for an assessment is valuable as it focuses the academic to consider what aspects they really want from the assessment.

Marking criteria must be made available to students in their module handbook and/or in Moodle/VLE.

Marking schemes

A marking scheme is essentially an expansion of the assessment criteria which outlines in greater detail the way in which students will be assessed on each element of assessment.

Race (2007) asserts that a well-constructed marking scheme will save a great deal of time when marking scripts.

A marking scheme consists of a breakdown of marks available for an assessment which can be broken down to reflect different sections of an assessment.

Marking schemes are developed for markers in order to enhance inter-marker reliability and ensure consistency and reliability. Since the attributes of a good answer are predetermined within the making scheme, the assessment process is less likely to be unfair (biased).

Exemplars of marking criteria can be found below.

Examples of marking criteria for SCQF Level 9

	Knowledge and understanding	**Analysis and reflection**	**Use of evidence/ literature**	**Professional growth and development**	**Structure and sequence**
75% or more	Extensive integrated knowledge and understanding pertinent to portfolio learning outcomes.	Evidence of an outstanding level of critical reflection and analysis relevant to professional practice.	Extensive use of appropriately selected evidence and literature which is clearly linked to practice.	Excellent ability to reflect in and on practice in order to determine own learning needs which is then used to formulate an action plan.	Logical presentation. Well-structured sentences and paragraphs. Follows guidelines for presentation of academic work.
65–74%	Very good level of integrated knowledge and understanding pertinent to portfolio learning outcomes.	Evidence of a very good level of critical reflection and analysis relevant to professional practice.	Comprehensive use of appropriately selected evidence and literature which is clearly linked to practice.	Very good ability to reflect in and on practice in order to determine own learning needs which is then used to formulate an action plan.	Logical presentation. Well-structured sentences and paragraphs. Follows guidelines for presentation of academic work.

Examples of marking criteria for SCQF Level 9 (continued)

	Knowledge and understanding	**Analysis and reflection**	**Use of evidence/ literature**	**Professional growth and development**	**Structure and sequence**
50–64%	Broad and integrated knowledge and understanding pertinent to portfolio learning outcomes.	Evidence of critical reflection and analysis relevant to professional practice.	Adequate use of appropriately selected evidence and literature which is clearly linked to practice.	Ability to reflect in and on practice in order to determine own learning needs which is then used to formulate an action plan.	Logical presentation. Clearly structured sentences and paragraphs. Follows guidelines for presentation of academic work.
40–49%	Integrated knowledge and understanding pertinent to portfolio learning outcomes.	Evidence of some critical reflection and analysis relevant to professional practice.	Some use of appropriately selected evidence and literature which is clearly linked to practice.	Evidence of some ability to reflect in and on practice in order to determine own learning needs which is then used to formulate an action plan.	Generally information logically presented with adequately structured sentences and paragraphs. Attempts to follow guidelines for presentation of academic work.

Examples of marking criteria for SCQF Level 9 (continued)

	Knowledge and understanding	Analysis and reflection	Use of evidence/ literature	Professional growth and development	Structure and sequence
35–39%	Superficial knowledge and understanding pertinent to portfolio learning outcomes.	Little evidence of critical reflection and analysis relevant to professional practice.	Little evidence of critical reflection and analysis relevant to professional practice.	Little evidence of ability to reflect in and on practice in order to determine own learning needs which is then used to formulate an action plan.	Demonstrates some attempt to present information in a logical manner. Structure of sentences and paragraphs is inconsistent. Shows some attempt to follow guidelines for presentation of academic work.
34% or less	Lacks evidence of knowledge and understanding pertinent to portfolio learning outcomes.	Insufficient level of evidence of critical reflection and analysis relevant to professional practice.	Insufficient level of use of appropriately selected evidence and literature which is clearly linked to practice.	Insufficient evidence of ability to reflect in and on practice in order to determine own learning needs which is then used to formulate an action plan.	Demonstrates some attempt to present information but not in a logical manner. Poor structure of sentences and paragraphs. Little attempt to follow guidelines for presentation of academic work.

Examples of marking criteria for SCQF Level 11 portfolio
How will my portfolio be assessed?

Grade	Logical & coherent structure	Critical thinking	Actual & future development	Use of evidence	Use of relevant literature
Distinction	Outstanding clear, logical and coherent structure. The portfolio has an introduction that outlines what will be discussed in the body of the text, makes appropriate use of sub-titles within the body of the text and a conclusion that summarises key issues. The prose flows clearly within each section. There is evidence of excellent written communication skills (eg grammar, spelling, references).	Consistently examines evidence in a systematic and questioning manner. Interprets and analyses information collected to make critical judgements. Asks thoughtful questions related to patient/client care. There is evidence of time being spent critically reflecting within the portfolio discussing why the student experienced the problems they did and how they solved these.	Outstanding evidence of actual or future skills development. There is evidence within the portfolio that the student has developed through the process of achieving their learning outcomes. The student also discusses area(s) they will be working on in the future and how they plan to achieve this.	There is evidence of in-depth use of an extensive range of evidence. The student makes clear links between their personal critical reflections and their documentary evidence. Students cite most, if not all, pieces of documentary evidence. No relevant information is omitted and no irrelevant information is included.	There is evidence of an in-depth use of an extensive range of relevant literature. The student makes excellent links between their experiences within their workplace and the relevant theory. The student correctly cites an extensive range of literature including textbooks and research articles.

Examples of marking criteria for SCQF Level 11 portfolio (continued)
How will my portfolio be assessed?

Grade	Logical & coherent structure	Critical thinking	Actual & future development	Use of evidence	Use of relevant literature
Pass	Very clear and mainly logical structure. The portfolio has an introduction section, use of sub-titles within the body of the text and conclusion but it may not be clear in the introduction what will be discussed in the portfolio and/or the conclusion may not summarise the key issues. The prose generally flows clearly within each section. There is evidence of good written communication skills (eg grammar, spelling, references).	Collects and reviews information to make informed and safe judgements. Whilst there is evidence of critical reflection within the portfolio there is little evidence of the student exploring the problems they had and how they solved these.	There is some evidence of actual or future skills development. There is limited evidence within the portfolio that the student has developed through the process of achieving their learning outcomes. The student also discusses area(s) they will be working on in the future but they do not present a plan to achieve this.	Some use of a significant range of evidence. The student generally makes clear links between their personal critical reflection and their documentary evidence. No relevant evidence or information is omitted but some irrelevant information may be included.	There is evidence of some use of a significant range of literature. The student makes good links between their experiences within their workplace and the relevant theory. The student generally correctly cites a range of literature including textbooks and research articles.

Examples of marking criteria for SCQF Level 11 portfolio (continued)
How will my portfolio be assessed?

Grade	Logical & coherent structure	Critical thinking	Actual & future development	Use of evidence	Use of relevant literature
Fail	Clarity is limited or absent, there may be some evidence of a structure but rather incoherent. The portfolio may be difficult to follow in terms of its structure and flow. The prose may flow poorly in places with the student jumping from one topic to an unrelated topic. The portfolio may not contain an introduction and or conclusion. There is evidence of poor written communication skills (eg grammar, spelling, references).	Unable to access, collect, examine or interpret relevant information. Unable to pose thoughtful relevant questions. There is no evidence of critical reflection.	There is no evidence of actual or future skills development. There is no evidence in the portfolio to suggest that the student has developed during the process of attempting to achieve their learning outcomes. There is no attempt to plan how they would improve their knowledge and or skills in the future.	There is limited or no meaningful use of documentary evidence. The student either attempts to make links between their personal reflections and their documentary evidence, but these are unclear, or makes no attempt at all. The evidence presented omits important central issues, details or information.	There is either limited or no evidence of the use of literature. The student makes restricted or no links between their experiences within their workplace and the relevant theory. The student either incorrectly or does not cite any literature.

Appendix B: Suggested verbs/phrases for specifying learning outcomes (Scottish Qualifications Framework)

SCQF level	Suggested verbs/phrases
7	Account for; acquire; collect; define; develop an awareness of; duplicate; enumerate; gain an appreciation of; indicate; label; list; match; name; operate; outline; quote; recall; recognise; record; recount; refer to; relate; repeat; reproduce; respond to; restate; select; state; tabulate
8	Clarify; classify; consider, convert; describe, develop insight into; differentiate between; discuss, distinguish; estimate; examine specific; exemplify; explain; explore; express; extend; find; formulate; give examples of; indicate; identify; illustrate; locate; make distinctions; make observations; paraphrase; perform; present; report; review; select; summarise; utilise a problem-solving approach to
9	Apply knowledge; apply, based on the best evidence; calculate; change; choose; compare; compute; contrast; construct; critically reflect; debate; demonstrate; determine; estimate; evaluate; examine the relationship between; execute; formulate and document a plan of care; illustrate; implement; interpret; infer; manipulate; modify; operate; predict; produce; provide a rationale for; relate; simulate; solve; utilise a problem-solving approach to; verify
10	Adapt; analyse; anticipate; appraise; argue; arrange; assemble, attribute; calculate; categorise; classify; compare; compose; conclude; connect; construct; contrast; create; critically reflect; criticise; debate; defend; design; devise; differentiate; discriminate; distinguish; elaborate; elucidate; evaluate; examine; experiment; extract core issues; formulate; generalise; hypothesise; infer; integrate; initiate; invent; manage; measure; modify; organise; reconstruct; separate; substitute; test; validate
11	Analyse; appraise; argue; challenge; conceptualise; conclude; convince; create; critically appraise; critically assess; critically engage with; critically explore; critically reflect; critique; debate; defend; discriminate; display mastery of; draw conclusions; engage in critical dialogue; estimate; evaluate; examine the impact; exercise appropriate judgment; generate ideas; hypothesise; judge; justify; plan; predict; produce; rationalise the use; recommend; synthesise; test. *And see the QAA resource on masters level outcomes at:* http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/docs/report/what-is-mastersness.pdf

Appendix C: Edinburgh Napier University's Assessment Brief Proforma (Modified)

1. Module number	Insert number.
2. Module title	Insert title.
3. Module leader	Insert name
4. Tutor with responsibility for this Assessment Student's first point of contact	As above or insert details of any other member of staff as the student's first point of contact for this assessment.
5. Assessment	Insert brief description of assessment, for example, 'Essay', 'Practical', 'Oral presentation', 'Project'. This must be as in the approved module descriptor.
6. Weighting	For example, '50% of module assessment'. This must be as in the approved module descriptor.
7. Size and/or time limits for assessment	For example, '1500 words' or '20-minute oral presentation'. Delete 'size' or 'time' as applicable. This must be as in the approved module descriptor.
8. Deadline of submission	Your attention is drawn to the penalties for late submissions Insert date
9. Arrangements for submission	Insert place where work is to be submitted, and the times when it may be submitted. Insert instruction: 'Your work must be submitted with the appropriate cover sheet which must confirm that the assignment is your own and has not been submitted for another assessment', or, if the assessment is not a written or similar artefact, give instructions on any alternative procedure which has been agreed. Insert instruction where appropriate: 'You are advised to keep your own copy of the assessment'.

10. Assessment Regulations	All assessments are subject to the University Regulations Include here any details where exemption from the University Regulations has been approved.
11. The requirements for the assessment	Insert the assessment details, for example, the essay title, the details of the project or practical, the topic for the oral presentation, etc.
12. Special instructions	Use headings as appropriate to provide any instructions on resources, advice and support, arrangements for working in groups, assessment structure, timetable for presentations etc. The statement below on referencing practice should always be included. Refer to your School's guidance for referencing practice and the use of Turnitin, available at: *(insert link to guidance for the school to which the module belongs).*
13. Return of work and feedback	Specify procedures for return/collection of assessment. Note that the Student Charter specifies an entitlement to written feedback for coursework within three working weeks of submission. This should include details of the manner in which students can expect to obtain feedback on their formative / summative assessment. For example, word-processed feedback; podcast; audio; word-processed feedback on student self-selected area(s) etc. Details of what students should if they have difficulty understanding the feedback they have received should also be provided.
14. Assessment criteria	Insert details of the criteria which will be used in marking the assessment. There is no set method for expressing criteria. Criteria may be highly detailed and prescriptive, for example in the form of a grid of academic attributes and marks/grades. They may be relatively descriptive, for example in the form of a set of bullet points. However, they must make cross-reference to the relevant module descriptors. If different parts of the assessment are weighted separately, insert details. The criteria applicable to the different parts should be specified. It is strongly recommended that criteria make explicit reference to 'following normal academic conventions for acknowledging sources'.

Appendix D: Code of Practice on Anonymous Assessment

Principles, purpose and process for anonymous assessment

Principles

In establishing what is accepted as sector-wide good practice in promulgating anonymity in assessment, the University applies the following principles:

a) assessment is of a student's performance, and is without influence from other knowledge or experience of the student

b) after the assessment method has been determined, procedures to anonymise the assessment process should be standard practice wherever it is possible to introduce them

c) in cases where anonymous assessment cannot reasonably be adopted, every effort will be made to separate the assessment of a candidate's performance from any other knowledge or experience of the candidate, or otherwise to introduce such measures which will increase students' confidence that their work is being assessed without inappropriate influence.

Purpose of anonymous assessment

The above principles commit the University to striving to ensure that any assessment of students' work is as free from any potential bias (both positive and negative) as possible. This indicates that the assessment process should be designed to separate the assessment of the students' work from any other experience of, or knowledge about, the candidates. Additionally, it reduces candidates' cause for concern that assessment could be influenced by such factors.

Processes for anonymous assessment

Written examinations

Written examinations are subject to anonymity in assessment. This applies to examinations of all types whether organised centrally or locally including, but not restricted to, closed-book and open-book examinations; unseen and seen examinations.

Candidates are instructed not to write their names on any part of the examination script. They write and sign their names on a portion of the examination cover sheet which is sealed at the end of the examination. Candidates write their matriculation number on the

open (unsealed) portion of the examination cover sheet. Markers do not unseal the cover sheet to identify names until second marking and moderation is completed.

Other forms of examination

Oral, portfolio, exhibition, log, practical or digital examinations cannot usually be assessed effectively and efficiently in this manner, and anonymous assessment would not normally be used in such examinations. The assessment design and process of such examinations, however, should clearly demonstrate how the principles embedded in paragraph 1 above are achieved.

A system of anonymous assessment is not required for exams marked automatically, or for multiple choice exams.

Written coursework

Written coursework assignments are required to follow a process of anonymous assessment except where the nature of the assessment precludes it (for example, a dissertation or project) or where a compelling justification – based on sound pedagogic principles that are linked to the University's *Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy* – has been made at the point where the assessment method is determined.

Candidates write their name, signature and student number on a portion of the assessment coversheet which is sealed at the point of coursework submission. Markers do not identify names until second marking and moderation is completed.

Practical or performance coursework

Anonymous assessment is not likely to be appropriate or possible where coursework consists of art work, exhibitions, performance, oral presentations**,** practical presentations, or where any transitory forms of assessment are involved. Where appropriate, the nature of skills development should be clearly identified at the point where the assessment method is determined, with the principles of fairness and equity built into any diagnostic or iterative processes.

Appendix E: Code of Practice on the Moderation of Marks and Grades

Principles of moderation of marking of summative assessments

Moderation is designed to:

a) ensure consistency and fairness of marking;

b) ensure consistency in the interpretation and application of assessment performance standards;

c) demonstrate inter- and intra-marker reliability;

d) contribute to quality assurance and enhancement within the University;

e) provide a self-assessment mechanism for individual lecturers.

Procedures for moderation of marking

Internal moderation can be carried out in a number of ways, but the principles stated above remain the same, that is, essentially to ensure fairness and consistency of marking across the programme. Internal moderation normally consists of the scrutiny of a sample of students' work across the range of marks.

The following aspects should inform the procedure adopted by a School, or Subject Group in identifying an appropriate moderation procedure:

a) in the interests of objectivity, the internal moderator should normally not have marked any of the submissions in question, though it is recognised that moderation within teaching teams may be the most practicable approach in the case of large modules;

b) consistency in internal moderation is more likely to be achieved with a minimum number of people being involved in each moderation event. This will be dependent on the number of markers involved each time a module is assessed and the type and scale of assessment;

c) internal moderators should be identified by the subject group, for specific modules and diets on an annual basis, with consideration given to lecturers' experience, personal development and subject knowledge;

d) internal moderators should assess the consistency of intra- and inter-marker reliability;

e) moderators should draw a sample of the top, mid and lowest grade work for each marker. This sample is drawn for the purpose of direct comparison between markers and to satisfy the moderator that the marker has awarded a mark or grade that is consistent with the marking criteria;

f) in respect of the volume of work to be moderated, a square root sample would normally be appropriate. Where very small numbers are being assessed, it may be appropriate to moderate all scripts;

g) whilst acknowledging that different terms (moderation, second marking, double marking, etc), may be used to describe the same process, what is sought through this Code is the presence of a procedure which meets the principles stated in paragraph 1. Such procedures already exist in many parts of the University and it is anticipated that they would continue to be used without further or additional processes. However, second or double marking processes which are employed only to meet specific purposes related to the work of individual students would not meet these principles, and further internal moderation should still be undertaken to ensure overall consistency across the entire range of marking;

h) since moderation involves only a sample of student work, there will be a number of students whose work is not moderated. Moderators should not alter individual students marks/grades, as this could unfairly advantage or disadvantage those students whose work was sampled;

i) should the process of moderation reveal inconsistencies or problems of a serious nature, the normal outcome would to re-mark all of the assessments from which the sample has been drawn.

Appendix F: Code of Practice on the Scaling of Marks and Grades

Preamble

This Code of Practice has three sections:

a) underlying principles;

b) triggers for the consideration of scaling;

c) scaling procedures.

Underlying principles

The principles which inform the issue of the scaling are:

a) teaching and learning should be well designed and delivered and its quality monitored through subject groups, and through the annual module review process;

b) assessment should challenge all students;

c) fairness to the student group and the maintenance of appropriate academic standards are the overriding considerations in any scaling exercise;

d) scaling is undertaken to correct recognised problems with the teaching or with the conduct of assessments;

e) the general principle of scaling of marks to deal with recognised problems within the module should be communicated to students;

f) the details of the process of scaling for any individual module should be transparent to all staff and External Examiners;

g) decisions on scaling are related to individual modules and are taken at the Module Board of Examiners; however, as scaling relates to the adjustment of a whole cohort's marks, individual students should be compensated on the basis of their overall performance at the Programme Board of Examiners;

h) scaling of module marks or grades should only be undertaken where there are clearly identified and acceptable reasons; in no case should there be any compromising of academic standards.

Triggers for the consideration of scaling

Scaling may be considered in cases where:

a) for example, unusually high or low averages, or an abnormal distribution, or a high failure rate are identified by the module leader and the subject group and trigger the need for review;

b) student complaints have been received and/or the module survey feedback indicates that there has been a problem;

c) academic or administrative staff, or examination invigilators, report a significant problem.

Procedures for scaling

The following procedures should be followed in cases of scaling:

a) the Module Leader or Subject Group Leader as appropriate analyses student performance and discusses this within a draft module report prepared for the subject group or sub-group meeting held before the Module Board of Examiners. The Module Leader or Subject Group Leader makes recommendations for actions;

b) subject group or sub-group discusses the report and the recommendations and decides on any recommendation regarding scaling that will be taken to the Module Board of Examiners;

c) the group also agrees action designed to minimise any future recurrence of the identified problems;

d) the Module Leader or Subject Group Leader discusses the recommendations with the External Examiner(s) and the Convenor of the Module Board of Examiners prior to its meeting;

e) the Module Board of Examiners decides whether scaling is appropriate and approves action;

f) normally, scaling should not exceed 10 marks or 2 grades above or below the moderated outcomes of the assessment in question;

g) the outcomes of any scaling exercise should be applied equally to all students who have submitted for assessment on the module in question;

h) after the Module Board of Examiners, all decisions taken on scaling should be communicated to the School LTA Committee so that the School can review the rationale and outcomes of such decisions at the next available meeting.

Appendix G: Code for the Conduct of Boards of Examiners

Introduction

The University operates a two-tier system for Boards of Examiners: one tier for modules and a second for programmes. These cover every module and programme of study approved through the University's validation processes.

The purpose of these Boards is to consider module performance and issues arising from the learning, teaching and assessment approaches adopted by the modules; to review students' overall performance on their programme of study; and to make awards. In addition the Boards should actively facilitate reflection, review and dialogue within the module and programme teams and between these teams and external examiners.

Authority to act as convenor or clerk to boards of examiners

The roles and responsibilities of the Convenor or Clerk to a Board of Examiners include a clear understanding of the University's Regulations, procedures and processes and of the academic provision (whether modules or programmes) being considered.

Authority to act as Convenor to a Board of Examiners will be granted by the Dean of School.

No member of staff will be eligible to be the Convenor or Clerk to a Board of Examiners unless they have undertaken training and updating sessions which will be provided through Quality & Standards (School Support Service).

Boards may also appoint a Clerk to take minutes and generally support their work.

Timing of boards of examiners

Module and Programme Boards of Examiners will be held after the end of each trimester in the University's academic calendar. Schools will use the Key Dates Calendar to determine the appropriate timing of all boards and will publish the dates of meetings in good time to ensure effective preparation.

Module Board of Examiners

The responsibilities of the Module Board of Examiners are set out in section A11 of the Academic Regulations which are updated annually.

Module Board of Examiners do not consider the overall performance of individual students or extenuating circumstances.

Schools should configure a Module Board(s) to include:

a) processes which actively facilitate reflection, review and dialogue within the module teams and between these teams and external examiners

b) a membership which as a minimum should comprise module leaders, Convenor, Clerk and External Examiner(s). There should also be adequate representation of additional staff associated with the modules being considered.

The Convenor of a Module Board of Examiners will normally be the Dean of School or a designated senior academic member of staff from the same school, nominated by the Dean of School, who has undertaken the mandatory training and updating.

A member of staff may not serve as the Convenor of a Module Board of Examiners when it is considering a module in whose assessment he or she has been involved.

Proposals for any changes to the membership or operation of the Module Board of Examiners should be approved by the School LTA Committee.

Programme Board of Examiners

The responsibilities of the Programme Board of Examiners are set out in Section A11 of the Academic Regulations

Schools should give careful consideration to the configuration of Programme Boards of Examiners that most appropriately meet their local requirements. The agreed configuration and operation for Programme Boards of Examiners should include:

a) details on the membership of the Board which as a minimum should comprise Programme Leaders, Convenor, Clerk and External Examiner(s). Membership should ensure that there is adequate representation of additional staff associated with the programme(s) being considered

b) provision for pre-Programme Board of Examiners processes to ensure that clear and verified data is presented to the Board

c) a summary paper tabled by the Clerk at the beginning of the Board which indicates changes to the regulations or exemptions relating to the programme

d) a reminder from the Convenor of the procedures relating to cases of extenuating circumstances, and that an appropriate code is used to indicate where a valid extenuating circumstances decision has been applied.

The Convenor of a Programme Board of Examiners will normally be the Dean of School or a designated senior academic member of staff from the same school or faculty, nominated by the Dean of School, who has undertaken the mandatory training and updating.

A member of staff may not serve as the Convenor of a Programme Board of Examiners when it is considering a programme in whose assessment he or she has been substantially involved.

Proposals for any changes to the membership or operation of the Programme Board of Examiners should be approved by the School LTA Committee.

Recording and reporting the outcomes from Boards of Examiners

Each school will retain a full set of minutes and papers for each Board of Examiners. The Clerk to the Board will be responsible for creating and maintaining these records. The minutes of Boards will include information on non-standard decisions made about individual students, for example, the consideration of extenuating circumstances.

Role of external examiners

The role of external examiners is to advise the Board of Examiners, but decisions on student performance, progression and awards are those of the Board as a whole. If an external examiner is unable to attend a meeting of the Board of Examiners, his/her views should be communicated to the Convenor of the Board and should inform the meeting appropriately. Full details of the role and responsibilities of external examiners are set out in section A10 of the Academic Regulations

Quorum and Convenor's Action

The quorum for Module and Programme Boards of Examiners follows the University standard practice of one-third of the approved membership including the Convenor or designated substitute.

Where Convenor's Action on behalf of a Board of Examiners involves a change in a module or award decision, and is anything other than a correction to an error in processing decisions, it should be confirmed in liaison with the Convenor of the School LTA Committee. All Convenor's Action must be reported to the next Board of Examiners meeting. Decisions on changes affecting progression or reassessment decisions are normally taken by the Convenor. In special cases it may be necessary to convene an exceptional Board of Examiners comprising members as appropriate. The remit of such a Board will be agreed, in advance, by the Convenor of the School LTA Committee and the meeting should be minuted.

Appendix H (i): Code of Practice for Effective Group Assessment

Purpose, principles and process for effective group assessment

Definition

The term, group assessment 'can refer to the assessment by a tutor of the products of student group work, or to the assessment of the product by students from other groups (inter-peer assessment), or the assessment of the product of group work by students within a group (intra-peer assessment), and can include self-assessment by individuals or by the group as a whole of the product they have generated, and/or their respective contributions towards the product [ie the process involved]. Therefore it is usual for group assessment to involve at least some elements of peer-assessment and self-assessment' (Race, 2001).

Purposes of group assessment

Opportunity for students to develop a range of skills that are consistently requested by employers, including both working with others and self-management skills.

Opportunity to observe and assess students at a level that can be difficult to achieve in a larger group using pencil and paper tests (Deretchin, 2002).

Opportunity to either focus on product (an outcome of the group activity) or process (how the group worked) or a mixture of the two (Freeman & Lewis, 1998). Overall, group assessment works most usefully when it includes assessment of both the *product/output* of group working and the *process* involved. The balance of these will vary considerably according to the purpose of the activity and the learning outcomes the assessment is designed to measure.

The appropriate use of both self-assessment and peer-assessment can be very effectively used to measure individual activities within the process of group working.

Principles of effective group assessment

Group activity and assessment should be used as a powerful stimulus to learning within the LTA strategies for all Edinburgh Napier programmes.

All students must be appropriately prepared in order to derive the maximum learning benefit from group work and its assessment.

All students should be engaged in group assessment activity from the start of their programme so as to facilitate their understanding of what is involved in working collaboratively and the benefits of such activity.

However, no student should be summatively assessed using group assessment at levels 9, 10 or 11 unless they have received appropriate development opportunities earlier in their programme and/or received formative feedback to help them enhance their group-working skills and maximise the opportunity such activity affords.

Process for effective group assessment

It is important that staff who are involved in using and assessing group work undertake appropriate staff development and engage in relevant good practice exchanges.

Preparation of students should include:

- Induction to the benefits of group assessment;
- How to work as an effective group (including roles, responsibilities, communication and ground rules);
- Managing tasks and meeting deadlines;
- Identifying and managing / resolving potential issues.

Preparation should also include receiving formative constructive feedback on individual contributions, on both group work processes and tasks, and on the product(s) of the group activity.

Consideration should be paid to students' previous experiences and their stage of programme prior to preparation phase. This particularly applies to direct entry students who are likely to need additional arrangements made for them.

When designing group work assessments, appropriate assessment criteria must be strongly aligned with purpose(s) of the assignment and its intended learning outcomes.

Before starting group work, the purpose(s) of the specific group activity and its associated assessment need to be made clear to students. Students need to understand how they will be assessed in order to focus their efforts. Where at all possible, assessment criteria should be negotiated and agreed with students to help increase their understanding of what is being assessed and their sense of ownership of the process.

Appropriate elements of self-assessment and/or peer-assessment should be built into the assessment of any group work assignment in order to help students understand the process of group working as well as their own role and responsibilities.

Appendix H (ii): Code of Practice for Effective Peer Assessment

Purpose, principles and process for effective peer assessment

Definition

Peer assessment involves students in appraising, criticising or evaluating other students' work and receiving assessment from other students (Gallagher & Stevenson, 2007). Peer assessment can foster deep learning and involves students giving feedback or grades (or both) (Falchikov 2005).

Purposes of peer assessment

Provides an opportunity to practise employability skills, including diplomacy, problem solving analysis, making judgments, and being constructive when giving feedback.

Provides an opportunity for social learning which encourages individuals contributing as much as receiving and is an important factor in mental and professional development.

As a system, peer-review helps shift power to the learner thereby increasing democracy and responsibility for learning.

Involving students in the assessment process provides more genuine feedback, providing greater assurance that marks are what they deserve.

Encourages the development of self-appraisal skills, constructive criticism techniques, a reflective approach and fosters deep learning.

Principles of effective peer assessment

Peer assessment should be embedded where appropriate as a learning activity in all Napier programmes as an effective means to foster the development of team working and peer assessment skills.

May be used in a variety of assessment and learning methods including journals, reflective logs, presentations, problem based learning and portfolios.

Peer assessment may be used formatively or summatively but prior to its use, students must be prepared thoroughly.

If used summatively, peer assessment should be used with students initially in a 'low risk' setting (ie with a very small mark allocation).

If used in first year of studies, peer assessment needs to be very structured.

Once students are familiar with the use of peer assessment they should be encouraged to participate in identifying and negotiating appropriate criteria for assessment. The criteria are therefore transparent and fairness is implicit.

Process for effective peer assessment

It is important that staff who are involved in using peer assessment undertake appropriate staff development and engage in relevant good practice exchanges.

Preparation of students should include:

- induction to the benefits of peer assessment;
- how to be an effective peer assessor (including providing written and verbal constructive feedback);
- how to receive and benefit from constructive feedback;
- identifying and managing / resolving potential issues.

Consideration should be paid to students' previous experiences and their stage of programme prior to preparation phase. This particularly applies to direct entry students who are likely to need additional arrangements made for them.

When designing peer assessments, appropriate assessment criteria must be strongly aligned with purpose(s) of the assignment and its intended learning outcomes.

Before using peer assessment, the purpose(s) of the peer assessment activity must be made clear to students. Students need to understand how they will be assessed in order to focus their efforts. Where at all possible, assessment criteria should be negotiated and agreed with students to help increase their understanding of what is being assessed and their sense of ownership of the process.

Prior to being used summatively, adequate preparation and practice should be incorporated into the learning process.

Appendix H (iii): Code of Practice for Effective Self-Assessment

Purpose, principles and process for effective self-assessment

Definition

Self-assessment can be defined as a means by which students gain insight into their own learning journey (Andrade & Du, 2007) through developing the ability to make a judgement of what they know and what they do not know (Langendyk, 2006).

Purposes of self-assessment

The defining characteristic of independent learners (and professional work/ practice) is their ability to self-assess.

Facilitates students meeting expectations of employers.

Provides a significant stimulus to learning.

It is the *sine qua non* of lifelong learning and professional development; powerful tool for self-improvement.

Fosters the ability to accurately self-assess competencies and learning needs which often seems to escape the interest of assessment methods.

Can help low-achieving students gain insight into the quality of their own performance;

Promotes reflection on personal performance.

Identifies reactions to self-assessment.

Principles of effective self-assessment

Self-assessment should be embedded where appropriate as part of the repertoire of learning activities within all Napier programmes.

The skills required in self-assessment are consistent with those required of confident graduates.

The ability to undertake self-assessment is not a natural gift but rather a skill that needs to be learnt and practised. Self-assessment requires students to make an honest self-appraisal or reflection on their own work.

Self-assessment can increase the opportunities to monitor progress and should form the basis of progressive dialogues with Personal Development Tutors/Year Tutors.

Process for effective self-assessment

It is important that staff who are involved in using and facilitating self-assessment undertake appropriate staff development and engage in relevant good practice exchanges.

Self-assessment whilst facilitated by staff should be undertaken by the students themselves.

Students must be provided with an induction to the process and expectations of self-assessment (include rationale for the introduction of self-assessment; guidelines for developing self-assessment criteria; and any expectations of students in supporting their peers in achieving and evidencing their criteria).

Ground rules should be set and maintained.

Students should be provided with clear and unambiguous guidelines which are non-directive in nature.

Students should be provided with opportunities to practice self-assessment.

Consideration should be given to the use of both formative and summative self-assessment.

Students should be engaged in the setting of criteria which will form the basis of self-assessment.

Emphasise that self-assessment is just that – independent of others. Lecturers need to adopt a facilitative role so as to foster student autonomy.

Consideration should be given to including peer support and review of self-assessment.

Lectures need to be reflexive during and after facilitation of self-assessment in order to enhance the process for future students.

Lecturers/Personal Development Tutors should provide feedback to students on their attempts at self-assessment as part of the learning process.

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