



University of  
Chester

Handbook

F

# Quality and Standards Manual

**TO ACCOMPANY THE  
PRINCIPLES AND REGULATIONS:  
THE ASSESSMENT OF  
STUDENTS  
AT LEVELS 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 AND  
TAUGHT PROVISION AT LEVEL 8**

**2014 – 2015**

Date of Approval: June 2014  
Authored By: Registry Services / Academic Quality Support  
Services (AQSS)  
Version: 1.0

The University of Chester has framed Principles and Regulations which govern the assessment of students at levels Z, 4, 5, 6, 7 and taught provision at Level 8.

The following sections of the Quality and Standards Manual, which together form Handbook F: The Assessment of Students at Levels Z, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught Provision at Level 8, expound how these Principles and Regulations are fulfilled.

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# Introduction

SECTION

1

Quality and Standards Manual

**HANDBOOK F:**  
**The Assessment of Students**  
**at Levels 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught**  
**Provision at Level 8**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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University of Chester has adopted a modular structure for the delivery of academic programmes, pathways and courses of study. The assessment of students registered for any module of study approved by University of Chester shall be conducted in accordance with the Principles and Regulations of University of Chester. In order to ensure that these Principles and Regulations are observed, the requirements set out below shall be adhered to in the assessment of all modules.

These requirements derive their force from the said Principles and Regulations of University of Chester and shall be read in association with those Principles and Regulations. There is an obligation on the part of all those staff of the University who may be charged with the conduct of assessment in its academic and administrative aspects to observe these requirements.

In order for these requirements to be applied with complete equity to all students, it is of paramount importance for examiners and assessors to discharge their duties disinterestedly. Consequently, it is a requirement of University of Chester that any member of staff, academic or administrative, whose ability to engage in the assessment of students may be influenced by a personal relationship or a personal consideration relating to any student who is subject to assessment, shall declare such an interest in advance to the Chair of the Module or Awards/Progression Board as appropriate. When such a declaration has been made, it is incumbent upon that Chair, in conjunction with the Deputy Registrar and Head of Student Administration, to take such steps as are necessary to safeguard the integrity and equity of the assessment process. Measures available to the Chair of the Module or Awards/Progression Assessment Board shall include requiring the member of staff in question to absent himself or herself from and/or withhold himself or herself from participation in a stage or stages of the assessment process.

Students of University of Chester shall be required to adhere to the requirements set out below. They shall be given access to these requirements at the point of commencement of the academic sessions to which the rules shall apply.

**The requirements in this Handbook apply to all forms of summative assessment which contribute to the results of modules processed by Assessment Boards. They are not intended to apply to formative assessment which does not contribute to such module results, except as guidance on good practice which may be followed as appropriate.**

The requirements shall be reviewed annually and with due consideration given to the advice of External Examiners.



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# Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

SECTION

2

Quality and Standards Manual

## HANDBOOK F: The Assessment of Students at Levels 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught Provision at Level 8

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## SECTION 2: ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING (APL)

1. The University recognises, in partial fulfilment of its own requirements, qualification and experience gained elsewhere. Students wishing to apply for accreditation of prior credited/ certified or prior experiential learning (APCL/ APEL) may apply for exemption from parts of a programme for up to the maximum credit value allowed. Application for recognition of credit already achieved shall normally be made immediately upon registration for the student's programme of study, and all decisions shall be reported to the relevant Module Assessment Board.
2. APCL and APEL are defined as follows:
  - **APCL** is demonstrated on an academic record (certificate or transcript) and there is no charge for it, provided its 'age' is within the stated time limits.
  - **APEL** is non-certificated, has to be assessed by the University and carries a charge.

3. The accreditation of credited or certified (APCL) and uncertified (APEL) learning may only be awarded where evidence of achievement is provided and, where appropriate, has been assessed in relation to module and level equivalence.
4. There are no limits on the use of credit previously awarded by University of Chester for either a lower level qualification, or on a free-standing basis, which corresponds to modules within the new award. With regard to 'external' credit, accreditation may be granted for up to two-thirds (66.67%) of the amount required for an award, providing that a minimum of 40 credits are awarded by the University of Chester

Where an award consists of credits from across different levels, a minimum of 80 new University of Chester credits must be studied at the highest level of the award

The marks gained for any University of Chester modules undertaken within five years of the date of registration on the new award shall be included in the calculation of the final award classification. Students granted Accreditation of Prior Learning cannot, under any circumstances, use these module marks to replace marks for modules for which they were previously registered on an award-bearing programme. Module marks attained as part of a Foundation Degree shall not be included in the calculation of the final award classification of an Honours Degree.

5. The maximum age of credit shall be five years, unless:
  - (a) The application to use 'older' credit is accompanied by a demonstration that the learning has been brought up to date in the workplace, via continuing professional development which is shown to be directly relevant to the new award

OR

- (b) The 'older' credit is accompanied by some form of assessment e.g. a reflective portfolio.

The maximum age of credit brought into a programme, added to a student's maximum registration period, gives the total time span of credit on an award. The maximum registration period will vary according to the amount of credit brought into the award, as detailed below:

### Master's Degree

Amount of APCL or previous University of Chester free standing or lower award credit	Maximum 'age' of credit	Maximum Registration Period	Total Time Span of Credit
120	5 years	3 years	8 years
60	5 years	5 years	10 years
<60	5 years	6 years	11 years

### Bachelor's Degree

Amount of APCL or previous University of Chester free standing or lower award credit	Maximum 'age' of credit	Maximum Registration Period	Total Time Span of Credit
240	5 years	3 years	8 years
120	5 years	5 years	10 years
60	5 years	6 years	11 years
<60	5 years	7 years	12 years

### Foundation Degree

Amount of APCL or previous University of Chester free standing or lower award credit	Maximum 'age' of credit	Maximum Registration Period	Total Time Span of Credit
120	5 years	3 years	8 years
60	5 years	5 years	10 years

6. An applicant seeking to make a claim for APCL should seek to complete the form 'Application for Accreditation of Prior Credited/Certified Learning' (Appendix 2A) in consultation with the relevant Admissions Section and the Faculty Academic Assessor. All such claims should be for learning successfully achieved in the previous five years, and be supported by transcripts or certificates. An applicant or student seeking to make a claim for APEL should seek to complete the form 'Application for Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning' (also Appendix 2A) in consultation with the Faculty Academic Assessor. The Faculty Academic Assessor is a member of faculty staff with knowledge of the programme of study for which the candidate is applying. Once completed all forms must be ratified by the Faculty Credit Co-ordinator. The Faculty Credit Co-ordinator has delegated authority to act on behalf of both the Module Assessment Board and the Awards/Progression Assessment Board. If approved, the claim is forwarded to Registry Services, the Finance Department and the Faculty Administrator. The Faculty Administrator will inform the Faculty Academic Assessor of the outcome of the application, along with the candidate.

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# Requirements for Reasonable Adjustments to Assessment

SECTION

3

Quality and Standards Manual

## HANDBOOK F: The Assessment of Students at Levels 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught Provision at Level 8

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## SECTION 3: REQUIREMENTS FOR REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS TO ASSESSMENT

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- 1 All candidates should, as far as possible, undertake assessments under equal conditions. The purpose of reasonable adjustments to assessment is therefore to enable a student to demonstrate his/her ability and address the barriers s/he experiences as a result of his/her disability, specific learning difficulty or medical condition, but not to otherwise advantage the candidate. This will entail individual assessment of the nature and degree of the barriers a student face, and provision being made according to the individual's needs. No improvement in the standard of answers should be expected as a result of any reasonable adjustment given.

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### Procedures for Approval of Reasonable Adjustments for Assessment

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- 2 A student who wishes to claim reasonable adjustments for assessment must complete the Request for Specific Assessment Arrangements form (SN1) and provide **written evidence** of her/his disability or medical condition by appropriate professional; where evidence is unclear the student may be asked for further evidence. Students with specific learning difficulties (SpLD e.g. dyslexia) must provide a statement from an educational psychologist confirming their condition and indicating their needs. The document(s) should be passed to a Disability Support Officer (in Disability Support Student Support and Guidance) when an application is first made and these will be retained in the student's personal file.
- 3 The likely needs of the student will then be assessed by the Disability Support Officer in discussion with the student. These will depend on the student's disability or condition, on the format and duration of the assessment and on recommendations made by educational psychologists or similar advisers. Guidance may also be sought from RNIB, RNID, Occupational Health or one of the National Federation of Access Centres. A decision will then be made by the Disability Support Officer on what reasonable adjustments are appropriate to meet the student's needs.
- 4 Having identified the student's needs the Disability Support Officer will complete and sign the Request for Specific Assessment Arrangements form (SN1), which will be returned to Registry Services (Assessment Team).
- 5 The student shall be informed, in writing, by Registry Services (Assessment Team) of the agreed specific assessment arrangements.

## Arrangements for implementation during the academic session in which the student presents themselves for screening for Specific Learning Difficulties

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- 6 In recognition of the significant timeframes involved in the process outlined above, students who, as an outcome of screening, have been referred for a psychological assessment will be granted 25% additional time in both formal examinations and in-class tests. This measure seeks to minimise disruption to their studies and avoid a backlog of assessments. However, this arrangement will only remain in place for one set of examinations (or in-class tests until the first set of examinations). Students shall not be entitled to additional time in any further examinations until the educational psychologist's report has been received and approved. In exceptional circumstances where it is not possible to obtain an educational psychologist's assessment the Student Support Manager (or nominee) will confirm to Registry Services that additional time may be granted for further assessment periods.
- 7 Students receiving the additional time shall not be eligible to appeal on the grounds of mitigating circumstances unless the educational psychologist's report subsequently recommends that modifications in addition to 25% extra time are appropriate. In such cases the appeal shall only be considered in relation to assessment undertaken in the current academic session; under no circumstances will appeals be considered in relation to assessment undertaken in previous academic sessions.
- 8 For practical reasons, students screened 2 weeks or less in advance of an assessment period shall not be offered the additional time. They shall be eligible to seek deferral of assessment pending the outcome of their educational psychology assessment.
- 9 Once a student is referred for a psychological assessment, Disability Support will send a temporary SN1 form to the student's academic department(s) and Registry in order to alert them that the student is entitled to additional time.

## Alternative Forms of Assessment

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- 10 If a student is unable, for reasons relating to his/her disability, to be assessed by the normal methods specified in the module assessment requirements the Head of Department, in consultation with the External Examiner, may vary the assessment methods as appropriate, bearing in mind the objectives of the academic provision in question and the need to assess the student on equal terms with other students. The suitability of any such alternative assessment in meeting the needs of the student's disability shall be approved in advance by the University's Disability Services Manager or equivalent. Advice on alternative forms of assessment may be sought from Disability Support and the Dean of Learning and Teaching.
- 11 Guidance on options available to students with specific needs appears in Appendix 3A.



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# Operational Requirements to be Observed by Examiners and Examinees

SECTION

4

Quality and Standards Manual

## HANDBOOK F: The Assessment of Students at Levels Z, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught Provision at Level 8

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## SECTION 4: OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS TO BE OBSERVED BY EXAMINERS AND EXAMINEES IN THE COURSE OF THE PROCESS OF ASSESSMENT

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### 4.1 Written Examinations: Rules for Examinees

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1. Except where prevented by illness or by other sufficient cause (please refer to mitigating circumstances procedures), a student who fails to present herself/himself for written examination in a module at the time and place indicated in the published timetable shall be deemed to have failed in that part of the assessment. Misreading of the timetable will not be regarded as 'sufficient cause'.
2. Candidates are forbidden to take into the examination room any unauthorised book, manuscript, or other unauthorised material. Any candidate suspected of (i) introducing into the examination room any such items, or of making use of or copying such material from the papers of another candidate, or (ii) obtaining or endeavouring to obtain, directly or indirectly, assistance in her/his work or give or endeavour to give, directly or indirectly, assistance to any other candidate, shall be in breach of regulations and dealt with in accordance with requirements governing the occurrence of academic malpractice. Unauthorised materials include crib notes and information stored in electronic devices.
3. All bags, cases and coats etc must be placed at the front of the examination room as instructed by the invigilator.
4. All gangways should remain clear of obstruction.
5. Strict silence must be observed at all times in the examination room. The examination is deemed to be in progress from the time candidates enter the room until all scripts have been collected. Candidates must not indulge in any behaviour which in the opinion of the invigilator may disturb other candidates or in any form of conduct which may disrupt the smooth progress of an examination. Any irregularities of conduct within the examination room shall be in breach of regulations and dealt with in accordance with Requirements governing the occurrence of academic malpractice, and/or under Procedures for Examiners, Section 2.2, paragraph 15 (below).
6. Wherever possible, students should avoid taking mobile phones or other electronic devices into the examination venue; where such devices are taken into the venue, they must be switched off and stored at the front of the examination room. All items are introduced into the venue at the owner's risk.
7. Candidates are forbidden to communicate with each other in the examination room. All enquiries must be addressed to an invigilator by raising a hand.
8. No candidate shall be permitted to enter the examination room after the lapse of half an hour from the commencement of the written examination, and no candidate shall

be allowed to leave the examination room until after the expiration of half-an-hour from the commencement of the examination, irrespective of the length of the examination paper. In the case of examinations of one hour or less, students will be required to remain in their seats until the end of the examination.

9. No additional time shall be allowed to candidates who arrive at the examination room after the commencement of the examination.
10. Candidates should complete the assessment attendance slip before the commencement of the examination.
11. Candidates should place their student ID card on the desk so that it can be seen by an invigilator.
12. Identification checks on female students opting to cover their face will be conducted with discretion by a female member of staff. Female students who for reasons of faith require the presence of other females in the examination venue should alert both Registry Services and their academic department(s) at the beginning of the academic year.
13. The impersonation of assessment candidates is prohibited and candidates must not allow themselves to be impersonated.
14. Candidates should complete the front of the examination answer book and seal down the right hand section. A candidate who fails to do so will forfeit the right to have her/his paper marked anonymously.
15. Candidates are not permitted to write in the examination answer books during any allocated reading time.
16. Unless specified in the rubric of the examination paper, candidates are not permitted to use calculators. Where it is permitted, calculators should be silent in operation and not have an alphabetic keyboard. The calculator's memory must be cleared of all user-defined programmes and functions. Calculators that permit the symbolic manipulations of equations and formulae are forbidden. University of Chester shall not be responsible for the provision of (i) calculators in the event of a breakdown, (ii) power for their operation, or (iii) spare batteries.
17. The use of English Language and/or translation dictionaries is prohibited unless specified in the rubric of the examination. Other books may only be taken into the examination room if specified on the rubric of the paper.
18. The use of scrap paper is not permitted and all rough work must be done in the answer books provided.
19. It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that any loose or separate sheets are securely fixed within the examination answer book using the tags provided.
20. When time is called at the conclusion to the examination all writing must cease immediately.
21. No candidate is normally permitted to leave the examination room in the last fifteen minutes of the written examination. Candidates who complete their work during the

last fifteen minutes should remain quietly seated until an invigilator announces the end of the written examination.

22. Candidates must not leave the examination room until all their written work has been collected and they have been given permission by the chief invigilator to do so. Candidates must not remove from the examination room any answer books (whether used or unused), mathematical tables or other data provided for use or other items of stationery except for any non-returnable question papers.
23. If the fire alarm sounds during the assessment, candidates must follow the instructions of the chief invigilator. Candidates must leave the room in silence and must not take any papers or materials from the room. They must not communicate with each other, except in cases of urgent necessity, prior to their return to the examination room.
24. Candidates are expected to ensure the entire contents of their exam script are legible; in cases where anyone involved in the marking of the work is unable to read the full script, the department will offer the option of the formal transcription of the paper by a scribe designated by the University, with the student translating their original script. The student must pay the transcription fee directly to the service provider. In order to avoid delays with the processing of results, the student will be given seven days from original notification to make themselves available for the transcription session. Upon completion of the transcription, the student must sign a statement confirming that the transcription represents precisely the contents of the original script. Any alteration from the original may be considered academic malpractice. Should the student fail to make themselves available within the specified period, the illegible section of the script will not be marked and the final mark will be derived from the legible sections.
25. Except where a foreign language is the subject of the assessment, papers should normally be set and answered in English.
26. Formal examinations are always held in accessible locations. Department organised assessments should also take place in locations accessible to all students due to undertake the assessment.

### *Guidelines for students unable to return to the University (or Partner) to undertake formal assessment*

Students are expected to undertake examinations and other formal timed assessments at the University of Chester or Partner organisation as appropriate. However, there may be exceptional cases where this is not possible and where students may request permission to undertake assessment from overseas. The request will normally only be considered for students whose country of domicile is outside the United Kingdom and for examinations which take place outside the University's official term dates. Holidays are not considered legitimate grounds for failing to undertake assessment at the specified venue. Students must contact the Deputy Registrar in the first instance in order to discuss their request.

In addition to deciding whether a student may, in principle, undertake assessment from overseas, the University will also decide whether the proposed venue is acceptable. The

University will reject requests where either the student's circumstances and/or proposed venue are not deemed acceptable, or where insufficient notice is given (see below).

Wherever possible, assessments should be organised via the British Council. In cases where this is not possible (where the British Council does not offer this service in the country in question, for example), the University **may** agree to the student undertaking the assessment at an institution of higher education.

Following initial discussion with Registry Services, students seeking permission to undertake an examination overseas must first establish whether the British Council/proposed Higher Education Institution are able to provide the required service at the required time; upon receipt of this confirmation the student must then complete and return Form OE1 to Registry Services at least 4 weeks prior to the commencement of the examination period. This should provide details of the reasons for the request, the proposed venue at which the assessment will be taken, the relevant module codes and titles, as well as contact details of a named officer at the British Council/HE institution. The University of Chester will then decide whether the request is approved or rejected. Students will be notified of the decision in writing within 2 weeks of the receipt of Form OE1 by the University. In cases where the request is rejected, the student will be expected to return to the University or Partner to undertake the assessment. Students must complete Form OE1 for every examination period in which they request permission to undertake assessment overseas.

In all cases, the assessment must take place at precisely the same time as at the specified venue, regardless of the impact of the time difference between the United Kingdom and the country in question.

It is the responsibility of the student to pay all fees incurred directly to the host organisation; in addition the University of Chester will charge an administration fee of £150 per assessment period, the fee for which must be paid within 7 days of notification that the request has been accepted.

## 4.2 Written Examinations: Procedures for Examiners

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1. Registry Services will be responsible for delivering the question papers and attendance sheets to the examination room.
2. Any examination offered during an assessment period by both a Collaborative Partner and the University, and any examination taken at different campuses or sites of the University, must take place simultaneously at all locations.
3. An examiner, or in her/his unavoidable absence a representative from the department concerned, who is knowledgeable about the contents of the question paper, must be present in the examination room for ten minutes before the examination is due to begin and for five minutes after the start of the examination.
4. Before the examination begins the examiner shall check her/his papers for any errors. If there are any amendments to be made she/he shall inform an invigilator who will normally make the necessary announcements.
5. Before leaving the examination room an examiner shall inform the chief invigilator where s/he may be contacted in the University for the duration of the examination, in the event of any question from a candidate about the paper.

6. It is the responsibility of invigilators to supervise examinations in accordance with the Operational Requirements to be observed by examiners and examinees.
7. All invigilators must be present in the examination room to which they have been appointed, from fifteen minutes before the commencement of the examination, until all answer books have been removed from the examination room after the conclusion of the examination.
8. Invigilators are responsible for the distribution of question papers before the commencement of each examination, for the collection of answer books from each candidate, for checking attendance sheets provided and noting absentees.
9. Identification checks on female students choosing to cover their face must be conducted with discretion by a female member of staff
10. Candidates may sit at any desk within the room to which they have been allocated under the direction of the chief invigilator and should be seated in such a way that no candidate can overlook the papers of another candidate.
11. No examination may be left without an invigilator while the paper is in progress.
12. Under normal circumstances, at least two invigilators must remain in the examination room throughout the examination except when their invigilation duties require them to leave.
13. At the time scheduled for the start of the examination the chief invigilator shall:
  - make an announcement to the effect that candidates must satisfy themselves that they are in possession of the correct paper;
  - ask candidates to study carefully the instructions at the head of the examination paper;
  - make all other necessary announcements.
14. Invigilators shall check that all candidates listed on the relevant attendance sheets are present and note the names of any candidates who are absent. Attendance sheets shall be collected by a member of Registry Services staff at the end of the examination.
15. An invigilator shall require a candidate to leave the examination if, in the opinion of the invigilator, her/his conduct is disturbing other candidates or is disrupting the smooth progress of the examination. Any irregularities of conduct within the examination room shall be reported to the Student and Programmes Administration Manager, who shall have the power to exclude the candidate from the examination room and shall report the matter to the Chair of the Awards/Progression Assessment Board for investigation.
16. Invigilators who suspect that breaches of the Operational Requirements to be observed by examiners and examinees have occurred shall inform the Chair of the relevant Module Assessment Board in writing. Invigilators shall warn a candidate that such a report will be made, but the candidate shall normally be permitted to complete the written examination. The Student and Programmes Administration Manager shall also be notified that such a breach has been observed.

17. Candidates wishing to make a temporary withdrawal from the examination room for personal reasons must be accompanied by an invigilator or by a person authorised by the chief invigilator to ensure against any possibility of academic malpractice.
18. In certain special cases, candidates shall be allowed additional time for completion of their examination. Such candidates will have been identified by Registry Services in advance of the paper and may be sitting separately. It is the responsibility of the invigilators to complete the full invigilation of all candidates assigned to them.
19. It is the responsibility of subject departments to provide any special requirements for specific examinations. Guidance for amanuenses appears in Appendix 4B.
20. Registry Services shall be responsible for providing examination answer books and graph paper for each examination room. Large envelopes for transporting completed scripts shall be available in each room. The chief invigilator shall be responsible for ensuring that a copy of the relevant question paper is placed in the appropriate envelope, together with the completed scripts for marking purposes.
21. Invigilators shall be responsible for ensuring that completed scripts are delivered to the relevant department(s) for marking purposes.
22. Any changes to the original invigilation list shall be notified to Registry Services in advance of the assessment date. It is the responsibility of the Departmental Assessment Contact to find replacement invigilators. Last minute substitutes should not be sent, other than in unforeseen circumstances, as this may affect the gender balance in the examination room.
23. The invigilators shall inform the Student and Programmes Administration Manager (or her/his representative) immediately of any unsatisfactory conditions or activities which they consider detrimental to the conduct of examinations.
24. The Operational Requirements to be observed by examiners and examinees shall be published prior to each assessment period by Registry Services, setting out details of the procedures to be followed for the conduct of examinations.
25. In the event of a fire alarm or other emergency requiring the evacuation of the examination room the chief invigilator shall note the time the assessment was interrupted and shall instruct the candidates to cease writing and to leave all materials, including question papers and examination answer books, on their desk. Candidates should leave the room in an orderly fashion and assemble at the specified place where names will be checked to ensure that all candidates are accounted for. On return to the examination room, candidates shall be allowed additional time to compensate for time lost, at the discretion of the chief invigilator, who shall record the time of the resumption of the examination.
26. In all cases of emergency, invigilators should contact Registry Services on extension 3582 (Chester); 4396 or 4234 (Warrington).
27. In cases where candidates complain of feeling unwell and leave the written examination temporarily, they will be permitted to return to the examination room provided that they have been accompanied during their absence by a person authorised to do so by the chief invigilator. In cases where a candidate is unable to return to the scheduled room, every effort will be made for the written examination to

be continued in a separate room provided that the candidate has been accompanied during her/his absence by a person authorised to do so by the chief invigilator.

28. In cases described under (28), the chief invigilator will be required to enter in the candidate's answer book and on the attendance sheet the time of departure and, where appropriate, subsequent return and to sign against these entries.
29. Departmental Assessment Contacts will be asked to provide names of invigilators for each session at which a written paper is being offered by that department. Taking into account the requirement for there to be at least two invigilators present in the venue, invigilation ratios are as follows:

Number of students sitting examination	Number of invigilators required
1-34	1
35-69	2
70-100	3
>100	1 additional invigilator per 34 additional students

### 4.3 Anonymous marking of students' assessed work

Students' assessed work should be marked anonymously (i.e. without the identity of an individual student being known to first or second marker until after an internal mark has been agreed), in those assessment components which consist of:

- a) written examinations;
- b) essays or similar written assignments involving set titles or questions, where there is no negotiation of such titles/questions by individual students and there is no element of oral assessment or assessment of groupwork, within the assessment component.

Students assessed under (a) or (b) above who choose to identify themselves, and those whose special circumstances make it impossible to conceal their identity, shall not deprive the remaining students taking an assessment component of their entitlement to anonymous marking.

For dissertations or other assessment where the supervisor is also the first marker, the first marker will know the student's identity when marking the work; this will allow them to use their knowledge of the student's work through their supervision meetings to aid the identification of academic malpractice such as data manipulation/invention and material from other sources.

Further guidance on this and on other aspects of anonymous marking appear as Appendix 5A.



#### 4.4 Submission of other work for formal written assessment

---

A dissertation, thesis, essay, project, or any other work which is not undertaken in an examination room under supervision but which is submitted by a student for formal written assessment during her/his course of study must be written by the candidate herself/himself and in her/his own words, except for quotations from published and unpublished sources which shall be clearly indicated and acknowledged as such. The incorporation of material from other works without acknowledgement may be treated as plagiarism (please refer to Academic Malpractice section 6). The source of any photograph, map or other illustration shall also be indicated as shall the source, published or unpublished, of any material not resulting from the candidate's own experimentation, observation or specimen collecting.

A candidate shall not be permitted to incorporate material which has been submitted in support of a successful application for a degree or diploma, of this or any other approved awarding body, except for the purpose of drawing attention, for reference purposes only, to such material, including calculations of the results of experimental work. Where such material is incorporated, the fact shall be recorded together with the title of the thesis or other work, the date of the award of the diploma or degree and the name of the university or other degree-awarding body making the award.

Where candidates are presenting written work for formal assessment, other than examinations, such work must be submitted by the due date prescribed by the Department. Except when prevented by illness or by other sufficient cause (please refer to mitigating circumstances procedures), the marks of any student who fails to submit work by the prescribed date shall be subject to penalty deduction in accordance with the scale as specified in the section on Late Work below (section 7.6 of this Handbook). It shall be the duty of Heads of Department to ensure that students are notified of due submission dates and the penalty scale to be applied in the case of late submission.

#### 4.5 Oral assessment and presentations

---

***Students shall be given a minimum of four weeks notification, in writing, of the date of the assessment and a minimum of two weeks notification of its time and venue.***

Students shall be informed as to what materials, if any, they are permitted to use and the format of the assessment.

A student who does not attend an oral assessment or presentation within the time period allocated will be awarded a mark of 0 for that assessment, unless there are valid mitigating circumstances. (See section 7 of this Handbook) If a student arrives late, but within the period allocated for the oral assessment, s/he shall normally be allowed such time as remains, without any adjustment of marks.

## 4.6 Open book assessment and advanced publication of papers

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Methods of assessment are specified in the module descriptor as validated, but reference to an 'examination' without further qualification is taken to mean a 'closed' 'unseen' written examination, i.e. one in which candidates have not seen the paper in advance and are not permitted to take materials into the examination room except as in 4.1 above. Where an 'Open Book' assessment is specified, the Head of Department concerned shall be required to inform the candidates in writing of the following:

- the paper title of the 'Open Book' assessment;
- the precise nature of the material which can be taken into the examination room;
- that such material is for the candidate's personal use only;
- that, apart from the candidates being allowed the use of certain specified material, the assessment will be conducted in all other aspects in accordance with the Operational Requirements to be observed by examiners and examinees.

Where the module assessment requires a written paper to be published in advance of the date of an assessment, the Head of Department concerned shall be required to inform the candidates in writing of the following:

- the title of the paper for advance publication;
- the date on which the paper will be available to candidates;
- the venue for collection of the paper by the candidates.

## 4.7 Electronic Submission of Coursework Assessments

---

Unless there are compelling technical reasons which make this impossible, all work must be submitted electronically via the Turnitin integration in Moodle.

At the beginning of each academic year and/or well in advance of the first submission deadline the module leader will set up the required post-boxes on the module's Moodle space, ensuring that the guidance set out in the Turnitin guidance notes is followed.

When submitting the work, students must ensure that they include their assessment number (in 2014/15 this will begin with the letter J) in the header or footer of the work. When submitted the work immediately goes through the Turnitin process and only when this is complete will the work be recorded as having been submitted; students should therefore ensure that they commence the submission process in sufficient time to allow this to happen before the deadline.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure they submit the work to the correct postbox; failure to do so will result in a mark of zero being recorded.

***Further requirements relating to the marking of assessed work appear in Section 5.***



University of  
Chester

# Requirements for the Marking of Assessed Work

SECTION

5

Quality and Standards Manual

## HANDBOOK F: The Assessment of Students at Levels Z, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught Provision at Level 8

2014 – 2015

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## SECTION 5: REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MARKING OF ASSESSED WORK

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The assessment tasks and their weightings, by means of which students are assessed, shall be in accordance with the authorised and published module descriptors as these are currently validated.

Where a formal written examination constitutes a part or the whole of the assessment of a module, the work presented by a student for that formal written examination shall be assessed by University of Chester internal assessors in such a way as to preserve the anonymity of the student. Guidance for the conduct of anonymous marking is given in Appendix 5A of this Handbook.

University of Chester requires that, normally, the marks awarded to students are determined by a first and second marker who shall be members of the Module Assessment Board and who shall satisfy themselves that the assessment of that module has been conducted accurately and fairly. Within these requirements, the phrase 'second-marking' applies in cases where there is an element of sampling, but 'double-marking' where every assignment is fully marked twice.

While the principal responsibility for accurate marking of an entire cohort's work rests with the first marker, an internal second-marker (monitor) also has a responsibility for ensuring that the entire cohort is fairly assessed.

The statements which follow on second-marking and double-marking are requirements for Levels 5, 6, 7 and taught provision at Level 8, and in cases where students register for a designated Level Z or Level 4 award. There is no obligation to observe the requirements on second- and double-marking in relation to work submitted at Level Z or Level 4, except where students have registered for a designated Level Z or Level 4 award. However, no student shall be failed in a Level Z or Level 4 module without a second-marker having participated in the determination of the agreed internal mark and without the confirmation of marks by an External Examiner. In order to confirm failed marks at Level Z or Level 4, an External Examiner may request to see all the work proposed as failures or only a representative sample.

Students shall be informed in writing of Faculty / department / programme practice on second-marking, as agreed at the final Module Assessment Board of the previous year, via handbooks and / or noticeboards.

### 5.1 External approval of examination and coursework questions

---

External Examiners shall be required to approve in advance all examination papers, and also all coursework weighted at 50% or more of module assessment. They shall also have the opportunity to approve in advance all coursework, if they so request. It may be appropriate for prior approval of coursework to relate to the general nature thereof, rather than to specific questions.

## 5.2 Composition of samples

---

A sample of a given batch of assignments shall be fully second-marked by the monitor. The sample shall include: (a) the highest-marked assignment, (b) all assignments first-marked at 40% or below, and (c) at least five others selected from those first-marked between 41% and above, representative of different classes (or all those first-marked between 41% and above if less than five).

The sample shall normally comprise at least 25% of the total number of assignments. In cohorts of 24 students or less, the minimum size of the sample (including best work and fails) shall be six assignments. In cohorts of over 100 students, a sample smaller than 25% may be second-marked, but in no such case shall the number of assignments second-marked be less than 25. It is good practice to include within the sample some cases of identified specific needs, so that the handling of such cases can be monitored.

The sample to be sent to the External Examiner shall be negotiated between the Programme Leader/ Departmental Assessment Contact and the External Examiner. There is no maximum or minimum size. However, other than at Level 4, the sample should be sufficient to enable the External Examiner to confirm all module marks in the First class and Fail categories and to see a selection from the top, middle and bottom of the range and at class borderlines in order to be satisfied that each student is fairly placed in relation to the rest of the module cohort. At Level Z and Level 4, an External Examiner is not required to see students' work other than for the purpose of confirming failures. To this end, the External Examiner should either see all failed work or a representative sample from each programme, by negotiation.

## 5.3 Changes to marks

---

In the interests of assuring standards, the monitor may propose changes to the marks of individual assignments first-marked at 69% and above, or 40% and below, but in all such cases the changes shall be discussed between the first-marker and monitor so that an agreed internal mark can be recorded. Where a change is proposed to work first-marked at 69% or above, all work in this category shall be read by the monitor with a view to marks being proposed for change. In cases where first-marker and monitor cannot agree, the Chair of the relevant Module Assessment Board shall arbitrate, with recourse as necessary to a third internal marker.

The monitor shall not propose changes to the marks of individual assignments first-marked between 41% and 68%, but shall comment on the overall standard and consistency of first-marking in a Monitoring Form, and shall have the right to propose the moderation of the entire cohort up or down or to require the re-marking of the entire cohort. An assignment the mark for which moves into the category of 69% and above or 40% and below as a result of moderation of the cohort up or down shall be considered individually as in the previous paragraph above. Accordingly, monitors may find it helpful to address the issue of whether the marks for an entire cohort require moderation up or down, before considering individual assignments first-marked at 69% or above and 40% or below.

Marks returned to students as feedback must (a) be the agreed marks following completion of internal marking and monitoring, not the marks of the first and second markers individually; (b) be clearly indicated to students as provisional, pending consideration by the external examiner and the decision of the relevant assessment board.

## 5.4 Monitoring Form

---

It is not necessary for monitors to signal agreement of the marks for individual assignments (whether inside or outside the selected sample) on scripts or assignment feedback forms, provided that a Monitoring Form is completed as above, and includes the statement 'The verification of the total cohort is based on the sample, as recorded on this form', which must be signed by the monitor.

The Monitoring Form shall:

- (i) include brief guidance from the first marker to the monitor on the performance of the cohort, and (if appropriate) on any issues for attention;
- (ii) include comment by the monitor based on the second-marking of the sample, either verifying the overall marks awarded, or proposing the moderation of the entire cohort up or down, or requiring the re-marking of the entire cohort. (It shall be left to the discretion of the Chair of the relevant Module Assessment Board whether such re-marking shall be conducted by the first marker, the monitor, or a third marker.) In cases where agreement on marks cannot be reached, the Chair of the Module Assessment Board shall arbitrate, with recourse as necessary to a third marker;
- (iii) record the total number of assignments passed to the monitor, and the names (or numbers) of students whose assignments were in the sample second-marked, as evidence that procedures have been followed;
- (iv) record all cases in which changes have been proposed to marks of 69% and above, or 40% and below, together with the agreed internal marks;
- (v) on completion, be made available to the Departmental Assessment Contact, or other designated person, who shall pass it to the External Examiner with the work of the relevant cohort. The External Examiner shall take account of the comments on the Monitoring Form in reaching a judgment on the assessment.

## 5.5 Double-marking

---

All work of an individual nature where the supervisor is also the first marker, such as Level 6 and Level 7 dissertations, performances and exhibitions, must be 100% double-marked, with the comments of both markers, and agreed internal marks, recorded [see also the guidance on good practice in Appendix 5B]. Module Assessment Boards have discretion to apply double-marking to other modules in consultation with the External Examiner. In all such cases, the monitoring procedures outlined above shall not apply, but where the two markers cannot agree a mark, the Chair of the Module Assessment Board shall arbitrate as set out above.

## 5.6 New first-markers

---

In cases where the first marker is new to University of Chester, either, (a) all work for such new tutors shall be 100% double-marked, or (b) a selected sample comprising at least 20 scripts drawn from different classes shall be initially double-marked to verify the marking standard, prior to the application of normal monitoring. The Chair of the Module Assessment Board or the Departmental Assessment Contact shall ensure that these procedures shall apply at least for the first assignment in which such new tutors are involved in assessment.

## 5.7 Oral assessments

---

Oral assessments (presentations, dialogues, debates, etc.) shall, as far as practicable, have two markers present to determine the marks awarded. Where this is not practicable and only one marker is present, arrangements to assure the consistent standard of marking (such as appropriate staff development and the observation of every marker on at least one occasion) shall be agreed with the External Examiner. These arrangements should, where possible, include the submission of evidence of each student's performance, for example via recordings, copies of OHPs and PowerPoint slides, or a written script. Where recordings are made, all students undertaking an assessment must be recorded in order to ensure consistency of practice; a monitor will sample the recordings and a Monitoring Form will be completed in the manner set out for written work in paragraph 5.4 above. For work at Level 2 or Level 4 and for work weighted at 10% or less of total module assessment, only one marker need be present and the procedures set out above need not apply. These requirements shall also apply to the assessment of 'live' performances, subject to the agreement of the External Examiner.

## 5.8 Practical work

---

Practical work (other than written work arising therefrom) shall be subject to monitoring according to established professional procedures, and/or as agreed with External Examiners and approved by validation panels. No student shall be recorded as having failed without a second opinion having been obtained. Written assignments arising from practical work shall be subject to the normal procedures set out in paragraphs 5.2 to 5.4 above.

## 5.9 Internal compensation

---

In the assessment of a given module, compensation between components of the modular assessment shall normally be permitted in the case of determining whether or not a student shall be deemed to have passed the module, provided that a minimum mark of 20% has been obtained for the failed component. In cases where a minimum level of attendance must be attained as a precondition for the passing of the module, this must be made explicit in the module descriptor. The overall module mark awarded for the work of a student who fails because either the mark obtained for a component or the level of attendance was



below the minimum required shall normally be either the arithmetical mark actually attained, or 39%, whichever is the lower.

## 5.10 Calculation of marks

---

In calculating the overall mark for a given module all marks of 0.50 or above shall be rounded up to the next integer. Correspondingly, all marks of 0.49 and below shall be rounded down to the appropriate integer.

## 5.11 Viva Voce examination

---

In exceptional circumstances, examiners are empowered to conduct a *viva voce* (oral) examination. This form of additional assessment may be used to:

- i) determine difficult or borderline cases (from which the outcome can only be to raise or confirm a student's marks);
- ii) assist the Chair of a Module Assessment Board to decide whether there is a *prima facie* case of academic malpractice.

The student must be informed in writing at least seven days in advance that she/he is required to attend for a *viva voce*, stating clearly the time and place, and the name(s) of the examiners conducting the process. Written records of the *viva voce* must be kept which are then reported in the minutes of the Module Assessment Board.

It must be ascertained whether the student has any declared disability that may affect their ability to reflect their knowledge in a *viva voce* examination and where this might be the case Disability Support should be consulted to ensure any required reasonable adjustments are put in place.

## 5.12 Complaints about provisional marks

---

A student who wishes to complain about a provisional mark should submit a case in writing to the Departmental Assessment Contact, who shall investigate whether there has been a procedural or administrative irregularity and notify the student accordingly, in writing. Any such irregularity shall be reported to the Module Assessment Board and, in exceptional cases, to the Awards/Progression Assessment Board. A student who wishes to complain about a mark following the final Awards/Progression Assessment Board of the academic session should follow the University's Appeals Procedure. Complaints against academic judgment are not permitted.

## 5.13 Feedback on assessed work

---

Written feedback on coursework (other than for final-year dissertations) shall normally be available to students in good time to be of assistance in preparation for the next assignment

(where applicable) and within four term-time working weeks of the submission deadline. Feedback shall show the agreed internal mark following the second-marking process. In cases where, for good reason, the four-week schedule cannot be adhered to, students shall be notified by the relevant Subject Department with an accompanying rationale and a revised schedule. (Notification may be through letters, e-mails, an announcement on the Portal or on a Departmental noticeboard, as appropriate). Feedback on dissertations may be deferred until after the relevant Module Assessment Board has met, but students shall be informed of departmental practice on this matter. In a case of suspected academic malpractice, the initial letter of accusation to the student shall stand in place of the normal feedback.

A student who submits written coursework early shall not be given feedback until after the submission deadline.

Departments and Programme Teams shall not return examination scripts to students but shall offer oral feedback on them to all students. This will be done without prejudice to the outcome of any reassessment. In addition, departments should consider other ways of providing feedback on examinations; for example, a written summary, commenting in general terms on the answers to each question and posted on the departmental noticeboard, offers a model of good practice. Departments wishing to provide individual written feedback to students on exam performance, including the disclosure of provisionally-agreed marks for each answer, may do so but must ensure that such feedback is given to all students who took the exam in question. A clear rationale must also be provided to students in cases where there is written feedback on some exams for which a Department is responsible, but not all. Boards of Studies shall approve the rationale and the means by which it is communicated to students.

For oral presentations and other forms of non-written assessment, students shall normally receive written feedback within three working weeks, even if supported by oral feedback. Feedback shall show the agreed internal mark, following the second-marking process. (The three weeks shall not include days when the University is officially closed.) Cases where, exceptionally and for good reason, the three-week schedule cannot be adhered to shall be notified to students with a rationale, as for feedback on written work (above).

#### 5.14 Reassessed/Deferred work

---

When marking reassessed or deferred work, in circumstances in which the total number of scripts is often very small, the requirements for second-marking shall be interpreted flexibly within the spirit of paragraphs 5.2 to 5.4 above. All work proposed (before adjustment for reassessment) for a mark of 40% or below shall be second-marked, plus a representative sample of work proposed for higher marks (prior to any adjustment to 40%). All work subject to second-marking shall be recorded on the Monitoring Form in the standard fashion, with a sample (including all proposed fails) sent to the External Examiner, whose rights and responsibilities are as set out in section 12 of this Handbook. Paragraphs 5.5 to 5.8 shall be observed without modification.

## 5.15 Staff development

---

Every Faculty or department shall hold staff development in relation to assessment, such as a marking exercise, in advance of a major assessment period at least once a year.

## 5.16 Retention of student work

---

Each Faculty or department shall retain an archive of all assessed written work, and, where possible, work in other media, representing a sample of students from each module. This should include the work of students ranked at the top, in the middle, at a threshold pass level, and (where applicable) as a clear fail. The work of a minimum of four students per module shall be retained on an annual basis and kept for a minimum period of five years, for purposes of internal and external review and as a means of comparing marking standards over a period of time. Copies of the originals are acceptable for retention purposes.

Provided that the requirements above are fulfilled, the only reasons to retain students' work once internal marking has been completed are for the benefit of external examiners and assessment boards, and in case of academic appeal or malpractice. Once a department is satisfied that work is no longer needed for these purposes, it can be returned to students (or copies destroyed if originals have already been returned to students as feedback), although every effort should be made to vary questions set from one year to another to guard against plagiarism through being handed down the cohorts. A student who formally accepts a degree cannot subsequently appeal, so there is no need to retain all students' work for any length of time after the graduation ceremony.

## 5.17 Requirements for Excess Word Count

---

A penalty for excessive word count shall be applied to all programmes of study that use numerical marking.

The word count shall not include appendices, bibliographies or references to sources. Quotations may also be excluded from the word count at the discretion of the relevant Module Assessment Board, but students must be notified via the module handbook of the Assessment Board's practice on this matter.

Wherever possible, on the basis of the electronic word count facility, students should include the number of words written, excluding the relevant items above, on the front of the assignment cover sheet or at the end of the assignment.

There will be a 10% leeway allowed above the specified word count before the penalty is imposed.

Assignments must be marked in their entirety and the penalty imposed at the end.

The penalty for exceeding the word count will be 5 marks per 1000 words excess (e.g. a 1000-word assignment should have 5 marks deducted if it runs to 1101-2100 words, 10 marks deducted for 2101-3100 words, and so on).

Details of the word count penalty shall be included in all programme or module handbooks where numeric marking scales are used.

Guidelines on this Requirement are in Appendix 5C.

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**Procedures Governing the Occurrence of  
Academic Malpractice by Students in the  
Course of Assessment**

**SECTION**

**6**

**Quality and Standards Manual**

**HANDBOOK F:  
The Assessment of Students  
at Levels Z, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught  
Provision at Level 8**

**2014 – 2015**

Authored By: Academic Quality Support Services  
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## SECTION 6 - PROCEDURES GOVERNING THE OCCURRENCE OF ACADEMIC MALPRACTICE BY STUDENTS IN THE COURSE OF ASSESSMENT

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The purpose of assessment is to determine the extent to which a student has acquired an independent understanding of the material on which he or she is being assessed. To this end, the University of Chester requires its students to fulfil the stated objectives of assessment as these are set out in section F1 of the Principles and Regulations. These procedures also apply to students studying under a collaborative partnership agreement at another institution or overseas on taught programmes, and the taught modules of research degrees, delivered by University of Chester.

### 1. Definition of Academic Malpractice

---

- 1.1 Academic malpractice may be deemed to have occurred where a student has gained, or sought to gain, advantage in assessment contrary to the established conditions under which students' knowledge, abilities or skills are assessed for progression towards, or the conferment of, academic credit.
- 1.2 Academic malpractice can occur whether or not the student intends to deceive.
- 1.3 Students may be penalised in the normal course of assessment for work which, in the judgement of the examiners, relies too heavily on the verbatim reproduction of work derived from other published sources where those sources are acknowledged. However, such over-reliance on work reproduced directly from published sources but acknowledged by the student to be taken from those sources may also be regarded as academic malpractice as defined in section 1.1, if a student is judged to be implying that the phraseology is her or his own.
- 1.4 Specific practices which shall be deemed to constitute academic malpractice are:
  - a) plagiarism, that is, where a student incorporates another person's work (including another student's as well as published sources) by unacknowledged quotation, paraphrase, imitation or other device, in a way which suggests that it is the student's original work. Work in this context is to be taken as any intellectual output being assessed for academic credit, and may include text, images, data, oral presentation, sound or performance.

Examples of plagiarism are:

- the verbatim copying of another's work without acknowledgement;
- the close paraphrasing of another's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation, without acknowledgement;
- unacknowledged quotation of phrases from another's work;
- the deliberate presentation of another's idea as one's own;
- copying or close paraphrasing with occasional acknowledgement of source may also be deemed to be plagiarism if the absence of quotation marks implies that the phraseology is the student's own;

- copying of data.

#### plagiarism in creative work

In arts practice the presentation, re-presentation and representation of extant material may explicitly refer to its sources. Where such references are artistically *implicit* they should be *extrinsically* stated in document or orally. The absence of such acknowledgement may constitute academic malpractice.

In arts practice stylistic or structural resemblance to extant material must be *explicitly* or *extrinsically* acknowledged to ensure fitness for purpose of submission for any given assessment.

Where a student is unclear on either point the onus will fall on them to discuss the particular issue with an appropriate member of academic staff prior to assessment.

- b) copying, that is, reproducing verbatim another's work, for example, downloading and incorporating material from the internet or other electronic sources;
- c) collusion, that is, the conscious collaboration, **without authorisation**, between two or more students in the preparation and/or production of work which is ultimately submitted by each in an identical, or substantially similar, form, and is represented by each to be the product of her/his individual efforts. Collusion also occurs where there is unauthorised co-operation between a student and another person in the preparation and/or production of work which is presented as the student's own;
- d) submitting, or assisting in submitting, false evidence of knowledge and understanding, for example by submitting coursework from an outside source or which has been completed by another student;
- e) commissioning another person or persons to undertake an assessment which is then submitted in whole or part of a submission for academic credit;
- f) fabricating references or primary sources;
- g) falsifying data or record, that is, where data or record presented in laboratory reports, projects, dissertation, journalistic interview and so on, based on work purported to have been carried out by the student, has been invented, copied or otherwise obtained by the student;
- h) incorporating material which has been submitted, previously or simultaneously, in support of an application academic credit from this or any other awarding body, except for the purposes of drawing attention, for reference purposes only, to such work, or where resubmission of previously failed work has expressly been permitted.
- i) obtaining data unethically, or by methods which are not in receipt of formal, ethical approval;
- j) communicating with, or copying from, another person by any means during an examination;
- k) copying or gaining information from any unauthorised source, by any means, from either inside or outside of the examination room;



- l) introducing any written or printed material into the examination room unless expressly permitted by the rubric of the examination;
- m) introducing any electronically stored information into the examination room, unless expressly permitted by the rubric of the examination;
- n) gaining access, or attempting to gain access, to unauthorised material before or during an examination;
- o) being a party to impersonation in an examination;
- p) preventing or attempting to prevent another student's assessment taking place properly;
- q) fabricating evidence in support of a mitigating circumstances claim;
- r) fabricating evidence in support of an academic appeal;
- s) any other dishonest practice resulting in, or intended to result in, a student gaining an unfair advantage in assessment, or disadvantaging other students' assessments.

1.5 No case for academic malpractice shall be made on the basis of an anonymous accusation by one student against another.

1.6 In cases of plagiarism, where identical or very similar source material can be found in more than one location, an example source shall be regarded as evidence.

## 2 Academic Malpractice and Disciplinary Procedures

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2.1 Where a student is alleged to have committed an offence which could be considered under the University's disciplinary procedures, if the alleged offence potentially disadvantages other student's assessment in a particular module or modules, then the student may be brought before an Academic Malpractice Panel instead of or in addition to the disciplinary hearing, in consultation with the Chair of the Module Assessment Board. For example, if a student is accused of damaging or stealing books, documents or other resources belonging to the University which potentially has the effect of disadvantaging the assessment of other students in a particular module or modules.

2.2 Where a student is accused of bringing the University of Chester into disrepute by engaging in academic malpractice in a published article or book or in other media, then a disciplinary panel may take the above definitions of academic malpractice into account at the hearing.

2.3 If an Academic Malpractice Panel considers that the student's actions or inactions have brought the University into disrepute, the Panel may refer the allegation of bringing the University into disrepute to the University Proctor for consideration under the Disciplinary Procedures (in addition to, or in place of, reflecting the matter in a more severe academic penalty than the intrinsic charge of Academic Malpractice would suggest).

2.4 In cases of suspected academic malpractice by a student on a professional programme, these procedures should normally be used. However, where the Chair of the MAB considers that the

Professional Suitability Procedure to be the more appropriate procedure, advice should be sought from Senior Assistant Registrar (Student Affairs) in the first instance.

### 3. Initial Witnessing and Accusation

3.1 If a lecturer or other academic officer suspects that a student is engaging in academic malpractice, she/he must inform the Chair of the Module Assessment Board as soon as she/he becomes aware of the suspected offence. In cases of plagiarism, where identical or very similar source material can be found in more than one location, an example source shall be regarded as evidence. The assignment shall be submitted for assessment and, where feasible, marked in the normal way as for all other coursework submissions. However, the student's mark will be withheld until the case has been judged.

#### 3.2 Level 4 and Level Z – coursework

- i. First (alleged) offences of academic malpractice at Level 4 and level Z will normally be dealt with initially by the Module Assessment Board, without recourse to University Academic Malpractice Panel
- ii. If the Chair, or nominee, of the Module Assessment Board is of the opinion that it is likely that academic malpractice may have occurred, the Chair, or nominee, will write to the student (using the format in Appendix 6B notifying her/him of the allegation and require her/him to provide a written response to the allegation within 7 days. The letter shall be accompanied by a copy of the evidence and will state that the student should attend an interview with the Chair, or nominee, where the allegation and the student's written reply will be discussed. The student may be accompanied by a fellow student of the University of Chester or an officer of the Chester Students' Union (CSU). A copy of this section of the Handbook should be included with the letter along with a copy of the relevant evidence.
- iii. If the student accepts that academic malpractice has taken place the Chair, or nominee, will inform the student orally that the Module Assessment Board will impose a penalty. The Chair should also counsel the student on approaches to study, and sources of study skills support, which could assist the student in developing academic skills and avoiding any recurrence of the offence in future.
- iv. If the student does not respond to the Chair, and does not submit a defence, the Chair may make a decision as to whether academic malpractice has occurred without the student's presence, and if academic malpractice has occurred, impose a penalty
- v. If the Chair decides that academic malpractice has not occurred. A pro-forma letter which may be used in this case can be found at appendix 6L
- vi. The penalty shall normally be recommendation that the student fail the piece of work in question. A copy of the letter containing confirmation of the offence from the Chair to the student should be sent to AQSS, together with notification of the penalty applied.
- vii. If the student contests the allegation, or if having been dealt with as in the previous paragraph, a student is accused of a second or subsequent offence at Level 4 and the Chair, or nominee, is of the opinion that there is a *prima facie* case, then the allegation will be referred to a University Academic Malpractice Panel, as described elsewhere in

this Handbook. The Chair will write to AQSS, using the form in Appendix 6C and request the convening of the University Academic Malpractice Panel.

viii. In the event of one or more offences of plagiarism, all cases at Level 4 will be regarded as concurrent, until formal written feedback about plagiarism has been given to the student. Any further academic malpractice in work submitted for assessment after this point will be regarded as constituting a subsequent offence.

### 3.3 Level 5, 6, 7, 8 (taught) and relevant levels 4 and Z – coursework

- a) The decision to accuse a student of academic malpractice shall be made only by the relevant Chair of the Module Assessment Board. Academic malpractice procedures may not be implemented if a mark has already been confirmed by an Awards Assessment Board.
- b) Within five working days of receiving notification of an allegation of academic malpractice, the Chair of the relevant Module Assessment Board will review the evidence submitted. The Chair may consult with other academic officers as appropriate.
- c) The Chair of the MAB may decide to conduct a *viva voce* examination where there is a suspicion that academic malpractice has been committed, but where no evidence can be produced. The *viva voce* examination is part of the assessment of the piece of work in question, and as such, normally the student may not be accompanied (although the student does have the right to be accompanied at the academic malpractice hearing – see section 7.5 and appendix 6J- should the case be referred to a Panel). Guidelines for the conduct of a *viva voce* examination in the case of suspected academic malpractice are available at Appendix 6E.
- d) If s/he is of the opinion that there is a *prima facie* case (sufficient evidence to proceed to a University Academic Malpractice Panel), the Chair of the Module Assessment Board will write to the student, by pro forma letter (Appendix 6F) notifying her/him of the allegation and requiring her/him to provide a written response to the allegation within seven days of the date of the letter. The letter shall be accompanied by a copy of the evidence and will state that the student should attend an interview with the Chair, or nominee, where the allegation and the student's written reply will be discussed. A copy of the relevant sections of this handbook should be included with the letter. In a case of suspected academic malpractice, the initial letter of accusation to the student shall stand in place of the normal feedback.
- e) If the Chair of the Module Assessment Board judges, if necessary after the conduct of a *viva voce* examination, that there is insufficient evidence to proceed, the case will be dismissed with no blame attached. Where, for any reason, the student has been made aware of the initial accusation, but where the case is dismissed by the Chair of the Module Assessment Board, the Chair shall inform the student by letter that she/he has been exculpated. A pro-forma letter which may be used in this case can be found at appendix 6L.
- f) If the Chair judges, on the basis of the evidence available to him or her, that there is a *prima facie* case for proceeding to the stage of a University Academic Malpractice Panel, the Chair shall write to AQSS, using the form in Appendix 6C and request the convening of such a Panel.
- g) The student shall then be informed by AQSS of the appointed time at which the panel will be held and shall be informed of her/his right to appear before the Panel and/or submit a

further written statement beyond that already made to the Chair of the Module Assessment Board. Before the University Academic Malpractice Panel meets, the student against whom the allegation has been made will be supplied with a copy of the written evidence submitted by the member of academic staff submitting the accusation. However, if further evidence of malpractice in the piece of work comes to light during or before the hearing, the University reserves the right to take this additional evidence into account, however, the student must be provided with a copy of the additional evidence against them and be given an appropriate amount of time to prepare a defence should wish to do so.

- h) Both staff and students have the opportunity to present their case in writing and in person to an academic malpractice panel. Other than through these channels, neither students, staff nor other individuals may seek to influence the Chair or Members of an Academic Panel, or in any other way seek to sway the operation of the University's academic malpractice procedures, regarding an academic malpractice case which has been submitted to a Panel, or is expected or proposed to be submitted. Doing so may lead to the case being deferred until a new Panel with a different Chair and members can be convened.
- i) For Level 5 and above a "second offence" **will normally** be considered simultaneously with a "first offence" if work from more than one assessment is brought before a Panel. Penalties may reflect the number of offences in addition to the volume of **academic malpractice** in each assessment.
- j) Where a formal accusation of academic malpractice has been made, the University shall not normally permit suspension of studies until the matter is resolved.

### 3.4 Initial Witnessing and Accusation: Examination – levels Z, 4, 5, 6 7 and 8 (taught)

- a) If an invigilator suspects that a student is engaging in academic malpractice:
  - i) Provided that the student is not disturbing other candidates, the student shall be allowed to continue the examination. However, the invigilator shall immediately require another invigilator to act as a witness and any unauthorised materials shall be removed. The script (or other assessment form where appropriate) shall be endorsed by the invigilator at the point where the occurrence of cheating is suspected, and on the front cover of the examination answer book. In a practical examination, the invigilator will take note of the stage reached when the infringement was observed.
  - ii) A student who, in the opinion of an invigilator, is behaving in a manner which may disturb other examination candidates or may disrupt the smooth progress of the examination shall be required to leave the examination room forthwith. At the discretion of the chief invigilator, examination candidates may be allowed additional time to compensate for the time lost as a result of any disturbance/disruption.
- b) The invigilator should instruct the student to report to them at the end of the examination when other students have been dismissed from the examination hall. The invigilator and student should then meet with the Examinations Officer (or other senior member of the Registry) who will make a written record of the circumstances and retain or make notes regarding any relevant materials. A form for this purpose may be found as Appendix 6A. A copy of this record should be sent to both student and invigilator for them to sign and record any comments as soon as possible and no later than 2 working days following the incident.

- c) Immediately after the examination/assessment, a full report shall then be made by the invigilator(s) to the Chair of the relevant Module Assessment Board. Any unauthorised materials should be attached to the report. The candidate shall be advised, after the examination/assessment, of the procedures for dealing with suspected cases of academic malpractice. Where feasible, the examination script shall be marked in the normal way as for all other scripts. However, the student's mark will be withheld until the case has been judged.

#### 4. Acceptance of the Charge of Academic Malpractice

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- 4.1 If the student accepts the charge of academic malpractice, and does not wish to appear before the University Academic Malpractice Panel then they may write to the Panel, using the form provided (Appendix 6H) accepting the charge, and any penalty applied.

#### 5. University Academic Malpractice Panel: Composition

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- 5.1 The Panel shall consist of a Chair and two members. The Panel shall be drawn from a pool of the following:

a) *Chair*

Each Faculty shall nominate a Chair who is normally either a head or deputy head of Subject or a Chair of a Module Assessment Board.

b) *Members*

Each head of subject shall nominate a member of academic staff who has experience of academic malpractice matters, and knowledge of assessment procedures. At least one of the members of the panel must be from a Faculty other than that of the student. Normally, the panel shall not contain anyone who is involved in the teaching or assessment of the programme in which the student is accused. Nominated panel members shall declare any interest they have in the student which may prejudice their membership of the panel and will entitle them to decline membership accordingly. The University reserves the right to involve such other individuals in the hearing as it sees fit.

- 5.2 The Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement (or nominee) will be present and shall act as a procedural advisor. The panel will be serviced by AQSS. Formal minutes will be taken and kept in AQSS.

**5.3 A written submission shall be presented to the panel by the department, on a form provided by AQSS (Appendix 6C). If the department considers that the affected portion of the work is particularly significant to the assessed work, and merits a more severe application of a penalty than the guidelines would suggest, they may make application to the University Academic Malpractice Panel, before the hearing, providing a written rationale on the Appendix 6C form.**

**5.4 The Chair of the University Academic Malpractice Panel will normally request via the minuting secretary of the panel that a member of staff with knowledge of the alleged offence attend the hearing to present the case on behalf of the Chair of the Module Assessment Board.**

5.5 Upon initial consideration of the case, the Chair of the University Academic Malpractice Panel may request that additional evidence be sought from the department.

5.6 Normally the case shall be considered at the next meeting of the University Academic Malpractice Panel. The student shall be informed of the date of the hearing as soon as reasonably practicable. The student will normally be given 7 calendar days' notice of the University Academic Malpractice hearing.

## 6. Requesting a deferral of the Academic Malpractice Panel

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6.1 The student may request a rescheduling of a hearing on one occasion only, and for good reason. Such reason for hearing scheduled during term time being, but not exclusively:

- a) a clash with an examination or class test;
- b) a clash with a field trip or with Work Based Learning;
- c) a clash with another academic requirement (application for deferral for an academic reason shall be accompanied by a written confirmation from the programme or module leader confirming the requirement);
- d) illness of the student, or someone for whom the student has a caring responsibility (application for deferral due to illness must be accompanied by a medical certificate).

6.2 A request for deferral of a hearing due to a holiday taken during term time will not be permitted.

**6.3 For hearings during vacation time, requests may be made for the reasons stated above, because of a pre-booked holiday, or because of work commitments.**

**6.4 In either term or vacation time, a student may request that the hearing goes ahead in their absence.**

## 7. The Meeting of the University Academic Malpractice Panel

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7.1 At its meeting, the Panel shall consider:

- a) all evidence adduced in the course of the bringing of the allegation against the student; this might include evidence such as reportage from a *viva voce* examination held on behalf of an MAB in order to determine whether there is a *prima facie* case for academic malpractice;
- b) any written statement by the student in question;
- c) any oral statement the student may elect to make in person to the Panel;
- d) oral or written evidence from any other relevant sources, including members of the Assessment Board to which the student is subject.

7.2 The student shall have the right to see and comment on any evidence the University Academic Malpractice Panel intends to take into account, and the Chair of the University Academic Malpractice Panel shall adjourn the hearing if necessary to give the student the opportunity to do this.

7.3 If further evidence of malpractice in the piece of work comes to light during or before the hearing, the University reserves the right to take this additional evidence into account, however, the student must be provided with a copy of the additional evidence against them and be given an appropriate amount of time to prepare a defence should wish to do so.

7.4 The student shall respond to the allegation personally and cannot delegate the response to a third party, nor shall a third party be permitted to attend the hearing on behalf of a student without their presence. No discussions will be entered into with a third party about the matter.

7.5 Where a student elects to make an oral statement to the Panel, she/he may be accompanied by a member of the University of Chester, who should be either a fellow student or an officer of Chester Students' Union. The student's parent or guardian shall only be permitted to attend the hearing if the student is under 18 years of age. At the discretion of the Chair of the Panel, the person accompanying the student may be invited to make a statement. The name and status of the person accompanying the student shall be communicated in advance to the Chair of the Panel. Further information about the status of the person accompanying the student can be found in appendix 6J.

7.6 If the student elects not to make an oral statement, the case will be heard in their absence

7.7 If a student has previously been found to have committed academic malpractice, this shall be disclosed to the Chair of the panel, before the hearing. Members of the panel will be informed before the penalty is applied if the student is found to have previously engaged in academic malpractice.

7.8 Where a student is studying at a partner institution abroad, is an overseas student who is no longer resident in the UK, or is a student based in the UK but is overseas as part of their programme, the academic malpractice panel may be conducted via videolink.

7.9 An academic malpractice panel hearing may not normally be conducted via videolink because the student is on holiday, or overseas for personal reasons.

## 8. Decision and Subsequent Recommendation of Penalty

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8.1 After the hearing, the University Academic Malpractice Panel shall make a decision based on the evidence presented. The decision of the Academic Malpractice Panel is one of academic judgement. The panel shall send a written report to the appropriate Assessment Board, detailing the outcome of the hearing and making recommendations accordingly. Typically, these recommendations will be one of the following:

- a) the student has not engaged in academic malpractice, and that the assessment marks should therefore be released in the normal way or;
- b) the student has engaged in academic malpractice and that the student receives a formal warning as to future conduct and shall be given the following academic penalty:

That the student:

- i) should fail (with a mark of 0%) the entire component of assessment within the relevant module (e.g. all the examination component or all the course work component);
  - ii) should fail (with a mark of 0%) the entire module;
- c) the student has engaged in academic malpractice in multiple pieces of work or in such a way that the panel deem the case to be exceptionally serious:
- i) has marks for all modules at a particular level capped at 40%;
  - ii) in the case of a Foundation degree student, should be barred from receiving a Merit or Distinction;
  - iii) should have their degree classification lowered;
  - iv) should fail (with a mark of 0%) the entire level;
  - v) at Level 7, the student shall only be permitted **a maximum** award of Postgraduate Diploma, and may not take further modules which may lead to the award of a Masters' degree.
  - vi) at Level 7, the student shall only be permitted **a maximum award** of Postgraduate Certificate, and may not take further modules which may lead to the award of Postgraduate Diploma
  - vii) be required to withdraw from the University and may not enrol for any other award at the institution. Where this penalty is applied, the penalty of a reduction of marks shall also be specified.

8.2 The penalty shall include a recommendation, where appropriate, about whether reassessment is permissible. In this case any resultant module mark must be capped at 40% and in the case of Bachelor's degree students at Level 5 and 6, the capped module mark may not be discounted in the calculation of the final degree classification; in the case of Foundation degree students, the capped module mark may not be discounted in the calculation for determining whether a merit or distinction shall be awarded.

8.3 In all cases of academic malpractice at Level 7, the student shall be barred from being awarded a merit or a distinction.

8.4 All judgements and recommendations relating to penalties for academic malpractice shall be ratified by an Assessment Board. Those penalties which relate to individual modules shall be ratified by a Module Assessment Board; where the penalty directly relates to progression or to an award, the decision shall be ratified by an Awards Assessment (or Progression) Board. (Chair's Action may be taken as necessary to expedite the outcome.)

## 9. The Role of the Assessment Board

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9.1 The Assessment Board shall ratify the penalty judgement.



9.2 Normally, the final module mark(s) awarded shall be treated in the same way, and have the same consequences with regard to the assessment of the candidate's overall performance, as a similar mark awarded to other candidates. However, the result of any module in which a student has been found to have committed academic malpractice may not be discounted for the purpose of calculating the degree classification.

9.3 When reassessment is allowed in modules which the student is deemed to have failed on account of academic malpractice, the requirements governing reassessment shall apply (please refer to Requirements for the Conduct of Assessment by Awards Assessment Boards).

9.4 The permanent record of the student should record both the findings of the University Academic Malpractice Panel and the penalty imposed.

## 10. Appeal against the decision of the Academic Malpractice Panel

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10.1 The decision of the Academic Malpractice Panel is one of academic judgement. A student may not therefore appeal against the decision on the ground of disagreement with the decision of the Academic Malpractice Panel.

10.2 A student (known as an appellant in the academic appeals procedure) may make an academic appeal based on the following grounds:

- a) that the appellant had personal illness or exceptional personal circumstances which affected her/his ability to mount a defence of the allegation, only if s/he was unable, or for valid and compelling reasons unwilling, to either request a deferral of the academic malpractice panel or divulge such illness or circumstance(s) to the academic malpractice panel, prior to or during the hearing;
- b) that the Academic Malpractice Panel was not conducted in accordance with the relevant regulations;
- c) that there was administrative error on the part of the University which had a demonstrable and substantial negative impact on the operation of the academic malpractice procedures or of the Academic Malpractice Panel;
- d) that some other material irregularity on the part of the University occurred in the conduct of the academic malpractice procedures or conduct of the Academic Malpractice Panel assessment outcome.
- e) That the penalty imposed unreasonably exceeded the penalty which would normally be applied for such an offence.

10.3 Appeals against the decision of the Academic Malpractice Panel shall be considered under the academic appeals procedure (see Handbook F, Section 10, Academic Appeals)

10.4 A student should lodge any appeal within 14 calendar days of notification of the decision of the Academic Malpractice Panel.

10.5 Where an appeal against the decision of an Academic Malpractice Panel has been upheld, the decision of the Appeals Committee (or Assessment Review Board) shall

normally be that the student shall be afforded the chance to defend the allegation at a hearing of the Academic Malpractice Panel as if for the first time.

## Office of the Independent Adjudicator

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- 11.1 Where a student has exhausted internal procedure, and a Completion of Procedures letter has been issued, there exists a right to take the case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). If the student wishes to take his/her complaint to the OIA, s/he must send a Scheme Application Form within three months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter. A Scheme Application Form can be obtained from the Institutional Compliance Officer, from Chester Students' Union or downloaded from the OIA website [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk).
- 11.2 Where a student does not have grounds for making an academic appeal against the decision of the academic malpractice hearing panel but is nonetheless dissatisfied with the outcome of the hearing, they may request a Completion of Procedures letter from the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement.

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## GUIDANCE ON PENALTIES

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### PLAGIARISM OR COLLUSION IN WRITTEN COURSEWORK

The Panel may wish to recommend penalties according to the following tariff.

#### **First offence**

##### *At Level Four only, for cases dealt with by the academic department*

If less than 10% of full text is involved, recommend that student be given written warning of bad practice by Chair of relevant Module Assessment Board.

If 10%-100% of full text is involved, recommend that the student should fail with a mark of 0% the work in question.

##### *Any undergraduate level dealt with by the University Academic Malpractice Panel*

If up to 50% of full text is involved, consider the recommendation at section 8.1b)i).

If 50-100% of full text is involved, consider the recommendation at section 8.1b)ii).

#### **For second or subsequent offences at any level and all offences at postgraduate Levels 7 and 8 taught**

Apply at least the recommendation at 8.1b) ii) for any of the categories above and consider subsequent recommendations 8.1c)i) to 8.1c)vii) where at least 50% of full text is involved and/or work in more than one module is affected (including second and subsequent offences where previous cases have been considered by an earlier panel).

In the event of one or more offences of plagiarism, all cases at **Level 4** will be regarded as concurrent, until formal written feedback about plagiarism has been given to the student. Any work submitted for assessment after this point will be regarded as a subsequent offence

For **Level 5 and above** a 'second offence' will normally be considered simultaneously with a 'first offence' if work from more than one assessment is brought before a Panel. Penalties will normally reflect the number of offences in addition to the volume of plagiarism or collusion in each assessment.

#### **Guidelines for recommending reassessment following academic malpractice:**

The penalty shall include a recommendation, where appropriate, about whether reassessment is permissible.

#### **Academic malpractice at first assessment attempt:**

Reassessment shall normally be permitted, except where the penalty applied is that the student is required to leave the University, or, at level 7, where the penalty applied is that the award is limited to a Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate.

**Academic malpractice at second assessment attempt:**

A discretionary third attempt shall normally be permitted in the following circumstance:

- Where the student is at level 4, 5 or 6;
- Where the offence is one of plagiarism or collusion;
- Where the academic malpractice is in one piece of work only;
- Where it is the student's first offence;
- Where the amount of work affected is less than 50%;
- And where the student is not otherwise barred from a third attempt due to professional body requirements or due to non-submission of reassessment in (an) other module(s).

All the above criteria must apply. Where these criteria do not apply, consideration should be given to whether reassessment is permitted, and a reason for the permission or denial of a discretionary third attempt shall be minuted and conveyed to the student.

**Academic malpractice at third assessment attempt:**

The University does not permit fourth assessment attempts.

**OTHER FORMS OF ACADEMIC MALPRACTICE:**

The Panel shall make a recommendation about penalties taking into consideration the following:

- a)The level of study of the student;
- b)The seriousness of the offence;
- c)Whether it is a first or subsequent offence;
- d)Precedent;
- e)Any other pertinent issues raised by the case.



University of  
Chester

# Mitigating Circumstances

SECTION

7

Quality and Standards Manual

## HANDBOOK F: The Assessment of Students at Levels 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught Provision at Level 8

2014 – 2015

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## SECTION 7: MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

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### 7.1 Mitigating Circumstances

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1. Mitigating circumstances are those which may adversely affect a student's performance in assessment, and in respect of which a student formally advances a claim for special consideration.
2. The Registry Services Officers responsible for the co-ordination of all documentation related to mitigating circumstances and associated cases are the Assistant Registrars in the Assessment Team.
3. All claims for mitigating circumstances shall be considered by the University's Mitigating Circumstances Board, which shall meet as required and shall have the following composition:
  - A Chair of an Awards/Progression Assessment Board, who will act as Chair of the Panel
  - Department Assessment Contacts or Heads of Department (or their nominee), the number of which will be determined based on the volume of claims to be considered but will not fall below three

In attendance:

- Dean of Academic Quality and Standards (or their nominee)
  - Deputy Registrar (or their nominee)
  - Student Support Manager (or their nominee)
  - A member of Registry Services who will service the meeting
4. Where claims for mitigating circumstances relate to assessment for which the deadline date has already passed, applications should be submitted on form MC1 to the Assessment Team in Registry Services. In addition to the MC1 form, students must also include the form showing the assessment components they wish to claim for; this form is found on the Student Homepage on the student's e-vision account.

Claims should be supported with medical or other evidence (signed by a doctor or other relevant authority). The deadline dates for submission of claims shall be included in the guidance notes. Claims submitted after the deadline date may, at the discretion of the Mitigating Circumstances Board, be considered, but in no circumstances shall claims be considered by the Mitigating Circumstances Board after the relevant Module Assessment Board has taken place. The date of the written evidence must be concordant with the dates of the assessment for which mitigation is being sought. The deadline dates provided by students on their forms will be checked by the Assessment Team before the claims are considered by the Mitigating Circumstances Board.
  5. Students must specify which component of the module(s) (e.g. written coursework; oral presentation; examination) is affected by their circumstances, and for which they are seeking mitigation. In order to do so, they must tick the relevant components on the form found on the student homepage of e-vision and include this with their submission of form MC1. Claims not including both form MC1 and the form showing

the components for which they wish to claim will not be considered. 'Blanket' applications (i.e. applications which seek to claim mitigation across all components of all modules) will not normally be accepted.

6. Other than in exceptional circumstances, the outcome of a valid claim for mitigating circumstances shall be one of the following:
  - (a) to be allowed to miss an assessment component and to be granted the opportunity to take that missed component, on a future occasion, as if for the first time (deferred assessment). Students will normally be required to submit themselves for deferred assessment on the next designated occasion when the relevant assessment opportunity is made available
  - (b) where an assessment component has been attempted, to have the mark for that component set aside, so that the student attempts the component again, as if for the first time (deferred assessment). Where a student undertakes a deferred assessment, as a consequence of mitigation, the mark for that deferred assessment must replace any previous mark.

In both (a) and (b) above, 'first time' shall be read as 'second time' in any case where mitigation is granted in respect of reassessment and 'third time' in respect of third assessment attempts.

- (c) Where a student has a registered/confirmed disability or specific need, this shall be reported to the relevant Module Assessment Board, but normally no further consideration will be given since, as set out in guidelines for students with disabilities or specific needs, account will already have been taken of this.
- (d) Where a student has a chronic condition or her/his circumstances are not improving, the normal recommendation shall be interruption of studies.
- (e) Where a late work penalty has been applied, to have this penalty revoked and the full mark awarded for the relevant component(s)

The outcome determined by the Mitigating Circumstances Board in respect of each student shall be communicated in identical terms to each Module Assessment Board which has responsibility for the assessment of that student. A Module Assessment Board has no discretion in the matter and must accept the outcome determined by the Mitigating Circumstances Board.

7. If the claim is deemed invalid by the Mitigating Circumstances Board no action will be taken and the original mark will stand. A student who misses an assessment component and whose claim for mitigating circumstances in respect of that assessment is deemed invalid shall be awarded a mark of 0% (fail) for that component.
8. If it is subsequently discovered that a student had misled the Mitigating Circumstances Board in any way, that Board has the right to rescind the decision it has taken on the case and, where appropriate, this may be considered as a case of Academic Malpractice.



## 7.2 Extensions and Deferrals

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1. Where a student is aware in advance of the relevant deadline that they wish to postpone the submission of an assignment, they may take one of two courses of action.
  - (a) If seeking an extension to the deadline for the submission of an assignment which falls within the period set in the University timetable for the delivery and assessment of the module concerned, the student shall complete form EX1 (available on the Registry Services Portal pages) in advance of the deadline date. This form, with accompanying medical or other evidence (signed by a doctor or other relevant authority), shall be submitted to the relevant Head(s) of Department (as Chair(s) of the Module Assessment Board(s)) or nominee. The student must obtain the signature of the Head of Department, or nominee, who will make a decision based on the written evidence. (see section 7.4 on Acceptable Evidence). A copy of form EX1 will be kept by the department who will confirm the new submission date with the student. Where such extensions are granted at the discretion of a Head of Department, or nominee, they will normally only be reported to the Mitigating Circumstances Board in cases where students may appear to be claiming mitigation over and above that already allowed by the extensions. Where an extension is granted, the mark must be available to the Module Assessment Board.
  - (b) If seeking an extension to the deadline for the submission of an assignment which falls after the period set in the University timetable for the delivery and assessment of the module concerned, the student must seek a deferral of assessment. S/he shall complete form DF1 (available on the Registry Services Portal pages). This form, with accompanying medical or other evidence (signed by a doctor or other relevant authority), should be submitted to the relevant Head(s) of Department (as Chair(s) of the Module Assessment Board(s)), or Deputy Head, for approval (Please see section 7.4 on Acceptable Evidence). The student must obtain the signature of the Head of Department, or Deputy Head, who will make a decision based on the written evidence before returning form DF1 and the written evidence to Registry Services.

Where such deferrals are granted at the discretion of a Head of Department, or nominee, they will be reported to the Mitigating Circumstances Board, to be recorded alongside deferrals granted by that Board.

A student who for any reason seeks to postpone attendance at an examination for assessment must complete form DF1. This form, with accompanying medical or other evidence (signed by a doctor or other relevant authority), should be submitted to the relevant Head(s) of Department (as Chair(s) of the Module Assessment Board(s)), or Deputy Head, for approval. The student must obtain the signature of the Head of Department, or Deputy Head, who will make a decision based on the written evidence before returning form DF1 and the written evidence to Registry Services.

Claims for extensions or deferrals will not be accepted once the submission deadline date has passed, save in exceptional circumstances which made submission of a claim impossible by the due date.

Students submitting assessment having already been granted a deferral to the next assessment point will be deemed to have presented themselves for assessment; in this event the deferral will no longer be valid. Students in this position who feel their performance was adversely affected must submit a claim to the Mitigating Circumstances Board.

### 7.3 Categories of acceptable mitigating circumstances

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*The following should also be taken into account by Heads of Department and others when granting extensions or deferrals):*

- Those students with a specific need or disability. Guidelines for dealing with such students should be consulted and the procedures applied prior to the assessment period, subject to written medical evidence or an up-to-date psychologist's report.
- Those students who have long term illness/medical conditions, for whom medical evidence has been submitted in advance of their assessment periods.
- Those students who sit an examination or complete and submit a piece of work when they are ill or troubled in some way.
- Those students whose preparation for assessment is affected by illness or other adverse circumstances.
- Those students for whom mitigating circumstances have arisen during an assessment period which may have affected only a part of the assessment, for example in one subject area only.
- Bereavement (family or otherwise).
- Domestic problems (including divorce, separation, parental divorce).
- Work commitments (part time students and those repeating modules on a part time basis only)
- Other factors which may reasonably be deemed to have had an adverse impact comparable with those above.

Where a student submits a claim for mitigating circumstances due to illness or circumstances relating primarily to family or friends, evidence must be submitted demonstrating how the illness or circumstances have affected the student.

The following are unacceptable reasons for mitigation:

- Misreading the timetable resulting in absence from an examination.
- IT failure, including but not limited to computer failure/storage device failure/printer failure.
- Work commitments for full time students
- Problems associated with travelling arrangements/holidays traffic problems or stress caused by travel problems. It is the responsibility of the student to make appropriate arrangements to ensure that assignments are submitted on time and/or that they present themselves for an examination on time. This should be borne in mind when making any plans to return to University after a home visit or when making holiday/travel arrangements. In cases of extremis, travel issues may

be taken into account for students with disabilities where the combination of unforeseen circumstances and disability related issues impinge on attendance

## 7.4 Acceptable evidence in support of mitigating circumstances

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### *Medical*

Extensions or deferrals will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. The University is unable to make allowances for minor illnesses such as headaches, upset stomachs, coughs and colds. These affect everyone and it would not be practical or sensible to take account of them all.

Students are expected to plan their work and allow leeway to cope with minor misfortunes.

It is important that students go to see or have a telephone consultation with the doctor or nurse while they have the symptoms so that a signed certificate can be issued which includes precise dates of illness, a diagnosis or description of symptoms and a statement on the severity of the impairment. Notes /letters from a doctor or nurse stating that the illness/ailment 'may have an impact' or which state 'the patient informs me' will not normally be accepted as valid evidence.

Medical practices will not normally issue certificates for self-limiting illnesses of less than seven days.

Where a student seeks an extension/deferral/mitigating circumstances due to illness or circumstances relating primarily to family or friends, evidence must be submitted demonstrating how the illness or circumstances have affected the student.

Where a student provides medical certification which states that they are suffering from an on-going medical condition which will on an on-going or recurring basis impact on their studies, they will not be expected to provide new date-specific evidence for each assessment period for which they seek extension, deferral or mitigating circumstances.

### *Work commitments (Part time students and those repeating modules on a part time basis only)*

Part time students seeking extension, deferral or mitigating circumstances on the grounds of work commitments should submit a letter from their employer.

### *Practical problems*

The University will not take account of events such as car breakdowns, public transport delays, traffic problems and computer breakdowns. For a submission deadline or an exam, students must allow extra time in case such things happen. It is the student's own responsibility to back up work on a computer.

## *Disability*

The University will take into account issues arising from a combination of disability and wholly exceptional circumstances

### *Evidence from the University*

In exceptional cases, a signed statement from the Head of Student Support, or nominee, may be deemed acceptable evidence. However, this will be limited to those cases where in the view of the Mitigating Circumstances Board or, in the case of extension or deferral, the relevant Head of Department, the nature of the mitigating circumstances are such that other independent documentary evidence could not reasonably be provided. The Head of Student Support or nominee are under no obligation to provide a supporting letter and will only do so where strict criteria have been met.

Students will normally be granted an extension if the University's own computing systems were at fault. However the failure has to be substantial, very close to the deadline, and documented by LIS. Further information may be found in the University's Turnitin guidelines.

## 7.5 Illness during examinations

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1. A candidate who is absent from part or the whole of an examination on account of illness must inform Registry Services and provide a valid medical certificate without delay. A properly-evidenced claim for mitigating circumstances should be submitted on form MC1 before the published deadline.
2. A statement from a member of University staff who witnesses the condition of the student in or on leaving the assessment, describing the circumstances as witnessed, may be considered by the Mitigating Circumstances Panel as evidence regarding a case where a student leaves an assessment due to the sudden onset of illness.
3. Wherever possible, written examinations will be taken by candidates in recognised assessment rooms and every effort will be made to avoid the necessity of making specific assessment arrangements elsewhere.
4. Where a candidate is unable due to illness or temporary disability to sit a written examination at the published venue, arrangements will be made, if feasible, for the written examination to be taken in another room under the control of staff of the University.
5. A candidate seeking such specific arrangements must report to Registry Services as far as possible in advance of the start of the written examination.
6. Students with a notifiable, communicable disease must not attend examinations and should obtain medical evidence in support of a deferral or claim to the mitigating circumstances board.
7. Where a request is made for the written examination to be taken in a hospital, approval of the request will be dependent upon the provision of suitable facilities and access to such facilities by a supervisor of the University.

8. If a student is unable, through disability, to be assessed by the normal methods specified in the module assessment requirements the Head of Department, in consultation with the External Examiner, may vary the assessment methods as appropriate, bearing in mind those competence standards which inform the learning objectives. Any such alternative assessment shall be approved in advance by the University's Disabilities Coordinator or equivalent. Advice on the types of alternative assessment may be sought from the Dean of AQE.

## 7.6 Late Work

1. These University Requirements operate for any piece of assessed work for which a submission date has been given at the start of a module and where the assessment does not involve the attendance of the student during the assessment (e.g. the handing in of an essay or project but not the presentation of a seminar, a drama performance, a written examination).
2. Where an extension to the deadline for the submission of an assignment is requested, the student shall follow the procedures set out in the section **Extensions and Deferrals**, above. A request will not be considered unless accompanied by a valid medical certificate signed by a doctor, or other certified written evidence. Categories of acceptable mitigating circumstances are listed under **Mitigating Circumstances**.
3. Assessed work submitted after the original submission date or after the extended submission date will be recorded as late.
4. Late assessed work should be marked in the usual way so that the student who has made the effort is given feedback on the standard of work achieved.
5. In the final calculation of a student's performance in a module the late assessed work will be appropriately penalised. The penalty mark awarded to late work refers only to the component of the module that is submitted late.
6. Late assessed work will be penalised and the penalty incurred will be 10 marks for work submitted up to 24 hours after a deadline and 10 marks per day after this, including weekends, e.g.:

	<i>Intrinsic Merit</i> (% mark awarded by tutor)	<i>Penalty Mark</i> %
Work up to 24 hours late	65	55
Work up to 48 hours late	65	45
Work up to 72 hours late	65	35

and so on, to 0.

7. Where an assessment component is assessed on a Pass/Fail basis, a fail will be recorded in cases where that component is submitted after the deadline.
8. In order to enforce this rule of procedure effectively, deadlines should normally be set for days other than Fridays and for times during the working day. These should be

publicised in the appropriate module handbooks, along with details of where, within each Department, to hand in assignments.

9. A record shall be kept by departments of any work penalised for late submission. All such penalties shall be recorded in the minutes of the Module Assessment Board.

## 7.7 Extensions to a student's period of registration

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Students requesting an extension to their period of registration should complete form RP1 (available on the Registry Services Sharepoint Portal pages). Claims will be considered by the relevant Mitigating Circumstances Board or Awards/Progression Assessment Board and must, therefore, be submitted by the stipulated deadline. Extensions to a period of registration will only be granted in exceptional cases where the student is able to provide independent documentary evidence proving they have suffered severe and prolonged mitigating circumstances which have affected their ability to complete within the approved period of registration. If approved, an extension will be granted for a maximum of 12 months in excess of the approved period of registration; further extensions are not normally granted.

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University of  
Chester

# Assessment Boards

SECTION

8

Quality and Standards Manual

**HANDBOOK F:**  
**The Assessment of Students**  
**at Levels 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught**  
**Provision at Level 8**

**2014 – 2015**

Date of Approval: June 2014

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- 8K Guide to compensation of failure in assessment

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## SECTION 8: ASSESSMENT BOARDS

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### 8.1 Assessment Board Structure and Operation

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The University operates a two-tier system of Assessment Boards, with subject specialist External Examiners who operate through Module Assessment Boards and Chief External Examiners appointed to Awards/Progression Assessment Boards.

A Module Assessment Board has responsibility for the outcomes of modules assigned to that Board. An Awards/Progression Assessment Board has responsibility for the outcomes of the Programmes of Study assigned to that Board. The appropriate Awards/Progression Assessment Board considers matters of awards, progression, re-assessment and third assessment attempts. An Appeals Board deals only with appeals against the decision of an Awards/Progression Assessment Board or Examination Committee.

The role of the external examiner is as follows:

- External Examiners shall be equal members of Module Assessment Boards, whose role shall involve acting as a specialist academic advisor, and reporting on academic standards and the processes of assessment.
- Awards/Progression Assessment Boards have Chief External Examiners appointed to them, whose role involves maintaining oversight of the assessment process, advising on structural and assessment issues pertaining to credit-based, modular programmes, and acting as arbiter/wise counsellor in individual student cases, as requested.

The Chair of an Assessment Board shall be responsible for ensuring that meetings are conducted in accordance with University of Chester Principles and Regulations concerning assessment, and also in accordance with any special Regulations affecting the particular programme of study on which the Board is adjudicating.

Except provisional marks disclosed in the normal course of assignment feedback, only component marks, coursework and/or examination marks, as finally approved by both tiers of Assessment Board, shall be disclosed to students.

Module Assessment Boards shall meet formally at an appropriate time following a student assessment period, which may involve several meetings in each academic session. Unless prevented from doing so by exceptional circumstances, the External Examiner(s) shall attend at least one of these meetings of the Board each year. This will normally be at the end of the summer term for undergraduate programmes and January for postgraduate programmes. Awards/Progression Assessment Boards shall meet on pre-determined dates and in line with the approved schedule. A Chief External Examiner will normally be present at Awards Assessment Boards, with the right of attendance at Progression Assessment Boards. If, for unavoidable reasons, the Chief External is not present, s/he must be consulted and signal approval of the decisions of the Awards Assessment Board.

## 8.2 Terms of Reference and Membership

### *AWARDS/PROGRESSION ASSESSMENT BOARDS*

#### Terms of Reference

To consider the overall profiles of students at Levels Z, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught Provision at Level 8.

To determine, on behalf of Senate, the awards for candidates who have completed University of Chester programmes of study.

To determine the candidates who may progress or proceed to the next level or modules of study. To determine the candidates who may be reassessed or deferred in modules. To determine the candidates who shall be offered a third assessment attempt. To determine the candidates who will have failure in assessment compensated.

To determine the candidates whose studies are to be terminated.

External Examiners who are members of subordinate Module Assessment Boards shall have a right to attend the Awards Assessment Board responsible for those modules assigned to them as an examiner. Such right of attendance shall carry with it the status of observer and advisor only.

#### Membership

- Dean or Associate Dean of Faculty (Chair)
- Chief External Examiner
- Representative of each Module Assessment Board which is subordinate to the Awards/Progression Assessment Board (normally, the Departmental Assessment Contact or Head of Department). Modules Assessment Boards for professional programmes may be represented by more than one member.
- Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement (or nominee)
- One representative of each partner organisation with students under consideration by the board. Partner organisations may be represented by the member of the Module Assessment Board as above

In attendance

- Deputy Registrar and Head of Student Administration (or nominee)
- Representative of Academic Quality Support Services, who will service the Board

### *MODULE ASSESSMENT BOARDS*

#### Terms of Reference

To make recommendations on the results of individual modules of study .

#### Membership

- Head of Department (Chair; in his/her absence, this may be delegated to the Deputy Head of Department). The Chair must be a member of University of Chester staff.
- External Examiner(s)

- The module leaders of all modules to be considered by the board.
- Departmental Assessment Contact

In attendance

A member of University of Chester staff, normally an administrator from an academic department, who will service the meeting

## 8.3 Awards

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### *Foundation Certificate*

The award of Foundation Certificate shall involve the accumulation of 120 credit points at Level Z.

### *Certificate of Higher Education (Cert HE)*

The award of Certificate of Higher Education (Cert HE) shall involve the accumulation of 120 specific credit points at Level 4.

This standard equates to that laid down for Level 4 in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (QAA, August 2008).

### *Diploma of Higher Education (Dip HE)*

The award of Diploma of Higher Education (Dip HE) shall involve the accumulation of 240 credit points, with not less than 120 at Level 5.

This standard equates to that laid down for Level 5 in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (QAA, August 2008).

### *Foundation Degree*

The award of Foundation Degree shall involve the accumulation of 240 credit points, with not less than 120 at Level 5.

This standard equates to that laid down for Level 5 in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (QAA, August 2008).

### *Certificate of Education in Teaching in the Learning and Skills Sector*

The award of Certificate of Education in Teaching in the Learning and Skills Sector shall involve the accumulation of 120 credit points; 60 credit points at Level 4 and 60 credit points at Level 5.

### *Professional Certificate*

The award of Professional Certificate shall involve the accumulation of 60 specific credit points. Credit may be accumulated entirely at Level 4, entirely at Level 5 or progressively at Levels 4 5 and/or 6, but shall not be accumulated exclusively at

Level 6. The Professional Certificate shall be awarded on the successful completion of modules formally approved for inclusion within a programme appropriate to that award, provided that a student was registered for the Professional Certificate award by the time of registration for the second module to be studied. The Professional Certificate is not available as an exit award for students initially registered for a different award.

### *Graduate Certificate*

The award of Graduate Certificate shall involve the accumulation of 60 credit points at Level 6. **It is not a postgraduate award.**

This standard equates to that laid down for Level 6 in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (QAA, August 2008).

### *Graduate Diploma*

The award of Graduate Diploma shall involve the accumulation of 120 credit points at Level 6. **It is not a postgraduate award.**

This standard equates to that laid down for Level 6 in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (QAA, August 2008)

### *Bachelor's Degree with Honours*

The award of Bachelor's Degree shall involve the accumulation of 360 specific credit points, of which at least 240 credits shall be at Levels 5 and 6 and at least 120 shall be at Level 6.

This standard equates to that laid down for Level 6 in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (QAA, August 2008)

### *Bachelor of Education (BEd) with Honours*

The award of Bachelor of Education (BEd) shall involve the accumulation of at least 480 specific credit points.

Students who fail to complete all the modules required for the award of the BEd, with recommendation for QTS, but who have accumulated at least 360 credits, of which at least 240 credits must be at Levels 5 and 6 and at least 120 credits must be at Level 6, may exit with BA (Hons) Education. This award does not include a recommendation for QTS

### *Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)*

The award of Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) shall involve the accumulation of 60 credits at Level 7.

The PGCE award is associated with qualifying the holder to practise as a teacher but all students awarded a PGCE shall only be recommended as eligible for Qualified Teacher Status if all requisite skills have been demonstrated.

### *Church Colleges' Certificate*

The Church Colleges' Certificate programme shall require the accumulation of 60 credit points at a level equivalent to Level 4 of an Honours degree.

### *Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert)*

The award of Postgraduate Certificate shall require the accumulation of 60 specific credit points at Level 7.

### *Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip)*

The award of Postgraduate Diploma (including the Diploma in Management Studies) shall require the accumulation of 120 specific credit points at Level 7.

### *Masters Degrees (except the MPhil)*

The award of Masters degree shall require the accumulation of 180 specific credit points at Level 7.

### *Students changing their name during their course of study*

In circumstances whereby a student's name changes during their programme of study, the University will change the official record, providing acceptable proof of the change of name is provided. Under no circumstances, except where required by law, will the University amend a student's name after the original certificate has been issued. Where the award entitles the student to attend, certificates will be presented at the awards ceremony; where the award does not entitle the student to attend the awards ceremony, certificates will be posted following the appeals deadline and no later than six weeks after the date of the award.

## 8.4 Module Assessment

---

### *Levels 2, 4, 5 and 6*

The following percentage marking scale shall be adopted for all academic provision at Levels 2, 4, 5 and 6.

<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Classification for a Bachelor's degree</b>
70 - 100	First class honours or equivalent designation
60 - 69	Upper second class honours or equivalent designation
50 - 59	Lower second class honours or equivalent designation
40 - 49	Third class honours or equivalent designation
0 - 39	Fail

Except where provision is validated to include modules or components thereof marked on a pass/fail basis, the following requirements shall apply. The

minimum aggregate pass mark for each module shall be 40%. Failure in one or more components of the assessment of a given module shall normally be compensated for by the results in one or more other component within that module, provided that the overall pass mark for the module of 40% is attained and a minimum of 20% is attained for each assessment component within the module. In the event of failure on these grounds, the module mark to be recorded shall be 39% or the arithmetical mark, whichever is the lower. Students reassessed (or subject to third assessment attempt) in previously-failed components of such modules shall be required to attain the same minimum marks as those stipulated for first assessment in order to pass the module overall.

The formal module documentation shall identify the weighting as between the components of assessment in each module.

In order to reduce plagiarism, Departments should take steps to ensure that, where assessment tasks admit of variation, all assignment and coursework titles are varied from one assessment session to the next.

### Level 7

The following percentage marking scale shall be adopted for postgraduate programmes:

Percentage	Classification
70 - 100	Distinction
60 - 69	Merit
40 - 59	Pass
0 - 39	Fail

The minimum aggregate pass mark for each module to which these regulations apply shall be 40%. Failure in one or more components of the assessment of a given module shall be compensated for by the results in one or more other component within that module, provided that the overall pass mark for the module of 40% is attained and a minimum of 20% is attained for each assessment component within the module. In the event of failure on these grounds, the module mark to be recorded shall be 39% or the arithmetical mark, whichever is the lower. Students reassessed (or subject to third assessment attempt) in previously-failed components of such modules shall be required to attain the same minimum marks as those stipulated for first assessment in order to pass the module overall.

The University does not classify Postgraduate Certificates.

The formal module documentation shall identify the weighting as between the components of assessment in each module.

In order to reduce plagiarism, Departments should take steps to ensure that, where assessment tasks admit of variation, all assignment and coursework titles are varied from one assessment session to the next.

## 8.5 Requirements for the conduct of assessment by Module Assessment Boards

---

1. For purposes of conducting the assessment of all those modules which have been assigned to a given Module Assessment Board at the point of validation, all members of that Board must have access to all modular marks, including component marks. Please see notes of guidance on Presentation of Module Assessment Boards (Appendix 8A).
2. The Module Assessment Board must determine the marks of all students being assessed in all modules within its jurisdiction without regard to the ultimate profile of any individual student. Once marks have been determined, for each module within the Board's jurisdiction, changes to individual outcomes may occur for the following reasons only:
  - the identification of an administrative error
  - a successful appeal against a decision of the Board
  - a ruling by the relevant Assessment Board in the light of a student having been found guilty of academic malpractice

All such changes shall be reported back to the next Module Assessment Board

3. The Module Assessment Board shall be required to abide by any decision concerning a student which has already been taken by the Mitigating Circumstances Board.
4. All decisions taken by the Module Assessment Board shall be taken in the name of the entire Board, of which the External Examiner(s) is a member. Those decisions must be taken and recorded with all members of the Board present, except for those who, for valid reasons, have been given permission by the Chair of the Board not to attend.
5. In any event, no decision concerning the assessment of a student or students shall be taken by a Module Assessment Board, unless that Board is quorate. A quorum shall be deemed to be 50% of the full-time equivalent staff responsible for assessment within the purview of that Board.
6. It is a requirement of University of Chester that the proceedings of a Module Assessment Board shall be minuted by a member of staff of University of Chester in accordance with the guidelines in Appendix 8A.
7. External Examiners shall sign the confirmed marks cover sheet at the end of the meeting of the Module Assessment Board.

Further guidance on matters relating to the conduct of Module Assessment Boards is given in Appendix 8A of this Handbook.



## 8.6 Requirements for the conduct of assessment by Awards/Progression Assessment Boards

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### 1. Compensation of Failure

#### Level Z and Level 4

In the case of a student who is registered for a minimum of 120 credit points at Level Z or Level 4, an Awards or Progression Assessment Board, having due regard to the standard of the award, the programme objectives, the programme assessment requirements, and any professional requirements, may allow that student's overall performance to compensate for failure in the assessment of modules up to and including 40 credits at Level Z or Level 4. In order for compensation to be applied, the student must have a profile (following initial assessment, reassessment or a third assessment attempt) with no more than 40 failed credits and an average mark for the level of study in question (including failed but not deferred modules) of 40% or higher. If these conditions are met, compensation will be applied to those failed module(s) where both the overall module mark falls in the range 30-39% and there is no component mark below 20%. The Board will deem that a student in this position has achieved the credit for the compensated module(s), although the fail marks themselves will stand and will be recorded on the student's transcript.

#### Level 5

In the case of a student registered for a minimum of 120 credit points at Level 5, an Awards or Progression Assessment Board, having due regard to the standard of the award, the programme objectives, the programme assessment requirements, and any professional requirements, may allow that student's overall performance to compensate for failure in the assessment of modules up to and including 20 credits at Level 5. In order for this to apply, the student must have a profile (following initial assessment, reassessment or a third assessment attempt) with no more than 20 failed credits and an average mark for the level of study in question (including failed but not deferred modules) of 40% or higher. If these conditions are met, compensation will be applied to those failed module(s) where both the overall module mark falls in the range 30-39% and there is no component mark below 20%. The Board will deem that a student in this position has achieved the credit for the compensated module(s), although the fail marks themselves will stand and will be recorded on the student's transcript.

#### Level 6

In the case of a student registered for a minimum of 120 credit points at Level 6, an Awards or Progression Assessment Board, having due regard to the standard of the award, the programme objectives, the programme assessment requirements, and any professional requirements, may allow that student's overall performance to compensate for failure in the assessment of modules up to and including 20 credits at Level 6. In order for this to apply, the student must have a profile (following initial assessment, reassessment or a third assessment attempt) with no more than

20 failed credits and an average mark for the level of study in question (including failed but not deferred modules) of 40% or higher. If these conditions are met, compensation will be applied to those failed module(s) where both the overall module mark falls in the range 30-39% and there is no component mark below 20%. The Board will deem that a student in this position has achieved the credit for the compensated module(s), although the fail marks themselves will stand and will be recorded on the student's transcript.

Compensation may not be applied to a module that, for professional reasons, has been granted formal derogation from the regulations.

Within the LLB programme, the University's normal regulations governing compensation of modules marked in the range 30%-39% shall not apply to modules designated as Foundations of Legal Knowledge, all of which must be passed with a mark of 40% or more, unless a student signifies in writing to the University that she/he no longer wishes to have Qualifying Law Degree status. A student who does not wish to have Qualifying Law Degree status may be compensated in any modules within the LLB programme, in accordance with the University's normal regulations.

Compensation may be applied to part time students before they have completed all the modules at the level; providing they have failed no more than the maximum number of credits for which compensation is permitted at the level and that their average mark for the level of study in question (including failed but not deferred modules) is 40% or higher, compensation will be applied to those failed module(s) where both the overall module mark falls in the range 30-39% and there is no component mark below 20%.

For compensation information regarding students on 15 credit modules please refer to Section F4.3 of the Principles and Regulations

## **2. Progression: Level 2 to Level 4, Level 4 to Level 5 and Level 5 to Level 6**

In order to progress from one level of study to the next, a full time student shall normally be required to have obtained the requisite number of module credits (120) at the lower level. These credits may be obtained by means of first assessment, reassessment, or, where permitted, third assessment attempt. However, a student who cannot (either because of deferral or because there is no resit opportunity scheduled) be re-assessed in modules totalling no more than 40 credits may, at the discretion of the Awards/Progression Assessment Board, be allowed to progress conditionally to the next level of study (F2.10)

In determining whether a student should be permitted to progress conditionally to the next level of study, the Awards Assessment Board shall have regard to:

- any professional requirement which may prohibit such conditional procession;
- any prerequisites which must have been met before students can be admitted to modules at the next level of study;
- any other circumstances which might, in the opinion of the Board, adversely affect the student's performance.

Students granted a third assessment attempt are not permitted to progress to the next level of study.

Part time students may register for modules at different levels during the same academic year. However, where a third assessment attempt has been granted, a part time student is not permitted to register for any further modules at the higher level until the third assessment attempt has been successfully completed. Under no circumstances will a student be permitted to register for modules at Level 6 until they have successfully completed all required credits at Level 4.

A student who passes modules at the higher level of study shall be entitled to the credit gained from those modules, but shall not have them taken into account for further progression until the necessary modules at the lower level have been passed. In no circumstances shall a student be permitted to commence Level 6 study until they have successfully completed all modules at Level 4.

In cases where a student on an accelerated programme has been allowed to conditionally progress to the next level of study, the outstanding reassessment and/or deferrals from the lower level of study shall be assessed in the next assessment session, regardless of whether other students are taking these assessments in that session. If a student fails to complete the reassessment and/or deferrals and is offered a third attempt, their study at the higher level must cease and may only recommence when successful completion of the third attempt has been confirmed by both tiers of assessment board.

Students undertaking a third attempt should normally attend the module again; where this is not possible they must attend a programme of scheduled tutorial support.

Where programmes are validated to include requirements for progression and completion which do not contribute to the credits of the award, such requirements shall be stated within the formal programme documentation. This documentation shall also state the means by which students may retrieve initial failure to meet such requirements.

### **3. Procedure for the determination of the classification of Bachelor's Degrees with Honours**

- (a) These Requirements are sequential and shall be applied in order.
- (b) Module Assessment Boards shall provide moderated module marks for all the students who have been assessed within the purview of those Boards for consideration by the Awards/Progression Assessment Board in relation to a recommended honours degree classification. A Module Assessment Board is not empowered to make recommendations concerning awards or classifications.
- (c) Students who have fulfilled the credit requirements for the award of an Honours Degree will be awarded classifications on the basis of a weighted average mark from their study at Level 6 and Level 5. Averages for Level 5 and Level 6 will be calculated, with each module's mark weighted according to its credit value. In cases where numerical marks exist for between 100 and 120 credits at the relevant level, the calculation will be based on the highest

100 credit marks at that level. Where numerical marks exist for in excess of 120 credits at the relevant level, the lowest 20 credit mark will be deducted from the calculation. In cases where numerical marks exist for fewer than 100 credits at the relevant level, all marks will be used. These averages will then be combined with a weighting of one-third for the Level 5 mark and two-thirds for the Level 6 mark. Figures used for this calculation shall not be rounded but will be expressed to two decimal places.

- (d) Where a student has been admitted by direct entry to Level 6, the overall mark total shall be calculated on the basis of the Level 6 marks only. In cases where numerical marks exist for between 100 and 120 credits at Level 6, the calculation will be based on the highest 100 credit marks. Where numerical marks exist for in excess of 120 credits at Level 6, the lowest 20 credit mark will be deducted from the calculation. In cases where numerical marks exist for fewer than 100 credits at Level 6, all marks will be used.
- (e) The average for Level 5 will only be used for degree classification purposes if there are numerical marks for 50% or more of the required Level 5 credits.
- (f) A provisional degree class shall be awarded in accordance with the following scale:
- |              |                            |
|--------------|----------------------------|
| 70 and above | First class honours        |
| 60 – 69.99   | Upper second class honours |
| 50 – 59.99   | Lower second class honours |
| 40 – 49.99   | Third class honours        |
| 0 – 39.99    | Fail                       |
- (g) A list of students shall be provided to the Awards Assessment Board, ranked by overall mark total expressed to two decimal places. The indicative, provisional degree class shall be ascribed.
- (h) Students whose overall total mark falls within one of the following ranges shall have that initial overall mark raised to the threshold of the next degree class above, i.e.
- a mark within the range 69.50 to 69.99 shall be raised to 70
  - a mark within the range 59.50 to 59.99 shall be raised to 60
  - a mark within the range 49.50 to 49.99 shall be raised to 50
- (i) Students whose overall total mark falls within one of the following ranges shall be reviewed for possible raising of the indicative degree classification to the next class above, i.e.
- 67.00 to 69.49 shall be considered for raising to the first class
  - 57.00 to 59.49 shall be considered for raising to the upper second class
  - 47.00 to 49.49 shall be considered for raising to the lower second class

Where a student has an overall total mark within one of those ranges stated above and also has at least half the Level 6 credits for which numerical marks are available in the higher class, that student shall be placed in the higher class.

- (j) The Academic Malpractice Panel may make a recommendation on the calculation of the student's average mark or degree classification.

#### 4. Procedure for the award of the Foundation Degree with Distinction or Merit

- a) These Requirements are sequential and shall be applied in order.
- b) Students who have fulfilled the credit requirements for the award of a Foundation Degree will be awarded the classification on the basis of Level 5 module marks only. Level 4 modules must be passed or compensated but the marks do not contribute to the average upon which the classification is based.
- c) The number of Level 5 credits used to determine the average is dependent upon the number of Level 5 credits for which numerical marks exist. In cases where numerical marks exist for between 100 and 120 credits, the best 100 credits will be used; where numerical marks exist for in excess of 120 credits, the lowest 20 credit mark will be deducted from the calculation. In cases where numerical marks exist for fewer than 100 credits, all marks will be used

- d) A provisional degree class shall be awarded in accordance with the following scale:

70% and above – Distinction  
60-69.99% - Merit

- e) Students whose average mark falls within one of the following ranges shall have that initial overall mark raised to the threshold of the next degree class above, i.e.

a mark within the range 69.50 to 69.99 shall be raised to 70 and a Distinction awarded

a mark within the range 59.50 to 59.99 shall be raised to 60 and a Merit awarded

- f) Students whose average mark falls within one of the following ranges shall be reviewed for possible raising of the indicative classification to the next class above, i.e.

67.00 to 69.49 shall be considered for raising to a Distinction

57.00 to 59.49 shall be considered for raising to a Merit

Where a student has an overall total mark within one of those ranges stated above and also has at least half the Level 5 credits for which numerical marks are available in the higher class, that student shall be placed in the higher class.

- g) The Academic Malpractice Panel may make a recommendation on the calculation of the student's average mark or their eligibility to be awarded a Foundation Degree with Distinction or Merit.

### **5. Procedure for the award of Masters Degrees and Postgraduate Diplomas with Distinction or Merit**

In order to be eligible for the conferment of a Distinction, a candidate for a Masters degree or Postgraduate Diploma must attain a mark of 70% or higher in Level 7 and/or Level 8 modules representing at least half the credit for which numerical marks are available. The modules may include the dissertation. In order to be eligible for the conferment of a Merit, a candidate for a Masters degree or Postgraduate Diploma must attain a mark of 60% or higher in Level 7 and/or Level 8 modules representing at least half the credit for which numerical marks are available. The modules may include the dissertation.

The Academic Malpractice Panel may make a recommendation on the student's eligibility to be awarded a Masters Degree or Postgraduate Diploma with Distinction or Merit.

The University does not confer Distinction or Merit on Postgraduate Certificate Awards.

### ***6. Procedure for the determination of interim awards***

In circumstances where a student fails to gain the required number of module credits for the granting of the award for which he/she is registered, the Awards Assessment Board shall normally award the highest interim award to which the credits gained entitles them.

### ***7. Powers to act on behalf of an Awards Assessment Board***

In accordance with paragraphs F2.5 and F2.6 of the Principles and Regulations, the Chair of an Awards Assessment Board may take decisions on granting reassessments (or third assessment attempts), progression and awards, on behalf of the Board. In all cases involving the grant of an award, the relevant Chief External Examiner must be consulted.

An Awards/Progression Assessment Board may, in exceptional circumstances, also delegate its authority to a subsidiary examination committee, of which at least one External Examiner in a programme leading to the award shall be a member. Where an examination committee is required this must be approved by the preceding Awards/Progression Assessment Board. Examination Committees may not make awards. Further guidance is given in Appendix 8E.

All decisions taken on behalf of an Awards/Progression Assessment Board shall be reported to and minuted at the next meeting of that Board.

### ***8. Reassessment***

A student normally has the right to reassessment in any failed module, except where:

- the module is the subject of compensation
- such provision is contrary to the regulations of any party to the award

- an academic malpractice panel has determined that reassessment is not permitted
- for professional or other reasons, recommended for approval by a validation panel, and ultimately approved by Academic Quality and Enhancement Committee on behalf of Senate, restrictions on reassessment opportunities within the programme should apply,

The Awards/Progression Assessment Board shall decide whether to allow the reassessment, based on the recommendations of an Academic Malpractice Panel.

Full time students at Levels Z, 4, 5 and 6 cannot be offered reassessment until the results have been confirmed by the Awards/Progression Assessment Board and will not be presented to the Awards/Progression Assessment Board until all module results at the level have been confirmed by the Module Assessment Board.

A student who fails a third assessment attempt or who fails to submit all outstanding components at the second assessment attempt will not be offered a further attempt and will have their studies terminated. The final profile of marks will include results from the most recent sitting; marks for failed modules are not carried forward from previous sittings.

The minimum aggregate pass mark for each module to which these regulations apply shall be 40%. Failure in one or more components of the assessment of a given module shall be compensated for by the results in one or more other component within that module, provided that the overall pass mark for the module of 40% is attained and a minimum of 20% is attained for each assessment component within the module.

A minimum mark of 20% must be attained in all assessment components within a given module in order that that module may be passed overall. In the event of failure on these grounds, the module mark to be recorded shall be 39% or the arithmetical mark, whichever is the lower. Such module failure cannot be the subject of compensation.

A student who undertakes reassessment in a failed module is required only to undertake that component or those components for which a mark of at least 40% has not already been obtained.

At the point of reassessment, those components in which the student has already gained a pass mark of 40% or more shall be brought forward either from first assessment or reassessment as appropriate, and the principle of compensation as between components of assessment shall be applied. Notwithstanding the arithmetical outcome of the calculation of marks at the point of reassessment, the overall module mark which shall be recorded for a student who has succeeded in passing such reassessment shall be 40%.

Where a student is required to be reassessed in more than one component of a module, the student shall be required to submit herself or himself for reassessment in those components at the same point.

Where a student has both deferred and failed components within the same module, at the next assessment point they must submit both the deferred component(s) and any failed component(s) where the mark falls below 20%. Where such failed components exist, the module mark will be capped at 40% upon reassessment.

Reassessment must be undertaken at the point determined by the Awards/Progression Assessment Board.

Regardless of the number of credits outstanding, all candidates will normally be reassessed at the first opportunity following initial failure. Undergraduate students with in excess of 60 credits outstanding following an Awards Assessment Board where the next opportunity does not permit repeating attendance will be given the option to undertake outstanding assessment with attendance during the next academic session. In particular Undergraduate students with in excess of 60 credits outstanding at the July Awards Assessment Board will be given the option to undertake outstanding assessment with attendance during the next academic year.

Where a student is registered for study in the part time mode, reassessment may take place prior to the conclusion of his or her studies at a given level (F4.4). Full time students may not be reassessed until the results of all modules at that level have been confirmed by both tiers of assessment board.

Where a student is registered for study at Level 7 or 8, reassessment at second or third attempt may take place prior to the conclusion of studies. The student shall be offered reassessment in failed modules at the first opportunity, this being determined by the Awards/Progression Board.

A student who is allowed to progress conditionally to the next level of study shall also be offered reassessment in the outstanding module(s) at the time when the equivalent components of those modules are being assessed within the next academic session.

A student who has been granted a further reassessment (third assessment attempt) following failure in reassessment shall be offered that third assessment attempt normally at the time when the equivalent components of the failed module(s) are being assessed within the next academic session.

Where the objectives of the programme, pathway or course are such that attendance is compulsory for certain components, the formal programme documentation must give details of the attendance requirements to be met by students and make clear the relationship between compulsory attendance and the assessment process. It must also be made clear what provision there is for the retrieval of initial failure where this failure relates to attendance (D1.9).

A reassessment task in a given component of a module shall be proportionate to, comparable with and equivalent to the original assessment task; any variation from this is permitted only in circumstances where an assessment task cannot be practicably replicated in the reassessment (F1).

In cases where a module in which a student has been offered reassessment is no longer being delivered at the time when the student is due for such reassessment, the Awards/Progression Assessment Board shall make appropriate alternative arrangements if necessary.

A student required to be reassessed in a module must pay a reassessment fee for each module failed. A student required to be reassessed in a module with attendance must pay the full module fee, even if assessed only in those components not already passed.



Further guidance on the availability of reassessment opportunities appears as Appendix 8B

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# Requirements for the Disclosure of Assessment Results

SECTION

9

Quality and Standards Manual

## HANDBOOK F: The Assessment of Students at Levels Z, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught Provision at Level 8

2014 – 2015

Date of Approval: June 2014

Authored by: Registry Services

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## SECTION 9: REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DISCLOSURE OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS

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### 9.1 Categories of marks to be disclosed

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Finally determined main component marks, i.e. the mark for each particular module, written assessment, coursework or practical as determined by the Module Assessment Board, shall be disclosed to students. Where students are given access to marks that have not been before the relevant Module Assessment Board and Awards/Progression Assessment Board for final determination, it must be made clear that these marks are PROVISIONAL. Provisionally-agreed marks for individual questions on an examination paper may be disclosed to students and marks gained in continuously assessed studies shall be disclosed to students throughout the academic year, as a matter of routine.

### 9.2 Disclosure of assessment results to students

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Students will be able to access provisional assessment results via the Portal during the course of the academic year. Final, official assessment results are then issued on the Portal at pre-determined dates (see the Registry Services Portal pages for further details). The official results include text explaining what the Awards/Progression Assessment Board decision means for the student and what is required of them. **It is the student's responsibility to ensure they check confirmed results on the Portal at the relevant times.** Students are advised to discuss their results with their Personal Academic Tutor. On completion of an award, the profile will take the form of a Diploma Supplement which will be issued after the meetings of Awards/Assessment Boards, and be sent to each student by post to the home address held on the central student record system. Only students who have successfully completed their award, withdrawn or had their studies terminated will receive results via the post

### 9.3 Requests made before marks are finally determined

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Students shall be advised that marks to date are PROVISIONAL only, subject to confirmation by the Awards/Progression Assessment Board.

### 9.4 Non-disclosure to other persons

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Only a student's own assessment marks shall be disclosed to that student and no member of the University shall be permitted to disclose to or discuss with a student or other unauthorised person the marks gained by another student. Should a student come to a member of staff having discovered, by whatever means, the marks of another student, and wish to discuss them, possibly in relation to his or her own assessment performance, the member of staff shall decline to do so.

***Assessment results will not be released over the telephone.***

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# Academic Appeals Procedure

SECTION **10**

Quality and Standards Manual

**HANDBOOK F:  
The Assessment of Students  
at Levels Z, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught  
Provision at Level 8**

**2014 – 2015**

Authored By: Academic Quality Support Services  
Date of Approval: June 2014  
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## SECTION 10 - ACADEMIC APPEALS PROCEDURE

### 1 Introduction

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- 1.1 These procedures describe how a student may submit an Academic Appeal and the grounds under which they may do so. A student submitting an Academic Appeal is referred to in these procedures as 'the appellant'.
- 1.2 Staff who recognise after an AAB that an administrative irregularity may have occurred, leading to an incorrect mark being approved by an Awards Assessment Board or a Progression Assessment Board, should in the first instance contact Registry Services.
- 1.3 All references to an Awards Assessment Board in these procedures shall also refer to a Progression Board or an Examination Committee, unless otherwise stated.
- 1.4 These procedures apply to students studying at the University of Chester (or at a partner organisation) for undergraduate and taught postgraduate awards made by this institution. Academic Appeals may only be made after a decision has been made by an Awards Assessment Board which are the bodies charged with making decisions on student progression and awards (or exceptionally, by the Chair of an Awards Assessment Board), and must be made within the specified time limit.
- 1.5 The purpose of these procedures is to safeguard the interests of all students. They may be used only when there are adequate grounds for doing so and may not be used simply because a student is dissatisfied with the outcome of his/her assessment or other decision concerning their academic position or progress or as an alternative to using the Mitigating Circumstances or complaints procedure at the proper time.
- 1.6 The University expects that students take responsibility for managing their learning, revision and assessment activities throughout the duration of their studies. However, the University acknowledges that exceptional or mitigating circumstances may at times affect a student's performance. Thus, the University has put in place a system of extensions and deferrals for which a student may apply when such difficulties arise. The University also provides extensive student support through the PAT system and SSG. A student in difficulties is expected to make use of support systems put in place by the University and to request an extension or deferral if appropriate.
- 1.7 Students should appreciate that Academic Appeals do not always produce the outcome preferred by an appellant.

### 2 Right to Appeal

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- 2.1 An Academic Appeal is a request for a review of a decision of an Awards Assessment Board or Examination Committee. An Academic Appeal may only be made on one or more of the following grounds:

2.1.1	that the appellant's performance in the assessment was adversely affected by personal illness or other exceptional personal circumstance(s) only if s/he was unable, or for valid and compelling
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	reasons unwilling, to divulge such illness or circumstance(s) before the Awards Assessment Board or Examination Committee reached its decision. Such illness or circumstance(s) must have had a demonstrable and substantial negative impact on the resulting assessment outcome;
2.1.2	that the assessment was not conducted in accordance with the relevant assessment regulations, leading to a demonstrable and substantial negative impact on the resulting assessment outcome;
2.1.3	that there was administrative error, on the part of the University, which had a demonstrable and substantial negative impact on the resulting assessment outcome;
2.1.4	that some other material irregularity on the part of the University occurred in the conduct of the assessment which had a demonstrable and substantial negative impact on the resulting assessment outcome;
2.1.5	<p>that the appellant has been assessed as having a specific learning difficulty during the current academic session, subject to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The appellant has been diagnosed as having a specific learning difficulty, and was diagnosed, or had started the process of diagnosis by attending SSG for an initial screening, in the current academic session, and before the meeting of the relevant Awards Assessment Board</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. the appellant had not been afforded all opportunities agreed in a full Inclusion Plan to support the assessment or examination in question</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>iii. the appellant is able to supply an educational psychologist's report with a diagnosis of Specific Learning Difficulties and a full Inclusion plan.</li> </ul> <p>The Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement is empowered to grant a deferral of assessment on receipt of satisfactory evidence of the diagnosis of a Specific Learning Difficulty, provided the conditions set out above apply, without the need to convene an Appeals Board. In cases of doubt, recourse shall be had to the full Appeals procedure. In no circumstances will deferral of assessment be granted in respect of assessment taken in a previous academic session.</p> <p>In the case of students on professional programmes, those academic appeals which have been upheld on this ground shall normally be referred to the Assessment Review Board, in order that the Board may satisfy itself that reasonable adjustments to the undertaking of the professional components of the appellant's programme are considered.</p>

2.2 Academic Appeals on other grounds shall be deemed inadmissible.

- 2.3 Appeals against the decision of an academic malpractice panel may only be made on the following grounds:

2.3.1	that the appellant had personal illness or exceptional personal circumstances which affected her/his ability to mount a defence of the allegation, only if s/he was unable, or for valid and compelling reasons unwilling, to either request a deferral of the academic malpractice panel or to divulge such illness or circumstance(s) to the academic malpractice panel;
2.3.2	that the academic malpractice panel was not conducted in accordance with the relevant regulations;
2.3.3	that there was administrative error on the part of the University which had a demonstrable and substantial negative impact on the operation of the academic malpractice procedures or of the academic malpractice panel;
2.3.4	that some other material irregularity on the part of the University occurred in the conduct of the academic malpractice procedures or conduct of the academic malpractice panel assessment outcome.
2.3.5	That the penalty imposed unreasonably exceeds the normal penalty for the offence.

- 2.4 Academic appeals against the decision of a Mitigating Circumstances Board may only be made on the following grounds:
- 2.4.1 additional evidence of illness or other exceptional circumstances, which could not have been known or presented to the Mitigating Circumstances Board at the appropriate time  
or
- 2.4.2 evidence of some administrative irregularity in the operation of the Mitigating Circumstances procedures
- 2.5 The decision of an academic malpractice panel is one of academic judgement, and thus a student may not appeal against the decision of an academic malpractice panel merely because they disagree with the decision.
- 2.6 The decision of a Mitigating Circumstances Board is final, and thus a student may not appeal against the decision of a Mitigating Circumstances Board merely because they disagree with the decision. They may however appeal should they believe they have grounds as described in section 2.4.1 and 2.4.2.
- 2.7 Students are assured that they will not be subject to discrimination for lodging an Academic Appeal in good faith, irrespective of the outcome of the Academic Appeal.
- 2.8 Students should note that the University's complaints procedure should be invoked in other areas of potential dispute. There may be appeals against academic decisions that refer to matters or allegations that are, or that become, the subject of a formal complaint. In cases where matters that are the substance of a complaint are linked to matters which are the substance of an Academic Appeal, the Dean of Academic Quality and

Enhancement and the University Proctor shall decide whether the cases shall be considered concurrently or consecutively.

- 2.9 Students studying under a collaborative partnership agreement at another institution or overseas on taught programmes delivered by University of Chester shall be expected to comply with the Academic Appeals Procedures as detailed herein, and to submit full written evidence in support of any Academic Appeal to the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement, University of Chester.
- 2.10 Neither students, nor their representatives, nor members of staff may lobby the Chair or Members of an Appeals Board (or Committee) about an academic appeal which has been submitted, or is expected or proposed to be submitted. Doing so may lead to the Appeals Board (Committee) to either defer the hearing of the Academic Appeal until a new Appeals Board (or Committee) with a different Chair and Members can be convened, or to the Appeals Board (or Committee) rejecting the Academic Appeal outright.

### 3 Exclusions from Academic Appeal

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- 3.1 The following are illustrations of claims that cannot be considered as the basis for an Academic Appeal:
- 3.1.1 disagreement with academic judgement of a Programme (or Subject) or an Awards Assessment Board in assessing the merits of an individual piece of work or in reaching any assessment decision based on the marks, grades and other information relating to a student's performance;
- 3.1.2 disagreement with an Academic Malpractice Panel outcome;
- 3.1.3 complaints related to teaching, supervision or services. These must be raised at the time when they occur and through the appropriate channels e.g. Personal Academic Tutor, Head of Subject, Staff-Student Liaison Committee, or the University's Complaints Procedure;
- 3.1.4 any other complaint which can be properly dealt with, or has already been dealt with, under the University's Complaints Procedure, unless the agreed outcome of the complaint was that the matter be referred to the Academic Appeals Board (or Committee);
- 3.1.5 circumstances which could have been considered, had notice been given prior to the meeting of the Mitigating Circumstances Board or Assessment Board, and where the student has no valid reason for having failed to give such notice;
- 3.1.6 circumstances which do not fall within one of the permitted grounds, or are wholly without substance or merit, or are frivolous or vexatious, or are unsupported by evidence;
- 3.1.7 claims that academic performance was adversely affected by factors such as ill health where there is no contemporaneous independent medical or other evidence that relates directly to the named appellant;

- 3.1.8 claims that academic performance was adversely affected by factors such as ill health which are accompanied by medical evidence which does not contain opinion or diagnosis, but merely repeats what the student has *post hoc* reported to the doctor (or other medical practitioner).
- 3.1.9 claims that academic performance was adversely affected by factors such as ill health which are accompanied by medical evidence stating that the illness 'may have an impact' or which state "the patient informs me".
- 3.1.10 mitigating circumstances in cases where the student could reasonably have avoided the situation or acted to limit the impact of the circumstances. Examples of mitigating circumstances which would not be considered by an Appeals Board can be found in the accompanying guidance;
- 3.1.11 circumstances which might have fallen within one or more of the permitted grounds for Academic Appeal, but which were not the subject of an Academic Appeal at the relevant time.
- 3.1.12 Academic Appeals on the grounds of specific learning difficulties where the appellant began the process of diagnosis after the assessment in question.
- 3.1.13 Appeals against the decision of an Academic Malpractice Panel in cases which have already been considered by an Appeals Board or Committee

*The above list is not exhaustive.*

## 4 Responsibilities of the student

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- 4.1 The University acknowledges that there may be exceptional or mitigating circumstances where a student cannot divulge such circumstances at the relevant time. However, if a student wishes to lodge an Academic Appeal, the Appeal should be lodged at the first available opportunity i.e. where the circumstances are long-standing an Academic Appeal based on such circumstances should be made at the failure of the first attempt at the assessment rather than waiting until failure at reassessment or third attempt. If a student has a long-term condition or problem which may affect her/his study and assessment, it is the responsibility of the student to seek advice as early as possible, to use the support services available through the University, and to utilise procedures such as extension, deferral or mitigating circumstances procedures where appropriate and permissible.
- 4.2 It is the responsibility of the student to:
  - 4.2.1 ensure the submission of an Academic Appeal and supporting evidence is submitted within the published timescale;
  - 4.2.2 ensure that the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement has an address for correspondence for the timescale of the Academic Appeal;
  - 4.2.3 compile documentation in support of an Academic Appeal. The University does not contact medical practitioners or other professionals on behalf of an appellant for supporting evidence. Impartial guidance about the compilation of supporting evidence can be obtained from the Students' Union.

## 5 Procedures for Academic Appeal

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- 5.1 A student may ONLY appeal after the publication of results and MUST:
- 5.1.1 within fourteen calendar days of the publication of results, submit a completed Academic Appeal Form signed by the appellant and present a full case for Academic Appeal in writing, including appropriate documentary evidence;
  - 5.1.2 or, if appealing against the decision of an Academic Malpractice Panel, within fourteen calendar days of notification of the outcome, submit a completed Academic Appeal Form AM signed by the appellant and present a full case for Academic Appeal in writing, including appropriate documentary evidence;
  - 5.1.3 or, if appealing against the decision of a Mitigating Circumstances Board, within fourteen calendar days of notification of the outcome, submit a completed Academic Appeal Form MCB signed by the appellant and present a full case for Academic Appeal in writing, including appropriate documentary evidence;
  - 5.1.4 not proceed to any awards ceremony pending determination of the Academic Appeal. An Academic Appeal will not be considered once an award has been conferred.
- 5.2 An Academic Appeal signed by someone other than the appellant shall not be considered, unless prior permission is granted by the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement.
- 5.3 Where an appellant has submitted an academic appeal and takes the case to law before the University's procedures have been exhausted, consideration of the academic appeal will be stayed until the legal case is completed. Where a student takes a case to law and submits an academic appeal based on the same substantive issues, the academic appeal will not be considered until the legal case is completed.

### *Time Limits*

- 5.4 Failure by an appellant to comply with any of the time limits specified in these procedures will render an Academic Appeal inadmissible, with the consequence that it cannot be pursued further, unless the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement is satisfied that circumstances exist which made it not feasible for the appellant to have complied within the time limit specified.
- 5.5 Where an appellant has a disability or specific learning difficulty, the appellant may apply to the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement for an extension to a specified time limit. The appellant must have either an Inclusion Plan which specifies that flexibility with deadlines should be applied upon application, or should be able to produce evidence of the disability or specific learning difficulty and how it has impacted on the appellant's ability to comply with the specified time limit.

## *Evidence*

- 5.6 All Academic Appeals on the grounds of illness or other exceptional circumstances as described in section 2.1.1 or 2.3.1 must be accompanied by medical, professional or other sufficiently independent evidence which is contemporaneous with the period of the assessment concerned. Other than in exceptional cases, retrospective medical or other certification will not be accepted as valid.
- 5.7 Any medical or other certification submitted in support of an Academic Appeal must relate specifically to the dates, nature, onset and duration of the illness or circumstances. Additionally, in the case of illness, the certification must contain a clear medical diagnosis, opinion or description of symptoms and a statement on the severity of the impairment, and not merely report the student's claim that s/he felt unwell, nor report the student's claim that s/he had reason to believe s/he was ill.
- 5.8 Where the appellant is appealing because of illness or circumstances relating primarily to family or friends, medical or other evidence must be submitted demonstrating how the illness or circumstances have affected the appellant, and also must comply with the evidence requirements in 5.4. and 5.5.
- 5.9 Letters of support from family members or friends will not be considered as independent evidence.
- 5.10 All supporting evidence should be in English. Where original documentary evidence is in another language, it must be accompanied by a certified translation into English.
- 5.11 Where an appellant submits falsified evidence in support of an Academic Appeal, the University reserves the right to disallow the Appeal and to institute disciplinary or other appropriate procedures.
- 5.12 Personal information contained within the academic appeal will only be shared with members of staff who need to know the information, normally: members of the Appeals Board; members of the Assessment Review Board where the information is necessary to make an informed academic decision; the administrative staff dealing with the academic appeal, and where necessary other members of staff who may need to give information to the Appeals Board about the case. However, in the case of a student studying on a professional programme as defined by the University's Professional Programmes Handbook, the Academic Appeals Board or the Assessment Review Board, after considering medical or other evidence submitted in support of the academic appeal may advise or require the initiation of Professional Suitability procedures.

## *Status of a student who has submitted an Academic Appeal*

- 5.13 The decision of an Awards Assessment Board, Academic Malpractice Panel or Mitigating Circumstances Board remains until and unless it is overturned by an Assessment Review Board. In the case of continuing students, the appellant should prepare for and submit any assessments or reassessments by the given deadline and sit any examinations on the scheduled dates. Where a student has not been permitted to progress to the next level, they

may not attend lectures nor submit work for the next level unless a decision to that effect has been made by an Assessment Review Board, or in the case of an undisputed administrative error, by the Chair of an Awards Board. In the case of students whose studies have been terminated, the student may not recommence studies unless a decision to that effect has been made by an Assessment Review Board, or in the case of an uncontested administrative error, the Chair of an Awards Assessment Board has taken action.

## 6 Preliminary consideration of Academic Appeal

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- 6.1 The Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement (or nominee) and a designated member of the senior staff of Academic Quality Support Services shall decide normally within 28 working days of receipt of an Academic Appeal submitted within 14 days of the publication of results whether the Academic Appeal merits further consideration by an Appeals Board (or Appeals Committee in the case of appeals against academic malpractice decisions or appeals against Mitigating Circumstances Boards which have not been ratified by the Awards Assessment Board). The Dean and senior member of Academic Quality Support Services may make one of the following decisions:
- 6.1.1 that the appellant's case does not have substance. This decision shall be based on the guidelines appended (Appendix 10D). The Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement will notify the appellant by letter of the reasons for the decision;
  - 6.1.2 that the appellant's case wholly or partly warrants further consideration by an Appeals Board (or Committee);
  - 6.1.3 that the Academic Appeal should be dealt with under the process for students identified as having a specific learning difficulty during an academic session;
  - 6.1.4 that an Academic Appeal made on the grounds specified in sections 2.1.2, 2.1.3 and/or 2.1.4 is established and a letter is received from the Head of Department / Head of Section or nominee confirming the error. In this case the Dean shall refer the case directly to the Chair of the relevant Awards Assessment Board.
- 6.2 Where an appellant is studying on, or having had their studies terminated, is seeking to return to a professional programme, at any stage in the procedure the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement, the Appeals Board (or Committee) or the Assessment Review Board may advise or require that professional suitability procedures are invoked, if the nature of the academic appeal, or the evidence supplied in support of the academic appeal occasions this course of action.

## 7 Request for a review of the decision at the preliminary stage

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- 7.1 Following the rejection of an Academic Appeal at the preliminary stage, the appellant may request a Dean of an academic Faculty (not the Chair of the Appeals Board) to review the decision. The request for a review must be made within 7 calendar days of the notification of the decision of the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement. This request should

be sent to the Appeals Section of Academic Quality Support Services who will forward the request together with the relevant papers to the reviewing Dean.

- 7.2 A request may only be made on the grounds that the appeals procedure was not carried out correctly, or that new evidence had come to light which could not have been made known to the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement at the relevant time. The reviewing Dean may decide:
- 7.2.1 to confirm that the appeal is unsuccessful. A 'Completion of Procedures' letter will be issued (See Section 13.1 below);  
*or*
  - 7.2.2 that the appeal should be forwarded for further consideration by the Appeals Board (or Committee).

## 8 Appeals Board

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- 8.1 The Appeals Board acts with the full delegated authority of Senate. It has the power to require staff and students of the University to make written submissions, attend, give evidence and answer questions.
- 8.2 Following the Awards Assessment Boards, the Appeals Board (Annex A) will meet normally within six weeks following the publication of results to consider all written submissions referred by the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement within the specified time limits, other than those rejected during the initial consideration and those on which the Dean has been able to take other action.
- 8.3 The Appeals Board may take advice from a member (or members) of staff with appropriate clinical expertise, or other persons with such expertise, about the interpretation of medical or other evidence supplied in support of an academic appeal.
- 8.4 After considering all the evidence, the Appeals Board may decide as follows:
- 8.4.1 that the Academic Appeal is unsuccessful, the original decision of the Awards Assessment Board or Examination Committee stands;  
*or*
  - 8.4.2 that the Academic Appeal is successful: the Appeals Board shall request that AQSS convene the relevant Assessment Review Board.
- 8.5 Where an appellant is studying on, or having had their studies terminated, is seeking to return to a professional programme, at any stage in the procedure the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement, the Appeals Board or the Assessment Review Board may advise or require that professional suitability procedures are invoked, if the nature of the academic appeal, or the evidence supplied in support of the academic appeal occasions this course of action.
- 8.6 The Appeals Board may decide at any stage of its deliberations to adjourn for the purpose of obtaining further evidence in writing or in person.



## *Attendance at the Appeals Board by the Appellant and Staff of the University*

- 8.7 Normally the Appeals Board will only consider written submissions. However, if the Appeals Board decides to adjourn to receive further evidence, a further meeting of the Board shall be convened. The Appeals Board may request further evidence in writing or in person from either the appellant or staff of the University. If the Chair deems that oral evidence is appropriate, the Board may request that (an) appropriate member(s) of staff and the appellant attend the reconvened Board.
- 8.8 The appellant may be accompanied by a “friend” if s/he wishes. The “friend” shall be a member of the University of Chester, either a fellow student or an officer of Chester Students’ Union. If the “friend” is a student, they must bring proof of registered student status at the University of Chester. Exceptionally, the “friend” may be a member of SSG. The name and status of the “friend” shall be notified in advance to the Secretary of the Appeals Board. The role of the “friend” is to support the appellant, and not to act as a legal representative. At the discretion of the Chair, the “friend” accompanying the appellant may be invited to make a statement.
- 8.9 In cases of an oral hearing the appellant shall be sent one copy of all documents made available to the Appeals Board in advance of the hearing.
- 8.10 Where an appellant attends an Appeals Board at the request of the Board, travel expenses limited to the cost of a second class rail fare (mainland only) from the appellant’s declared home address shall be permitted.
- 8.11 Where a decision has been ratified by the AAB, it shall be considered by the Appeals Board. Where a decision has not been ratified by the AAB, it shall be considered by an Appeals Committee.
- 8.11 Where a student is studying at a partner institution overseas, is a student whose studies are based in the UK, but is studying overseas as part of their programme, or who is an overseas student studying without attendance, the hearing may take place via a videoconference link.
- 8.12 A student who is overseas on holiday, or for personal reasons, will not normally be permitted to attend a hearing via a videoconference link.

## 9 Appeals Committee

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- 9.1 Where an academic malpractice decision or Mitigating Circumstances Board decision has been ratified by the AAB, an appeal shall be considered by the Appeals Board. Where such a decision has not been ratified by the AAB, an appeal shall be considered by an Appeals Committee.
- 9.2 The Appeals Committee acts with the full delegated authority of Senate. It has the power to require staff and students of the University to make written submissions, attend, give evidence and answer questions.

- 9.2 Following ratification of an academic malpractice decision by the Subject (or Programme or Awards) Assessment Board (or a decision undertaken by the Chair, acting on behalf of the MAB, PAB or AAB), the Appeals Committee (Annex C) will meet normally within six weeks following the receipt of Appeals against the outcome of an Academic Malpractice Panel to consider all written submissions referred by the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement within the specified time limits, other than those rejected during the initial consideration and those on which the Dean has been able to take other action
- 9.3 The Appeals Committee may take advice from a member (or members) of staff with appropriate clinical expertise, or other persons with such expertise, about the interpretation of medical or other evidence supplied in support of an academic appeal.
- 9.4 After considering all the evidence, the Appeals Committee may decide as follows:

9.4.1	that the Academic Appeal is unsuccessful, the original decision of the academic malpractice panel, as ratified by the Subject (or Programme or Awards) Assessment Board, stands.
9.4.2	that the Academic Appeal is unsuccessful, the original decision of the Mitigating Circumstances Board, as ratified by the Subject (or Programme or Awards) Assessment Board, stands.
9.4.3	<p>that the Academic Appeal is successful: the Appeals Committee shall normally request either:</p> <p>9.4.2.1 that a new Academic Malpractice Panel be convened to hear the case</p> <p>Or:</p> <p>9.4.2.2 that the original Academic Malpractice Panel be reconvened to reconsider the penalty applied.</p> <p>Or:</p> <p>9.4.2.3 that the Academic Appeal against the Mitigating Circumstances outcome is successful: the Appeals Board shall request that AQSS convene the relevant Assessment Review Board.</p>

- 9.5 Where an appellant is studying on, or having had their studies terminated, is seeking to return to a professional programme, at any stage in the procedure the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement, or the Appeals Committee may advise or require that professional suitability procedures are invoked, if the nature of the academic appeal, or the evidence supplied in support of the academic appeal occasions this course of action.
- 9.6 The Appeals Committee may decide at any stage of its deliberations to adjourn for the purpose of obtaining further evidence in writing or in person.

## *Attendance at the Appeals Committee by the Appellant and Staff of the University*

- 9.7 Normally the Appeals Committee will only consider written submissions. However, if the Appeals Committee decides to adjourn to receive further evidence, a further meeting of the Committee shall be convened. The Appeals Committee may request further evidence in writing or in person from either the appellant or staff of the University. If the Chair deems that oral evidence is appropriate, the Committee may request that (an) appropriate member(s) of staff and the appellant attend the reconvened Board.
- 9.8 The appellant may be accompanied by a “friend” if s/he wishes. The “friend” shall be a member of the University of Chester, either a fellow student or an officer of Chester Students’ Union. If the “friend” is a student, they must bring proof of registered student status at the University of Chester. Exceptionally, the “friend” may be a member of SSG. The name and status of the “friend” shall be notified in advance to the Secretary of the Appeals Board. The role of the “friend” is to support the appellant, and not to act as a legal representative. At the discretion of the Chair, the “friend” accompanying the appellant may be invited to make a statement.
- 9.9 In cases of an oral hearing the appellant shall be sent one copy of all documents made available to the Appeals Committee in advance of the hearing.
- 9.10 Where an appellant attends an Appeals Committee at the request of the Board, travel expenses limited to the cost of a second class rail fare (mainland only) from the appellant’s declared home address shall be permitted.

## **10 Request for a review of decision after an Appeals Board (or Committee)**

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- 10.1 If the Academic Appeal is unsuccessful, the appellant may submit a request in writing for a review of the decision. This request must be made within 14 calendar days of the Appeals Board’s (or Appeals Committee’s) decision and should be made to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) (or a nominated other Pro Vice-Chancellor). This request should be sent to the Appeals Section of Academic Quality Support Services who will forward the request together with the relevant papers to the Pro Vice-Chancellor.
- 10.2 Normally, there should be new grounds put forward to substantiate the request for review. These might constitute either:
- 10.2.1 evidence of some administrative irregularity in the operation of the Academic Appeals procedures
  - or*
  - 10.2.2 additional evidence of illness or other exceptional circumstances, which could not have been known or presented to the original Appeals Board (or Committee).
- 10.3 Where possible, the review should be completed within 21 calendar days of receipt of the request in writing from the appellant. The Pro Vice-Chancellor may decide one or more of the following:

- 10.3.1 no irregularity in procedure is found - Academic Appeal is unsuccessful and a 'Completion of Procedures' letter will be issued (see Section 13.1);
  - 10.3.2 some irregularity in procedure - Academic Appeal is referred back to the Appeals Board (or Appeals Committee);
  - 10.3.3 no new evidence supplied in mitigation - Academic Appeal is unsuccessful and a 'Completion of Procedures' letter will be issued (see Section 13.1);
  - 10.3.4 valid new evidence of mitigating circumstances supplied - Academic Appeal is referred back to the Appeals Board (or Appeals Committee);
  - 10.3.5 there is doubt that natural justice has been applied - Academic Appeal is referred back to the Appeals Board (or Appeals Committee);
- 10.4 Where the Pro Vice-Chancellor refers a case back to the Appeals Board (or Appeals Committee); in accordance with sections 9.3.2, 9.3.4 or 9.3.5, the Appeals Board shall meet to determine the Academic Appeal normally within 28 working days following the Pro Vice-Chancellor's decision. The decision of that Appeals Board shall be final and if the Academic Appeal is unsuccessful at this stage a 'Completion of Procedures' letter will therefore be issued (see Section 13.1).

## 11 Assessment Review Board

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- 11.1 If an Academic Appeal against the decision of an Awards Assessment Board is successful, an Assessment Review Board (Annex B) shall carry out a review of those decisions of the Awards Assessment Board that were the subject of the Academic Appeal.
- 11.2 The Assessment Review Board shall meet normally within five working days of the relevant Academic Appeals Board to consider the evidence and any recommendations from the Appeals Board in as much these pertain to a decision the Assessment Review Board makes on the new recommendation for assessment. The Assessment Review Board may not overturn the decision of the Appeals Board.
- 11.3 The options available for recommendation are as follows:
  - 11.3.1 the original decision of the Awards Assessment Board is overturned and a new recommendation for the relevant assessment(s) is made.  
*or*
  - 11.3.2. exceptionally, the original decision of the Awards Assessment Board is upheld and the original recommendation confirmed.
- 11.4 In the case of an Academic Appeal being successful on the grounds specified in sections 2.1.2, 2.1.3 or 2.1.4 the Assessment Review Board may consider the effects of the error or other irregularity on other students who may or may not have appealed and be empowered to review the decisions made by an Awards Assessment Board in respect of those students also.

- 11.5 In the case of a student studying on a professional programme as defined by the University's Professional Programmes Handbook, the Assessment Review Board, after considering medical or other evidence submitted in support of the academic appeal may advise or require the initiation of Professional Suitability procedures.
- 11.6 The decision of the Assessment Review Board is final, and there is no right to request a review of this decision. A 'Completion of Procedures' letter will therefore be issued (see Section 13.1) at this point. In cases of appeals against decisions of academic malpractice panels, which have been returned to the original academic malpractice panel or to a new academic malpractice panel, there is no right to request a review of the decision of the second academic malpractice panel. A 'Completion of Procedures' letter will therefore be issued (see Section 13.1)
- 11.7 If, exceptionally, the Assessment Review Board confirms the original decision of the Awards Assessment Board, the Chair of the Assessment Review Board shall write to the appellant, giving reasons for the decision. The Chair shall also write to the Chair of the Academic Appeals Board, giving reasons for the decision.
- 11.8 The decision will be reported to the next meeting of the relevant Awards Assessment Board.

## 12 Timescale for the process

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- 12.1 An appellant's academic appeal will normally be resolved (to the point of exhausting the University's procedures) within 4 months of the date of the appellant submitting an academic appeal. Where this is not possible, the appellant will be informed of, and given a reason for, the delay.

## 13 Office of the Independent Adjudicator

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- 13.1 Where an appellant has exhausted internal procedure, and a Completion of Procedures letter has been issued, there exists a right to take the case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). If the appellant wishes to take his/her complaint to the OIA, s/he must send a Scheme Application Form within three months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter. A Scheme Application Form can be obtained from the Institutional Compliance Officer, from Chester Students' Union or downloaded from the OIA website [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk).

Where an appellant does not have grounds for requesting either a review of a preliminary decision, or a review of a the decision of an academic appeals board, but is nonetheless dissatisfied with the outcome of the academic appeal, they may request a Completion of Procedures letter from the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement.

## 14 Internal Monitoring of Process

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- 14.1 Academic Quality Support Services will maintain a record of:

- The nature of the Academic Appeal;
- How the matter was dealt with and the time taken for each stage;
- The outcome of the Academic Appeal;
- Equal opportunities information gathered, which will be held separately and anonymously.

14.2 A report will be submitted annually to Quality and Enhancement Committee detailing numbers of Academic Appeals in the previous academic year, the outcomes of those Academic Appeals, the spread across level and subject, comparison with previous years, and an analysis of any trends. The report shall also highlight any issues which impact upon regulatory matters, managerial issues, matters of interest to students and any other aspects of the life and work of the University.

## 15. Submission of mark amendments following an Awards Assessment Board

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- 15.1 Mark amendments will be made using the form Nii submitted to Registry Services.
- 15.2 Where the nature or reasons for the amendment indicate in the view of Registry Services a serious breach of process, or would change an overall AAB/PAB outcome to the detriment of the student, then Registry Services will advise that the mark amendment request shall be submitted to the Dean of AQE on form 10E.
- 15.3 Where the requested amendment would result in a less advantageous outcome for the student, the Dean of AQE will send the request to the Academic Appeals board for consideration.
- 15.4 Where a case is sent to the Appeals Board, the student shall be given 7 days to make a written representation to the Academic Appeals Board in response. Thereafter, the case will be dealt with in line with the relevant sections of the Academic Appeals procedures.

## Annex A: TERMS OF REFERENCE AND COMPOSITION OF APPEALS BOARDS

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### *Terms of Reference*

1. To decide Academic Appeals which are eligible for consideration by an Appeals Board having taken into account all the relevant evidence relating to such Appeals. In doing so the Appeals Board acts with the full delegated authority of Senate. It has the power to require staff and students to make written submissions, attend the Appeals Board, give evidence and answer questions.
2. To communicate in writing to an unsuccessful appellant the reason(s) why the Academic Appeal was unsuccessful.
3. To report its decisions to the Assessment Review Board, and if it thinks fit make a recommendation to the Assessment Review Board on the result of the assessment in question or the further assessment opportunity to be granted.
4. To note any matters arising from the Academic Appeals considered, and where appropriate, bring matters to the attention of a subject or support department, Faculty, or relevant committee.

### *Composition*

There shall be an Appeals Board consisting of **three** members. Members of the Appeals Board shall be approved by Senate, for a term of two years. Retiring members may be re-nominated.

*Chair:* A Dean, or an Associate Dean of a Faculty who is a member of Senate, who has not been directly involved in the assessment of any module(s) under consideration;

*Members:* Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement (or nominee approved by Senate)  
A senior member of staff from a department other than the department(s) within which the modules in question are delivered and assessed.

*A minuting secretary will be in attendance.*

Before proceeding to decide an Academic Appeal a member of the Appeals Board should consider whether s/he has an interest which conflicts or appears to conflict with the duty to be impartial. Where any member of the Appeals Board believes that s/he may have such a conflict of interest, s/he must declare this to the Chair or Secretary as appropriate, and not take part in any decision making about that case. In such an event, the case may be referred to the next Appeals Board or a new Appeals Board will be convened.

The Appeals Board may permit such observers of its proceedings as is appropriate from time to time.

## Annex B: TERMS OF REFERENCE AND COMPOSITION OF ASSESSMENT REVIEW BOARDS

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### *Terms of Reference*

1. To make decisions on the assessment of individual components/ modules which have been the subject of a successful Academic Appeal.
2. To make decisions on progression and awards where necessary.

### *Composition*

There shall be an Assessment Review Board.

*Chair:* A Dean of Faculty (or in exceptional circumstances a suitable nominee may be appointed to act in this capacity).

*Member* One member of the Awards Assessment Board who will normally be a representative of the relevant department (where there may otherwise be unreasonable delay, the department may give their advice to the Chair by email).

*A minuting secretary, a senior officer of AQSS and a senior officer of Registry Services will be in attendance.*

The Assessment Review Board may determine such observer members as is appropriate from time to time.

In cases where an Assessment Review Board outcome has immediate effect on the status of an award previously confirmed by the Awards Assessment Board, the Chief External Examiner shall be consulted over the review proceedings and confirm the decision of the Assessment Review Board.

The decisions of the Assessment Review Board shall be reported to the next meeting of the Awards Assessment Board.



## ANNEX C: TERMS OF REFERENCE AND COMPOSITION OF ACADEMIC APPEALS COMMITTEE

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### *Terms of Reference*

1. To decide Appeals against the decision of a University Academic Malpractice Panel
2. where the decision has NOT been ratified by an AAB. In doing so the Academic Appeals Committee acts with the full delegated authority of Senate. It has the power to require staff and students to make written submissions, attend the Appeals Committee, give evidence and answer questions.
3. To communicate in writing to an unsuccessful appellant the reason(s) why the Academic Appeal was unsuccessful.
4. To require a University Academic Malpractice Panel to reconvene, or to convene a new University Academic Malpractice Panel to convene to consider the case where an academic appeal in the case of a successful appeal against the decision of an academic malpractice panel.
5. The University Academic Malpractice Panel may be required either:
  - a) to consider the academic malpractice panel afresh,
  - or
  - b) to reconsider the penalty originally applied.
6. To note any matters arising from the Academic Appeals considered, and where appropriate, bring matters to the attention of a subject or support department, faculty, relevant committee or the pool of members of academic malpractice panel members.

### *Composition*

There shall be an Appeals Committee consisting of two members and a Secretary. Members of the Appeals Committee shall be approved by Senate, for a term of two years. Retiring members may be re-nominated.

*Chair:* A Dean or Associate Dean of a Faculty, who shall also be a member of Senate, who has not been directly involved in the assessment of any module(s) under consideration;

*Member:* A senior member of staff from a department other than the department(s) within which the modules in question are delivered and assessed.

*Secretary* Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement (or nominee approved by Senate)

*A minuting secretary will be in attendance.*

Before proceeding to decide an Academic Appeal a member of the Appeals Committee should consider whether s/he has an interest which conflicts or appears to conflict with the duty to be impartial. Where any member of the Appeals Committee believes that s/he may

have such a conflict of interest, s/he must declare this to the Chair or Secretary as appropriate, and not take part in any decision making about that case. In such an event, the case may be referred to the next Appeals Committee or a new Appeals Committee will be convened.

The Appeals Committee may permit such observers of its proceedings as is appropriate from time to time.

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Chester

## Certification

SECTION

11

Quality and Standards Manual

**HANDBOOK F:**  
**The Assessment of Students**  
**at Levels 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught**  
**Provision at Level 8**

**2014 – 2015**

Date of Approval: June 2014

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- 11B Example of a Certificate of Credit

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## SECTION 11: CERTIFICATION OF AWARDS/ACHIEVEMENT

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The regulations governing the certification of awards at the University of Chester encompass any printed verification of achievement or award issued by the University. Irrespective of the level of award, all certification produced by the University must conform to institutional guidelines, outlined in this document.

### 11.1 Certificates

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- 11.1.1 The University of Chester issues a number of different types of certificate, dependent upon the type of award or achievement. Full details, including the type of parchment and overt security features used, may be found below as Annex A
- 11.1.2 All parchments are securely stored within Registry Services. In order to ensure quality control, access to the parchments is restricted as detailed in Annex A. Certification for students completing awards with partner organisations remains under the control of University of Chester Registry Services. These access rights are determined and managed by the Deputy Registrar and Head of Student Administration and any queries relating to this should be directed to [s.nelson@chester.ac.uk](mailto:s.nelson@chester.ac.uk)
- 11.1.3 All University certificates incorporate the appropriate level of authentication outlined in Annex A
- 11.1.4 Mandatory wording for each type of certificate is detailed in Annex B. Regardless of the mode, method and location of delivery, the wording of all University certificates is consistent
- 11.1.5 Certification of awards confirmed on or after 1 October 2012 will not include the partner name; the partner's name will appear on the Diploma Supplement, with reference to the existence of the Diploma Supplement included on the certificate in line with QAA guidelines
- 11.1.6 Only certificates for awards including at least 120 credits at Level 6 or above are normally presented at the University Awards Ceremony; certificates for awards which do not allow the recipient to attend the University Awards Ceremony will be dispatched by mail within 4 weeks of the formal confirmation of the award
- 11.1.7 Certificates will not be issued to those in debt to the University
- 11.1.8 Certificates for University of Liverpool Awards are issued by University of Chester Registry Services in accordance with the agreement between the University of Chester and University of Liverpool
- 11.1.9 All certification will be issued in the initial instance without charge. A charge will be made for duplicates

- 11.1.10 Where a request is made to replace a damaged certificate, the original certificate must be returned prior to a replacement being issued
- 11.1.11 Where a request is made to replace a lost, destroyed or stolen certificate, the full circumstances surrounding the request must be made in writing to the Deputy Registrar and Head of Student Administration. Further information may be requested and the University reserves the right to refuse a request for the duplication of a certificate. Duplicate certificates will have the following statement printed on the reverse: 'This document is a duplicate of the original and was reprinted on Day/Month/Year'
- 11.1.12 Where an award is revoked as in Section 1.3(g) of the Principles and Regulations, certification is also revoked and any certificate issued should be returned

## 11.2 Diploma Supplements/Results Profiles

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- 11.2.1 Results remain provisional until they have been confirmed by an Awards Assessment Board or Examination Committee
- 11.2.2 All students are expected to access results online in accordance with the policy set out in Section 8 of the Assessment Handbook. Hard copies of results profiles requested during the course of a student's studies will only be issued when all results displayed have been ratified by an Awards Assessment Board/Examination Committee; provisional results will not be issued on an official results profile
- 11.2.3 Diploma Supplements are issued to all students successfully completing an award of Senate; students leaving their programme having failed to complete an award of Senate are issued with a final profile of results, as are those students successfully completing modules on a free-standing basis

## Annex A – Certification Descriptors

Certificate Type	Issued by	Signatories	Parchment	Security Features/Guidelines
Certificate of Attendance	Academic or Support Departments	Head of Department or equivalent	As appropriate	University Logo may be included but not the University Crest or Hologram
Certificate of Credit <sup>1</sup>	Registry Services	Vice-Chancellor	120gsm Cream UV Dull	University Logo and Hologram with offset colour-tint University Crest
Results Profile/Diploma Supplement/ HEAR	Registry Services	Director of Registry Services	120gsm Cream UV Dull	University Logo and Hologram with offset colour-tint University Crest
Awards of Senate	Registry Services	Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor	160gsm Cream UV Dull	University Crest and Hologram, with the Crest also as a central colour-tint. Unique identification number on reverse

<sup>1</sup> Only for modules as approved by Faculty Boards of Study

## Annex B – Mandatory Wording

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### 1 *Certificates of Attendance*

This Certificate of Attendance has been issued to

*Student's full name*

by the Department of ..... of the University of Chester in recognition of

*name of activity*

*Date*

This Certificate of Attendance does not constitute academic credit<sup>2</sup>

### 2 *Certificates of Credit*

Certificate of Credit

This is to certify that

*Student's full name*

has been awarded a Certificate of Credit in recognition of studies

*Credit Value and Level of Study*

*Module Code and Title*

*Award Date*

---

<sup>2</sup> Must appear on all Certificates of Attendance



### 3 Awards of Senate

*Full Award Title*

We hereby certify that

*Student's full name*

having undertaken University of Chester approved courses of study, and having satisfied the examiners, was admitted by resolution of the University's Senate to the

*Full Award Title*

*Classification (where applicable)*

on the (date)

Further information regarding this award can be found on the student's Diploma Supplement<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> this statement will appear on the certificates of awards made on or after 1 October 2012



University of  
Chester

# External Examiners

# SECTION 12

Quality and Standards Manual

**HANDBOOK F:**  
**The Assessment of Students**  
**at Levels Z, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught**  
**Provision at Level 8**

2014 – 2015

Date of Approval: June 2014  
Authored By: Academic Quality Support Services (AQSS)  
Version: 1.0

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12B External Examiner nomination form - extension to duties
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12D Chief External Examiner report template
12E Education ITE report template

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## SECTION 12. EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

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### 12.1 The Role of the External Examiner

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External Examiners perform an essential role in the management and enhancement of academic quality and standards. In accordance with chapter B7 of the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*, (QAA, December 2011), the University expects external examiners to provide informative comment and recommendations upon the extent to which:

*the institution is maintaining the threshold academic standards set for its awards in accordance with the frameworks for higher education qualifications and applicable subject benchmark statements;*

*the assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the programme(s) and is conducted in line with the institution's policies and regulations;*

*the academic standards and the achievements of students are comparable with those in other UK higher education institutions of which the external examiners have experience.*

In line with QAA guidance the name, position and institution of the current External Examiner must be included within the relevant Programme Handbook. This is for information only and under no circumstances are students permitted to independently contact an External Examiner; a statement to this effect should be included in the Programme Handbook. Any External Examiner who is independently contacted by a student should inform the Programme Leader and AQSS at the earliest possible opportunity.

#### **External Moderators**

External Moderators are appointed where appropriate to the specific needs of a programme. They perform the same duties as an External Examiner but are not responsible for writing an annual report. The External Examiner with responsibility for writing the annual report for a programme which uses External Moderators is expected to incorporate their views into the report. External Moderators are appointed in the same way as External Examiners and an External Moderator may be extended to the role of External Examiner by submission of a written statement to Academic Quality and Enhancement Committee via the External Examiner Approvals Sub-Group.

#### **Chief External Examiners**

To each Awards Assessment Board there shall be appointed no less than one Chief External Examiner, whose role shall be to oversee the conferment of awards resulting from the academic provision which falls within the scope of that Awards Assessment Board. The role

is concerned with assessment strategies and their operation, and with the fairness and equitability of the assessment processes.

In addition to the criteria stated for External Examiners, the University, in appointing a Chief External Examiner, shall have regard to that individual's ability to take an overview of the range of subjects, disciplines and programmes which fall within the remit of the Awards Assessment Board, as well as the ability to advise on the application of the regulations governing those awards. A Chief External Examiner should also bring relevant experience of modular schemes and credit accumulation and transfer. The Chief External Examiner shall be a member of the Assessment Review Board (see Section 10 of this Handbook) and shall advise the Assessment Review Board in matters relating to assessment decisions following successful academic appeals.

The specific responsibilities of the Chief External Examiner shall be to assist the University in ensuring that:

- (a) justice is done to each student submitting for the conferment of an award and that the process of student assessment is conducted with rigour and with due regard to best practice;
- (b) students have fulfilled the stated objectives in their submission for the conferment of the award;
- (c) the standard of the award is consistent with that nationally accepted as appropriate for the level of award;
- (d) the academic provision being assessed continues to maintain its academic quality and standards.

In the event of a Chief External Examiner unavoidably being prevented from attending an Awards Assessment Board meeting that he/she was due to attend, the Chief External Examiner should notify the relevant Faculty or AQSS (as appropriate) as soon as possible to agree an alternative process. Faculties should seek approval of the alternative arrangements from the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement (via AQSS), who will grant permission for the Board to proceed.

### ***Collaborative Provision***

External Examiners for programmes delivered in partnership with another organisation are subject to all the requirements and procedures stated within this handbook including policies relating to appointment. Responsibility for providing programme information and details of Module Assessment Board arrangements may be subject to negotiation between the partner organisation and the relevant academic department at the University.

## 12.2 Rights and Responsibilities of External Examiners

### *Rights*

It is the right of External Examiners to:

- (a) have access to all assessed work which provides evidence of a candidate's ability in the modules under consideration;
- (b) serve as full members of relevant Module or Awards or Progression Assessment Boards as appropriate and, in the case of subject Externals, additionally to attend the superordinate Awards or Progression Assessment Board;
- (c) to participate in discussions and confirm decisions on module results, or – in the case of Chief External Examiners-confirm decisions on awards at the Assessment Board. Where there is disagreement over decisions, it is accepted that the view of the External Examiner will normally be accepted. The signature of an External Examiner must be appended to the final list of recommendations as evidence that s/he accepts and confirms the module marks on the Results Schedule;
- (d) expect that the report submitted to the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement (on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor, as Chair of the Senate) on the conduct and outcomes of the most recent assessment will be considered by the relevant programme team and University committee and that a written response to this report be sent to the External Examiner for his or her information by the Programme Leader or Chair of the relevant committee within six months of the date of submission of the report;
- (e) make direct and separate representations to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Chester as Chair of the Senate, on any matter of serious concern arising from the assessments which puts in jeopardy the standard of the award and the fair treatment of any individual student;
- (f) request to meet students at least once during the term of office;
- (g) propose the moderation of marks of a module cohort, where this is deemed to be justified, but not to adjust individual module marks on the basis of only a sample of assessed work. However External Examiners – in the interests of assuring standards – may propose changes to the marks of students in the 'first' or 'fail' categories, or at the borderlines of these classifications, provided that the final decision in such cases is taken by the Module Assessment Board. If an External Examiner wishes to propose changes to marks other than those in the 'first' or 'fail' categories and at the borderlines thereof, she/he must scrutinise the work of the full module cohort before doing so. Any such proposed changes must be confirmed by the Module Assessment Board (further guidance on External Examiners' role in the changing of marks is provided in Section 5 of this Handbook, as Appendix 5G);
- (h) conduct a *viva voce* examination of any student to determine difficult or borderline cases or to assist in determining whether or not a student is guilty of academic malpractice;
- (i) where an external examiner has a serious concern relating to systematic failings with the academic standards of a programme or programmes and has exhausted all published applicable internal procedures, including the submission of a confidential

report to the head of the institution, he/she may invoke the QAA's concerns scheme or inform the relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body.

### *Responsibilities*

In the interests of ensuring that there is justice for each student submitting for the conferment of the award and that the process of student assessment is conducted with rigour and due regard to best practice, the External Examiners shall:

- (a) assist in ensuring that the standard of award is consistent with that accepted nationally as appropriate for the level of award;
- (b) attend the meetings of the Module and/or Awards and/or Progression Assessment Boards at which decisions on module results, or on awards or progression, are made and ensure that those decisions have been reached through agreement and in accordance with the stated regulations and requirements, as well as the norms of practice in higher education and any other issues such as academic irregularities. External Examiners are required to observe the confidentiality of all Assessment Board proceedings;
- (c) in the event of an External Examiner unavoidably being prevented from attending an Assessment Board meeting that he/she was due to attend, the External Examiner should notify the relevant Department as soon as possible to agree an alternative process. The Department should seek approval of the alternative arrangements from the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement (via AQSS), who will grant permission for the Board to proceed;
- (d) participate as required in any reviews of decisions about individual students' awards;
- (e) report to the Senate, by means of annual written reports, on: the academic standards set for awards, the comparability of those standards with those of similar programmes in other UK higher education institutions and students' attainment of those standards; the delivery of the objectives of the academic provision, the fulfilment of students' assessment outcomes and any recommendations arising from the assessment process; the effectiveness and fairness of the assessment procedures themselves;
- (f) be associated with all recommendations for the assessment of modules which may lead to an exit award.
- (g) be responsible for a designated batch of identified modules and will take responsibility for moderating the performance of all students presenting themselves for assessment in those modules, irrespective of the programme, pathway or course of study on which they are registered;
- (h) moderate impartially and assist in ensuring that justice is done to individual students in respect of those modules contributing to an award in accordance with the University of Chester criteria;
- (i) moderate and provide comments on component and overall module grades achieved by students.
- (j) confirm the award of prior credit for those modules contributing to degree classification;
- (k) review whether in their judgement the assessment process has accorded with the University's regulations and requirements and has been fair;

- (l) report any suspected instances of academic malpractice to the Chair of the Module Assessment Board via the Programme Leader as soon as possible.

### **Sample size**

#### **Level 4**

Confirm marks for all failed modules. In order to do this an external examiner may request to see all the work proposed as failures or only a representative sample.

#### **All levels except level 4**

- Confirm individual marks in the First class and Fail categories;
- See samples of student assessed work from the top, middle, bottom of the range and at class borderlines, in order to ensure that each student is fairly placed in relation to the rest of the module cohort.

### **Volume of work**

The volume of work to be sent to an External Examiner is a matter for negotiation with the Programme Leader and/or Departmental Assessment Contact; there is no maximum or minimum sample size.

### **Other duties**

External Examiners should scrutinise and comment in advance upon the assessment tasks, in respect of those modules which are within their jurisdiction. This will include;

all examination papers;

all coursework weighted at 50% or more of module assessment;

the opportunity to approve in advance all coursework, if they so request.

It may be appropriate for prior approval of coursework to relate to the general nature thereof, rather than to specific questions.

An External Examiner may also act as a curriculum advisor to the Subject Department or Programme Team, as requested. The University of Chester procedures for approval of new modules or major changes to existing modules on a validated programme require that the relevant External Examiner shall be consulted and shall signal her/his consent to the new development or major change to existing module(s).



## 12.3 Appointing an External Examiner

Schedules for the appointment and reappointment of all External Examiners and Chief External Examiners are maintained by Academic Quality Support Services. Departments will be notified via the Faculty Administrator when an appointment needs to be made. Once a programme has been validated and approved to run, steps must be taken immediately to appoint an External Examiner. If the Programme Team are satisfied that the appointee meets the criteria they should complete the relevant nomination form as detailed in this section of the handbook. They should also ensure that the nominee is eligible to work in the UK. Any conflicts of interest which arise **after** an external examiner has been appointed must be brought to the attention of AQSS.

Appointments are normally for four years and are renewed on an annual basis. To enable effective continuity in programmes requiring more than one External Examiner, it is permissible to appoint External Examiners for a shorter term initially with an extension to a full, four year, term available on request.

For further criteria relating specifically to the appointment of Chief External Examiners see the section entitled Chief External Examiners on pages 2-3.

### *The Appointment Process*

Programme Leader submits the appropriate pro-forma for approval to the appropriate Board of Studies. They should attach all relevant documentation as detailed in the pro-forma.

If the nomination is approved at the Board of Studies it should then be submitted electronically to the Policy Implementation Officer (External Examiners and Quality Support) in Academic Quality Support Services.

The nomination will then be presented to the External Examiner Approvals Sub-Group, chaired by the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement. The paperwork will be considered in detail and a recommendation made regarding the suitability of the nomination.

Following the meeting of Academic Quality and Enhancement Committee the Policy Implementation Officer (External Examiners and Quality Support) will contact the relevant Faculty Administrator to confirm the outcome of the nomination.

Where a nomination is unsuccessful the academic department is responsible for contacting the nominee to advise.



Where a nomination is successful the Policy Implementation Officer (External Examiners and Quality Support) will send a letter of appointment to the External Examiner and the relevant documentation as detailed in section 12.5.

## *National Criteria for Appointment*

(as set out in chapter B7 of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education)

### **Person Specification**

Institutions appoint external examiners who can show appropriate evidence of the following:

- i) knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality
- ii) competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study, or parts thereof
- iii) relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate
- iv) competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures
- v) sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to command the respect of academic peers and, where appropriate, professional peers
- vi) familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed
- vii) fluency in English, and where programmes are delivered and assessed in languages other than English, fluency in the relevant language(s) (unless other secure arrangements are in place to ensure that external examiners are provided with the information to make their judgements)
- viii) meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies
- ix) awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula
- x) competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

Institutions do not appoint as external examiners anyone in the following categories or circumstances:

- i) a member of a governing body or committee of the appointing institution or one of its collaborative partners, or a current employee of the appointing institution or one of its collaborative partners

- ii) anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme of study
- iii) anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study
- iv) anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study
- v) anyone significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme(s) or modules in question
- vi) former staff or students of the institution unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the external examiner have completed their programme(s)
- vii) a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another institution
- viii) the succession of an external examiner by a colleague from the examiner's home department and institution
- ix) the appointment of more than one external examiner from the same department of the same institution.

### *Terms of Office*

- i) The duration of an external examiner's appointment will normally be for four years, with an exceptional extension of one year to ensure continuity.
- ii) An external examiner may be reappointed in exceptional circumstances but only after a period of five years or more has elapsed since their last appointment.
- iii) External examiners normally hold no more than two external examiner appointments for taught programmes/modules at any point in time.

### *General Criteria for Appointment to the University of Chester*

- a. An External Examiner shall not be appointed to an Assessment Board if he or she is deemed to be ineligible on one or more of the grounds set out in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.
- b. It is an expectation that external examiner nominees will normally hold a full-time or fractional post within academia or in a related and relevant organisation.
- c. Nominees who have already left academia at the time of their nomination should not normally be appointed, other than in exceptional circumstances. Where these circumstances exist, programme teams must demonstrate, via the nomination form and other documentation where necessary, that the nominee has sufficient subject/discipline currency, academic credibility and experience, and must describe to the satisfaction of the External Examiner Sub-group why the post cannot suitably be filled by an alternative nominee currently engaged within academia. Examiners appointed under these criteria must, after a two year period, demonstrate continued academic/professional currency and standing to the satisfaction of the External Examiner Approvals Sub-group. Subsequent to this, they should be permitted to complete their tenure.
- d. Where an Examiner is appointed, and then leaves academia partway through his/her term of office, it is acceptable for the Examiner to continue for a further two years. After this two year period, if the Programme Team/External Examiner can

demonstrate continued academic currency to the satisfaction of the External Examiner Approvals Sub-group, they should be permitted to complete their tenure.

- e. Notwithstanding the above recommendations, it is recognised that there may, in the course of an academic year, arise circumstances where the above recommendations cannot be fully applied due to exceptional circumstances relating to areas such as, but not restricted to; specific professional programme requirements, External Examiner resignations/terminations, programme extensions etc. In these cases, a Programme Team must, to the satisfaction of the External Examiner Approvals Sub-group, describe a clear rationale for any proposed appointment or extension to duties.

### *Nomination forms and procedures*

The following criteria indicate which nomination form should be used and situations where a nomination form is not required:

#### Full nomination form (Appendix 12A)

- For new External Examiner appointments.
- For requests to extend an existing External Examiner's tenure beyond 4 years.

#### Abridged nomination form (Appendix 12B)

- For adding another programme, including a WBIS pathway, to an existing External Examiner's duties;
- For adding modules to an existing External Examiner's duties if these modules:
  - are at a higher level than those currently examined;
  - lie outside of the department(s) to which the External Examiner's current programme(s) belong;
  - belong to an unrelated programme within the same department.

#### Letter of Continued Currency

In situations that require a review of an Examiner's continued academic/professional currency after two years of their tenure, a letter demonstrating this currency from the External Examiner and/or Programme Leader to the External Examiner Approvals Sub-group, in addition to an up-to-date CV, will usually be sufficient to extend the Examiner's tenure for another two years.

#### External Moderators

See the the section entitled External Moderators on page 2 of this handbook for further information regarding their appointment.

### **No nomination form**

*For adding new modules to the programme(s) currently examined, if they do not exceed the level of the External Examiner's current duties and are within the same department(s) as the External Examiner's current programmes.*

*For adding existing modules to the programme(s) currently examined, if they do not exceed the level of the External Examiner's current duties and are within the same department(s) as the External Examiner's current programmes.*

It is expected that any additional modules allocated to an External Examiner are highlighted in the annual undergraduate module allocation forms distributed by AQSS.

### ***Procedure for Confirming Eligibility to Work in the UK: UK Border Agency Requirements***

The University of Chester is committed to equality of opportunity in its recruitment, selection and employment practices. To prevent discrimination the University treats *all applicants in the same way* and verifies the eligibility of all new staff to work in the UK in accordance with the procedures detailed below.

Employing a worker who is not eligible to work in the UK is a criminal offence that carries substantial financial penalties and can lead to imprisonment. Nobody should commence work at the University until their eligibility to work in the UK has been verified under the procedures listed below.

It has been confirmed by Universities UK and the UK Border Agency that they must be subject to the same checks to confirm eligibility to work in the UK. The University would be liable for the same penalties if it engaged someone as an External Examiner who was not eligible to work in the UK.

The University can engage External Examiners who are UK or EEA nationals, or non-EEA nationals who have been granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK. Some individuals who have been granted visas through the UK's Points Based System may be eligible to undertake work with specific restrictions but any such cases must be checked with HRM Services.

#### ***Obtaining Copies of Documentation***

The University requires evidence of an External Examiner's right to work in the UK before any work is undertaken. Prior to nomination, the relevant academic department will ask External Examiners to provide photocopies of appropriate documentation. This must be either:

- **their passport, residence permit or national identity card, showing that they are a British citizen or a national of an EEA (European Economic Area) country, or that they are** allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK

or

- other documents as required by Section 15 of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006. A full list of acceptable documentation can be obtained by contacting the Policy Implementation Officer (External Examiners and Quality Support) in AQSS.

The photocopies should include:

- the front cover
- all the pages which give the potential employee's personal details, including photograph and signature
- if the individual is not a British citizen or EEA national, any visa/endorsement which allow the potential employee to do the type of work they have been offered.

The photocopies should be forwarded to AQSS along with other relevant documentation. AQSS will be unable to confirm an External Examiner's appointment without this evidence of eligibility to work in the UK.

### ***Verifying the Original Documentation***

When the External Examiner makes their first visit to the University, Heads of Subject (or administrators/nominee) in the relevant academic department will need to see and take copies of the original documentation as detailed above. If the External Examiner is expected to undertake a significant amount of work before visiting the University, they should be asked to send their original documents by courier/secure delivery so that they can be verified.

The person taking copies of the original documentation should ensure they are satisfied that the External Examiner is the rightful holder of the documents by checking:

- photographs to ensure that they are consistent with the appearance of the External Examiner
- date of birth to ensure that this is consistent with the person's appearance
- expiry dates (passports, visas) to ensure they have not passed.

The photocopies should be signed and dated by the person who has checked the documents and forwarded immediately to AQSS who will keep them on file.

If there are any queries regarding documentation or an individual's eligibility to work in the UK, please contact HRM Services for further guidance.

## **12.4 Discontinuation and non-renewal of appointment**

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All External Examiner appointments are subject to annual review.

The decision not to renew an appointment may be made for a number of reasons including, but not limited to:

- failure to submit a report within the agreed time limit;
- if the external examiner fails to carry out his/her responsibilities appropriately;
- non-attendance by the examiner at assessment boards;
- circumstances where a conflict of interest has arisen during the External Examiner's term of office.

The decision not to renew an appointment will be taken by the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement, or representative, in discussion with relevant members of the academic department. Academic Quality Support Services will inform the External Examiner in writing if their contract is not being renewed.

If an External Examiner wishes to discontinue their appointment, they should notify the Policy Implementation Officer (External Examiners and Quality Support) in writing and in sufficient time for a replacement appointment to be made.

The University may dismiss an External Examiner whom it considers not to be fulfilling his/her responsibilities to the institution's satisfaction.

## 12.5 Documentation to be provided to External Examiners

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### *Information to be provided by Academic Quality Support Services*

The following information and documentation is sent to all External Examiners both on appointment and at the start of every academic year:

- the External Examiner section of Handbook F: Requirements Governing the Assessment of Students;
- UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Chapter B7 External Examining;
- fee and expenses schedules and claim form;
- information about the procedure for confirming eligibility to work in the UK;
- username and password to enable external examiners to access SharePoint (through which they are able to access information such as the Principles and Regulations and the full Assessment Handbook);
- acceptance form, to be completed and returned by the External Examiner.

Additional documentation can be provided on request.

Academic Quality Support Services e-mails a copy of the Annual Report Form Template to all External Examiners at the appropriate time.

### *Information to be provided by Programme Teams / University Departments*

Programme Teams should provide External Examiners with the following as and when appropriate:

- copies of the relevant Programme Specification(s) and Handbook(s), updated copies of these should be sent as necessary during the External Examiners term of office;
- assessment briefs/assessment criteria, marking schemes and marking criteria and samples of scripts and profiles of marks as appropriate to enable them to undertake their duties;
- examples of student feedback and responses thereto (for example, the outcomes of, and responses to, module evaluation questionnaires);
- an annual letter from the Programme Leader or Head of Subject, detailing action taken in response to the previous year's External Examiner report, and/or the relevant extract from the programme Annual Monitoring Report addressing this issue (the response should be approved by a senior member of staff in the academic department prior to being sent to the External Examiner);
- dates of assessment boards should be made available as early as possible and agreed in negotiation with External Examiners where possible

## 12.6 Induction of New External Examiners

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It is University policy that all External Examiners should, where possible, attend an induction during their first year of appointment. Those who are unable to attend on the date specified will be invited to attend a subsequent event. The primary purposes of the induction event are:

- to enable External Examiners to meet with other examiners from different subject/programme or academic specialist areas, and with University staff, from both academic and central support services;
- to inform External Examiners concerning University-wide policies relating to assessment and the External Examiner role;
- to obtain feedback from External Examiners concerning their perceptions of the role, its responsibilities and their operational delivery, in the light of developments in the wider HE quality agenda.

## 12.7 Mentoring system for colleagues new to External Examining

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To be considered for appointment, all External Examiners must have substantial experience of examining in HE in the relevant academic discipline. However, potential External Examiners may have limited or no prior experience of the external examining role. Therefore, the following guidance is recommended as good practice for a colleague new to external examining:

- (a) Where possible the incoming External Examiner should be invited to attend the final Module Assessment Board of the previous session, as an observer, and to meet the University examiners and the outgoing External Examiner.
- (b) Dialogue between the outgoing External Examiner and the new appointee should be encouraged.



- (c) The new External Examiner should be provided with the name and contact details of an appropriate member of academic staff who will act as a contact point for queries; this person is available to supplement the mentoring provided by an experienced External Examiner.
- (d) The Programme Team should provide the new External Examiner with copies of recent Annual Monitoring reports (past three years).
- (e) A mentor must be appointed for External Examiners who have no previous experience of external examining; the mentor should be another, experienced External Examiner (normally based within the same Department or on the same programme).
- (f) Following the appointment of a new External Examiner with a named mentor the Policy Implementation Officer (External Examiners and Quality Support) will contact the relevant Programme Leader via the Faculty Administrator requesting that they initiate contact between the mentor and new appointment.

The University greatly values the willingness of existing External Examiners to offer mentoring and support to colleagues new to the role. AQSS holds a list of new external examiners who are being mentored and the name of their appointed mentor.

## 12.8 Annual Reports

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All External Examiners appointed on the authority delegated to Academic Quality and Enhancement Committee by Senate are required to report annually on the conduct of the academic provision within their jurisdiction. Reports are submitted to the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor. Where Examiners' responsibilities include Foundation Degrees comments should, where appropriate, reflect the distinctive aspects of the qualification indicated primarily in the QAA's FD Qualification Benchmark (QAA, October 2004). This will help provide evidence that the particular characteristics of the Foundation Degree are being demonstrated. Examiners are also requested to reference their comments as far as possible to specific modules/programmes where their report covers more than one programme. Industry based Examiners are requested to give a particularly detailed response to section 3 of the report form. In the interests of quality assurance and the standard of awards, the report shall include comment upon:

- (a) consistency with requirements of the National Academic Infrastructure (UK Quality Code for Higher Education), including the Foundation degree benchmark (where applicable);
- (b) the appropriateness of methods of assessment and consistency of marking standards (in the case of Foundation degrees, particular attention should be paid to the distinctive aspects of the FD qualification);
- (c) the standard of student performance in comparison with similar provision within the HE sector;
- (d) the aims, learning outcomes and content of the curriculum;

- (e) learning and teaching methods, and the resources to support them;
- (f) issues specific to a module or a programme;
- (g) documentation, including feedback to students on their assessed work;
- (i) the level and effectiveness of administrative support;
- (j) evaluation and review processes;
- (k) collaborative provision (where appropriate);
- (l) shortcomings or specific issues requiring attention or development;
- (m) examples of good practice;
- (n) a brief overview of the term of office (for examiners in their last year).

The University particularly welcomes comment on the use made of second marking (monitoring) procedures and on the implementation of anonymous marking of coursework.

The purpose of the report is to enable the University to judge the extent to which:

- (a) the academic provision in question is meeting stated aims and objectives and what actions, if any, are required for the improvement or enhancement of the design and delivery of the provision and/or its methods of assessment;
- (b) assessment procedures are being properly carried out.

In addition to the main report form external examiners are also required to complete the External Examiners' Report Checklist which will be appended to the template.

Where External Examiners work as a team the University shall require each Examiner to submit a separate report, according to the guidance provided above. Any report which does not contain enough detail to fulfil the quality requirements of the University will be returned to the External Examiner for additional comment. Further information on the standard required can be obtained from the Policy Implementation Officer: External Examiners and Quality Support.

Examiners should be aware that reports will potentially have a variety of readers serving on University Committees (including student members), internal and external peers, Chief External Examiners, and validating and professional bodies. As a matter of course, all reports are read by programme teams (from whom a letter of response is required), and by AQSS, which produces a summary of key points; issues raised inform the action plan(s) in the relevant annual programme monitoring report(s) which are considered by Faculty Boards of Studies. External examiners' reports must also be shared with students on the programmes in question and the Students' Union President is entitled to request sight of any external examiners' report. Accordingly, reports should not make reference to named students or staff, or allow them to be identified in any way which might be prejudicial to their interests.

Academic Quality Support Services also produces two annual overviews of external examiners' reports, one for undergraduate and the other for postgraduate programmes. This is submitted to Academic Quality and Enhancement Committee, which includes Students' Union representation.

An electronic template is provided for the purposes of completing the Annual Report. Examiners are required to submit a typed report by e-mail. The report should be submitted according to the following schedule unless a separate timetable has been agreed with the Programme Leader and AQSS.

all undergraduate reports:

**SUBMISSION DATE: 10<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2015**

reports for postgraduate programmes with an Assessment Board held in January:

**SUBMISSION DATE: 5<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2015<sup>1</sup>**

reports for undergraduate Assessment Boards held after 29<sup>th</sup> June, or for postgraduate programmes with an Assessment Board which takes place outside the January schedule:

**SUBMISSION DATE: WITHIN 2 WEEKS OF THE ASSESSMENT BOARD MEETING**

External Examiners' fees will be paid on receipt of the final Annual Report. Examiners' expenses may be paid at other times during the year, upon receipt of the appropriate claim. Details of the procedures for claiming expenses are attached to the fees and expenses schedules included with the External Examiner's appointment letter.

### ***Structure and Format of Annual Reports***

The External Examiner's report follows the template set out below. The template is available as Appendix 12C.

1. Consistency with requirements of the National Academic Infrastructure (UK Quality Code for Higher Education), institutional requirements and/or industry practice (if applicable)
  - (a) consistency with the QAA Code of Practice (Chapter of the UK Quality Code) and adherence to the University assessment regulations and requirements.
  - (b) appropriateness of standards and assessment tasks with reference to relevant subject benchmarks(s), Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), the Foundation Degree benchmark (where applicable), industry standards and practice (where applicable) and/or programme specification(s).
2. Standard of Student Performance (in the case of Foundation Degrees, Examiners are invited to pay particular attention to the distinctive characteristics of the FD qualification)

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that this date is for submission of postgraduate reports relating to the 2014-15 cohort. The deadline for postgraduate reports relating to the 2013-2014 cohort is 27<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

- (a) in relation to specified learning outcomes for modules;
- (b) in comparison with other similar provision at other HE institutions.

### 3. Modules/Programme of Study

- (a) aims and learning outcomes of modules/programmes: please comment on whether these were clearly defined and appropriate to the subject matter and the needs of students and, where applicable, their vocational relevance.
- (b) learning and teaching methods used to support programme aims and intended outcomes (if External Examiner has evidence of this);
- (c) if applicable, Examiners are asked to comment on the nature and extent of the evidence of independent learning, including, if External Examiner has evidence of this, the resources for the modules and programme of study; e.g. IT facilities, library provision, specialist vocational resources (where applicable) etc.
- (d) Specific modules/programmes - comments on aspects of provision relating to individual modules or specific programmes (e.g. single and combined honours in the same subject).

### 4. Assessment

- (a) variety and appropriateness of assessment in relation to learning outcomes and extent to which they enable students to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes (Examiners are also invited to comment on use made of formative assessment);
- (b) extent and quality of feedback to students on their assessed work;

### 5. Level and effectiveness of administrative support (including provision of documentation from both the academic department and central support services)

### 6. Evaluation and Review Processes

- (a) formal methods of monitoring and evaluation to enhance quality, including the use made of student feedback on their student experience;
- (b) Programme Team's response to issues raised in previous External Examiner's report.

### 7. Please ensure you complete this section if your role includes the examination of work from a Partner College/Organisation, identify any issues (such as communication and comparability of standards) which are specific to that work and refer back to earlier sections of this report where appropriate. Your comments will be fed back to the Partner College/Organisation.

### 8. Shortcomings or specific issues requiring attention or development (programme or specific modules).

### 9. Examples of good practice (strengths or distinctive or innovative features).

**10. A brief overview of the Examiner’s term of office (for Examiners in their last year of office)**

An amended version of this template is provided for Chief External Examiners (Appendix 12D). A small number of additional questions are added to the template used by External Examiners for Initial Teacher Education programmes located within the Faculty of Education & Children’s Services (Appendix 12E).

Information on *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and *Subject Benchmark Statements* can be found on the QAA website <http://www.qaa.ac.uk>

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