Assessment and Feedback Policy

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Purpose

1.   The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles which relate to assessment and feedback at the University of Salford.

Scope

2.   This policy applies to all students undertaking taught programmes at levels 3 – 7 at the University of Salford and its partner institutions.

Definitions of Assessment and Feedback

3.   Assessment as used in this policy refers to all forms of assessed activity, for example, coursework assignment, presentation, test, portfolio and written examination.

4.   The Quality Assurance Agency has defined formative and summative assessment[1] as follows:
Formative assessment has a developmental purpose and is designed to help learners learn more effectively by giving them feedback on their performance and on how it can be improved and/or maintained. Reflective practice by students sometimes contributes to formative assessment.

Summative assessment is used to indicate the extent of a learner's success in meeting the assessment criteria used to gauge the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme.

5.   To aid student understanding of the purpose of the tasks, formative tasks are referred to as opportunities to 'Practice for Success'.

6.   Feedback as used in this policy refers to all information provided to students about their performance in an assessment task that enables them to learn. Feedback is a necessary component of learning and therefore should be a feature of all assessment tasks and assessment for learning.

Assessment and Feedback Principles

7.   We use assessment for a variety of different purposes:
- Assessment *of* learning: used for certification: identifying levels of achievement; awarding credit and qualification; assurance of academic standards.

- Assessment *for* learning: promoting student learning through timely, actionable feedback; motivating, guiding their approach to learning; giving the tutor useful information regarding effectiveness of teaching strategies.

- Assessment *as* learning: where students develop an awareness of how they learn and use that awareness to adjust and advance their learning, taking an increased responsibility for their learning.[2]

8.   The following principles inform the institution's approach to assessment. Assessment at the University of Salford will:

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[1] www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/advice-and-guidance-assessment.pdf?sfvrsn=ca29c181_4

[2] Adapted from Manitoba Education, The Role of Assessment in Learning
http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/assess/role.html and Bloxham & Boyd, 2007

- Be inclusive in design, providing all students with the opportunity to achieve learning outcomes associated with their modules and programmes to the best of their abilities[3];
- Be authentic and relate to real world practice;
- Promote academic and professional ethical practice;
- Include active and collaborative tasks;
- Involve appropriate stakeholders, including industry partners;
- Encourage, motivate and engage students, promoting learning and facilitating improvement through timely and constructive feedback;
- Promote the development of assessment literacy amongst students and staff;
- Be conducted equitably and securely in line with University regulations and processes;
- Help students to develop through the provision of, and engagement with, timely and constructive feedback as well as through opportunities to practice for success;
- Provide a valid, reliable and transparent measure of student achievement and proficiency relative to the specific learning outcomes;
- Support future employment and encourage students to embark on professional pathways;
- Provide stakeholders with confidence in the quality and standards of University of Salford awards.

9. The assessment principles have been designed to align with the University's Industry Collaboration Zone Curriculum Design Principles.

Assessment and Feedback Policy

10. All assessment is conducted in line with the University's Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes.

11. Examinations are conducted in line with the University's Examination Rules and Regulations. If a student is unable to attend an examination at a particular time due to religious observance, guidance is available here.

12. All modules must be assessed in line with an approved module specification using the validated assessment strategy. The assessment strategy should be designed to encourage student engagement with each element of assessment.

13. Assessment must be aligned with module and programme learning outcomes, and marks should only be awarded against marking criteria which relate directly to these learning outcomes. If marks for contribution / engagement are used these must be explicitly identified in the assessment brief and marking criteria. Penalties must not be applied for non-attendance as part of the assessment strategy.

14. Each module will contain at least one component of assessment. The Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes provide further information about the maximum permitted number of components of assessment. Marks are awarded for whole components of assessment and sub-components should not be used. Where a single

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[3] Details of the University's Inclusive Student Experience Project are available via https://testlivesalfordac.sharepoint.com/sites/DisabilityLearnerSupport/SitePages/Inclusive-and-Accessible-Teaching-Framework.aspx

component of assessment comprises a number of parts but has one submission date, as in a portfolio or project, a single mark should be awarded for the whole assessment and only this mark will be recorded.

15. The final submission date for assessments must not exceed the end point of a programme as set out in the Programme Specification. This is to ensure compliance with Home Office requirements in relation to programme end dates which are specified in Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS).

16. To help support the transition of students into Higher Education there should be no formal written examinations in Trimester 1 for students at levels 3 and 4 within any mode of module delivery (short fat or long thin), this does not preclude the use of other types of assessment carried out under time-limited conditions. Formal written examinations are permitted where this is a requirement of a PSRB or subject to additional accreditation awarded by external bodies. A note to this effect should be included in relevant programme approval documentation.

17. All assessments (with the exception of examinations) must use the University's assessment brief template and be provided to students, normally electronically. This is the set of instructions outlining the requirements and criteria for the assessment. As a minimum, assessment briefs must include:

- a description of the task (which may include a word count or length);

- the intended learning outcomes;

- the submission date;

- process for submission;

- referencing style/requirements;

- allocation of marks and grade descriptors;

- marking criteria;

- the date on which feedback is due and the mode of feedback;

- details of how students can engage in 'practice for success' during preparation for the assessment.

18. Examination papers must be prepared in accordance with guidance provided by Student Administration. Marking schemes are also required and should form part of the verification process. Examination rules are available here.

19. All assessment shall normally take place within modules during the approved duration of each programme.

Verification

20. Internal and external verification of summative assessment briefs and marking schemes is used to ensure that the assessment of students is appropriate and promotes effective learning.

21. The purpose of verification is to consider:

- the appropriateness of the module assessment strategy in relation to the module's intended learning outcomes;
- the clarity of instructions within the Assessment Brief to support completion of the assessment task(s) and consideration of marking schemes/model answers;
- the appropriateness of the marking scheme.

22.   The verification process is described in Appendix A.

Assessment Submission

23.   Programme teams shall produce an assessment schedule one week prior to the induction period at start of each academic year to document all assessment deadlines and tasks. This is to ensure that module assessments are scheduled in an appropriate manner, this should ensure that all students receive timely feedback on performance through early assessment, that assessments are spaced in a manner that avoids bunching and promotes progressive learning through the staggering of assessment submission dates throughout the academic year. The assessment schedule shall be published on Blackboard for students to access.

24.   Assessment briefs, including submission dates, shall be published at the start of each module via module information on the module site within Blackboard.

25.   Submission dates must not be scheduled on dates when the University is officially closed and when setting due dates, consideration should be given to the impact of the late submission period (see section 35).

26.   Programme teams should strive to accommodate major religious festivals of all faiths in its planning, though this is not always possible. Programme teams should consider significant dates when setting assessment submission dates. Further information is available through askUS.

27.   The University's assessment process takes place principally electronically, this includes electronic submission, marking and feedback. All written assessments must be submitted through Blackboard, unless an exception has been granted by the Director of Academic Quality. Wherever practical to do so, other assessment artifacts should also be submitted via Blackboard, specific exemption does not need to be sought where Blackboard is not used for such assessments.

28.   Module leaders must make sure that all assessment submission areas (including Turnitin and online tests) are set up in accordance with University guidelines:

Blackboard Ultra

29.   Exceptions to electronic submission are considered as part of the module approval and amendment process through the Programme Design, Approval, Amendment, Review and Withdrawal Procedure. Alternative arrangements for submission may be considered for students studying at collaborative partner institutions. Alternative arrangements must be agreed and logged with the Quality Management Office.

30.   When submitted online, assessments will be receipted electronically, or confirmation of receipt provided on screen. When an assessment is legitimately submitted offline, students must use the assessment submission form. Schools must ensure that there is

a robust system for the timed receipting of student work, again using the [assessment submission form](#).

31. Whether online or offline, the deadline for submission of assessments is 16:00 UK time on the specified submission date, which should normally be a weekday, except where the relevant module is normally delivered on a weekend. Any submission after 16:00 UK time, even if by only a few seconds, will be considered as late.

32. Text based work should normally be submitted through Turnitin so students can view an Originality Report. Students can resubmit to Turnitin before the deadline of 16:00 UK time to view Originality Reports. After the deadline students can no longer resubmit and any submitted work becomes their submission. If a student submits for the first time during the late submission period, they will not have access to an originality report.

33. Where work is submitted through Blackboard, only one submission for each assessment is possible. It is not possible to offer originality reports for Blackboard submissions. If an incorrect version has been submitted, students can contact Digital IT who can remove a submission, allowing a further opportunity to submit. Late submission rules will apply if the submission is made in the late submission period.

34. It is a student's responsibility to ensure that assessments are submitted successfully and that the correct version has been submitted for assessment. In the case of online submission, students must ensure that assessments are submitted to the correct folder or equivalent. If a student discovers, after the submission deadline, that an assessment has been submitted to an incorrect Blackboard or Turnitin folder, they should contact the Module Leader to request that the submission is marked, as long as this occurs prior to the meeting of the Module Assessment Board which formally ratifies module marks.

Late Submission

35. The University's late submission period is seven consecutive days following the assessment submission date. The seven consecutive day period includes weekends and Bank Holidays but not extended periods of official closure e.g. Christmas, Good Friday and Easter Monday.

36. The late submission period applies to all assessment attempts (including resit attempts) except In-Year Retrieval Assessment attempts. Late submission arrangements do not apply to examinations or similar scheduled and timed assessment events such as presentations or performances.

37. Where assessments are submitted in the late submission period, the following rules apply:

   - If the work is no more than seven days late, then if the work would otherwise be of a pass standard, then the mark for the work shall be capped at the pass mark for the component. If the mark achieved is lower than the pass mark, then no penalty will be applied.
   - If the work is no more than seven days late and graded either Pass or Fail, then no penalty shall be applied.
   - If the work is more than seven days late then it cannot be submitted. It will be recorded as a non-submission (NS) and no feedback will be provided.

- Late submission rules only apply to whole components of assessment and no penalties should be applied to individual elements of portfolio/project type assessments.

38. Reasonable Adjustment Plans and Carer Support Plans (see section 73 for further information) which have assessment adjustments for submission deadlines will be for a period of up to seven days only for any assessment attempt, and not subject to penalties for late submission of assessment within the adjusted deadline. Penalties for late submission in line with section 37 will apply after the adjusted deadline has elapsed.

39. Where a student has valid reasons for submitting an assessment late and has a request for Personal Mitigating Circumstances accepted through the Personal Mitigating Circumstances Procedure, the penalty applicable for late submission will be removed.

40. Where students have submitted an assessment later than the published deadline, as permitted by the late submission period or by a Reasonable Adjustment Plan/Carer Support Plan, programme teams should still aim, where possible, to provide feedback within 15 working days of the published deadline, and in any case no later than 15 working days after the date the assessment was submitted. The 15 working day period for provision of feedback does not include days when the University is officially closed, for example weekends, bank holidays or during the Christmas closure period.

Network/System Failure

41. Where there is an unexpected University network failure, and Blackboard and/or Turnitin is not accessible at the deadline for e-submission or in the 12 hour period before that time, the Director of Academic Quality (or nominee) will determine the course of action to be taken, for example, the assessment deadline may be amended to 16:00 UK time on the next working day on which the University network and Blackboard and/or Turnitin become available. Where there is a scheduled downtime of Blackboard and/or Turnitin, all staff and students will be notified in advance via appropriate communication channels.

42. Where a student experiences a technical issue with University systems which means that they are unable to complete their assessment, they must report this to Digital IT immediately.

Marking and Feedback

43. All summative assessments are either awarded a numerical mark expressed as a percentage or a pass/fail grade.

44. All marks are awarded in line with the University marking scale of 0-100%. Programme teams may choose to adopt the stepped marking scheme detailed in Appendix B.

45. All assessments are marked using specific criteria which are shared with students at the start of the module. Marking criteria will align with programme and module intended learning outcomes.

46. The University provides brief descriptors of level of performance. Schools are required to develop, implement and review annually subject-specific performance descriptors that

align with the University descriptors. Schools should ensure that any issues arising from their annual reviews of subject-specific performance descriptors and their relationship to University descriptors are recorded in relevant Programme Action Logs in line with the Programme Monitoring and Enhancement Procedure.

47. At levels 3, 4, 5 and 6 the pass mark is 40% and the scale is:

Percentage Mark	Level of Performance
90-100	Outstanding
80-89	Excellent
70-79	Very Good
60-69	Good
50-59	Fair
40-49	Adequate
30-39	Unsatisfactory
20-29	Poor
10-19	Very Poor
0-9	Extremely Poor

48. At level 7 the pass mark is 50% and the scale is:

Percentage Mark	Level of Performance
90-100	Outstanding
80-89	Excellent
70-79	Very Good
60-69	Good
50-59	Satisfactory
40-49	Unsatisfactory
30-39	Inadequate
20-29	Poor
10-19	Very Poor
0-9	Extremely Poor

49. Where assessments are awarded pass or fail grades, the requirements for passing the assessment must be described in the assessment brief.

50. All summatively assessed work must be marked anonymously where possible and practical to do so; however, there will be some forms of assessment where this is not possible, for example observed assessments such as performances and presentations.

51. Assessment calibration activities are required for assessments offered on apprenticeships and collaborative provision programmes. Assessment standardisation activities are required for assessments offered on collaborative provision programmes and where more than one person is marking an assessment (i.e. there is a marking team). Calibration and standardisation are defined in Appendix D along with a description of the processes.

52. Marks and feedback (for summatively assessed work) shall be provided to students within 15 working days of the published assessment submission deadline except where concerns relating to academic misconduct arise. In such instances, the marker may cease marking the assessment and prepare a case for referral to the School's Academic Misconduct Officer. Feedback will not normally be given to the student until the case has been considered. Where students have submitted later than published assessment submission deadline due to a Reasonable Adjustment Plan/Carer Support Plan or use of the late submission period, section 40 outlines requirements in relation to the timing for provision of marks and feedback.

53. All marks and, where appropriate, feedback should be returned to students via Blackboard.

54. The QAA's UK Quality Code provides guidance on how effective feedback is achieved:

> *Effective feedback enables students to understand the strengths and limitations of their performance, and to recognise how future performance can be improved.*[4]

55. The scheduling and availability of feedback will be dependent on the nature of the learning tasks undertaken and at the discretion of the programme team. Arrangements for obtaining feedback as part of 'Practice for Success' should be clearly articulated to students. Programme teams will need to ensure that students have sufficient time to act on any feedback received.

56. The purpose of feedback is to support learning and therefore should identify strengths and where there is room for improvement and development. Feedback should be provided for all summative assessments with the exception of formal written examinations, must, as a minimum:

- provide an un-ratified mark or grade;
- indicate how marks were arrived at with explicit reference to the descriptors and marking criteria for the assessment task (see sections 45 and 46);
- present constructive, developmental comments on the assessment, including reference to successful and less successful aspects of the assessment, and advice on how to improve. This should include the provision of answers to the following questions:
  - **What you did well in this piece of work** (briefly describing the main strengths on this assessment)
  - **Where improvements could be made in this piece of work** (detailed and clearly explained points)
  - **What should I consider for future assessments?** (How feedback should be applied to improve the next / later similar elements of assessment)

57. In addition to meeting the standards set out in this Policy, programme teams must ensure that they meet any standards for feedback required by relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies.

58. For written examinations feedback should, as a minimum, constitute:

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[4] QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education Advice and Guidance Assessment (2018)

- a mark or grade;
- an opportunity for students, upon request, to view their annotated examination script and receive verbal feedback of the type described in section 56.

59. Although examination scripts are exempt from subject access requests under the General Data Protection Regulation, comments made by assessors and moderators are not exempt and should be provided to students if requested. Where requested, examiners' comments must be transcribed onto a separate sheet.

60. Feedback should be easily accessible and clear, ensuring that comments can be accessed confidentially by individual students and can be retained by students and the University.

61. A record of marking, which evidences the breakdown of marks for each assessed component, will be retained within the Student Information System. Only whole component marks are recorded.

Word Count/Length

62. Where a word count or length is specified in an assessment brief, students must adhere to this. If a student does not adhere to the word count or length, assessors may determine that the task has not been completed in accordance with instructions and reflect this in the mark awarded (see Appendix C for further guidance).

63. No arbitrary penalty shall be applied for exceeding the stated length of an assessment however, markers will cease considering content for the purpose of grading and feedback once the stated maximum length has been exceeded. Content beyond this point will not contribute to the determination of the awarded mark and will not be commented upon in feedback.

Moderation

64. Summative assessment outcomes shall be subject to internal and external moderation and confirmed by the Assessment Board in line with the Assessment Boards for Taught Programmes Policy. The purpose of moderation is to provide assurance that assessment criteria have been applied appropriately and to verify academic standards. Where appropriate, moderators may raise concerns regarding marking with assessors, but it is not the role of internal or external moderators to reconsider any individual mark.

65. The moderation process is described in Appendix E.

66. Students shall be advised that where feedback on assessments is provided prior to the meeting of the Module Assessment, any marks indicated are provisional, may be changed following moderation and are subject to ratification by the Module Assessment Board.

Double Marking

67. Our standard moderation processes provide the necessary assurance of consistency and fairness across the majority of modes of assessment and there is no case to

introduce second marking as a requirement where moderation can be adequately complete. Second marking should only be used when it is not possible to use sample moderation or where it is specifically prescribed by a PSRB. Guidance on second marking is available here.

Reassessment

68.   Reassessment submission dates should be set at a time which is suitable for the programme and, where there is a School wide reassessment submission date, published within the University Activity Planner.

69.   At the start of each module, students must be provided with details of all reassessment tasks and submission dates via module information on the module site within Blackboard.

70.   A reassessment task must be the same assessment task as that offered at first attempt, unless there is an appropriate academic justification to set an alternative task (see guidance notes- under development). For example,

- where an individual has failed a group assessment task and is not able to join a group for the reassessment, it would be necessary to design a different equivalent task for reassessment;
- for unseen written examinations, an equivalent alternative version would normally be produced for reassessment.

Academic Misconduct

71.   Any improper activity or behaviour by a student which may give that student, or another student, an unfair academic advantage in a summative assessment is considered to be an act of academic misconduct. This is unacceptable in an academic community. All cases of suspected academic misconduct will be considered in line with the Academic Misconduct Procedure or the Student Disciplinary Procedure.

Personal Mitigating Circumstances

72.   Where a student's ability to undertake or submit an assessment is seriously affected by personal mitigating circumstances (PMC) a student may submit a request through the Personal Mitigating Circumstances Procedure that their PMC be taken into consideration by the University in respect of:

- late submission of assessments;
- non-submission of assessments; or
- non-attendance at an examination or similar scheduled and timed assessment event.

Assessment of Study Abroad

72.   Where a student undertakes a period of Study Abroad as part of a programme of study, further information about how this will be assessment is available at: https://testlivesalfordac.sharepoint.com/sites/InternationalOpportunities-StudentHub/SitePages/Academic-Information.aspx

Reasonable Adjustment Plans/Carer Support Plans

73.   The assessment of need process seeks to put measures in place to mitigate the effects of a student's individual needs. Reasonable adjustments are made while the student is progressing through their programme and may affect the conduct of their assessments. These are documented in Reasonable Adjustments Plans which are developed by the Disability and Learner Support Service or through Carer Support Plans developed by the Student Diversity team.

In-Year Retrieval Scheme

74.   The University has an in-year retrieval scheme (IRYS) which provides level 3 and 4 students with an opportunity to recover failure in some summative assessments before the reassessment period. Essentially this offers students the opportunity to retrieve failure in assessments, or to submit assessments that were not submitted at initial attempt, at a much earlier point in the academic year, closer to the point of module content to which the assessment relates. The Scheme is described in Appendix F.

In Year Retrieval Scheme – FAQs for Staff

In Year Retrieval Scheme – FAQS for Students

Retention and Disposal of Summatively Assessed Work

75.   The University retains assessments for various purposes including moderation, resolution of queries, academic misconduct cases, academic appeals and internal and external review. Schools must retain all electronic or physical assessments for a minimum of two months from the date the results were ratified by the Assessment Board.

76.   In addition, Schools must retain samples of summative assessments that has been internally and externally moderated in line with the process set out in Appendix E, together with the feedback provided on a three year rolling basis for audit and review purposes. In addition, Schools should also accommodate any requirements set by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies.

77.   Advice is available to Schools on the management and confidential disposal of assessed work from the Information Governance Team.

Appendices

Appendix A – Verification Process

Appendix B – Stepped Marking Scheme

Appendix C – Assessment Length Guidance

Appendix D – Standardisation and Calibration Processes

Appendix E – Moderation Process

Appendix F – In Year Retrieval Scheme

Appendix A   Guide for Internal and External Verification of Assessments

1. Purpose

1.1   The overall purpose of internal and external verification of summative assessment briefs and marking schemes is to ensure that the assessment of students is appropriate, inclusive and promotes effective learning.

1.2   There are a number of different aspects of the verification process at component, module and level of programme. The overall impact of the verification process is to establish the appropriateness and coherence of the diet of assessment to which a student is exposed within each level of their programme and the clarity of each component within that diet. Verification should take account of intended learning outcomes, consideration of marking schemes/model answers, the characteristics of the student cohort and the role of other learning activities in supporting each assessment task. Verification should also seek to take into account the cumulative effect of assessment within each level of programme with consideration of the volume, timing and variety of assessment tasks.

2. Verification Requirements and Timing

2.1   Verification involves both internal and external review to ensure that assessments meet both institutional and sector standards and offer an appropriate level of challenge to students as well as forming an authentic and accessible way to gauge student achievement.

2.2   Internal verification is required annually for all components of summative assessments and is undertaken by at least one member of academic staff from outside the module team.

2.3   External verification by the External Examiner is required:

- for summative assessments that contribute to the classification of qualifications;

- for summative assessments at other levels where required by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) or by collaborative provision agreements;

- where assessments/modules outcomes have been identified as falling outside accepted norms.

2.4   Verification of module assessments should be completed **before** the start of the module and before assessments are distributed to students. Consideration of assessment outcomes from previous years is an integral part of the process and should be factored into the timing of the relevant tiers of the process.

2.5   First-sit assessments and, where a different task is used, reassessments should be verified at the same time.

3.   Verification Process

3.1   Tier 1 Programme verification– vertical coherence of assessment

3.1.1   The programme level diet of assessment is reviewed in detail at first validation (programme approval) and through periodic programme review. This process should consider the mapping of assessments against programme level learning outcomes as well as the coherence of the proposed diet of assessment. The vertical

coherence of assessment should be reviewed to ensure that there is an appropriately scaffolded progression of assessments tasks within and between levels.

3.1.2   The impact of changes at other tiers of the verification process should be checked annually to ensure that the coherence of the overall diet of assessment is not affected. At this tier, review of overall timely progression and, where relevant, degree outcomes should be reviewed to help inform the consideration of the overall programme assessment strategy, including performance by specific sub-sets of the student body. This process is an integral part of the ongoing programme monitoring and review cycle feeding in as appropriate to the PMEP and Student Staff Liaison processes.

3.2   Tier 2 Level of Study verification – coherence of assessment within each academic level

3.2.1   The pattern of assessment within a single level should be reviewed to verify the appropriateness of the volume (student load), timing and variety of assessment presented to students. Specific consideration should be given to the relative distribution of assessment to ensure there is no bunching and that there are opportunities for feed-forward from one piece of assessment to another and between modules. Where appropriate the timing of In-year retrieval and / or reassessment should also be considered.

3.2.2   At this tier, review of the level specific timely progression rate needs to be considered to help inform the consideration of the assessment diet at that level**, including performance by specific sub-sets of the student body**. This process should form a part of the review of programme performance at the time of assessment boards. Where student outcomes indicate that changes need to be made to the pattern or diet assessment these changes can be discussed by the programme team prior to the planning of individual module assessments.

3.2.3   Implementation of a new process for Single Mark Entry requires the confirmation of the diet of assessment and associated submission dates for the set-up of the assessment structure in Banner and to feed to creation of Assessment Areas in Blackboard. This tier of verification will be embedded in the Banner Assessment Structure sign-off process.

3.3   Tier 3   Module level verification

3.3.1   The total diet of assessment within the module need to be reviewed together to determine that the level of student effort proposed is appropriate and that the assessments designed map to the intended learning outcomes of the module. Consideration should be given to the timing of assessment in the module as well as the relationship between the assessments and the module teaching strategy.

3.3.2   **At this tier, review of module pass rates and distribution of marks should be considered to help inform the consideration of the module assessment strategy, including performance by specific sub-sets of the student body**.

3.3.3   The clarity and coherence of each assessment brief should be reviewed to ensure that students are able to identify and follow the requirements of the specific assessment item. Mapping of the assessment brief and assessment criteria to the module intended learning outcomes is essential. Component verification should

confirm the appropriateness of the specific assessment load (e.g. student effort hours).

3.3.4   At this tier, review of the equivalent component non-submission, first-time pass rates and distribution of marks should be considered to help inform the appropriateness of each specific component, including performance by specific sub-sets of the student body. Copies of the assessment briefs utilised the previous year should be made available for comparison at this tier and to allow any changes to be tracked and evaluated.

3.4   Recording of verification

3.4.1   Internal verifiers should record the outcome of the process on the University's verification template. Internal verifiers either confirm that the assessment and marking scheme/rubric are appropriate and record any examples of good practice, or record any concerns and suggested amendments. In the case of concerns, internal verifiers discuss the assessment and/or marking scheme/rubric with originators and, if appropriate, the module leader. Where appropriate originators produce an amended or new assessment and/or marking scheme/rubric and the process of internal verification is repeated.

3.4.2   Where external verification is required, the External Examiner should be provided with:

- internally verified assessment;

- marking scheme/rubric;

- University verification template detailing internal verification;

- the previous year's assessment briefs and outcomes for comparison.

3.4.3   External Examiners record the outcome of their verification process on the University's verification template and either confirm that the assessment and marking scheme are appropriate or record any concerns about the assessment together with amendments. Where necessary, originators produce an amended or new assessment and the process of external verification is repeated until satisfactorily completed.

3.4.4   Schools must retain records of verification as these may be required if a student submits an academic appeal or complaint or for audit purposes.

4.   Timing of the verification process

4.1   All tiers of verification need to be completed annually for all programmes and levels of study, however, Tiers 1 and 2 are embedding in other processes rather than being separate activities. Whilst there is a logical hierarchy to the tiers it should be possible for changes to the diet of assessment to be initiated from any tier e.g. specific module assessment changes may be required in one module to provide a more scaffolded preparation for students on another module where outcomes are lower. In contrast performance in a specific module may best be resolved by changing the nature of timing of assessment, this may have implications for the

overall flow of assessments in the level and so result in the need for Tier 2 coherence to be reconfirmed.

4.2   Programme and module leaders are central to this with support from others will appropriate subject knowledge to provide the critical review. External verification of the overall diet of assessment and student outcomes is implicit within the external examining process and through the role of external advisors on validation and review panels. It is therefore not necessary to require any further sign-off of these tiers of verification. Peer review of specific assessment briefs at module level is necessary at Tier 3. Following internal verification, assessment briefs for components contributing to degree outcomes should be shared with the appropriate external examiner to complete the verification processes prior to sharing with students at the start of the module.

4.3   Schools must retain records of verification in line with the Information Retention Schedule, as these may be required if a student submits an academic appeal or complaint or for audit purposes.

Appendix B Stepped Marking Scheme

Where possible, it is advised that stepped marking is considered. Stepped marking refers to a restricted grade band marking scheme, where markers may only choose marks representing the upper. middle and lower range of each band, as illustrated in the table below (for levels 3 to 6). For example, in the adequate band must choose between 42%, 45% or 48%.

Possible Mark Choices	Performance descriptor
100 95 92	Outstanding
88 85 82	Excellent
78 75 72	Very Good
68 65 62	Good
58 55 52	Fair
48 45 42 40 (for UG assessments	Adequate
38 35 32	Unsatisfactory
25	Poor
15	Very Poor
5 0	Extremely Poor

Using stepped marking allows markers to indicate where the work sits within each band but removes the need to make very finely tuned judgements and avoids borderline marks. Stepped marking should make conversations between markers, students and moderators more straightforward. For holistic marking rubrics, the marker will select one mark from the list in the table, and for analytic rubrics (where multiple criteria are assessed separately) each criterion is marked separately, and the overall mark calculated based on the weighting of the different criteria.

Appendix C Assessment Length

1.0 Principles and Scope

1.1 It is often useful for tutors to provide guidance as to the appropriate length (word count, page number, time etc) for an assessment either to guide the student as to the expected amount of effort required or to address the specific pedagogic challenge of producing work to a given brief. Having an upper-limit on the length of submission acceptable for a given task can help to protect students from spending a disproportionate amount of time on any one piece of work and can control the demands on staff required to assess the submitted work.

1.2 Where a guide length is provided it is important that the nature of this is stated explicitly to students including full details of what is included in this e.g. page lengths, font size, margins etc. where page lengths are used, or whether references, tables, appendices etc. are included if a word count is specified.

1.3 Regardless of how the length is specified, it is essential that the nature of this limit and margin of acceptability is detailed in the assessment brief. A clear distinction is required to identify the upper limit of length beyond which work will not be accepted for consideration to derived mark.

1.4 Under no circumstances should there be an arbitrary deduction of marks for excessive length. Rather, the assessor should cease consideration of content at the specified length and award marks only on the basis of work within the stated acceptable upper limit of length.

1.5 Where producing work to a specific, fixed length is an essential skill / ILO then we should when possible use the available technology to create assessment templates that do not allow submission of more than the allowable limit. – This is common practice in many online forms and prevents students exceeding the limits (limits can be set by no. characters, no. words, or no. pages as appropriate).

1.6 Where use of a constraining template is not possible or appropriate, the maximum length should be clearly articulated in the assessment brief (providing full details of how this will be determined) and consideration of content will cease during the marking process at the prescribed length.

1.7 Where the assessment length is for guidance and adherence is not an essential outcome or ILO, the submission rules should reflect this. The guidance length should be communicated in as much detail as possible and be sufficient to permit students to meet the assessment criteria. To help manage student effort and to manage marking work-load, an upper allowable limit is still advisable. This should be set at a level that reflects the nature of the limit, typically ~10%. Where work exceeds this upper limit assessor should cease consideration of content at the specified length and award marks only on the basis of work within the stated acceptable upper limit of length.

Table 1   Examples of application of guidance

Example	Proposed action	Rationale
Assessment length set for guidance of effort and to control marking load.	Set guide length as 'n' pages / words / minutes etc with an upper limit for acceptable length (typically +10%). Do not mark beyond stated upper limit. Where possible configure submission to only accept work up to upper limit.	Sets expectation with guide length. Does not impose an arbitrary penalty. Provides scope for students to write more if necessary but prevents really excessive length to constrain both student and marker work load.
Assessment seeks to address the development and evaluation of concise writing skills.	Use assessment template to constrain submission length e.g. by the creation of web or word forms with maximum word / character / or line numbers, upper limit on file size or media length. Students are unable to submit work beyond the accepted length. If maximum length can't be constrained by technology, make clear the absolute limit and do not mark content beyond stated upper limit.	Prepares students in an authentic manner for completion of many forms. Does not apply an arbitrary penalty. Prevents students from exceeding the acceptable limits.

Appendix D Assessment Standardisation and Calibration

This section explains different types of standardisation activity and how they are organised and carried out.

	Title	Timing	Circumstances it takes place.	Aim	Impact on students' marks
A	Assessment Calibration (pre-assessment)*	Prior to the assessment activity	Routinely for: • Apprenticeships • Collaborative provision (unless agreed otherwise) It also may be used where several people will be marking as part of a team.	To gain a shared understanding of the application of rubrics to either a specific type or level of assessment and so increase understanding of the assessment and minimise risk of discrepancies when the marking actually takes place. It may also include a reflection on similar previous marking exercises.	No direct impact on any individual student marks.
B	Standardisation (see guidance below)	As part of assessment marking (prior to internal moderation)	Routinely for: • Collaborative provision (unless agreed otherwise) It is also used where several people will be marking as part of a team including Apprenticeships.	To ensure consistency of the application of rubrics in marking.	Individual student marks as part of the sample used may change because of the exercise.
C	Assessment Calibration (post-assessment)*	After internal moderation and/or external moderation	Routinely for Apprenticeships It also may be used in other circumstances if considered appropriate based on feedback from internal and/or external moderators have raised issues.	To review and learn lessons from assessment marking activity that can be used to inform future assessment marking. For apprenticeship it may also involve calibration against other apprenticeship providers and include employer feedback on assessment.	No change in student marks as result of the exercise.

*Depending on timing A and C make take place in the same session.

Guidance on how to run an assessment calibration event (A and C)

The main purpose of calibration is to maintain academic standards within a programme team or across related programmes. It is a process of peer review which involves dialogue, negotiation and joint decision making, comparing judgements on student work to reach a shared understanding of the academic standard at each level. In addition to being an important quality assurance mechanism for improving marking and moderation, calibration offers important collaborative learning and professional development opportunities for academics.

For further information on calibration, see the resources from the Advance HE "Degree Standards" project https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/degree-standards-project/calibration-academic-standards.

A calibration activity involves the following:

1. Examples of student work from one assessment component (e.g. written assignment, video of performance, artefact) representing high, medium and low levels of student attainment.

2. An agreed reliable mark for each piece of work (e.g. the moderated grade originally given, confirmed by the module/programme leader) along with an explanation of the reasons for the mark awarded, with reference to the contextual information and external reference points below.

3. Contextual information about the assessment component e.g. learning outcomes, assessment brief, marking rubric and criteria. Also, the relevant external reference points, e.g. subject benchmark statement, FHEQ and professional standards.

Examples of student work are discussed with the aim of reaching a consensus as to the standard of each piece of work, taking account the full range of arguments. The discussion focuses on making reasons for judgements explicit and considering them in detail. This enables the participants to gain an in-depth understanding of the standards, and the aim is that repeated participation in calibration activities will over time result in 'calibrated academics' .

The approach adopted for calibration involves two main stages: a pre-activity marking task and a facilitated workshop activity (in person or online).

In advance of the workshop (e.g. one week before), the participants are each sent electronic copies of 3-5 pieces of student work representing a range of student work, and are asked to place each within a 10% band according to the university descriptors, based on the marking rubric and criteria for the task; in addition, participants can also be asked to give a specific percentage mark for each piece. They then submit their bands and marks anonymously to a central coordinator (e.g. using an MS Form set up for this). Before the workshop, the facilitator collates the marks and produces graphs/tables showing the distribution of marks for each piece of work.

At the workshop, participants are shown the range of benchmark standards that have been awarded to each piece of work and the variation in terms of grades given. Small-group discussions (F2F groups or break out groups for virtual workshops) are then held to consider these results, with the aim of achieving a group consensus on the band/grade for each assignment and for the markers to reflect on what influenced their decisions.

A whole-group facilitated discussion is then held with a view to achieving a consensus regarding the grading decisions, bringing the previously agreed reliable mark and rationale into the discussion. In addition, a list of common characteristics that influenced their judgements is compiled.

For support in facilitating these workshops and the broader calibration process, please contact the Academic Developers within QEO:

https://testlivesalfordac.sharepoint.com/sites/QEO/SitePages/academic-practice.aspx

Guidance regarding how to run an assessment standardisation event (B)

Assessment standardisation should take place where more than one assessor will be marking an assessment (i.e. where there is a marking team). The aim is to ensure consistency of the application of rubrics in marking for a specific assessment. The following guidance sets out the minimum requirements for standardisation. Marking teams or Associate Deans Academic may identify a need for additional steps and/or more formal record keeping in relation to standardisation than is described here. It is important to note that this standardisation activity should take place before assessments are formally marked and is a distinct activity which is separate to moderation.

The assessment standardisation activity should normally be planned to take place within three working days of the assessment submission deadline. It should not take much longer than this as it may affect the ability of the marking team to meet assessment feedback deadlines. The standardisation meeting should be set up well in advance. Where marking takes place with international partners it is important to allow for differences in both time zones and days of the working week.

1. **Day one after submission deadline**. One of the marking team, normally the most experienced member of staff, scans through the submissions to choose four or five submissions that, from their initial review, seem to represent the high, middle, low and fail range of submissions. They do not include examples of very poor/clear fail submissions. The selected assessments are randomly labelled A, B, C, etc and shared with the marking team. How they are shared will depend on the nature of the assessment. Although the selection will have been chosen based on a preliminary view of the assessments being high, middle, low and fail, information about which assessment falls in to each group should not be shared with others in the marking team as it may prejudice their considerations.

2. **Day two after submission deadline**. All the marking team (including the person who did the initial selection) apply the marking rubric to the sample and determine their initial mark. The marking team are not expected to include student feedback; however, they may find it helpful to make a few notes that may be useful in the Standardisation meeting.

3. **Day three after submission deadline: The standardisation meeting**. The marking team meet (in person or online) and share their view of the initial marks for the sample assessments. The discussion should then focus on the assessments where there are substantial differences in the marks between the members of the marking team. Where there is little or no difference between the marks, the marking team should still review

how the overall mark was derived from the rubric to identify if there are differences in the application of the rubric. As a result of the meeting, all those doing the marking should feel confident that they will apply the rubric consistently as team.

4. **After the standardisation meeting**. All the assessments, including the sample assessments, are then formally marked and student feedback prepared. Once all marking is completed, internal moderation takes place (see separate guidance).

Appendix E Moderation Process

1.0 **Purpose**

1.1 The purpose of moderation is to provide assurance that assessment criteria have been applied appropriately.

2.0 **Moderation Requirements**

2.1 As a minimum, each component of assessment within a module at levels 5, 6 and 7 which is summatively assessed shall be internally moderated. External moderation at levels 3 and/or 4 may additionally be necessitated by PSRB requirements or collaborative provision agreements. Internal moderation should also be undertaken at these levels where they contribute to the programme mark for a qualification which is classified or may be conferred with an overall grading, e.g. HNC, HND, FD. A sample of work submitted for reassessment shall be moderated where the reassessment task is different or if the marking team has changed.

2.2 In the case of assessments which do not include a written submission (e.g. music performance, clinical activity or an oral presentation) the assessment record (i.e. feedback sheet) must be made available for moderation purposes as a minimum. Wherever possible, video or audio recordings of the student work should be provided.

2.3 Where there are multiple individuals marking a summatively assessed task, a standardisation exercise should take place to ensure consistency between markers. For example, before marking starts, the module leader should choose a small sample of student work to be assessed independently by all the markers using the assessment criteria. The marking team then meets up to discuss their grades and to agree on the academic standards for the task (see Appendix D regarding the standardisation process).

2.4 For programmes delivered by collaborative provision, internal moderation should involve staff from the University of Salford.

2.5 All moderation should be conducted via University approved platforms.

3.0 **Moderation Process**

3.1 The module leader provides the internal moderator with:

- assessment brief;
- marking scheme/rubric;
- marked student work;
- feedback given to students by the assessor(s).

3.2 The internal moderator reviews a representative sample of student work but should have access to all assessments if requested. The sample should:

- consist of a minimum of 10 assessments or 5% of the assessments (whichever is greater) or all assessments if there are fewer than 10 students in the cohort;
- reflect the full range of mark bands;
- include samples of work marked by all assessors;

- include examples of work from all programmes on which the module is delivered.

- where Partners are involved each Partner is treated as a separate cohort for the purposes of calculating sample sizes, once the sample is selected, moderation should take place across all partners and UoS students.

A greater sample than the minimum may be needed in order to incorporate these requirements.

3.3   The internal moderator must not have participated in marking the assessment but should be familiar with marking at the appropriate academic level and subject area. Wherever possible the moderator should not be a member of the module team.

3.4   The outcome of the internal moderation process is recorded on the University's moderation template. The internal moderator either:

- confirms that the assessment process has been carried out appropriately; or

- records any concerns about the process on the moderation template.

In the case of concerns, the internal moderator discusses the assessment process with the assessor(s). Depending on the discussion, no further action may be necessary or the assessor(s) reconsider the marks given to the entire cohort of students; and, as a consequence, make changes to all marks, for example by scaling up or down the whole cohort.

3.5   The outcome of any discussions between the internal moderator and the assessor(s), together with a note of any action taken, is recorded on the University moderation template.

3.6   External moderation is carried out by External Examiners. External Examiners moderate work which forms the internally moderated sample from each module at least at levels 5, 6, and 7.

3.7   The module leader provides the External Examiner with the following:

- assessment brief;
- marking scheme, including grade descriptors and marking criteria;
- internally moderated sample of student work;
- feedback given to students by the assessor(s);
- University moderation template detailing the internal moderation process;

The external moderator either confirms that the assessment process has been carried out appropriately or records any concerns about the process on the moderation template. In the case of concerns, the external moderator discusses the assessment process with the assessor(s). Depending on the outcome of the discussion:

- no further action may be necessary OR
- the assessor(s) reconsider(s) the marks awarded for the entire cohort of students if concerns apply to all students OR
- the assessor(s) reconsider(s) the marks for sub-sections of the cohort where concerns about the application of the marking standardisation and calibration process have arisen.

3.8   The outcome of any discussions between the external moderator and the assessor(s), together with a note of any action taken, is recorded on the [University's moderation template.](#)

3.9   Records of moderation must be kept in line with the Records Retention Schedule and may be required for the purpose of considering an academic appeal or complaint or for audit purposes.

Appendix F In-Year Retrieval Scheme

1.0   Principles

1.1   The University's in-year retrieval scheme (IYRS) enables eligible students to recover failure in some summative assessments at a much earlier stage in the academic year, and closer to the point of delivery of the module content to which the assessment relates. In-year retrieval is based on the premise that students will be able to re-work the same assessment (where possible) and act upon constructive feedback in order to improve the standard of their work. In-year retrieval does not affect a student's right to re-assessment and re-take attempts.

1.2   This scheme applies only to level 3 and 4 students who are at the start of their higher education journey and who may need to familiarise themselves with the conventions of assessment in HE. Completion of level 3 provides students wishing to progress to a relevant degree programme with the relevant entry criteria. The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications requires that students completing level 4 will have a sound knowledge of the basic concepts of their subject and will have learned how to take different approaches to solving problems.

1.3   This scheme applies to students who have submitted and failed one or more components of assessments and to students who did not submit an assessment.

1.4   This scheme does not apply to students studying on accelerated degree programmes as these students have a different assessment pattern.

1.5   This scheme does not apply where students have passed an assessment.

1.6   In-year retrieval is optional for students. Eligible students may choose whether they wish to engage with the in-year retrieval scheme. It is recognised that undertaking in-year retrieval will increase the workload on students; however, this is off-set by the benefits associated with passing the module and avoiding the need for reassessment.

1.7   All in-year retrieval assessments must be submitted, and all assessment procedures concluded, before the meeting of the relevant Module Assessment Board so this scheme only applies to summative assessments which can be accommodated in this timeframe.

2.0   Procedure

2.1   At the end of the 15 working day feedback period, students who have achieved a mark which is below 40% or who did not submit, will be contacted by the School's Student Progression Administrator or nominated member of staff. Communication with the student will include information about the scheme, assessment help and support, details of the assessment task, the retrieval submission date and submission process. There is an expectation that students will receive academic and pastoral support.

2.2   Retrieval assessment deadlines are at the discretion of the Module Leader, in consultation with relevant staff. Normally, students will have a period of two weeks to complete a retrieval assessment.

2.3   As in-year retrieval will be conducted within a short space of time after the original submission, late submission does not apply to retrieval deadlines nor does the Personal Mitigating Circumstances Procedure.

2.4   Where students have extra time for submission documented through a Reasonable Adjustment Plan or a Carer Support Plan, the extra time will apply to the in-year retrieval deadline.

2.5   At retrieval students are required to re-work and submit the original piece of work or, wherever possible, engage in the same assessment (e.g. a practical or performance). Where it is not possible to recreate the same assessment (e.g. group work, etc.), an alternative verified assessment should be provided which tests the same learning outcomes. In-year retrieval assessments will be submitted using the same mechanisms as the original assessment. Where assessments are submitted electronically (unless an exception is in place), either through Turnitin or Blackboard, it will be via an additional retrieval folder.

2.6   Where a student achieves a lower mark at retrieval, the original higher mark will be used for the purpose of module mark calculation. All in-year retrieval assessments will normally be capped at the pass mark of 40%, except where there is an accepted PMC for the original assessment.

2.7   Where the module does not require the student to pass each component of assessment (Method A) and the module is failed if, following retrieval, the capping of the component mark prevents the student from passing the module, the module mark will be capped rather than the component mark.

2.8   Where a module requires the student to pass one or more components of assessment (Method B) and a student has failed a must-pass component, the maximum mark for any re-assessed component will be the pass mark. This mark will contribute to the overall module mark.

2.9   Where a student achieves a pass mark at retrieval, further feedback will not normally be provided.

2.10   Where a student fails a retrieval attempt, markers are required to provide feedback. Feedback on retrieval assessments must be provided within 15 working days of the retrieval assessment submission date.

Further Information:

- [In Year Retrieval Scheme – FAQs for Staff](#)
- [In Year Retrieval Scheme – FAQs for Students](#)

Document Control Information				
Revision History incl. Authorisation: (most recent first)				
Author	**Summary of changes**		**Version**	**Authorised & Date**
Annette Cooke	Amendment to the wording of extended time available to students with RAPs in relation to submission. Updated links. Inclusion of information about religious observance for exam purposes.		V3.7	Approved by Chair's action 30 June 2023
Annette Cooke	Inclusion of information about second marking, confirmation that late submission applies at resit, amended wording about assessment schedules and publication of resit dates.		V3.6	Editorial amendments 12 August 2022
Neil Fowler/ Annette Cooke	Changes to terminology and additional guidance on late submission, no formal exams in T1 for L3/4 students, inclusion of new sections covering assessment calibration, stepped marking and extension of anonymous marking to all relevant assessments		V3.5	ASQAC 5 May 2021
Annette Cooke	General update including changes required due to the introduction of a new version of Blackboard		V3.4	Editorial amendments 21 August 2020
Annette Cooke	Addition of word count and length guidance. Changes to late submission rules. RAP extensions now applicable at reassessment. Changes to assessment diet permissible when exceptional regulations are invoked.		V3.3	ASQAC 8 May 2019
Annette Cooke	Update for 2018/19		V3.2	Editorial amendments 22 August 2018
Annette Cooke	Substantive policy review – inclusion of assessment principles, changes to moderation and verification requirements, removal of late submission in resit period.		V3.1	ASQAC 7 June 2017
Policy Management and Responsibilities:				
Owner:		This Policy is issued by the Director of Academic Quality who has the authority to issue and communicate policy on assessment and has delegated day to day management and communication of the policy to the Quality Standards Manager.		
Others with responsibilities (please specify):		All subjects of the Policy will be responsible for engaging with and adhering to this policy including: Academic Staff		

Document Control Information	
	Associate Deans (Academic) External Examiners Students
Author to complete formal assessment with the following advisory teams:	
Equality Analysis	
Legal implications (LPG)	
Information Governance (LPG)	
Student facing procedures (QMO)	
UKVI Compliance (Student Admin)	
Staff Trades Unions via HR Students via USSU Relevant external bodies (specify)	
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