



University Undergraduate Assessment Handbook

**Academic Standards and Quality and
Institute for Learning Enhancement**

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This Handbook is published as an online document, located on the Academic Standards and Quality website (www.wlv.ac.uk/asq).

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1. Introduction

The assessment of students is an issue of central concern to everyone in higher education. In particular the University of Wolverhampton wishes to ensure that students will benefit from assessment which goes beyond the simple testing of factual knowledge. We wish to support approaches which 'involve students in the kinds of activities that are: valuable in the long term; help them to develop; provide them with guidance and feedback; and enable them to learn how to assess themselves as future professionals'.

(<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/teachingandlearning/assessment>)

The Quality Assurance Agency recognises the centrality of assessment in higher education in its formulation of the section of the [QAA Code of practice Section 6: Assessment of Students \(September 2006\)](#). Professional bodies also draw attention to the necessity of developing appropriate, reliable and valid assessment strategies so that students can demonstrate their readiness for practice. The current [University Learning and Teaching Strategy \(2010-12\)](#) also stresses the importance of the progression of innovation and consolidation in assessment.

During 2009-11, through a project entitled 'Learning Works', the University embarked on an ambitious restructuring and modernising of the whole of its undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum. Through listening to students, employers and professional bodies the course structures were simplified, course content clarified and all course titles reviewed, moving to a 20-credit base. In particular with regard to assessment, the number of course and module learning outcomes were limited and clarified, the overall number of summative assessments were reduced and the annual timing of assessment points were structured across the year to reduce the bunching of assessments and to help improve student achievement. As a focus for this change staff were asked to design curricula which embedded three Graduate Attributes to promote a distinctive University of Wolverhampton undergraduate education: knowledge and enterprise, digital literacy and global citizenship.

Purpose, structure and format

The purpose of this Handbook is to provide:

- an outline of the key features of the University's assessment framework for **all University students, collaborative partners, academic and administrative staff**
- a link to additional school specific assessment information and guidance

All the principles described in the Handbook also apply to assessments carried out in and by collaborative partners and on all University programmes.

The structure of the Handbook follows the life cycle of the assessment process:

- *from* the creation of an assessment strategy and policy;
- *through* the design of assessment activities;

- *the* grading of assessment and feedback to students on those activities;
- *the* internal and external moderation of assessments and the confirmation of results at Assessment Boards;
- *to* the publication of results and appeals against assessment decisions.

This Handbook is published as an on-line document, published on the [Academic Standards and Quality](#) website.

A list of Key Terms is provided in [Appendix 2](#).

Supporting materials regarding assessment can be found on the Institute for Learning Enhancement website under [Resources for Supporting Learning](#).

2. The Assessment Process

2.1 Purpose and principles of assessment

In higher education, 'assessment' describes any processes that appraise an individual's knowledge, understanding, abilities or skills. There are many different forms of assessment, serving a variety of purposes. These include:

- encouraging students to demonstrate that they have met the [learning outcomes](#) of their course
- promoting student learning by providing the student with feedback; normally to help improve his/her performance
- evaluating student knowledge, understanding, abilities or skills
- providing a mark or grade that enables a student's performance to be established. The mark or grade may also be used to make progress decisions;
- enabling the public (including employers), and higher education providers, to know that an individual has attained an appropriate level of achievement that reflects the academic standards set by the awarding institution and agreed UK norms, including the frameworks for higher education qualifications. This may include demonstrating fitness to practise or meeting other professional requirements;
- be set in manageable amounts for students and staff within the context of their course;
- be responsive to developments in learning and teaching;
- with the exception of Foreign Languages, be conducted in English and/or British Sign Language for all University programmes.

A central tenet of the University's approach to assessment is that the design and implementation of assessment should be primarily **for** learning rather than simply **of** learning. As such it should be designed to support student achievement, retention and progression. In order to test a wide range of intended learning outcomes, diversity of assessment practice between and within different subjects is to be expected and welcomed, requiring and enabling students to demonstrate their capabilities and achievements within each module or programme.

Assessment should:

- be explicit, valid and reliable;
- be an integral part of course and module design;
- enable students to reflect on their performance, following timely, meaningful and useful feedback;
- allow students to demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes of their course and modules;
- encourage students to identify their strengths and weaknesses so that the level of achievement can be measured and recorded for the purposes of completing their award, and where appropriate for classification;
- be clear and explicit to all stakeholders and the criteria to be used in grading assessment should be published to all;

The University recognises and assesses students' prior learning through its [APL processes](#).

2.2 Assessment and Equality and Diversity

An underlying principle of University practice is that all assessments should assess students' abilities fairly, with full reference to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. The University is committed to inclusivity in assessment, wherever possible, whilst acknowledging that some particular arrangements may still be required by some disabled students to overcome any remaining disadvantages – as reflected in the University's academic regulations:

If a student is unable through disability or injury to be assessed by the normal methods specified in the Module Guide or Award Regulations, the Student Enabling Centre will review and determine an alternative appropriate method of assessment in consultation with Subject Leaders.

The University has also incorporated best practice guidance from the Disability Discrimination Act(s) 1995-2005 and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education Code of Practice – Section 3, Disabled Students (Updated March 2010), whereby:

“Academic assessment practices ensure that disabled students are given the opportunity to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes and competence standards”.

Disabled students will not be exempt from academic assessment. If, however, a student is unable to complete any particular form of academic assessment due to his/her impairment, an alternative, but equivalent, academic assessment should be completed. This alternative academic assessment must still test the learning outcomes for which the original assessment was designed.

- Specific assessment arrangements must not reduce the reliability, validity or integrity of the academic assessment.
- Specific assessment arrangements may only be considered where appropriate and current evidence of disability has been provided by the student to the Student Enabling Centre (SEC).
- Only staff with appropriate specialist qualifications and/or experience should make recommendations on the specific arrangements for individual disabled students.
- The nature of the specific assessment arrangements recommended should take into consideration the needs of each individual student and must not give such candidates an unfair advantage over peers.
- The provision of specific assessment arrangements should not be dependent on students having access to external funding to meet additional costs.
- Some students, such as deaf or dyslexic students, would still face a substantial disadvantage if the nature of their difficulties were not taken into account when marking written work. In all other circumstances, disabled students' work should be marked in the usual way, since specific arrangements have been made which overcome a student's disadvantage.

Details of the [University's Dyslexia Assessment Policy](#) – including the procedure for considerate marking arrangements and guidance on feedback are available at this link.

Details of the support available for students with disabilities can be found on the [Student Enabling Centre](#) webpage, to ensure that assessment is conducted within an inclusive and supportive environment for students with a wide range of sensory, physical or specific learning difficulties.

[Special Exam Arrangements](#) are offered to students with a recognised condition or impairment.

2.3 Assessment Design

For general guidance and support regarding assessment in learning and teaching, please contact the [Institute for Learning Enhancement](#).

The [Higher Education Academy](#) offers a wide range of resources to support staff in [assessment design](#).

When designing any assessment the following questions should be answered:

- Who will be assessed?
- Why is the assessment necessary and what are its aims?
- What will be assessed?
- How will the assessment be conducted?
- Where will the assessment be conducted?
- When will the assessment occur?
- How fair and equitable are the assessment methods?

- How will feedback be given?
- How will the effectiveness of the assessment be monitored and evaluated?

The range of [assessment tasks](#) should be appropriate to the learning outcomes and the learning and teaching activities for the module or course.

The timing of assessment is key to the learning process. [Diagnostic](#) and [formative](#) assessment set early in the students' experience will help students understand the levels of demand of higher education, their own strengths and weaknesses and help them assess their own progress towards their ultimate aim. Additionally, it will identify those students at risk of failure so that supportive action can be taken.

All summative assessments must be passed. *'Where students fail a module at the first attempt they will have the right to attempt the failed summative assessment task(s) once.'* (Refer to [section D.3](#) in Academic Regulations.)

In the design of assessment, opportunities for students to plagiarise, self-plagiarise or commit other forms of [academic misconduct](#) should be reduced as far as possible through [positive curriculum design](#); clear, updated, personalised assignment briefs and innovative forms of assessment.

2.4 Methods of Assessment

There are various methods of and approaches to assessment which might be used, e.g.

- assessment taken in controlled conditions, (either time and /or place);
- computer-based assessment and multi-choice questions;
- essays;
- individual or group projects;
- open book and closed book examinations;
- presentations / oral examinations / viva voce;
- reflective logs / learning journals / portfolios
- self-assessment and peer assessment;
- web sites and web folios
- work-based projects / reports / workplans.

This list is not exclusive. When deciding on the method(s) to be used, identifying **why**, **what** and **for whom** the assessment is intended will determine what is the most appropriate method for a module.

2.5 Assessment and the use of Technology

In line with the University [Blended Learning Strategy](#) (updated Dec 2009) with relevance to assessment, all students should be entitled to:

Entitlement 1: have access to a digital copy of all lecturer-produced course documents. e.g. module guides, assessment briefs, presentations, handouts, reading lists;

- Entitlement 2: formative assessment/s opportunities on line with meaningful electronic assessment feedback;
- Entitlement 3: collaborate on line with others in their learning cohort
- Entitlement 4: participate in ePDP (*NB this is by student and thus by course*)
- Entitlement 5: submit all (appropriate) assessments online
- Entitlement 6: engage in interactive learning during all face to face sessions.

2.6 Assessment and work-based learning

In line with the University [Work-based and Placement Learning Guidelines](#) (May 2008), where assessment of WB&PL is conducted 'off-campus' by employers / work-based placement providers/mentors then procedures should be in place to ensure that those involved in assessment are competent, understand their role, have undertaken appropriate training and, where PSRBs are involved, have relevant qualifications and experience.

2.7 Approval and review of assessment tasks

2.7.1 Course assessment strategies and methods

Course assessment strategies and methods will be approved at validation.

The following will be considered within the validation process:

- the assessment criteria for each module and for each level;
- the use of formative and summative assessment tasks for each module;
- the clarity of the tasks set;
- whether each assessment task promotes learning;
- whether each task measures the intended learning outcomes;
- whether each task is appropriate to the level and mode of study;
- the balance of assessment and methods of assessment at course level.
- overall assessment regime

See [Review and Validation Handbook](#) for further information on validation/approval processes.

2.7.2 Annual Monitoring of assessment

As part of Annual Monitoring, module and subject teams are required to review and evaluate the effectiveness of assessments looking to identify opportunities for improvement. In doing this evaluation the following sources of information should be used.

- comments of internal moderators/second markers;
- External Examiner reports;
- other forms of student feedback such as group discussions;
- previous Annual monitoring reports;
- profiles of grades awarded;

- student module evaluations questionnaires;
- Subject and Award Board and Course Committee minutes;
- submitted assessments.

Any revisions to assessment regimes have to be agreed through the School's modifications process, normally in the year preceding the delivery of the module and allow time for changes to the assessment pattern to be made on the SITS system.

The University requires all summative assessment tasks (coursework and examinations) to be forwarded to the allocated external examiner to confirm the appropriateness of the tasks before the assessments are presented to the students.

2.8 Information on assessment for students

During the time of their studies, students will receive or be informed about:

- [Undergraduate Student Guide](#)
- A [Guide to your Course](#) for their subject which contains specific details about their award and the modules that are available to study
- [University Academic Regulations](#)
- Examination Regulations for Students
- Examination timetables
- Module guides are made available within each module WOLF topic include information on assessment such as the timing, weighting, the learning outcomes that each task is intended to demonstrate and informed of arrangements for the receipt of the following
- Module Teams must develop clear assessment instruction incorporating:
 - Advice, guidance and expectations
 - Linkages between the assessment and module learning outcomes
- The next available opportunity to retrieve assessment feedback sheet.

Structured feedback should be given indicating graded performance against assessment criteria and narrative comments.

2.9 Extensions and extenuating circumstances

Coursework Extensions

The University allows students to seek extensions of up to seven days in certain circumstances. See Guidelines for School Assessment Handbooks for further details.

Extenuating Circumstances

In instances where a seven-day extension is not appropriate but where personal circumstances have impacted adversely on a student's ability to undertake assessment, students can apply for extenuating circumstances to be taken into consideration.

See Sections 8 and 9 of the University's [Undergraduate Regulations](#) for further guidance on extensions and extenuating circumstances respectively.

2.10 Submission of coursework

All written coursework must be submitted to the location specified in the Module Guide. It is the module leader's responsibility to notify students of how and where other types of assessed work should be submitted.

If modules permit the electronic submission of coursework, module leaders are responsible for providing detailed instructions on how the submission should be made.

Exam scripts are collected in accordance with the University's examination rules.

2.11 Receiving coursework

All assessments submitted will be given a receipt. It is the student's responsibility to keep receipts for submitted assignments.

Assignments submitted to a specified location will be held securely. Internal examiners will be required to collect assignments from the point at which they were submitted and must ensure that assignments are held securely at all times.

For electronic submission, it is the module leader's responsibility to arrange for receipts to be issued and for a record to be kept.

2.12 Examinations and in-class tests

University guidance is available on each of the following areas:

Examinations

[Examinations: Instructions to Invigilators](#)

In-class tests

University [Guidelines: Summative In-class Tests](#).

Open book examinations

[University Guidelines on the Conduct of Open Book Examinations](#)

Computer aided assessment

[Guidelines for the Quality Assurance of Summative Computer Assisted Assessment](#)

2.13 Grading Student Work

Assessment Criteria and Grading Descriptors

One main purpose of module assessment is to check student achievement of the module learning outcomes. Any assessments given to students should therefore be linked explicitly to the learning outcomes. [Assessment criteria](#) can be provided, where appropriate, to clarify the assessment task. Schools

should provide clear overall grading descriptors to assist student understanding, marking and feedback. The University has developed undergraduate grading descriptors at each level to assist schools in this area (Appendix 1). Individual assessment-specific grading descriptors do not have to be provided for each assignment.

The Grade Point Scale

All undergraduate coursework and examination assessments and overall module scores are graded according to the alphanumeric Grade Point Scales as detailed in the [University's Academic Regulations: Section D The Management of Student Assessment](#).

There are two grading schemes operating, to meet the different requirements at different academic levels. For modules at levels 3 and 4 results will be recorded using the grading scale A to F. For modules at levels 5 and 6 results will be recorded using the alphanumeric grading scale of A16 to F0.

Honours Degree classifications

SITS has been programmed with award regulations and will calculate for finalists the award achieved and the classification where appropriate. This information is presented to Award Boards, which confer awards and recommend retrieval or retakes of modules. For classification algorithm see [University Undergraduate Academic Regulations](#)

2.14 Feedback on Student Work

Providing Feedback to students on their work

Providing effective feedback and feed forward on assessments is an integral part of the learning process. To be effective, feedback to students should be fast, focussed, relevant to the published learning outcomes and assessment criteria for the task, developmental and personal to each student.

The University's expected turnaround period for feedback on assessments is three working weeks. Feedback can be provided either in hard copy or electronically as appropriate and as per instructions to students.

Providing Feedback to students on examinations

It isn't normal practice to provide individual feedback on examinations. However, students are entitled to request feedback on their performance and this should be made available on request. Where possible it is recommended that a Module Leader provides group feedback which could be managed through the module WOLF topic.

Providing Feedback to students on group work

In the case of group based assessment multiple copies of front sheets should be made or available electronically as every group member is entitled to personal assessment feedback.

2.15 Internal moderation

The Internal Moderation Guidelines are available from the QASD website. Although the primary purpose of the Guidelines is to explain how marked work has to be moderated, attention is drawn to the good practice of ensuring the assessments for each module are comparable. The mechanism for the moderation of assessment design might be through a formal school committee or an informal subject working group. However approached, the assessment design group should consider among other matters:

- whether the assessment promotes learning;
- whether the assessment measures the intended learning outcomes;
- whether the assessment is appropriate to the student profile and level;
- the clarity of the assessments set;
- the clarity and appropriateness of the assessment criteria.

2.16 Entering grades through e:Vision

- The assessment pattern for each module is entered by staff through e:Vision
- Module Leaders check this is correct from their e:Vision account.
- Module Leaders are responsible for entering grades through e:Vision. An online e:Vision Web Mark entry manual is available from the teaching page of e:Vision.
- Once all items of work have been entered, SITS is programmed to calculate the final overall module grade and will automatically work out if the student has passed or failed the module overall and the right to reassessment.
- University policy is to publish grades, requirements for re-assessment and recommendations from Progression and Award Boards to students through e:Vision
- Grades **must not** be published on notice boards
- For finalists, a letter confirming the award conferred and a finalist transcript is sent to the student's home address

2.17 Assessment Boards

The University operates a two-tiered Assessment Board structure: The **Module Results Assessment Board** is responsible for a cognate set of modules owned by one School. Modules in this set will normally belong to more than one Subject. The Board carries full responsibility for considering the performance of students, individual modules, module groups and confirming module results.

Progression and Award Boards are responsible for confirming that University regulations have been correctly applied, reviewing performance trends and confirming arrangements for counselling students. There is provision within the structure for courses, which need to satisfy the requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies, to establish Boards which can meet more often and operate differently. The University

Quality Enhancement Committee (UQEC) encourages Schools to conform to the University standard wherever possible.

For details of the Assessment Boards' composition and terms of reference and the role and duties of External examiners, see the [External Examiner Handbook](#) and [University Academic Regulations: Section E Assessment Boards](#).

2.18 Retention of assessments

The following is an extract from the University's document retention schedule.

Description of record	Retention/format	Reason/notes
Exam scripts	9 months post publication of confirmed results (retain sample see 5.10)	Internal and External appeals processes
Feedback on assessed work (including assessment of placements)	9 months post publication of confirmed results	Internal and External appeals processes
Assessed work (student assignments)	9 months post publication of confirmed results QAA sample 10% (or representative sample for small groups) retained for CAY + 1 year, or longer as required by professional bodies	QAA
Assessment results (grades – module level)	Permanently - SITS	Verification
Marking verification (internal moderation)	9 months post publication of confirmed results	Appeals/evidence of moderation

2.19 Fair Marking Arrangements

The University is committed to transparent and fair marking arrangements that also reflect and protect the integrity of academic judgement. The University will only utilise anonymous marking in all examinations; in other types of assessment, stringent measures are in place to reassure students and staff against the perception of discrimination, including internal moderation and the use of external examiners.

If a student is concerned that an assessment grade is lower than expected:

In the first instance, the student should see the relevant tutor (or their personal tutor) to review the feedback provided. This process would be expected to resolve most immediate concerns. If, as part of this process, it becomes clear that there has been a problem with marking, such as questions being missed or grades being miscalculated, these should be resolved immediately. The module leader should check that a similar problem has not occurred with other work and should be assured through the internal moderation processes that this is an isolated issue.

If following this process the student is still dissatisfied then they may make a [formal request for a remark](#).

A request for a remark is the University's first formal action in cases of perceived individual discrimination as well as examples of an undetected error.

A student may not question "academic judgement", but must provide sufficient compelling evidence to the relevant School's Associate Dean, who may, on consideration of that evidence, grant the request and only where the assessed work has not already been moderated internally.

If the student did give such a compelling case to prompt the Associate Dean (who receives the request) to agree to a remark, it would be necessary to conduct a further review of a sample of work from other students to give reassurance that this is an isolated problem, which may include further external moderation.

The formal request for remark procedure is implemented and controlled within the relevant academic school and should be conducted in a timely fashion (normally within 20 working days), prior to the procedure for an academic appeal.

A request for remark and an academic appeal are two distinct processes.

[An academic appeal](#) may be brought against the overall decision of an assessment award board (so only after the grades have been confirmed) At this stage there remains no mechanism to appeal the academic judgement of examiners in relation to marks or grades awarded:

"There is no right of appeal against the academic judgement of an Assessment Board. An appeal may only be lodged against a decision of an Assessment Board where a student believes that an administrative error or other material irregularity has occurred, or where there were personal circumstances which, had the Board been aware of them, might have affected its decision. The appellant must have good reason not to have used the University extenuating circumstances procedure".

Academic appeals

Appeals must be made within three months of the Assessment Board's decision. An appeal can be made providing the case falls into one or both of the following categories:

- administrative or material error;
- personal circumstances not known to the Assessment Board.

See the Students' Union's guidance on [academic appeals](#) for further details.

3. Staff development on assessment

Further advice and guidance on assessment is available from:

- [The Institute for Learning Enhancement \(ILE\)](#)
- [The Student Enabling Centre](#)
- [Chairs of School Quality Enhancement Committees;](#)
- [Chairs of Validation Panels;](#)
- [The Higher Education Academy](#)

4. Additional School information on Assessment

Schools should follow the University's generic policies, procedures and guidelines for assessment and ensure that all student facing information is clear.

Where additional information from Schools is required such as school-based templates and proformas these should be made available from the following School links.

School of Technology (STech)

School of Art and Design (SAD)

School of Sport, Performing Arts and Leisure (SSPAL)

Wolverhampton Business School (UWBS)

School of Health and Wellbeing (SHaW)

School of Education (SEd)

School of Applied Sciences (SAS)

School of Law, Social Sciences and Communications (LSSC)

Appendix 1
Sample of Undergraduate Grading Descriptors for Levels 4, 5 and 6

Level 4 Grading Descriptors

A Work of an outstanding, excellent standard.	B Work of a very good standard. Above average	C Work of a competent average standard. Good.	D Work of a satisfactory standard.	E Work of an unsatisfactory standard.	F Work of an unsatisfactory standard.
Identification and full understanding of issues in the assessment. Full answers to all questions/task. Excellent examples used to illustrate response. Evidence of independent thinking. Attempts to relate appropriate theory and other relevant issues.	Very good understanding of the issues. Engages directly with the question. All main points and important issues of the question/task covered.	Generally sound understanding of basic theory and concepts. Content relevant to the question/task. Competently deals with main issues.	Some evidence of understanding of basic concepts/issues. Content in the main relevant but limited or little application of theory.	Superficial treatment of issues. Some is relevant to topic set. Material merely repeats taught input. Lacks understanding of basic theory/concepts. Possible use of extensive quoted passages.	Content not relevant to topic
Excellent identification and summary of major points, including all aspects of the issue. Demonstrates mature use of material, including looking for meanings and relating theoretical framework/models	Very good identification and summary of major points, covering most aspects of the issue. Independent thinking evidenced through use of material with some application of theory to the topic/issues	Competent identification and summary of major points, including main aspects of the issue. Sound use of material relevant to the topic/issues.	Material is relevant but largely repeats taught input without any further development. Work tends to be uncritical in the material used and generally overly descriptive	Lack of evidence of independent thinking. Wholly Descriptive. No evidence of application of theory.	No evidence of independent thinking
Evidence of wide reading with research sources clearly and properly referenced. Excellent application of researched material to the topic/issues.	Evidence of reading around the topic beyond basic texts. Uses a good range of sources well referenced.	Evidence of reading of recommended texts but is largely a solid attempt at referencing.	Limited reading only. Some attempt at referencing. Sources usually given but not systematically or consistently.	Too little evidence of reading.	No evidence of reading
Coherent argument excellently supported	Researched materials used very well to support	Competently structured,	Some assertions made but	Poor structure, little or no	Lack of structure and

with appropriate evidence/material. Work has a professional appearance with excellent layout and well-organised material.	argument. Very good structure with logical sequence of material and clear layout.	with a relatively easy to follow argument. Clear linkage between ideas within paragraphs. Assertions supported by appropriate material. Reasonably well organised material	not substantiated by evidence. Presentation adequate but could be improved upon in terms of organisation and lay out.	linkage of ideas, lacks logical sequence. Assertions lack substantiation. Poorly presented.	poorly presented
Excellent fluid writing style, virtually free from grammatical and spelling errors. Format wholly appropriate for task and audience.	Generally good use of grammar, punctuation and spelling. Ideas clearly explained. Appropriate style/format used.	Grammatically competent but some minor spelling errors or clumsiness in expression.	Errors in grammar, punctuation and/or spelling. Clumsiness of expression but does not prevent argument emerging.	Serious errors frequently enough to impede/prevent understanding by reader.	Serious errors frequently enough to impede/prevent understanding by reader.
The work shows a resourceful and imaginative ability to analyse based on defined classifications, principles, theories or models. Work shows clear evidence that the student has applied given tools/methods accurately to well defined practical contexts and/or problems.	The work shows evidence of ability to analyse based on defined classifications, principles, theories or models. Work shows evidence that the student has applied given tools/methods accurately to well defined practical contexts and/or problems. Although the work recognizes inherent complexities in the area of study, some judgments are reached on the basis of insufficient evidence.	Evidence of reading of recommended texts is largely descriptive in nature with evidence of limited reasoning.	Work shows some evidence that the student has applied given tools/methods accurately to well defined practical contexts and/or problems, including limited recognition of the inherent complexities in the area of study.	Work shows limited evidence that the student has applied given tools/methods to defined practical contexts and/or problems.	Insufficient understanding of given tools/methods to apply them to well-defined practical contexts and/or problems.

Level 5 Grading Descriptors

A14- A16 Work of an excellent standard.	B11- B13 Work of a very good standard.	C8- C10 Work of a competent standard.	D5- D7 Work of a satisfactory standard.	E4 Work of an unsatisfactory standard.	F Work of an unsatisfactory standard.
Full answer to the question and content wholly relevant. Excellent understanding of relevant theory, concepts and models. Application of appropriate theory to examples/practice, demonstrating a creative approach to a variety of ideas, contexts and frameworks.	Answers most if not all aspects of the question. Content mainly relevant. Very good knowledge and understanding of relevant theory and concepts and application of theoretical models. Evidence of a developing appreciation of contextual issues.	Main issues addressed and solid attempt to answer question. Some relevant content applied. Sound knowledge and understanding of relevant theory and concepts and identification of main issues	Satisfactory attempt to address question/issues with some content relevant to assignment topic. Material largely repeats taught input and lacks development or personal interpretation. Some general understanding of topic theory and concepts	Questions not answered fully. Content not wholly relevant. Little or no evidence of understanding of relevant theory. Very repetitive of taught input – no development or application. The use of extensive quoted passages evident.	Questions not answered. Content not relevant.
Evidence of independent thinking and some analysis of issues. The work adopts a critical approach, using evidence, reasoning and reflection based on well established classifications, principles, theories or models. Clear Synthesis of ideas.	Some analysis of ideas and evidence of some synthesis of ideas. Application of theory to practice and examples given where appropriate. Ability to compare and contrast issues, ideas, theories, models, and to analyse more complex ideas	Limited critical appraisal demonstrated. Tends to be descriptive.	Largely descriptive and lacking in critical thought and application of theory	Little or no critical thinking. Wholly descriptive- no attempt at analysis or evaluation. Little or no evidence of application of theory.	No critical thinking and no evidence.
Wide range of reading evidenced. Understanding of studied materials demonstrated. All citations correctly made and complete list of references/ bibliography. Excellent management and appropriate use of information.	Clear evidence of appropriate reading indicating independent research. Use of a range of sources. Referencing generally correct. Accurate reference list /bibliography. Very good management and appropriate use of information	Evidence of reading Competent range of source materials used. Referencing generally competent with list of references provided. Materials used quite effectively	Some evidence of reading from set list, however, materials not used effectively to support work. Some attempt at referencing source material using Harvard Referencing standard but limited list of references	Little evidence of reading. Inaccurate references/lacks referencing. No list of references /bibliography.	Little evidence of reading.
Excellent structured, well-organised material. Logical progression of	Very good layout incorporating relevant presentation of data such	Clear layout, good presentation and some attempt at useful	Layout could be improved upon. Lacks coherent structure with little linkage	Poor structure. Little or no linkage of ideas. Assertions, where present,	Lack of structure and poorly presented

argument and sequencing of ideas. Full supporting evidence for all assertions. Excellent layout incorporating relevant presentation of data such as charts, graphs etc, where appropriate.	as charts, graphs etc., where appropriate. Effective use of materials. All parts clearly linked and contributing to argument. Appropriate evidence/material to support assertions.	presentation of data via charts, etc. Competent structure but lapses in coherence. Most arguments supported by evidence/ references. Word-processed with few errors.	of ideas. Tends to be repetitive in places with some assertions made but not supported by appropriate evidence.	are not supported. Illogical structure or sequencing of ideas.	
Excellent grammar, punctuation and spelling throughout. Wholly appropriate style for task and audience. Excellent presentation, the approach is clear, fluent and precise.	Generally accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling. Clear in meaning and generally fluent. Appropriate style for purpose and recipient.	Whilst generally competent, some lapses in grammar, spelling or punctuation. Meanings always clear but not always explained in a clear and concise way.	Several errors in grammar, punctuations and /or spelling. Lacks fluency. Awkward or clumsy phrasing/language meaning not always clear Careless mistakes.	Serious and frequent errors in grammar, punctuation and /or spelling. Unclear in terms of meaning, hindering understanding by reader.	
Work shows sustained evidence that the student can identify a range of defined problems and/or practical contexts and can apply knowledge, skills and key techniques aimed at their resolution.	Work shows evidence that the student can identify a range of defined problems and/or practical contexts and choose appropriate methods for their resolution in a considered manner.	Work shows evidence that the student can apply learning in a considered manner to a range of defined problems and/or practical contexts.	Works shows some evidence that the student can apply learning to a range of defined problems and/or practical contexts.	Insufficient understanding of given tools/methods to apply them to a range of practical contexts and/or problems.	

Level 6 Grading Descriptors

A14- A16 Work of an excellent standard.	B11- B13 Work of a very good standard.	C8- C10 Work of a competent standard.	D5- D7 Work of a satisfactory standard.	E4 Work of an unsatisfactory standard.	F Work of an unsatisfactory standard.
Excellent links between a range of different ideas and theories. Places issues in a wider context. Evidence of excellent understanding and a range of relevant theories and demonstrates a facility to apply these appropriately. Original insight, independent, imaginative and creative ideas, excellently argued and supported.	Very good links between theory and practice. Highly competent coverage of main assignment issues. Full understanding of issues. Very good level of understanding of appropriate theory and concepts.	Identifies main issues and relevant theory. Competent application of relevant theory and links to practice.	Few links between theory and practice. Answers question in a very basic way. Describes relevant theory accurately, and some relevant ideas offered.	Inadequate and /or inappropriate content. Questions not answered, issues not addressed; insufficient evidence of understanding of relevant theory and concepts; only partial understanding shown. Very limited application of theory. The use of extensive quoted passages.	Student has not met learning outcomes with inadequate knowledge or understanding of key concepts and theories. There is no recognition of the complexity of the subject.
Develops lateral and creative connections between seemingly disparate ideas. Well sustained critical approach to use of ideas in literature and from research. Excellent understanding of how ideas could be useful for a wider audience. Confidence and sophistication in handling theoretical concepts.	Very good ability to analyse complex ideas. Recognition areas of controversy and very good syntheses of ideas. Evaluation of theories well applied to assignment issues. The work adopts a critical approach using a breadth of evidence, reasoning and reflection.	Some solid analysis and evaluation of issues. Ability to evaluate ideas from different viewpoints and clear understanding of implications of different theories	Mainly personal perspective reflected with little or no attempt to assess from other points of view. Some analysis (if a little superficial). A mainly descriptive approach and limited theoretical application.	Very limited or no critical appraisal of ideas and concepts. Mostly descriptive rather than analytical or evaluative.	Insufficient understanding of given tools/methods to apply learning accurately or safely to complex problems and/or practical contexts.
Excellent range of reading – well beyond recommended reading list. Originality in sourcing materials and their use/application. Fluent and discriminating use of material, etc. Excellent appraisal of sources. All references complete and accurate	Evidence of wide reading – beyond recommended reading list. Interesting and unusual sources used. Makes very good use of source material and establishes relevance to issues. References complete and accurate	Evidence of use of recommended reading list and other appropriate source material. Mainstream texts used. Referencing present and accurate	Uses some appropriate external sources but few from beyond the reading list. References present and accurate	Little evidence of reading. Little evidence of research. Incomplete and/or inaccurate referencing.	Little evidence of reading and no evidence of research
Work is of an excellent quality; logical, well sequenced, clear and	Shows independent planning and execution of work. Can structure argument well and	Competent structure and sequencing of material. A solid, coherent effort with	Presentation adequate with some attempt at structure that allows the reader to	Lacks coherence and/or theoretical underpinning. Not well organised, lacks	Frequent lapses in grammar, punctuation and /or spelling.

<p>concise with some flair/originality. Demonstrates an ability to plan, set targets and implement. Uses evidence to support convincing, coherent arguments and recommendations. Excellent presentation with professional touches</p>	<p>substantiate assertions Very good layout with effective structure and use of fonts, etc. Accurate word processing</p>	<p>ideas and argument well supported. Well laid out in an appropriate format. Evidence of proof reading before submission.</p>	<p>follow the line of thinking. Reasonably coherent. Ideas not always wholly supported or substantiated however. Style and format limits general effectiveness.</p>	<p>structure. Badly laid out. Not proof read.</p>	<p>Meaning not always clear, often obscure. Clumsy expressions used. Inappropriate style.</p>
<p>Clarity and precision of writing throughout. Excellent style and level of detail for audience. Accurate, succinct and fluent, persuasive in approach and typified by a sophisticated use of English.</p>	<p>Appropriate style used for purpose Generally no grammar or spelling errors; only very minor errors in English. Clear, fluent and persuasive writing style.</p>	<p>A competent attempt. Occasional errors in grammar spelling, punctuation, etc. but largely fluent, clear and correct. Appropriate style for purpose and audience.</p>	<p>Mostly clear in meaning if lacking in fluency. Some errors in grammar, spelling or punctuation.</p>	<p>Frequent lapses in grammar, punctuation and /or spelling. Meaning not always clear, often obscure. Clumsy expressions used. Inappropriate style.</p>	
<p>Works shows evidence of a mature and independent approach to problem solving. The student can create appropriate hypotheses and select, justify and use imaginative an innovative approaches in their investigations.</p>	<p>Work shows evidence that the student can act confidently and autonomously in the identification and definition of complex problems and select, justify and use approaches aimed at their resolution.</p>	<p>Works shows evidence that the student can act without guidance in the identification of complex problems and can apply knowledge and skills to their resolution.</p>	<p>Work shows some evidence that the student can apply learning accurately to complex problems and/or practical contexts.</p>	<p>Lack of understanding of given tools/methods to apply learning accurately or safely to complex problems and/or practical contexts.</p>	

Appendix 2

Key Terms

APL/APEL

The [QAA Guidelines on the Accreditation of Prior Learning](#) (2004) state that **APL** (Accreditation of Prior Learning) is a process for recognising and assessing students' prior learning which may give the learning a credit-value in a credit-based structure. APL includes experiential learning or prior certificated learning and has now displaced the term 'APA', the 'accreditation of prior achievement'.

Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) is a process by which a student's 'learning achieved outside education or training systems is assessed and, as appropriate, recognised for academic purposes.'¹

Assignment brief

An assignment brief is a document which may be made available to students to clarify an assessment which is generally outlined in the module guide. It usually combines the precise assessment task with the specific assessment criteria. It may also include signposting to dedicated references or resources.

Assessment criteria

Assessment criteria are a more detailed description of what students are expected to do in order to successfully demonstrate that specified learning outcomes have been achieved e.g. the assessment criteria may state how *many* examples have to be included or the *timescales* within which an activity has to be carried out.

Assessment task

An assessment task is a piece of work that, when successfully completed, demonstrates (in full or in part) that students have achieved the learning outcomes for a particular module.

Compensation

Compensation may be applied according to the University's Academic Regulations. (Refer to [Section D.3](#) of the Academic Regulations.)

Credit levels and volumes

The credit level of each module is an indicator of the relative demand, complexity and depth of learning needed for that module. The credit volume of a module is based on ten hours of notional learning time. Thus, achievement of a 20-credit module should require at least 200 hours of student learning, which includes face to face contact with tutors, directed and private study and completing assessment tasks.

Diagnostic assessment

Diagnostic assessment provides an indicator of a learner's aptitude and preparedness for undertaking or continuing on a pathway and identifies possible

¹ QAA Guidelines on the Accreditation of Prior Learning, September 2004, p 17.

learning problems, but does not contribute to the module grade.

Formative assessment

Formative assessment is designed to provide learners with feedback on progress and inform development, but does not contribute to the module grade. However, it may be a requirement of the module that the formative assessment has to be submitted.

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)

The FHEQ is QAA's description of the levels of achievement of higher education qualifications.

Grading descriptors

Grading descriptors identify the characteristics required to achieve a particular grade (Refer to Appendix 1).

Interim award

A Certificate of Higher Education is available for completion of an appropriate number of Level 1 credits; a Diploma of Higher Education for an appropriate number of credits at Level 2, and an Ordinary degree available for successful completion of at least 50% of Level 3.

Learning outcomes

A learning outcome is a specific statement of what students are expected to know, understand and do at the end of a module or course.

Level Descriptor

A level descriptor describes what a learner is expected to be able to do if he or she successfully completes a module at that level. See the QAA Qualification Level Descriptors for further information

Module

A module is a self-contained, structured learning experience with a coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes, assessed during the learning period over which it is delivered. Modules normally have a credit value of either 20 or 40 credits.

Module Specification Template (MST)

The module specification template is an on-line process that records all information relating to a module to be used for initial validation and then inclusion in the Module Guide.

Course Specification

The Course Specification (known by QAA as programme specification) provides information about the learning outcomes, content and assessment strategy of a pathway. These are set out in a Course Specification Template (CST).

Subject Benchmark Statements

Subject Benchmark Statements have been developed by QAA in certain subject areas to identify common aspects of knowledge and skills that all graduates in that subject are expected to have acquired.

Summative assessment

Summative assignments measure a learner's achievement of the intended learning outcomes of a module which contribute to the module grade.

Undergraduate Grade Point Scale

The University uses grading schemes for recording the results of summative assessment and overall module results. There are two grading schemes operating at undergraduate level to meet the different requirements at undergraduate level study. For modules at levels 3, 4 and 7 results will be recorded using the 6-grade point scheme and for modules at levels 5 and 6 results will be recorded using the 16-grade point scheme. See [University Academic Regulations](#) for a full outline of both Grade Point Scale tables.

Appendix 3

Assessment Type code	Full name	Process
ATTEND	Attendance	Tutor prints off barcoded class list, ticks those who have attended and gives to Student Office to scan.
AURAL	Aural	Tutor prints off barcoded class list, ticks those who have attended and gives to Student Office to scan.
CASE	Case Study	Barcode coversheet is printed off by student and handed in, with work, to Student Office.
CLPRAC	Clinical Practice	Barcode coversheet is printed off by student and handed in, with work, to Student Office.
CW	Coursework	Barcode coversheet is printed off by student and handed in, with work, to Student Office.
EXAM	Examination	Student prints barcode cover sheet and takes it to exam and is handed to the invigilator.
GROUP	Groupwork	Barcode coversheet is printed off by student and handed in, with work, to Student Office.
ORAL	Oral	Tutor prints off barcoded class list, ticks those who have attended and gives to Student Office to scan.
PERF	Performance	Tutor prints of barcoded class list, ticks those who have attended and gives to Student Office to scan.
PLACE	Placement	Not barcoded
PLAN	Workplan	Barcode coversheet is printed off by student and handed in, with work, to Student Office.
PORT	Portfolio	Barcode coversheet is printed off by student and handed in, with work, to Student Office.
PRAC	Practical	Tutor prints off barcoded class list, ticks those who have attended and gives to Student Office to scan.
PRES	Presentation	Tutor prints off barcoded class list, ticks those who have attended and gives to Student Office to scan.
PROJ	Project	Barcode coversheet is printed off by student and handed in, with work, to Student Office.
PROP	Proposal	Barcode coversheet is printed off by student and handed in, with work, to Student Office.
REPORT	Report	Barcode coversheet is printed off by student and handed in, with work, to Student Office.
RES	Research	Not barcoded
TEST	In-Class Test	Tutor prints off barcoded class list, ticks those who have attended and gives to Student Office to scan.
VIVA	Viva Voce	Tutor prints off barcoded class list, ticks those who have attended and gives to Student Office to scan.

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