

Setting and Scrutiny of Assessments Policy and Procedure

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out the University policy and procedure for setting and scrutinising assessments. It applies to all courses, including those delivered via an Educational Partnership arrangement.

Scrutiny is a process which takes place **before** the assessment is taken by learners. It is distinct from the post-assessment marking and moderation process, as set out in the Marking and Moderation Policy.

1 Responsibilities

- 1.1 The **Head of School**, in discussion with Course Leaders, is responsible for determining how scrutiny will be conducted within each School in line with this policy and procedures, and for ensuring that all staff receive appropriate induction, advice and guidance before preparing and participating in assessments, and are aware of the requirements regarding internal and External Examiner scrutiny. Should it be identified that a member of staff requires further support or training in relation to the requirements set out in this policy this will be referred to the Head of School for action.
- 1.2 The **Course Leader** is responsible for ensuring staff are aware of the arrangements agreed for scrutiny within their School/ Centre, and for reporting the arrangements to the Course Steering Committee.
- 1.3 The **Link Tutor** is responsible for supporting the Course Leader at Educational Partners in the establishment of this policy and procedure and for communicating the required processes and timelines. The Link Tutor is also responsible for providing advice and guidance in relation to the design of assessment and associated briefs and scripts.
- 1.4 The **Unit Leader** has overall responsibility for setting, preparing and ensuring scrutiny of the assessments for their unit, in line with this policy, with input from other staff as required, and for ensuring that all other colleagues involved in the assessment of the unit receive the necessary information and briefing related to that assessment.
- 1.5 **Registry** makes draft examination papers available to the relevant External Examiner(s) (where applicable) for review, prepares examination papers for printing/issue, and ensures the correct number of papers are provided for each examination (where physical papers are printed).

2 Policy

Design and setting of Assessments

- 2.1 All assessments should be informed by sound pedagogic practice and the principle of constructive alignment, and should be designed and set in line with the tariff for assessment workload, and the assessment principles within the University's [Course Design Framework](#).

Assessment Principles	
Principle 1	Assessment should be valid.
Principle 2	Assessment should be incremental and sufficiently demanding.
Principle 3	Assessment should be inclusive and equitable. Accessibility and inclusion should be anticipated when designing assessment.
Principle 4	Assessment should be manageable and efficient for both learners and staff.
Principle 5	Authentic assessment should be used wherever possible and consistent with constructive alignment.
Principle 6	Formative assessment and timely feedback that promotes learning and facilitates improvement should be an integral part of the assessment process.
Principle 7	Forms of assessment should actively discourage academic fraud.

Assessment Principles	
Principle 8	Assessment should be explicit and transparent.
Principle 9	Assessment should be reliable and consistent.

- 2.2 All staff new to examining (and more experienced staff engaged in examining a new unit) should discuss their assessment materials/questions and specific marking criteria/marketing rubrics with a more experienced colleague before submission for scrutiny.
- 2.3 For apprenticeship courses, all markers must undertake mandatory induction training on apprenticeships and assessment before undertaking assessment. Completion of the training must be recorded by the school and details provided to the Apprenticeship Manager as part of the standard reporting requirements.
- 2.4 Standardisation of the format and basic layout of examination papers and instructions for candidates throughout the University provides clarity and consistency for learners and supports the Assessments Officer in preparations prior to and during examination sessions. The requirements specified by the Assessments Officer must therefore be followed in all cases.
- 2.5 Unit Leaders must ensure all markers have been sufficiently briefed on assessment tools in order to ensure consistency of understanding of the assessment tool and consistency of approach and marking standards (See also the [Marking and Moderating policy](#)).

Deadlines and security

- 2.6 Other than in exceptional circumstances agreed by the Head of School in discussion with Registry, staff must adhere to deadlines set for submission of assessment materials/papers. This applies to first and resit assessment. All assessment materials/papers must have been appropriately scrutinised internally before submission.
- 2.7 Unit Leaders must ensure the security of assessment material prior to delivery to Registry. Further information is available from Registry.

Accessibility, inclusive design and reasonable adjustments

- 2.8 Reasonable adjustments may be required for individual learners with learning differences or disabilities and in line with the Equality Act 2010. However, if the principles of inclusive assessment are applied at the point of design, there may be less need for individual reasonable adjustments.
- 2.9 Reasonable adjustments are required where learners with disabilities and those with temporary conditions experience substantial disadvantage in comparison to other learners, to enable learners to demonstrate their abilities to meet the learning outcomes of a unit and programme without changing the purpose of assessment. An alternative mode or form of assessment may be appropriate to ensure these learners are not disadvantaged, nor advantaged compared with their peers

Scrutiny

- 2.10 All assessments (exam papers, questions and assessment briefs) must be appropriately scrutinised before being issued to learners, to ensure that the assessment process is valid and reliable, and that assessment documentation is error-free. Instructions for examiners and specific marking criteria used for summative assessment must also be appropriately scrutinised. Ensuring that questions are appropriate, that instructions are clear, and that marking schemes are clear and adhered to by all markers gives learners confidence that the assessment process is objective and free from bias.
- 2.11 Reassessments should be set and scrutinised at the same time as initial assessments and undergo the same level of scrutiny and approval
- 2.12 On occasion alternative assessments may need to take place for reasons such as ALS. When required any associated assessment briefs should be scrutinised in line with this policy and procedure, at the same time as the standard briefs.
- 2.13 Scrutiny of assessment material is an academic task and should normally involve academic staff who have not been involved with the setting of the paper.
- 2.14 The Head of School should agree with Course Leaders how scrutiny will be implemented within their School in line with this policy and procedures consistent with the needs of each course (for example, whether to set up 'scrutiny meetings' or operate a simpler 'pairing' system).

- 2.15 Courses that are delivered under an Educational Partnership will need to be included in the scrutiny procedure. Heads of School should liaise with the Link Tutor and partner Course Leader to ensure adequate arrangements are made for timely scrutiny of assessments.
- 2.16 The detailed arrangements for scrutiny should be outlined to staff by the Course Leader and reported to the Course Steering Committee.

3 Examination Papers Procedure

Setting the paper

- 3.1 Unit Leaders should ensure that:
- Papers are built on good pedagogic design, in line with the assessment principles (Para 2.1 and the summative and indicative assessment information in the approved unit specification).
 - The range and type of questions provided reflect the level of the learners being assessed and that sufficient consideration is given to constructive alignment.
 - The paper makes it possible to distinguish across the full range of ability.
 - There is no inappropriate overlap with material covered in other assessments for the unit or assessment for related units.
 - The questions are properly structured, clearly expressed and not ambiguous (could a learner sitting the exam reasonably be expected to know what is required of them?).
 - Questions are appropriate in length and difficulty given the marks allocated to them.
 - Where applicable, the difficulty of questions is appropriate to the pass mark.
 - Except where technical terminology is required questions are framed using straightforward English that is not likely to present a barrier to comprehension by non-native speakers or learners with specific learning differences.
 - Assessment questions are sufficiently different from that of the previous year and the re-sit assessment questions.
 - Papers are set out using the appropriate template provided by the Assessments Officer.
- 3.2 Unit Leaders should proofread their papers before submitting for internal scrutiny. This includes checking that:
- There are no spelling errors (check in particular for mis-spellings of words with more than one meaning, e.g., there/their, common grammatical errors, misplaced apostrophes, etc.).
 - There are no technical errors (e.g., mathematical errors).
 - There is consistency in, for example, use of capitals, abbreviations, etc. so things that can be written in more than one way appear in a consistent way throughout the paper. It is particularly important to check this where more than one person has contributed questions to a paper.
 - All diagrams, figures and images are accurate, readable and of good image quality.
 - The marks/questions add up correctly.
 - The rubric is complete and accurate.
 - The answer given is correct.
- 3.3 All new staff should discuss their paper (and/or their contributions to integrated papers) with a more experienced colleague (e.g., Unit Leader, Course Leader or Phase Tutor as applicable) before submission for scrutiny.
- #### Scrutiny
- 3.4 All examination papers must be checked for accuracy (including proofreading spelling and grammar), clarity, legibility and completeness. The items set out in Paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 should be checked as part of scrutiny.
- 3.5 Following scrutiny, the Unit Leader should review the paper in the light of scrutiny feedback and make any required amendments. The Unit Leader should then submit the corrected paper to the Assessments Officer together with the *Assessment Paper Setting, Scrutiny and External Examiner Comment Cover Sheet*. This requires a counter-signature from the staff member undertaking the internal scrutiny. Papers submitted without confirmation of scrutiny will be returned to the Unit Leader for action. It is not the role of the Assessments Officer to scrutinise assessment documentation or correct spelling / grammatical / formatting errors.

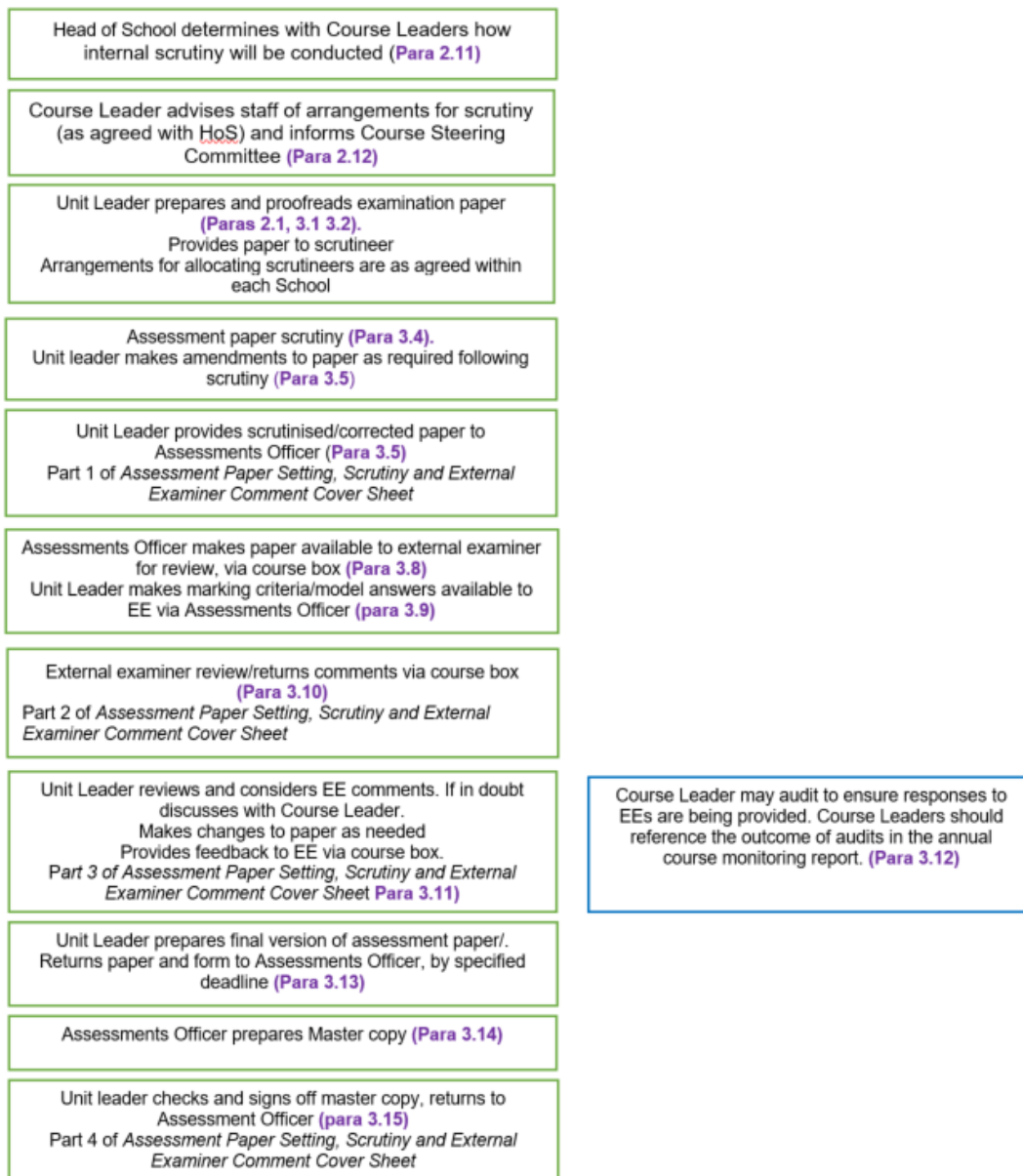
External review

- 3.6 For **courses delivered via an Educational Partnership**, responsibility for the provision of assessment briefs, scripts and practical assessment details is delegated to the partner Course Leader, acting in accordance with this procedure. Administrative arrangements are also delegated to the partner, as previously confirmed and set out in the Educational Partnerships Operations Manual. The Course Leader will include the Link Tutor in all communications with the External Examiner.
- 3.7 As specified in the External Examining Policy and Procedure, External Examiners should have the opportunity to review examination papers for work which contributes directly to a final degree classification (currently levels 5 and above). Papers at levels 3 and 4 may be submitted for consideration if either the Course Leader or the relevant External Examiner requests and must be made available where a specific External Examiner is appointed for work at this level.
- 3.8 Material submitted for external review must be the final draft version, which has already been scrutinised in accordance with the arrangements above.
- 3.9 For all other courses, the Assessments Officer will make papers available to the relevant External Examiner(s) for review via the relevant document repository used for the course documentation.
- 3.10 The Unit Leader should also make the relevant marking criteria and any model answers available for external review, via the Assessments Officer.
- 3.11 External Examiners are asked to add/return their comments using the *Assessment Paper Setting, Scrutiny and External Examiner Comment Cover Sheet* (External Examiners may also wish to annotate copies of exam papers) and to let the Assessments Officer know when this is done.
- 3.12 The Unit Leader is responsible for considering External Examiner comments, amending examination papers in the light of this input, where appropriate, and for providing a response, using the *Assessment Paper Setting, Scrutiny and External Examiner Comment Cover Sheet*, which should be saved to the document repository used for the course documentation, This process is a dialogue - while all External Examiner feedback should be considered, Unit Leaders may decide that changes would be inappropriate, and should explain their reasoning to the External Examiner if this is the case. If the Unit Leader is in doubt, they should consult the Course Leader.
- 3.13 The relevant Course Leader may conduct an audit to ensure that responses to External Examiner comments are being provided. Where audits are undertaken Course Leaders should reference the outcome in their annual course monitoring report.

Final check and sign-off

- 3.14 Unit Leaders must ensure that final copies of papers are submitted to the Assessments Officer by the stated deadline.
- 3.15 The Assessments Officer will prepare a Master copy of the paper which will be the version provided to learners, and from which the bulk copies for the examination will be made (where applicable).
- 3.16 The Unit Leader must make a final check of the Master copy of the paper, to check that all questions/pages are present and to check the quality/readability of any figures/diagrams/images. On completion of this final check the Unit Leader should sign the final section of the *Assessment Paper Setting, Scrutiny and External Examiner Comment Cover Sheet*.
- 3.17 The Assessments Officer is responsible for printing the required number of copies for each examination, where applicable.

3.18 Summary



4 Coursework and practical (other than clinical practical assessments)

- 4.1 The requirements for each assessment task must be set out in an **assessment brief** published to learners on the VLE, using the University's [standard template](#), and published by the agreed date (normally the beginning of the Semester in which the assessment will be taken).
- 4.2 Unit Leaders are responsible for creating the assessment brief for their unit. Assessment briefs should be audited by the Course Leader (or nominee) to ensure that the required information is being provided, and to encourage consistency of approach across the course. Institution-wide audits may be conducted, to ensure learners have access to the information they need, and that this policy is being followed. Arrangements for this will be agreed with Course Leaders
- 4.3 All instructions for coursework and practicals other than clinical practical assessments, together with the relevant marking scheme/assessment criteria, should be audited by the Course Leader (or nominee, who must be from outside the unit concerned).
- 4.4 All assignment deadlines should be entered onto the **Assessment structures** by the relevant Unit Leader and checked by the Course Leader for potential overlap between units and review of assessment deadline bunching within a course/level. The Assessments Officer will undertake a final check before publishing to learners.

External review

- 4.5 External examiners should have access to all assessment briefs which contribute toward

classification (levels 5 and above). Where a specific external examiner is appointed to review units below level 5, assessment briefs should be made available to that external examiner accordingly.

5 **Clinical Practical Skills Assessments Procedure**

5.1 In setting a clinical practical skills assessment Unit Leaders should ensure that:

- the assessment is built on good pedagogic design
- an appropriate sample of the skills-based curriculum is examined and it is mapped to the curriculum and unit learning outcomes (content validity).
- the size and weighting of assessment is consistent with what is validated, and published in the definitive unit specification.
- only content relevant to the unit being examined is included in the assessment.
- the questions are properly structured, clearly expressed and not ambiguous (could a learner taking the assessment reasonably be expected to know what is required of them?) All written questions, however brief, should be grammatically correct.
- care is taken to avoid disadvantaging learners by posing questions in unfamiliar formats.
- the level of competence demanded of learners is consistent with the level of the unit.
- the clinical practical skills to be assessed can reasonably be demonstrated in the time allocated.
- except where technical terminology is required questions should be framed using straightforward English that is not likely to present a barrier to comprehension by non-native speakers or learners with Specific Learning Difficulties.

5.2 All clinical practical skills assessments must have clear instructions for examiners.

5.3 All clinical practical skills assessments must have detailed marking criteria and marking rubrics or pro-forma, aligned with both learning outcomes and teaching methods; to provide a uniform marking scheme that will enable a learner's performance to be assessed objectively, based on pre-set criteria, and to ensure comparability among the assessors. All the information, instructions and marking scheme should be aligned.

5.4 Marking rubrics should normally consist of the following four sections: criteria; scales/scores; performance descriptors; and task descriptors. A marking rubric should be mapped against level-specific marking criteria to ensure the appropriate level of academic rigour is sought for the year of study. A rubric should be written in such a way that learners who perform at the same level receive a similar mark.

5.5 Staff needing advice about developing marking rubrics should contact the relevant Course Leader in the first instance.

Formative Clinical Practical Assessments

5.6 It is best practice that, wherever possible and appropriate, formative practical assessments should reflect the tools to be used for summative clinical practical assessments, and that the principles set out in this policy would be followed.

External review

5.7 The External Examining Policy and Procedure sets out what clinical practical skills assessment material should be provided to the external examiner for external review. The Unit Leader is responsible for making the relevant assessment material available to the relevant external examiner(s) for review (via the Assessments Officer). The Unit Leader is responsible for amending assessment material in the light of comments from external examiners (where appropriate), and for preparing a response to the external examiner.

6 **Ensuring implementation**

6.1 Should it become clear from external examiner or learner feedback that particular assessments have not been prepared or scrutinised effectively this should be drawn to the attention of the relevant Course Leader and Head of School. Should a member of staff require further support or training in relation to the requirements set out in this policy this will be referred to the Head of School for action.

6.2 Course Leaders will be asked to report on the implementation of this policy within their course(s), as part of the annual course monitoring reporting process.

6.3 Link Tutors will be asked to report on the implementation of this policy within the partner courses they are Link Tutor for as part of the Link Tutor Report.

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