



University of  
Chester

# Introduction

SECTION

1

Quality and Standards Manual

**HANDBOOK F:  
The Assessment of Students  
at Levels 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught  
Provision at Level 8**

2020 – 2021

Authored by: Registry Services/AQS

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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 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.



University of  
Chester

# Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

SECTION

2

Quality and Standards Manual

## HANDBOOK F: The Assessment of Students at Levels 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught Provision at Level 8

2020 – 2021

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

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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. In all cases where entry to a full time undergraduate programme incorporating study across levels is sought at anything other than the lowest level (eg in cases where entry to a Bachelors Degree is sought at level 5 or 6) the APL must be approved before the student is allowed to enrol or commence their studies.
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 it 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

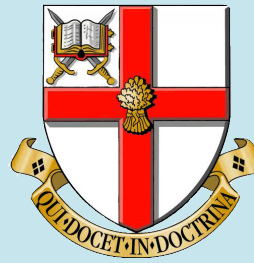
### Bachelor's Degree

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 complete the form 'Application for Accreditation of Prior Credited/Certified Learning' (Appendix 2A) in consultation with the relevant Admissions Section and/or the Faculty Academic Assessor. All such claims should 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 and the Finance Department. The Faculty Credit Co-ordinator will inform the Faculty Academic Assessor of the outcome of the application, along with the candidate.
7. In cases where a student produces a piece of work in support of a claim for Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning this work must be submitted electronically and put through the Turnitin system.



University of  
Chester

Transfer to Chester Scheme

SECTION

2a

Quality and Standards Manual

**HANDBOOK F:**  
**The Assessment of Students**  
**at Levels 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught**  
**Provision at Level 8**

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CTS-(1)      Individual Learning Agreement Template – *to follow*

## SECTION 2a – Transfer to Chester Scheme

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The University of Chester welcomes students who have the aptitude and ability to succeed in higher education. We recognise that some students, already registered for a degree programme at another institution may, for a variety of reasons, choose to move to another institution to complete their studies. In these circumstances, our aim is that the University of Chester is viewed as a welcoming and facilitative institution, enabling students to join us, at any point in the year, through a smooth and supported transition process.

### PART A: OVERVIEW OF THE SCHEME

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#### 1. Introduction

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- 1.1. The Transfer to Chester Scheme (the Scheme) is designed to enable a smooth transition for prospective students entering the University outside of the standard entry points, whilst rigorously maintaining our academic standards and the credibility of our awards. The Scheme is available to prospective students who:
  - 1.1.1. Are currently registered with another higher education provider, regardless of whether or not they have had academic credit awarded;
  - 1.1.2. Wish to transfer to the University of Chester outside of a standard entry point (normally 4 weeks from the commencement of teaching at any given level);
  - 1.1.3. Can demonstrate reasonable engagement with study at the FHEQ level that they seek to transfer into;
  - 1.1.4. Wish to transfer into a University of Chester programme that broadly maps onto their studies at their current higher education provider; and
  - 1.1.5. In the academic opinion of the University have a reasonable opportunity to successfully complete the programme in a timely way.
- 1.2. The University will start from the position that it wishes to facilitate the transfer in of any prospective student who matches the eligibility criteria listed above. The criteria will be applied sympathetically, considering each prospective student's individual circumstances and their academic record to date.

#### 2. Roles and Responsibilities

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- 2.1. In order to meet the University's aim of facilitating a smooth and swift transfer into the institution, enquiries and initial applications will be coordinated by a member of staff from Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions (MRA). They will be responsible liaising with the University's Transfer Team to consider each application to the Scheme, to be comprised as follows:
  - 2.1.1. **Academic Transfer Coordinator:** each Academic Department is to appoint one member of staff to act as the nominee of the Head of Department with responsibility for making academic judgements about the suitability of an

applicant and, upon acceptance, managing the development of the student's academic programme in accordance with the procedures set out in this document.

- 2.1.2. **Wellbeing Coordinator:** Student Futures is to appoint one member of staff to act as the nominee of the Dean of Students with responsibility for providing induction support to students admitted under this scheme. They will also act as a liaison with relevant colleagues should the student have any welfare or disability support needs.
- 2.1.3. **Accommodation Coordinator:** the Accommodation Office is to appoint one member of staff to help if the prospective student requires University accommodation to facilitate their transfer.
- 2.1.4. **Finance Coordinator:** the Finance Department is to appoint one member of staff to assist with any student finance matters relating to their transfer.
- 2.2. In addition, the Academic Transfer Coordinator may obtain additional support to assist in the discharge of their duties from:
  - 2.2.1. **Head of Academic Quality and Standards (or nominee):** to advise on the mapping of the prospective student's current programme of study and/or on the development of a bespoke package of studies for the remainder of the level that the prospective student is transferring into.
  - 2.2.2. **Deputy Registrar and Head of Student Administration:** to advise on the structure and assessment records requirements following admission of the student.

### 3. Stages of the Transfer Process

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- 3.1. Whilst, from the point of view of the prospective student, the aim is for the transfer process to be swift and seamless there are, necessarily, a number of stages to be completed for it to be successful. These are:
  - 3.1.1. **Admissions stage:** this encompasses receipt and academic consideration of the application and the decision on whether or not to permit the student to transfer into the University; thereafter, if the decision is to admit the student:
  - 3.1.2. **Practical arrangements stage:** make the necessary practical arrangements, such as accommodation, individual induction, finance, welfare and disability support etc. so that the student is equipped to begin studying as soon as possible and;
  - 3.1.3. **Academic development stage:** formulate the bespoke programme of study that the student will complete during the remainder of the academic year.
- 3.2. In practice, the transfer process is not linear and elements of these stages may need to be conducted in tandem with others. For example, the availability of accommodation may be central to the application proceeding or not. Therefore, it will be for the coordinating officer in MRA to manage the team outlined in 2.1. as they see fit.

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## PART B: ADMISSIONS STAGE

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### 4. Admissions Principles

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- 4.1. The provisions of this scheme will only apply where a prospective student seeks to transfer into the University beyond the point at which it would be impossible make up the time lost since the beginning of teaching for the given level of study (normally four weeks after the start). Prior to this point, a transfer under the standing APL arrangements (Handbook F, Section 2) can be completed, thus enabling the prospective student to follow the programme in the same way as others in their cohort.
- 4.2. Where this scheme is to be used, the University aims to complete the process of assessing their eligibility to transfer, using the eligibility criteria at 1.1. normally within 3 working days. From the point of application to the point of offer. Where appropriate, an offer may be made to a student without first going through UCAS.
- 4.3. When applying the eligibility criteria, the Academic Transfer Coordinator must be mindful of the following:
- 4.3.1. Where a prospective student seeks to transfer into Level 4, less emphasis may be placed on subject and course-specific content than is the case at higher levels of study and greater flexibility should be shown in respect of cases where a student's current programme does not directly map onto the University's programme<sup>1</sup>. Such flexibility may extend to cases where a student is seeking to transfer into a different subject area entirely.
- 4.3.2. Where a prospective student seeks to transfer into any level, the assessment of their previous studies must be mapped against programme learning outcomes rather than individual module learning outcomes. This is because students admitted under this scheme will have a bespoke academic programme for the remainder of the year in which they are admitted.
- 4.4. Where a prospective student is seeking to transfer in at Level 5 or Level 6, the credits obtained from the lower level(s) of study will be considered for APCL in the normal way in accordance with Handbook F, Section 2. However, the rules in relation to conditional progression will apply:
- 4.4.1. The prospective student may transfer into Level 5 or Level 6 with the equivalent of no more than 20 credits outstanding from the preceding level.
- 4.4.2. Where a student has credit at a lower level outstanding at the point of admission, this must be accounted for in the academic development stage. This will normally require additional tutorial support as attainment of such credit is essential to the completion of the programme.

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<sup>1</sup> It is recognised that the ability to do this in respect of professionally regulated or accredited programmes may be constrained.

## 5. Applications

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- 5.1 Full-time undergraduate students wishing to transfer into the University at the start of Level 5 or Level 6 (from other universities or colleges) will be required to apply through UCAS.
- 5.2 Prospective students wishing to transfer outside of the normal arrangements (and after the end of the UCAS admissions cycle) should contact the Undergraduate Admissions Team for an application form (Transfer Approval Form). All applications to transfer must include information on the course/module title, the credit value and level of each module taken, the date each module was taken, and the results of each module.
- 5.3 Once all essential information has been received, applications and supporting papers will be referred to the relevant Academic Content Co-ordinator for consideration. For combined courses, two Co-ordinators may be involved.
- 5.4 Following approval to transfer the MRA Co-ordinator will provide written confirmation to the applicant.
- 5.5 Applicants will be required to provide an original transcript or evidence of results and a suitable reference from their previous university or college prior to enrolment.

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## PART C: PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS STAGE

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### 6. Accommodation requirements

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- 6.1. At the point of application to the scheme, a prospective student may indicate that they require University accommodation for the remainder of the academic year. In these circumstances, the MRA Coordinator will alert the Accommodation Office as soon as is practical.
- 6.2. Confirmation of the availability of University accommodation must be provided to the MRA Coordinator within 3 working days of the application being received. This is to coincide with the academic decision on admittance.
- 6.3. In order to provide the prospective student with comprehensive details upon which to base their decision to accept an offer, the following must also be provided:
  - 6.3.1. Details of the type of accommodation available;
  - 6.3.2. The cost of the different accommodation types (where applicable);
  - 6.3.3. Any date restrictions on the availability of accommodation;
  - 6.3.4. Other relevant pre-contractual information in relation to the accommodation offer.

### 7. Welfare and disability support

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- 7.1. At the point of application to the scheme, a prospective student may indicate that they have additional welfare and or disability support needs. In these circumstances, the MRA Coordinator will alert Student Futures as soon as is practical.
- 7.2. Where a prospective student indicates that they require specific support, further discussions may be required, but this should not delay the offer making process which is predominately concerned with academic considerations and the eligibility criteria set out in section 1.1.
- 7.3. In the event that a prospective student discloses a disability, at an appropriate point following admission, the Wellbeing Coordinator will liaise with colleagues on the process for supporting the student to obtain an inclusion plan. Where a student had similar support arrangements at their previous institution, it would be helpful to match these as far as possible.

### 8. Induction requirements

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- 8.1. Students admitted to the University under this scheme are entitled to a bespoke induction process. This will consist in two parts:
  - 8.1.1. Part one will be a general induction to the University, delivered in person or online as requirements dictate and will be coordinated by Student Futures. The Wellbeing Coordinator identified as part of the formation of the transfer team is responsible for ensuring that the student has access to such an induction.

- 8.1.2. Part two will be an academic induction to the Faculty and Department. This should be overseen by the student's Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) and cover the same topics that feature in the normal induction programme delivered to students at the beginning of each academic session. The Academic Transfer Coordinator is responsible for ensuring the allocation of an appropriate PAT and that the academic induction takes place.

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## PART D: ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT STAGE

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### 9. Academic principles

- 9.1. The scheme is designed to facilitate student transfer into the University beyond the point when it is feasible for them to be registered and complete the standard suite of modules for a given programme. Consequently, a student admitted in this way will require a bespoke schedule of work that considers:
- 9.1.1. The previous academic experience of the student, including any work that they have completed and for which academic credit has already been awarded;
  - 9.1.2. The amount of work, assessed or otherwise, that the student has completed at their previous institution and the extent to which this aligns with the programme learning outcomes; and
  - 9.1.3. The time available to verify the learning that the student has already done and complete additional teaching and assessment activities at the level that they are transferring into.
- 9.2. The development of a bespoke schedule of work will necessarily be a detailed exercise, best conducted in partnership with the student. Consequently, this stage is separate from the point at which a decision is made on the student's eligibility to transfer under the Scheme based on the criteria outlined in section 1.1.

### 10. Programme structure

- 10.1. In order to develop a coherent academic programme for a student transferring into the University under this scheme, there are four elements that will be combined in differing proportions:
- 10.1.1. **Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) credits:** recognition of academic credit awarded by another Higher Education Institution, applied to the student record on a 1:1 basis and which does not require any further assessment.
  - 10.1.2. **Learning Reflection Credit (LRC):** University of Chester credits awarded for academic reflections, of an appropriate length, in relation to learning and assessment that a student has completed at their former institution, but for which no formal academic credit has been awarded. Such credits can be awarded in multiples of 5.
  - 10.1.3. **Credit Accumulation Block (CAB):** University of Chester credits awarded for successful achievement of a prescribed schedule of learning and assessment, appropriately aligned to the programme learning outcomes for the course of study that the student has been admitted into. Such credits can be awarded in multiples of 5.
  - 10.1.4. **Individual Learning Agreement (ILA):** The detailed underpinning of the student's admission to the University. This consists in two parts; part one describes the learning that the student has completed prior to admission (APL and LRC). Part two describes the learning and assessment that the student will complete in order to achieve University of Chester credits.



- 10.2. The APL credits and Learning Reflection Credits relate to learning and assessment that has been completed at another institution and consequently demonstrate only threshold achievement. In the case of APL, the award of these credits reduces the volume of learning, teaching and assessment that must be completed by the student. In the case of LRC, the award of these credits is based on the verification of prior learning that has not been certified by the student's previous institution.
- 10.3. APL credits carry no mark and LRC is awarded on a pass/fail basis only. Consequently, these mechanisms do not enable the student to demonstrate achievement beyond the threshold standard. For this reason, the maximum amount of APL/LRC available for the level of study into which the student has been admitted is capped at 80. This does not preclude students from bringing in full years of APL (e.g. a student admitting part-way through Level 5 may still import 120 credits at Level 4).
- 10.4. The credits awarded by successful completion of one or more Credit Accumulation Blocks, described in an Individual Learning Agreement, are based wholly on learning and assessment completed at the University and consequently are capable of demonstrating achievement beyond the threshold standard. The marks awarded in relation to these credits will therefore determine a student's overall award classification in accordance with the mechanism set out in the University's Principles and Regulations.

## 11. Accreditation of Prior Learning

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- 11.1. Where a student provides evidence of certificated learning which has resulted in the conferment of academic credit, this can be imported, in whole, to the University's student record. The admitting department will conduct a mapping exercise against the relevant programme learning outcomes. APL may be awarded for full and/or partially completed levels.
- 11.2. The process for the award of APL and the maximum number of APL credits that are permitted for each award are described in Handbook F, Section 2.
- 11.3. APL credits are awarded without a mark.

## 12. Learning Reflection Credit

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- 12.1. A student being admitted to the University via the Scheme is likely to have completed some learning and assessment at the level that they are being admitted into, but this may not necessarily have led to the conferment of academic credit at the point of transfer. Learning Reflection Credit (LRC) aims to take account of this prior exposure to level-appropriate learning in a way that is fair to the student and allows the University to meet its Quality Code obligations.
- 12.2. Following the admission decision, when developing the bespoke schedule of work, the Academic Transfer Coordinator should work with the student to obtain as much evidence as possible of the learning and assessment that they have successfully completed. This may include, for example:
  - 12.2.1. Interim transcript of results.
  - 12.2.2. Copies of marked work with feedback showing any provision or indicative marks.

- 12.2.3. Copies of relevant module descriptors and/or programme specifications.
  - 12.2.4. Copies of relevant module handbooks.
  - 12.2.5. Copies of relevant assignment briefs.
- 12.3. On the basis of this evidence, the Academic Transfer Coordinator will make a reasonable interpretation of those programme learning outcomes that the student has already successfully completed and the volume of their engagement in terms of academic credit. They will then set an appropriate learning reflection task, the length of which will be related to the number of credits being applied for. This will be recorded in part one of the Individual Learning Agreement.
- 12.4. The precise nature of the task set for the student to obtain the LRC will be at the discretion of the Academic Transfer Coordinator but, as a minimum, it must enable the student to demonstrate level-appropriate reflection of the learning that they undertook at their previous institution in relation to the programme learning outcomes being claimed.
- 12.5. The outcome of an assessment task set for LRC will be pass/fail only.

### 13. Credit Accumulation Block

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- 13.1. For the remaining credits that cannot be awarded via either APL or LRC, the Academic Transfer Coordinator will complete part two of the Individual Learning Agreement with details of the Credit Accumulation Blocks (CAB) that the student will be registered for.
- 13.2. CABs have a minimum credit value of 5 and are available in multiples of 5 credits. This is to enable close tailoring of a programme depending on the factors outlined in 9.1.
- 13.3. CABs take the place of modules for the remainder of the level of study into which the student has been admitted. They must be aligned to the relevant programme learning outcomes in such a way as to enable engagement with those that the student has not demonstrated threshold achievement of via another method. In addition, the assessment activity undertaken in a CAB must be sufficient to allow the student to demonstrate achievement beyond the threshold of those programme learning outcomes, even where these have already been mapped against APL/LRC.
- 13.4. The learning, teaching and assessment activities assigned to each CAB are at the discretion of the Academic Transfer Coordinator, but normally will, in combination:
- 13.4.1. Overlap with one or more module being studied by the rest of the cohort in such a way as to facilitate the student's broad engagement with their peers;
  - 13.4.2. Recognise the need for additional tutorial support that may be required, the volume of which will depend on the point that the transfer takes place;
  - 13.4.3. Enable the student to engage with appropriate learning and teaching activities to support their successful completion of assessment;
  - 13.4.4. Broadly replicate the assessment activities that the rest of the cohort are completing.

## 14. Individual Learning Agreement

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- 14.1. The Individual Learning Agreement (ILA) is created by the Academic Transfer Coordinator in close collaboration with the student. A template for the ILA is provided and is comprised of two parts:
  - 14.1.1. Part two records details of the APL credits that the admitting department is accepting in lieu of further assessment in relation to one or more of the programme learning outcomes. It also provides details of any LRC credits being applied for and the assessment task that has been set; and
  - 14.1.2. Part two is the definitive description of the learning and assessment with which the student is required to engage for the remainder of the level of study into which they have been admitted.
- 14.2. There will be a single ILA, unless the student is admitting onto a combined honours route, when there will be one per subject.
- 14.3. The second part of the ILA must detail the following:
  - 14.3.1. The learning outcomes (mapped in relation to the programme learning outcomes) that the student is expected to achieve on successful completion of the schedule of work in relation to each CAB;
  - 14.3.2. The timetabled learning events that the student is required to attend. These may align with one or more timetabled sessions being delivered by the admitting department in the current academic year;
  - 14.3.3. Any individual tutorials, online learning or other teaching events with which the student is required to engage;
  - 14.3.4. The assessments that the student will be required to complete and the deadlines for these; and
  - 14.3.5. Details of the student's PAT and other key contacts to support them through their learning.
- 14.4. The University expects that a completed ILA will be provided to the student and Registry Services within no more than 14 days following receipt of the student's acceptance of the offer made at the admissions stage.



University of  
Chester

# Requirements for Reasonable Adjustments to Assessment

SECTION

3

Quality and Standards Manual

## HANDBOOK F: The Assessment of Students at Levels 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught Provision at Level 8

2020 – 2021

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### *Appendices*

- 3A Examples of Options Available to Students with Specific Needs
- 3B Standard Assessment Feedback

We use the Equality Act definition of disability, this is any condition which has significant, adverse and long term effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities please see a Disability & Inclusion Officer to discuss further.

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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 their ability and address the barriers they experience as a result of their 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 experiences, 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.

### Procedures for Approval of Reasonable Adjustments for Assessment

2. A student who wishes to access reasonable adjustments for assessments will be required to contact Disability & Inclusion. They will need to provide written evidence of their disability or medical condition by an 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/suitably qualified specialist teacher confirming their condition and indicating their requirements.
3. The likely requirements of the student will then be assessed by the Disability & Inclusion Officer, students with non-standard requirements will have a discussion and agree requirements with a Disability Support Officer. 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/suitably qualified specialist teacher or similar advisers. Guidance may also be sought from RNIB, Action On Hearing Loss, Occupational Health or one of the National Federation of Access Centres. A decision will then be made by the Disability & Inclusion Officer on what reasonable adjustments are appropriate to meet the student's needs.
4. Having identified the student's requirements as either standard or non-standard (with standard being 25% extra time in the main examination venue, and non-standard being anything additional to this such as the provision of a reader) the Disability & Inclusion Officer will complete an Inclusion Plan (IP) & Specific Needs form (SN1) and process these documents, the latter of which is provided to our Registry Services (Assessment Team). The student receives a copy of the IP and a summary of their appointment confirming agreed exam arrangements. 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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5. In recognition of the significant timeframes involved in the process outlined above, students who, as an outcome of screening (such as a Dyslexia Assessment Screening Tool DAST, Form 8 or equivalent) and 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/suitably qualified specialist teachers report has been received and approved. In exceptional circumstances where it is not possible to obtain an educational psychologist's/suitably qualified specialist teachers assessment the Disability Services Manager (or nominee) will confirm to Registry Services that additional time may be granted for further assessment periods.
6. Students receiving the additional time shall not be eligible to appeal on the grounds of mitigating circumstances unless the educational psychologist's/suitably qualified teachers 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.
7. 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.
8. Once a student is referred for a psychological assessment, Disability & Inclusion 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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9. If a student is unable, for reasons relating to their 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 & Inclusion and the Head of Academic Quality and Standards (or nominee).
10. Guidance on options available to students with specific needs appears in Appendix 3A.



University of  
Chester

Examinations

SECTION

4

Quality and Standards Manual

**HANDBOOK F:  
The Assessment of Students  
at Levels 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught  
Provision at Level 8**

**2020 – 2021**

Authored By: Registry Services

Date of Approval: June 2020

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## SECTION 4: EXAMINATIONS

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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. Students must not take unauthorised material into the examination venue. If a student is found with unauthorised material they will be deemed to have used it. If a student finds that they have inadvertently brought unauthorised material into the examination they must raise their hands and inform an invigilator immediately.

Unless specified in the rubric of the examination, the following are considered to be unauthorised material:

- Revision or course notes
- Books or dictionaries
- Calculators

Except on religious or medical grounds students are not permitted to wear headgear. Students are only permitted to wear ear plugs on medical grounds and with prior approval granted by the Deputy Registrar.

3. Wherever possible, students should avoid taking mobile phones or other electronic devices into the examination venue; where such devices are taken into the venue, students will be provided with a clear box or bag in which to place the items. The items must be switched off and the box/bag must be stored under the examination desk. All items are introduced into the venue at the owner's risk. Items which must be placed in the box/bag and which must not be found on the student's person or desk include:

- mobile phones
- tablets such as ipad
- smart watches or any other device capable of storing information or accessing the internet or other external information source

4. All bags, cases and coats etc must be placed at the front of the examination room as instructed by the invigilator. Any such items found at the exam desk will be classed as unauthorised materials.
5. All gangways should remain clear of obstruction.
6. Strict silence must be observed at all times in the examination room. The examination is deemed to be in progress from the time students enter the room until all scripts have been collected. Students must not indulge in any behaviour which in the opinion of the invigilator may disturb other students 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 section 6 of this Handbook (Academic Integrity).
7. Students 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 student shall be permitted to enter the examination room after the lapse of half an hour from the commencement of the written examination, and no student 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.
9. No additional time shall be allowed to students who arrive at the examination room after the commencement of the examination.
10. Students should complete the assessment attendance slip before the commencement of the examination.
11. Students 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 students is prohibited and students must not allow themselves to be impersonated.
14. Students should complete the front of the examination answer book and seal down the right hand section. A student who fails to do so will forfeit the right to have her/his paper marked anonymously.
15. Students 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, students 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 student 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 student is normally permitted to leave the examination room in the last fifteen minutes of the written examination. Students who complete their work during the last fifteen minutes should remain quietly seated until an invigilator announces the end of the written examination.
22. Students 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. Students 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.

23. If the fire alarm sounds or if there is another reason why the venue needs to be evacuated during the assessment, students must follow the instructions of the chief invigilator. Students 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. Students 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 misconduct. 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 (or the country in which the relevant partner organisation is based) 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. In the case of undergraduate exams taking place in the formal assessment periods, Registry Services will be responsible for delivering the question papers and attendance sheets to the examination room.
2. Any examination run by both a Partner Organisation and the University, and any examination taken at different campuses or sites of the University, must take place simultaneously at all locations, unless separate papers are set.
3. At least one of the invigilators will normally be a member of academic staff who is knowledgeable about the contents of the question paper; where this isn't the case they must be present in the examination room for at least ten minutes before the examination is due to begin and for at least five minutes after the start of the examination, in order to check the content of the paper and to answer any queries from students. Before leaving the examination venue they should ensure the chief invigilator is made aware of their contact details during the duration of the examination.
4. All invigilators must be present in the examination room to which they have been appointed, from at least 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.
5. Invigilators are responsible for the distribution of question papers before the commencement of each examination, for the collection of answer books from each student, for checking attendance sheets provided and noting absentees.
6. Identification checks on female students choosing to cover their face must be conducted with discretion by a female member of staff
7. Students may sit at any desk within the room/rows to which they have been allocated under the direction of the chief invigilator and should be seated in such a way that no student can overlook the papers of another student.
8. 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. No examination may be left without an invigilator.
9. At the time scheduled for the start of the examination the chief invigilator shall:
  - make an announcement to the effect that students must satisfy themselves that they are in possession of the correct paper;

- ask students to study carefully the instructions at the head of the examination paper;
  - make all other necessary announcements.
10. Invigilators shall check that all students listed on the relevant attendance sheets are present and note the names of any students who are absent. In the case of undergraduate examinations taking place during the formal assessment periods attendance sheets shall be collected by a member of Registry Services staff at the end of the examination. In all other cases the department must ensure that attendance slips are retained in order to allow queries relating to a student's attendance to be verified
  11. An invigilator shall require a student to leave the examination if, in the opinion of the invigilator, her/his conduct is disturbing other students 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 student from the examination room and shall report the matter to the Chair of the Module Assessment Board for investigation.
  12. Invigilators who suspect that breaches of this policy have occurred shall inform the Chair of the relevant Module Assessment Board in writing. Invigilators shall warn a student that such a report will be made, but the student 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.
  13. Students 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 misconduct.
  14. In certain special cases, students shall be allowed additional time for completion of their examination. Such students 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 students assigned to them.
  15. It is the responsibility of subject departments to provide any special requirements for specific examinations. Guidance for amanuenses appears in Appendix 4B.
  16. 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.



17. Invigilators shall be responsible for ensuring that completed scripts are delivered to the relevant department(s) for marking purposes.
18. 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.
19. 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.
20. In the event of a fire alarm or other emergency requiring the evacuation of the examination venue the chief invigilator shall note the time the assessment was interrupted and shall instruct the students to cease writing and to leave all materials, including question papers and examination answer books, on their desk. Students 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. The invigilator shall check all names in order to ensure that all students are accounted for. On return to the examination room, students shall be allowed additional time to compensate for time lost .
21. In all cases of emergency, invigilators should contact Registry Services on extension 3582 (Chester); 4396 or 4234 (Warrington).
22. In cases where students complain of feeling unwell and leave the venue 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 student cannot continue the exam in the scheduled room, every effort will be made for the written examination to be continued in a separate room provided that the students has been accompanied during her/his absence by a person authorised to do so by the chief invigilator.
23. In all cases where a student reports an illness the invigilator should ensure this is noted on the exam incident report form. 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 University Mitigating Circumstances Board as evidence.
24. In cases described under (28), the chief invigilator will be required to enter in the student's answer book and on the attendance sheet the time of departure and, where appropriate, subsequent return and to sign against these entries.

25. 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 per department 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 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.*

1. Students shall be informed as to what materials, if any, they are permitted to use and the format of the assessment.
2. 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.

### 4.4 Open book assessment and advanced publication of papers

1. 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 students 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 Department concerned shall be required to inform the students 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 student's personal use only;
  - that, apart from the students 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.
2. Where the module assessment requires a written paper to be published in advance of the date of an assessment, the Department concerned shall be required to inform the students in writing of the following:
- the title of the paper for advance publication;
  - the date on which the paper will be available to students;
  - the method by which the paper will be made available to the students.

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

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Requirements for the Marking of Assessed  
Work

SECTION

5

Quality and Standards Manual

**HANDBOOK F:**  
**The Assessment of Students**  
**at Levels 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught**  
**Provision at Level 8**

2020 – 2021

Authored by: Registry Services

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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.

The work presented by a student 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 (hereafter referred to as the monitor), 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 'monitoring' applies in cases where there is an element of sampling, but 'double-marking' where every assessment is fully marked twice.

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

The statements which follow on monitoring and double-marking are requirements for Levels 5, 6, 7 and taught provision at Level 8. There is no obligation to observe the requirements on monitoring and double-marking in relation to work submitted at Level 3 or Level 4. However, no student shall be failed in a Level 3 or Level 4 module without a monitor 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 3 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 the University's practice on second-marking via handbooks.



## 5.1 External approval of examination and coursework questions

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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

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A sample of a given batch of assessments shall be fully second-marked by the monitor. The sample shall include: (a) all assessments first-marked at 40% (50% at Levels 7 and 8) or below, and (b) at least five others selected from the remainder, representative of different classes (or all the remainder if less than five).

The sample shall normally comprise at least 25% of the total number of assessments. In cohorts of 24 students or less, the minimum size of the sample (including fails) shall be six assessments. In cohorts of over 100 students, a sample smaller than 25% may be monitored, but in no such case shall the number of assessments monitored 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 Levels 3 and 4, the sample should be sufficient to enable the External Examiner to confirm all marks in the Fail category and to see a selection from each class, including those at borderlines, in order to be satisfied that each student is fairly placed in relation to the rest of the module cohort. At Level 3 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 module, by negotiation.

In cases where there is more than one first-marker, the statements set out above shall apply to each first-marker in order that both the internal monitor and the External Examiner see a sufficient number of assessments to be able to satisfy themselves that the marking of all first-markers is both consistent and at the appropriate level. However, when an assessment has a very large number of markers marking a small number of pieces of work each, such that sampling 6 from each would lead to a disproportionate amount of the whole cohort being monitored, then the number per marker may be reduced to a minimum of 3 with the agreement of the Deputy Registrar. The monitoring arrangements need to be clearly the responsibility of an individual co-ordinating the monitoring process.

## 5.3 Changes to marks

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Having seen all the work in this category, the monitor may propose changes to the marks of

individual assessments first-marked at 40% and below (50% and below for Levels 7 and 8), 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. 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.

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The monitor shall not propose changes to the marks of individual assessments first-marked at 41% or above (51% or above for Levels 7 and 8), 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 assessment the mark for which moves into the category of 40% and below (50% and below for Levels 7 and 8) 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 assessments first-marked at 40% or below (50% or below for Levels 7 and 8).

In cases where there is more than one first-marker, the monitor shall have the right to propose the moderation of all assessments marked by any individual first-marker up or down, or to require the re-marking of all assessments marked by any of the first-markers. Marks returned to students as feedback must (a) be the agreed marks following completion of internal first marking and monitoring, not the marks of the first marker and the monitor 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 assessment feedback forms, provided that the Monitoring Form is completed.

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 monitoring 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 assessments passed to the monitor, and the names (or numbers) of students whose assessments were in the sample monitored, as evidence that procedures have been followed;
- (iv) record all cases in which changes have been proposed to marks of 40% and below (50% and below for Levels 7 and 8), 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

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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]. The Chair of the Module Assessment Board has discretion to apply double-marking to other modules in consultation with the External Examiner. Where 100% double-marking has taken place the monitor may propose changes to any individual mark; 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

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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) an enhanced sample comprising at least 20 scripts drawn from different classes shall be initially double-marked to verify the marking standard. If the double-marker does not agree with the marking standard a meeting shall take place with the Chair of the Module Assessment Board in order to agree the internal mark. The Chair of the Module Assessment Board shall ensure that these procedures apply at least for the first assessment in which such new tutors are involved and shall determine the point at which the double marking or enhanced monitoring is no longer required.

## 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 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 3 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

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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 assessments arising from

practical work shall be subject to the normal procedures set out in paragraphs 5.2 to 5.4 above.

## 5.9 Viva Voce examination

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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* breach of academic integrity.

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 & Inclusion should be consulted to ensure any required reasonable adjustments are put in place.

## 5.10 Complaints about provisional marks

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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 Academic Appeals procedure (see section 10 of this Handbook). Complaints against academic judgment are not permitted.

## 5.11 Feedback on assessed work

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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 20 working days of the submission deadline. Feedback shall show the agreed internal mark following the monitoring process. In cases where, for good reason, the 20 working day 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 a suspected breach of academic integrity, 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 feedback in some format to all students sitting the exam. This will be done without prejudice to the outcome of any reassessment. 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).

## 5.12 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 monitoring 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 (50% or below for Levels 7 and 8) shall be monitored, plus a representative sample of work proposed for higher marks (prior to any adjustment to 40%/50%). All work subject to monitoring 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.

## 5.13 Staff development

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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.

## 5.14 Retention of student work

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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 a breach of the Academic Integrity Policy. 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.

## 5.15 Requirements for Excess Word Count

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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.

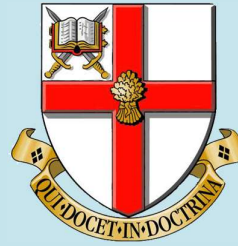
The penalty for exceeding the word count will be 5 marks per 1000 words excess (e.g. a 1000-word assignment should have 5 marks deducted if it runs to 1101-2100 words, 10 marks deducted for 2101-3100 words, and so on).

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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Academic Integrity

SECTION

6

Quality and Standards Manual

**HANDBOOK F:**  
**The Assessment of Students**  
**at Levels 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught**  
**Provision at Level 8**

2020 – 2021

Date of Approval: July 2020  
Authored By: Academic Quality & Standards  
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- 6B(i) Form AI-2, Record of Departmental Investigation
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- 6C Form AI-0, Marking and Moderation of Work in Breach of the Academic Integrity Policy
- 6D Conduct of a *viva voce* examination
- 6E Academic integrity and examinations (inc. form AI-EX)
- 6F Academic Integrity Course (Standard Penalty)
- 6G Transitional arrangements

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## SECTION 6 – ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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The University of Chester values its students' contribution to the necessary quality of its academic standards and awards by adhering to the principles of academic integrity and fair play in assessment. These standards are upheld when students, completing work for assessment, act honestly and take responsibility for the fair presentation of the contents of any work they produce for assessment. This means that students will do nothing that has the potential for them to gain an unfair advantage in assessment.

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### PART A: ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

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#### 1. Maintaining Academic Integrity

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In order to adhere to the University's definition of academic integrity, students are expected to abide by the following conventions when completing work for assessment:

- 1.1.1. Acknowledge all sources of information, knowledge and ideas used when completing work for assessment by consistently and correctly using an acceptable referencing system;
- 1.1.2. Produce work that is the product of their own, individual efforts. An exception to this is where an assignment brief specifically requires a single piece of work be submitted on behalf of a group of students.
- 1.1.3. Declare when they have used work before in a previous assessment (whether successful or not) using an acceptable referencing system;
- 1.1.4. Present accurate information and data that has been obtained appropriately and which is a fair representation of their own endeavours, knowledge and understanding;
- 1.1.5. Adhere to and comply with all applicable regulatory, legal and professional obligations and ethical requirements therein.

The University will make information on how to maintain academic integrity available to students in ways that are appropriate and accessible. However, at all times, it is the sole responsibility of the student to act in a way that is consistent with the Academic Integrity Policy and to seek advice and guidance if they are unclear.

#### 2. Breaches of Academic Integrity

---

A student will be regarded as being in breach of the Academic Integrity Policy if they act or behave in a manner that is inconsistent with the University's general definition of academic integrity or the specific statements given in 1.1.

A breach of the Academic Integrity Policy may occur when a student knowingly acts in a way that is contrary to the policy or does so inadvertently by means of careless scholarship. Inexperience, intention, lack of intention or unfamiliarity with the Academic Integrity Policy will not be regarded as a defence in the event that the policy is breached.

Any breach of the Academic Integrity Policy will be categorised as either unacceptable academic practice or academic misconduct. These are dealt with in different ways according to the published procedure described in Part B onwards.

Examples of unacceptable academic practice:

- 2.1.1. **Plagiarism:** the use of ideas, intellectual property or work of others without acknowledgement or, where relevant, permission.
- 2.1.2. **Reuse of previously submitted material:** the use of work, without appropriate referencing, that has been submitted for assessment, whether successful or not, by the same student in this University or any other institution. This will not apply where a student is making a resubmission for the same assessment component in the same module, unless specifically prohibited in the assessment information.
- 2.1.3. **Collusion:** the unauthorised collaboration between two or more students resulting in the submission of work that is unreasonably similar, but which is submitted as being the product of the submitting student's individual efforts.

Examples of academic misconduct include:

- 2.1.4. **Commissioning:** engaging another person or organisation to complete or undertake an assessment, whether a financial transaction has taken place or not.
- 2.1.5. **Falsification:** the presentation of fictitious or distorted documents, data, evidence or any other material, including submitting the work of another person as if it is their own. This includes the submission of false evidence in an application to the Mitigating Circumstances Board or to the Academic Appeals Board.
- 2.1.6. **Research misconduct:** failure to obtain ethical approval for a research project or failure to comply with regulatory, legal and professional obligations for research projects.
- 2.1.7. **Cheating:** any action before, during or after an assessment or examination which has the potential for the student to gain an unfair advantage in assessment or assists another student to do so. This includes failure to adhere to the examination regulations.

These lists are not exhaustive and the Academic Integrity Policy might be breached in ways not specifically referred to here.

The University will take steps to detect potential breaches of the Academic Integrity Policy which might not be immediately apparent when work is marked anonymously. Following completion of the marking process, once marks have been de-anonymised, the Chair of the Module Assessment Board might authorise a *viva voce*. The purpose of this will be to confirm the authenticity of the work that has been submitted.

Suspected breaches of the Academic Integrity Policy will be initially investigated by the relevant Chair of the Module Assessment Board in accordance with the published procedure described in Part B onwards.

Except in the case of unacceptable academic practice by students studying at Level 3 or Level 4, a breach of the Academic Integrity Policy can only be confirmed by the Academic Integrity Review Panel or its subgroup.

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## PART B: OVERVIEW OF PROCEDURE

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### 3. Introduction

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- 3.1. The University of Chester expects that when completing work for assessment, students will act honestly and take responsibility for the contents of the work that they produce. This means that students must adhere to the University's Academic Integrity Policy and do nothing that has the potential for them to gain an unfair advantage in assessment.
- 3.2. Where a tutor responsible for marking work suspects that a student has produced work that breaches the Academic Integrity Policy, they have an obligation to report it for investigation. This ensures that:
  - 3.2.1. Marks and academic credit are awarded for work which accurately demonstrates the true efforts and abilities of the student;
  - 3.2.2. The efforts of students who have not breached the Academic Integrity Policy are recognised by ensuring that those who have produced work by unfair means are not advantaged for doing so; and
  - 3.2.3. Employers and members of the public can have confidence that everyone who holds a University of Chester award has undergone a rigorous assessment process and has achieved an award that reflects their true knowledge and ability.
- 3.3. Throughout this procedure, where reference is made to a specific post-holder, the line manager of that post-holder may nominate another person to act instead.
- 3.4. Throughout this procedure, where reference is made to a particular timescale, it is given in calendar days. Where communications are sent via email no later than 4pm Monday-Friday, they will be deemed to have been received the same day.

### 4. Roles, Rights and Responsibilities

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- 4.1. The University accepts that when a student is accused of submitting work that breaches the Academic Integrity Policy, they might find the process stressful. The University undertakes to minimise any distress caused to the student by:
  - 4.1.1. Dealing with the matter as quickly as possible, whilst ensuring that this procedure is followed correctly;
  - 4.1.2. At every stage, giving clear information about the procedure and the role that the student is expected to take;
  - 4.1.3. Recognising that breaches of academic integrity relate to pieces of assessment and are not judgements about the character of the individual student involved; and
  - 4.1.4. Arriving at an outcome that is just, proportionate and, where appropriate, takes into account the individual circumstances of the student.

- 4.2. To ensure that each case is dealt with fairly, different people will be involved at each stage. These are referred to throughout the procedure. Some of the key figures involved are:
  - 4.2.1. The Examiner: this is the tutor who is responsible for marking assessment submissions;
  - 4.2.2. The Monitor: this is another tutor who will review the assessment submission and agree a mark to be released, if the student is eligible to receive a mark at the end of the procedure.
  - 4.2.3. Chair of the Module Assessment Board: this is usually the Head of Department (or equivalent) who is responsible for making an allegation, conducting a meeting with the student and choosing whether to refer the matter on. The Chair of the Module Assessment Board can also nominate other members of academic staff to undertake this role for them. Reference in this procedure to the Chair of the Module Assessment Board should be taken to refer to their nominee where another person is appointed to act instead.
  - 4.2.4. Academic Quality & Standards (AQS): the Academic Standards team in AQS is responsible for administering this procedure once allegations are sent from departments.
- 4.3. In some cases, for students at Level 3 or Level 4, the Chair of the Module Assessment Board is able to make a decision that a piece of work is in breach of the Academic Integrity Policy without the matter being considered by the Academic Integrity Review Panel. However, a student is allowed to ask for a review of that decision if they have good reason to do so.
- 4.4. For students at Level 5 or higher, only the Academic Integrity Review Panel or its subgroup is able to make a decision that a piece of work is in breach of the Academic Integrity Policy. Before this happens, the student will have the right to present a defence.
- 4.5. To ensure that the procedure is handled as efficiently as possible, after an initial allegation has been made, all other communication will normally be sent to the student's University of Chester email address only. It is the responsibility of each student to check their email account regularly.
- 4.6. When determining whether or not a piece of work is in breach of the Academic Integrity Policy, the University does not take into consideration whether or not the student concerned acted deliberately.
- 4.7. Where a piece of work found to be in breach of the Academic Integrity Policy is nevertheless eligible for marking, it is the responsibility of the Chair of the Module Assessment Board to ensure that this is done so in accordance with Handbook F, Section 5 of the Quality and Standards Manual.
- 4.8. In all circumstances, where an allegation of a breach of the Academic Integrity Policy is found to have been proven, the student shall not normally be permitted a deferral of the assessment component.
- 4.9. At the point of submitting an application to the Mitigating Circumstances Board, students will be advised that a proven breach of the Academic Integrity Policy in the



assessment component(s) for which they are claiming mitigation will normally override any decision of the Mitigating Circumstances Board to approve the claim.

## 5. Categorisation and Recording Breaches of the Academic Integrity Policy

- 5.1. In order to deal appropriately with the different ways in which the Academic Integrity Policy might be breached, each allegation will be provisionally categorised. The assigned category will be determined by the nature of the suspected breach.
- 5.2. The following will normally be categorised as **unacceptable academic practice**:
  - 5.2.1. Plagiarism
  - 5.2.2. Reuse of previously submitted work
  - 5.2.3. Collusion
- 5.3. The following will normally be categorised as **academic misconduct**:
  - 5.3.1. Commissioning
  - 5.3.2. Falsification
  - 5.3.3. Research misconduct
  - 5.3.4. Failure to abide by the examination regulations
  - 5.3.5. Cheating or other types of dishonesty
- 5.4. Other acts, not specifically listed here, might also be regarded as breaches of the Academic Integrity Policy. Where this happens, the Chair of the Module Assessment Board may take advice from the Quality Manager (Academic Standards) before making a decision about the provisional category.
- 5.5. In the case of students registered at Level 3 or Level 4, the Chair of the Module Assessment Board can decide that a student has breached the Academic Integrity Policy by means of unacceptable academic practice only. In all other cases, although advised by the provisional categorisation, the final decision rests with the Academic Integrity Review Panel.
- 5.6. Allegations of breaches of the Academic Integrity Policy that are confirmed proven will be recorded as academic offences. Details of allegations and recorded offences will be held electronically by AQS. Registry will hold details of recorded offences and any penalties applied.
- 5.7. In the event that a student has multiple cases brought against them at Level 5 or higher, any previous offences of unacceptable academic practice will be considered as either spent or unspent for the purposes of determining an appropriate penalty. Offences that are spent will not be considered as factors when determining a penalty for any further breaches of the Academic Integrity Policy by means of unacceptable academic practice.

- 5.7.1. Offences of unacceptable academic practice relating to assessments at Level 3 or Level 4 will be regarded as spent when the student starts study at Level 5.
  - 5.7.2. One initial offence of unacceptable academic practice at Level 5 or higher, where the student was eligible for a standard penalty, will be regarded as spent if the student successfully completes the Academic Integrity Course (see clause 15).
  - 5.7.3. All other offences will be considered unspent.
- 5.8. If a student withdraws from the University, or signals their intention to withdraw, before an allegation of a breach of the Academic Integrity Policy has been resolved, the matter will continue to be investigated in accordance with this procedure. The purpose of this will be to determine what, if any mark, should appear on the former student's transcript for the assessment concerned.

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## PART C: ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT PROCEDURE (COURSEWORK)

### 6. Identifying a Suspected Breach of the Academic Integrity Policy

- 6.1. This clause does not apply where work submitted for a Level 3 or Level 4 module is suspected of breaching the Academic Integrity Policy by means of unacceptable academic practice (plagiarism, reuse of previously submitted material or collusion only). In these cases, clauses 8 and 9 apply.**
- 6.2. Where the examiner believes that there is evidence that a piece of work is in breach of the Academic Integrity Policy, they will make a report to the Chair of the Module Assessment Board by submitting form AI-1 *Suspected Breach of the Academic Integrity Policy* at appendix 6a(i). This will detail the suspected breach and be accompanied by evidence.
- 6.3. If the examiner suspects that the student may have submitted work that has been completed by someone else, but where there is no documentary evidence to substantiate this, the examiner should consult with the Chair of the Module Assessment Board. Where necessary, the student may be required to attend a *viva voce* (see clause 7).
- 6.4. If the Chair of the Mitigating Circumstances Board, the Deputy Registrar or nominee or the Quality Manager (Academic Standards) suspects that documents submitted in support of an application for mitigating circumstances or an Academic Appeal may have been falsified or fabricated, they may make some limited investigations in order to verify the authenticity of those documents. If, having undertaken these investigations, they suspect that the student might be in breach of the Academic Integrity Policy, using form AI-1 they will make a report to the relevant Chair of the Module Assessment Board who will deal with the matter as if a suspected breach had been referred by the examiner.
- 6.5. No mark will be disclosed to the student. However, if the suspicion arises after a provisional mark has been disclosed, this will not constitute a procedural irregularity. Where provisional marks have been entered onto electronic student systems, they should normally be removed while the matter is investigated.
- 6.6. The Chair of the Module Assessment Board will review the report from the examiner and decide whether to investigate the matter further.
- 6.7. If the Chair of the Module Assessment Board decides that there is no case to answer, they will give reasons to the examiner. The examiner will then complete the assessment according to the normal process.
- 6.8. If the Chair of the Module Assessment Board decides that the matter should be investigated further they will:
- 6.8.1.** Write to the student (by email), to notify them of the allegation and give an opportunity for the student to request a meeting to discuss it. A template for this purpose is given at appendix 6a(ii).

- 6.8.1.1. The time and date of the meeting will be at the discretion of the Chair of the Module Assessment Board but will normally take place no sooner than 7 days after the allegation has been sent and no later than 21 days after.
  - 6.8.1.2. The letter inviting the student to the meeting will be accompanied by a copy of the AI-1 form and the evidence being relied upon.
  - 6.8.1.3. The student can attend the meeting with another registered student of the University or by an officer of Chester Students' Union if they wish.
- 6.9. The purpose of the meeting will be to assist the Chair of the Module Assessment Board in their investigation to establish whether it is reasonable to suspect that the student's work breaches the Academic Integrity Policy. Where appropriate, it may also be taken as an opportunity to talk to the student about approaches to good academic practice.
- 6.10. If the student does not attend the meeting, it should not be delayed. Instead the Chair of the Module Assessment Board should decide on an outcome to their investigation in the student's absence.

## 7. Use of a *Viva Voce*

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- 7.1. If the examiner suspects that a student may have submitted work that has been completed by someone else, but there is no documentary evidence, they may ask the Chair of the Module Assessment Board to authorise a *viva voce*. This is similar to an oral examination and gives the examiner the opportunity to talk to the student about the contents of the work.
- 7.2. If a *viva voce* is required, it is regarded as a continuation of the assessment. Its only purpose will be to help to decide whether, on the balance of probabilities, the student is the author of the work that they have submitted.
- 7.3. The *viva voce* will be conducted in accordance with the procedure set out at appendix 6d.
- 7.4. Under no circumstances will an allegation of a breach of the Academic Integrity Policy be put formally to a student during or immediately following the conduct of a *viva voce*. Instead, a report of the *viva voce* must be sent to the Chair of the Module Assessment Board, who will decide whether to conduct an investigation into a possible breach of the Academic Integrity Policy and follow the procedure set out in clause 6.
- 7.5. If the student fails to attend a *viva voce* the Chair of the Module Assessment Board may draw any conclusion from this that they wish when deciding whether to conduct an investigation.

## 8. Unacceptable academic practice at Level 3 and Level 4 only

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- 8.1. If the examiner believes that work submitted for a Level 3 or Level 4 module breaches the Academic Integrity Policy by means of unacceptable academic practice (plagiarism, reuse of previously submitted material or collusion), they should continue to mark the work, but shall disregard those elements that they believe constitute the breach. The provisional mark will be based on the remainder of the work, which the

- examiner believes to have been produced by fair means, and with reference to the applicable marking criteria.
- 8.2. The examiner should markup the submission to show which parts of it have been disregarded and give feedback as appropriate.
  - 8.3. The examiner must complete form AI-X *Level 3 or Level 4 unacceptable academic practice*. This form confirms that the mark has been affected by a breach of the Academic Integrity Policy and gives a brief description of the suspected breach.
  - 8.4. The AI-X form should be submitted to the Chair of the Module Assessment Board with a copy of the work and any other evidence required to substantiate the breach of the Academic Integrity Policy.
  - 8.5. The Chair of the Module Assessment Board will act as monitor and decide either:
    - 8.5.1. That the submission **does** breach the Academic Integrity Policy by means of unacceptable practice and that they should be warned as to their future conduct; or
    - 8.5.2. That the submission breaches the Academic Integrity Policy, but suspects academic misconduct; or
    - 8.5.3. That the submission **does not** breach the Academic Integrity Policy.
  - 8.6. Where the Chair of the Module Assessment Board decides that the submission **does** breach the Academic Integrity Policy by means of unacceptable academic practice, they will:
    - 8.6.1. Make provision for the student to have a meeting with a member of staff from the department to discuss the case and support to aid their development of good academic practice;
    - 8.6.2. Send a copy of the AI-X form to the student which shall act as a warning as to their future conduct and invite them to a meeting;
    - 8.6.3. Act to agree an appropriate provisional mark that should be awarded for the work; and
    - 8.6.4. Following the date of the meeting with the student, send a copy of the AI-X form to AQS for statistical monitoring.
  - 8.7. Where the Chair of the Module Assessment Board suspects that the submission breaches the Academic Integrity Policy, but by means of academic misconduct, they will follow the procedure set out in clauses 6, 7 and 10 as applicable.
  - 8.8. Where the Chair of the Module Assessment Board decides that the submission **does not** breach the Academic Integrity Policy, they should give reasons to the examiner and instruct that the work is marked in its entirety in the normal way. All paperwork relating to the case will be destroyed.

## 9. Independent Review Mechanism (Level 3 or Level 4 only)

- 9.1. In the case of a student registered at Level 3 or Level 4, the Chair of the Module Assessment Board can decide that the Academic Integrity Policy has been breached by means of unacceptable academic practice without the matter being referred to the Academic Integrity Review Panel. However, the student may request an independent review of that decision.
- 9.2. Within 7 days of the date that the AI-X form was signed by the Chair of the Module Assessment Board, a student who wishes to dispute the decision may email [academicintegrity@chester.ac.uk](mailto:academicintegrity@chester.ac.uk) to request a review. Such a request will only be considered if, in the opinion of the Head of Academic Quality and Standards or nominee, the following criteria have been met:
- 9.2.1. The student attended a meeting with the Chair of the Module Assessment Board arranged to discuss the matter; and
- 9.2.2. The student advances a reasonable case for their disagreement with the finding. Statements that the Chair of the Module Assessment Board was simply mistaken in their decision without a compelling explanation will not be admissible.
- 9.3. Where the Head of Academic Quality and Standards or nominee is satisfied that the criteria to request a review have been met, the case file (all forms and evidence) will be sent to a Chair of the Academic Integrity Review Panel who has had no involvement in the case and who is independent of any department hosting the student's programme of study.
- 9.4. The Chair of the Academic Integrity Review Panel may, if they wish, interview the student, the Chair of the Module Assessment Board and/or the referring examiner.
- 9.5. The decision of the Chair of the Academic Integrity Review Panel will be final and binding on all parties. It will be communicated in writing normally no later than 28 days following the request for a review.

## 10. Departmental Meeting with Students

- 10.1. During the meeting the Chair of the Module Assessment Board will complete form AI-2 *Record of Departmental Investigation* at appendix 6b(i). If the student does not attend the meeting, this form should be completed in their absence and sent to the student via their University of Chester email address.
- 10.2. If the outcome of the investigation by the Chair of the Module Assessment Board is that the student's work does not breach the Academic Integrity Policy:
- 10.2.1. The form AI-2 will be completed and a copy provided to the student;
- 10.2.2. The examiner will be informed and given a reason for the decision. The examiner will then complete the assessment according to the normal process; and
- 10.2.3. All paperwork relating to the case will be destroyed.
- 10.3. If the outcome of the investigation by the Chair of the Module Assessment Board is that the student's work might be in breach of the Academic Integrity Policy:

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- 10.3.1. The form AI-2 will be completed and a copy provided to the student; and
- 10.3.2. A copy of forms AI-1 and AI-2 and the accompanying evidence will be sent to Academic Quality & Standards and the case will be referred to the Academic Integrity Review Panel (see parts E and F).

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## PART D: ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT PROCEDURE (EXAMINATIONS)

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### 11. Definition of an Examination

- 11.1. For the purpose of this procedure, an examination will be regarded as a timed assessment which students are expected to undergo at a specific time and place, notified beforehand, and conducted in accordance with the rules set out in Handbook F, Section 4. This may include class tests.
- 11.2. Notwithstanding 11.1., other assessments may be regarded as an examination, depending on the context of a specific discipline. Where it may not be immediately clear that an assessment is an examination, the Chair of the Module Assessment Board will, if required, take advice from the Quality Manager (Academic Standards) and determine whether Part C or Part D of this procedure will apply.

### 12. Suspecting a Breach of the Academic Integrity Policy

- 12.1. If an invigilator suspects that a candidate may be in breach of the Academic Integrity Policy during an examination they will:
- 12.1.1. (If no other candidates are being disturbed) permit the candidate to continue with the examination. However, they will immediately require another invigilator to act as a witness. Where unauthorised materials are identified, they will be removed if possible. The script (or equivalent) will be endorsed by the invigilator at the point that the suspected breach is believed to have occurred. The front cover of the script (or equivalent) will also be endorsed. In a practical examination, the point at which the breach was suspected will be noted.
- 12.1.2. (If other candidates are being, or may be, disturbed) the candidate will be required to withdraw from the examination room. The script (or equivalent) will be endorsed and it will be noted that the candidate's examination was terminated. The chief invigilator should extend the examination by a length of time equivalent to deal with the disturbance. At the conclusion of the examination, the matter should be reported to the Deputy Registrar.
- 12.2. The invigilator will require the candidate to report to them at the end of the examination when there will be a meeting with an individual appointed by the Deputy Registrar or the Chair of the Module Assessment Board for this purpose and who will be known as the Examinations Officer.
- 12.3. The Examinations Officer will make a written record of the circumstances and retain any relevant materials. They will require the invigilator to make a written report, normally within three days.
- 12.4. Where it is not practical to retain any relevant materials, appropriate notes detailing their nature and reasons why they could not be retained should be made. If possible and appropriate, photographic evidence may also be gathered.
- 12.5. Normally within four days of receiving the invigilator's report, the Examinations Officer will complete form AI-EX at appendix 6e and submit it, with the invigilator's

report and any retained materials to the relevant Chair of the Module Assessment Board.

- 12.6. Normally within ten days of receiving the Examination Officer's submission, the Chair of the Module Assessment Board will determine whether there exists, *prima facie*, evidence that the candidate might have breached the Academic Integrity Policy. They may, if they wish, choose to interview the candidate and/or the invigilator before making such a determination.
- 12.7. If the Chair of the Module Assessment Board determines that there is insufficient evidence, they will decide that no breach of the Academic Integrity Policy has occurred. In this situation, they will instruct either:
  - 12.7.1. That the candidate's script is marked in accordance with the relevant procedures; or
  - 12.7.2. That the candidate's assessment is deferred.
- 12.8. If the Chair of the Module Assessment Board determines that there is *prima facie* evidence that the candidate might have breached the Academic Integrity Policy they will refer the matter to AQS. They will prepare the following case file:
  - 12.8.1. A brief report, outlining the reasons for the decision and a request that the matter be considered by the Academic Integrity Review Panel;
  - 12.8.2. The full submission received from the Examinations Officer; and
  - 12.8.3. Any relevant correspondence between the candidate and the department in relation to the matter.
- 12.9. All suspected breaches of the Academic Integrity Policy arising from an examination will be provisionally regarded as academic misconduct.
- 12.10. Where a student submits an application for mitigating circumstances or makes an Academic Appeal in relation to an examination and there is suspicion that documents submitted in support of this may have been falsified or fabricated, clause 6.3. of this procedure applies.

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## PART E: STANDARD PENALTY

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### 13. Determination of Eligibility for a Standard Penalty

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- 13.1. Once the case file has been received by AQS, the Quality Manager (Academic Standards), or nominee, will decide whether the student is eligible for consideration of a standard penalty. Eligibility will be confirmed where **all** of the following criteria are met:
- 13.1.1. The provisional categorisation of the suspected breach of the Academic Integrity Policy is by unacceptable academic practice only;
  - 13.1.2. The student has not previously been found to have breached the Academic Integrity Policy, in either category, at Level 5 or higher;
  - 13.1.3. The student has indicated that they accept the outcome of the investigation by the Chair of the Module Assessment Board, or they failed to respond within 7 days of the date given on the AI-2 form; and
  - 13.1.4. If required, the student would normally be entitled to a further attempt at the assessment.
- 13.2. Where all of the criteria at 13.1. apply, the case will be referred to a subgroup of the Academic Integrity Review Panel for consideration.
- 13.3. Where one, or more, of the criteria at 13.1. do not apply, the case will be referred to a full hearing of the Academic Integrity Review Panel for consideration and part F of this procedure will apply.

### 14. Subgroup of the Academic Integrity Review Panel

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- 14.1. A subgroup of the Academic Integrity Review Panel will meet to consider cases which meet all of the criteria given at 13.1.
- 14.2. The subgroup will consist of a Chair of the Academic Integrity Review Panel and the Head of Academic Quality and Standards or nominee. The Quality Manager (Academic Standards) or nominee will act as procedural advisor.
- 14.3. If a member of the subgroup has had any prior involvement in a case presented, this must be declared and the case will be deferred to the next meeting.
- 14.4. A student whose case has been referred to the subgroup will not have the right to attend the meeting.
- 14.5. The subgroup will review the case file and the recommendation that the student is eligible for consideration of a standard penalty and satisfy itself that:
- 14.5.1. Sufficient evidence has been presented which demonstrates that the student has breached the Academic Integrity Policy by means of unacceptable academic practice; and
  - 14.5.2. The recommendation that the student is eligible for consideration of a standard penalty is correct.

- 14.6. Where the subgroup satisfies itself in relation to the points at 14.5. it will act on behalf of the Chair of the Module Assessment Board and authorise the issuing of a standard penalty in accordance with the provisions of section 15.
- 14.7. Where the subgroup cannot satisfy itself in relation to the points at 14.5. it will refer the matter to a full hearing of the Academic Integrity Review Panel and part F of this procedure will apply.
- 14.8. The decision of the subgroup will be communicated to the student via their University of Chester email address, and to the Chair of the Module Assessment Board, normally within 14 days.

## 15. Application of a Standard Penalty

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- 15.1. Once the subgroup has authorised the issuing of a standard penalty, AQS will email the student to explain that they are required to complete the Academic Integrity Course within 14 days in accordance with appendix 6f of this procedure.
- 15.2. Following notification to the student, AQS will email the Chair of the Module Assessment Board who will be asked to ensure that a mark, based on those elements which the examiner decides have been produced by fair means, is determined. The work must be marked and moderated in accordance with the requirements of Handbook F, Section 5 and a provisional mark sent to AQS using form AI-0. AQS will state a deadline for the return of the form.
- 15.3. If the student successfully completes the Academic Integrity Course, they will be notified of the mark for the assessment as given on the AI-0 form, which will be provisional until ratified by the Module Assessment Board. The offence will be considered spent in the event of any future proven breaches of the Academic Integrity Policy by means of unacceptable academic practice.
- 15.4. If the student fails to successfully complete the Academic Integrity Course, they will fail, with a mark of zero, the assessment component concerned. The offence will be considered unspent in the event of any future proven breaches of the Academic Integrity Policy.
- 15.5. If the student fails to attempt the Academic Integrity Course by the stipulated deadline, they will fail, with a mark of zero, all assessment components in the module concerned. The student will be entitled to one reassessment opportunity. If a third assessment attempt is required, this will be at the discretion of the relevant Assessment Board. The offence will be considered unspent in the event of any future proven breaches of the Academic Integrity Policy.
- 15.6. For the avoidance of doubt, a student will be deemed to have attempted the Academic Integrity Course once they have accessed the timed test component.
- 15.7. If the student successfully completes the Academic Integrity Course after the Module Assessment Board has met, the Chair of the Module Assessment Board will be responsible for ensuring that the correct assessment procedures are adhered to in order to confirm the mark to be awarded.

## PART F: ACADEMIC INTEGRITY REVIEW PANEL

### 16. Scope and Composition of the Academic Integrity Review Panel

- 16.1. The Academic Integrity Review Panel (the Panel) will meet to hear all allegations which cannot be resolved by the subgroup. This will include:
- 16.1.1. Allegations of breaches of the Academic Integrity Policy provisionally categorised as academic misconduct.
  - 16.1.2. Allegations of breaches of the Academic Integrity Policy categorised as unacceptable academic practice, where the student has any previous offences recorded against them.
  - 16.1.3. Allegations which are disputed by the student, irrespective of the provisional categorisation.
- 16.2. The Panel will consist of a Chair and two members drawn from a pool and in accordance with the following:
- 16.2.1. **Chairs of the Panel** will be nominated by Faculty Deans and nominations approved by the Head of Academic Quality and Standards on behalf of Academic Quality and Enhancement Committee. Nominees will normally be at the level of either head or deputy head of department.
  - 16.2.2. **Members of the Panel** will be nominated by Heads of Department and nominations approved by the Head of Academic Quality and Standards on behalf of Academic Quality and Enhancement Committee. Nominees must be members of academic staff who possess relevant experience and expertise.
- 16.3. The Quality Manager (Academic Standards) will appoint a procedural advisor to the Panel. In addition to giving regulatory advice, the advisor will be responsible for maintaining an accurate record of the meeting.
- 16.4. The Chair of the Module Assessment Board or nominee who referred the allegation for consideration will normally be asked to attend the hearing to present the case.
- 16.5. The University reserves the right to involve such other individuals in the hearing as it sees fit.
- 16.6. When convening the Panel, the Quality Manager (Academic Standards) will try to ensure, as far as possible, that it is academically independent of the student whose case is to be heard. This will normally be achieved by the following:
- 16.6.1. At least one of the Panel members will be independent of the Faculty from which the allegation originates; and
  - 16.6.2. The Panel will not contain anyone who has been involved in the teaching or assessment of the student in the module to which the allegation refers.
- 16.7. Staff and students have the opportunity to present their case in writing and in person to the Panel. Other than through these channels, neither students, staff nor any other individual may seek to influence the Panel or in any other way seek to sway the

operation of these procedures in relation to a case that has been submitted or which may be submitted in future. Doing so is likely to lead to the deferral of the case and a report being made to the Head of Academic Quality and Standards for further action.

## 17. Scheduling and Notification

- 17.1. As far as possible, cases identified for hearing by the Panel will be scheduled for the next available meeting, whilst making sure that the provisions of 16.6. are adhered to.
- 17.2. AQS will send the student an invitation to attend the hearing at least 7 days before it takes place. The invitation will include the date, time and location of the hearing. This will be sent to the student's University email account only.
- 17.3. The invitation letter from AQS will tell the student about their right to attend the hearing. It will also explain that the student has the right to submit a written statement if they want to.
- 17.4. The invitation letter from AQS will explain that the student can bring someone with them to the hearing if they want. That person must be a student of the University of Chester: it can be another student or an officer of Chester Students' Union. If the student is under 18, they can also be accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- 17.5. If a copy of the evidence for the case was not sent with the invitation from AQS, the student will receive it at least 2 days before the hearing. The evidence will be exactly what was sent to AQS by the Chair of the Module Assessment Board.
- 17.6. If any more evidence is presented after the file has been sent to the student, or if it becomes available during the hearing, the University will still consider it as part of the case. However, if this happens, the hearing will be postponed until the student has had a chance to look at the new evidence and respond to it.

## 18. Requests to Defer a Hearing

- 18.1. In order to resolve cases as quickly as possible, the Panel may be convened to hear cases at any point in the year, including during vacation periods. Where a hearing has been scheduled during term time a student can request a deferral of their case on one occasion only, for one of the following reasons:
  - 18.1.1. A clash with a scheduled teaching session or assessment.
  - 18.1.2. A clash with a scheduled field trip or with work placement.
  - 18.1.3. A clash with another academic requirement.
  - 18.1.4. Illness of the student, or someone for whom the student has a caring responsibility.
  - 18.1.5. Work commitments (unless the student is part-time, this can only be cited outside of term time weeks).
- 18.2. In the case of 18.1.1 – 18.1.3. the request must be made no less than 3 days prior to the hearing and be accompanied by written confirmation from an appropriate member of academic staff.

- 18.3. In the case of 18.1.4. where the student cannot give notice in advance, a request for a deferral must be made as soon as possible following the hearing and, in every case, within no more than 3 days. It must also be accompanied by a valid medical certificate.
- 18.4. If the Panel meets on a date outside of term time weeks, in addition to the reasons listed in 18.1., a deferral may also be requested on the grounds of a pre-booked holiday.
- 18.5. Requests to defer a hearing should be made by email to the Quality Manager (Academic Standards). The process for doing this will be given in the invitation letter.

## 19. Conduct of Hearings of the Academic Integrity Review Panel

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- 19.1. If the student fails to arrive at the hearing by the time given in their invitation letter, and they have not had a request to defer the hearing approved, the hearing will go ahead in their absence.
- 19.2. Prior to the hearing, the members of the Panel will have received a copy of the case file submitted to AQS by the Chair of the Module Assessment Board or nominee. In addition, the Panel may take into consideration the following when deciding an appropriate outcome:
  - 19.2.1. Any written statements from the student which were not included in the case file;
  - 19.2.2. Any oral statements that the student wishes to make to the Panel at the hearing and any oral statements made by anyone who accompanies the student to the hearing, and
  - 19.2.3. Any oral statements from any other relevant sources, including the Chair of the Module Assessment Board who referred the case.
- 19.3. No one else is allowed to attend the hearing on the student's behalf. However, where the student is accompanied to the hearing, the Chair of the Panel may invite that person to make a statement. That statement must be limited to general support of the student and their circumstances. The person accompanying the student is not permitted to answer questions posed to the student by the Panel.
- 19.4. The hearing will be conducted in two parts:
  - 19.4.1. In the first part the student, anyone accompanying them and the Chair of the Module Assessment Board or nominee will be present. The purpose of this part of the hearing will be to present the evidence to the student, to hear the student's response and any requests for mitigation. This part of the hearing will normally be audio recorded.
  - 19.4.2. The second part of the hearing will be conducted in private with only the Panel members and the procedural advisor present. The purpose of this part will be for the Panel to review the evidence presented both in writing and during the first part of the hearing and to consider an appropriate outcome. A written record of this part of the hearing will be made.

## 20. Decisions of the Academic Integrity Review Panel

- 20.1. The outcome of the hearing will consist of:
- 20.1.1. A decision about whether the student's work has breached the Academic Integrity Policy; and, if the Panel decides that a breach of the policy has occurred:
  - 20.1.2. Whether that breach of the Academic Integrity Policy is by means of unacceptable academic practice or academic misconduct; and
  - 20.1.3. What penalty should be applied.
- 20.2. If the Panel decides that the student's work does not breach the Academic Integrity Policy, the matter will be referred back to the Chair of the Module Assessment Board who will instruct the examiner to complete the assessment in accordance with the normal procedures.

## 21. Penalties for Unacceptable Academic Practice

- 21.1. If the Panel determines that the student's work has breached the Academic Integrity Policy by means of unacceptable academic practice, the procedural advisor will inform the Panel of any previous offences in either category and whether they are spent or unspent (see 5.7.).
- 21.2. If the student would be entitled to a reassessment opportunity:
- 21.2.1. Where the student has **no** unspent offences recorded against them, the Panel should refer to penalty group A.
  - 21.2.2. Where the student has **one** unspent offence recorded against them:
    - 21.2.2.1. If the current case contains no more than one proven allegation, the Panel should refer to penalty group B; or
    - 21.2.2.2. If the current case contains two or more proven allegations, the Panel should refer to penalty group C.
  - 21.2.3. Where the student has **two or more** unspent offences recorded against them, the case should be considered in penalty group C.
- 21.3. If the student would not be entitled to a reassessment opportunity, the case must be considered in penalty group C. However, if the student has no unspent offences recorded against them, the provisions at 21.6. apply.
- 21.4. Where the procedural advisor confirms that a student would ordinarily have been eligible for consideration for a standard penalty had they chosen not to contest the case, the Panel may apply 21.8.1. only.
- 21.5. Notwithstanding the provisions of 21.2. the Panel may choose to consider the case in a different penalty stage than the applicable criteria would suggest if it deems that the circumstances of the case warrant it. Where this happens, reasons for doing so will be documented in the record of the hearing. Such reasons may include, but will not be limited to, the following:



- 21.5.1. Where the student has previously found to have breached the Academic Integrity Policy by means of academic misconduct, the Panel may wish to consider the case in a higher penalty group; or
- 21.5.2. If there are particular extenuating circumstances either relating to the individual student, the nature of the allegation(s) and/or the presentation of the case, the Panel may, if it chooses, consider the case in a lesser penalty group.
- 21.6. Where a student is found to have breached the Academic Integrity Policy for the first time at Level 5 or higher and that breach has occurred in the final assessment attempt allowed by the University, the Panel will decide whether it should be considered in penalty group A or penalty group C. The following normally applies:
- 21.6.1. The Panel may choose to consider the case in penalty group A if **all** of the following criteria hold:
- 21.6.1.1. The module to which the offence relates permits internal compensation of marks; and
  - 21.6.1.2. The moderated mark recorded on form AI-0 is compensable (i.e. 20 or higher); and
  - 21.6.1.3. Based on information available to the Panel, there is a mathematical chance that the student can pass the module overall if the moderated mark can be awarded.
- 21.6.2. The Panel must consider the case in penalty group C if **any** of the following criteria hold:
- 21.6.2.1. The module to which the offence relates does not permit internal compensation of marks; and/or
  - 21.6.2.2. The moderated mark recorded on form AI-0 is not compensable (i.e. 19 or lower); and/or
  - 21.6.2.3. Based on information available to the Panel, there is no mathematical chance that the student can pass the module overall even if the moderated mark can be awarded.
- 21.7. As far as possible, AQS will attempt to identify cases that might cause 21.6. to come into effect prior to the hearing. Where this happens, AQS will liaise with the Chair of the Module Assessment Board to ensure that the correct assessment procedures are adhered to, so that the Panel has access to the information it requires at the hearing.
- 21.8. Penalty group A**
- The Panel should select from one of the following options. However, the Panel should not normally impose the penalty at 21.8.1. if the student has previously been in receipt of a standard penalty in accordance with part E of this procedure:
- 21.8.1. The student will be required to complete the Academic Integrity Course within 14 days in accordance with appendix 6f and the provisions at clause 15. will apply; or

21.8.2. The student will fail, with a mark of zero, the component of assessment in which a breach of the Academic Integrity Policy has been proven; or

21.8.3. The student will fail, with a mark of zero, all components of assessment in the module in which a breach of the Academic Integrity Policy has been proven.

**21.9. Penalty group B**

The student will fail, with a mark of zero, all components of assessment in the module in which a breach of the Academic Integrity Policy has been proven; and

21.9.1. The student's final degree classification will be lowered by one class; or

21.9.2. Marks for modules specified by the Panel will be capped at the pass threshold; or

21.9.3. Marks for modules specified by the Panel will be set to zero. The student will be entitled to a second or third assessment attempt as appropriate.

**21.10. Penalty group C**

The student will fail, with a mark of zero, all components of assessment in the module in which a breach of the Academic Integrity Policy has been proven; and

21.10.1. The student's programme of study is terminated with immediate effect and they are not permitted to submit any further work for assessment. They will be entitled to an exit award if the total number of credits achieved based on all assessments submitted to date entitles them to one; or

21.10.2. The student's programme of study is terminated with immediate effect and they are not permitted to submit any further work for assessment. All marks for modules not yet ratified by an Assessment Board will be set to zero. They will not be entitled to any award and may not re-enrol at the University for any other programme of study.

**22. Penalties for Academic Misconduct**

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22.1. If the Panel determines that the student has breached the Academic Integrity Policy by means of academic misconduct, the procedural advisor will inform the Panel of any previous offences in either category.

22.2. The Panel will determine an appropriate penalty, taking into account any previous proven breaches of the Academic Integrity Policy (whether by means of unacceptable academic practice or academic misconduct), the number of proven allegations in the current case, the nature and seriousness of the allegations and any extenuating factors.

22.2.1. The Panel will disregard whether any previous offences are spent or unspent.

22.2.2. Where there are multiple allegations in the case, the Panel will normally consider them consecutively.

22.3. In every case, the student will fail, with a mark of zero, all components of assessment in the module in which a breach of the Academic Integrity Policy has been proven. **In addition** the Panel will consider applying one of the following:

- 22.3.1. The student's marks for assessment components specified by the Panel will be set to zero. The student will be entitled to a second or third assessment attempt as appropriate; or
- 22.3.2. The student's final degree classification will be lowered by one class; or
- 22.3.3. The student's marks for modules specified by the Panel be capped at the pass threshold; or
- 22.3.4. The student's marks for modules specified by the Panel will be set to zero. The student will be entitled to a second or third assessment attempt as appropriate; or
- 22.3.5. The student's programme of study is terminated with immediate effect and they are not permitted to submit any further work for assessment. They will be entitled to an exit award if the total number of credits achieved based on all assessments submitted to date entitles them to one; or
- 22.3.6. The student's programme of study is terminated with immediate effect and they are not permitted to submit any further work for assessment. All marks for modules not yet ratified by an Assessment Board will be set to zero. They will not be entitled to any award and may not re-enrol at the University for any other programme of study.

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## PART G: ADMINISTRATION

### 23. Reporting Outcomes

- 23.1. The decision of the Panel will be communicated to the student via their University of Chester email account and to the Chair of the Module Assessment Board no later than 14 days after the date of the hearing.
- 23.2. Where the Panel has found that the student has submitted work which breaches the Academic Integrity Policy, that decision and the decision on penalty will be reported to the Deputy Registrar or nominee as follows:
- 23.2.1. In the case of a standard penalty, the Deputy Registrar will be notified after the expiry date of the student's eligibility to complete the Academic Integrity Course. AQS will advise the outcome in accordance with the provisions of clause 15.
- 23.2.2. In all other cases, the Deputy Registrar will be notified as soon as possible after the conclusion of the hearing.
- 23.3. Any decision on penalty relating to components of assessment and/or module outcomes made by the Panel are binding on the Module Assessment Board.
- 23.3.1. If the Module Assessment Board has not yet met to ratify the student's marks at the time the decision is made, it is the responsibility of the Chair of the Module Assessment Board to enter the penalty decision on the student's record.
- 23.3.2. If the Module Assessment Board has already met to ratify the student's marks at the time the decision is made, Registry will enter the penalty decision on the student's record.
- 23.4. Any decision on penalty relating to the student's programme of study and/or overall award outcome made by the Panel are recommendations to the relevant Awards/Progression Assessment Board.
- 23.4.1. If the Awards/Progression Assessment Board has not yet met to consider the student's eligibility to progress or for an award at the time the decision is made, the recommendation will be reported by the Deputy Registrar at the appropriate time.
- 23.4.2. If the Awards/Progression Assessment Board had already met to consider the student's eligibility to progress or for an award at the time the decision is made, or where it is appropriate to act prior to the next meeting of that Board, the Deputy Registrar will seek to obtain the consent of the Chair of the Board and, where required, the Chief External Examiner, to implement the recommendation of the Panel.

### 24. Appeals Relating to Breaches of the Academic Integrity Policy

- 24.1. The final decision on whether a piece of work is in breach of the Academic Integrity Policy, whether made by the Chair of the Module Assessment Board (Level 3 or

Level 4) or by the Academic Integrity Review Panel or its subgroup (all Levels) will be regarded as an academic judgment.

- 24.2. A student may not appeal against the final decision that a piece of work is in breach of the Academic Integrity Policy solely on the ground of a disagreement with that decision.
- 24.3. Where a student is entitled to receive a mark for a piece of work found to have breached the Academic Integrity Policy that mark represents an academic judgment and may not be the subject of an appeal.
- 24.4. A student is entitled to appeal on the grounds of a procedural or administrative irregularity in the conduct of this procedure. Appeals must be submitted in accordance with Handbook F, Section 10.

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# Mitigating Circumstances

SECTION

7

Quality and Standards Manual

**HANDBOOK F:**  
**The Assessment of Students**  
**at Levels 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught**  
**Provision at Level 8**

**2020 – 2021**

Authored by: Registry Services

Date of Approval: June 2020

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## SECTION 7: MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

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### 7.1 Mitigating Circumstances

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1. Mitigating circumstances is the term used by the University in respect of circumstances which may adversely affect a student's performance in assessment, and in respect of which a student may formally request consideration in the determination of their final result(s) in respect of specific assessment components or their period of registration.
2. The processes which fall under the umbrella term 'Mitigating Circumstances' are as follows:
  - extensions to the submission deadline
  - a deferral of the assessment to the next assessment point
  - the waiving of a late-work penalty
  - an extension to the maximum period of registration

More details on each of these may be found below.

### 7.2 Categories of mitigating circumstances

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Circumstances acceptable under this policy must be exceptional (ie serious and unusual) relative to the normal daily challenges presented by academic study, and unpredictable in that the student could not reasonably have been expected either to avoid them, or to allow for them in planning the assessment work or preparation. The Mitigating Circumstances policy recognises that the assessment process itself can cause students to feel more pressurised than at other times of the academic year, and this should be considered to be one of the normal challenges presented by academic study. Except in a very small number of cases, where the impact is serious and incapacitating, this would not be considered as a valid mitigating circumstance.

There are many different reasons why a student's performance may have been adversely affected by mitigating circumstances, meaning that it is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of everything the University is and is not able to take into account. However, the following are the types of mitigating circumstances the University may consider:

- Exceptional medical circumstances, such as where the student is ill either at the point of assessment or immediately in advance. 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 ailments.
- Long term illness/medical conditions



- Disabilities for which reasonable adjustments are not yet in place and where the delay is not the fault of the student
- Bereavement of a close family member, defined here as spouse/partner, parent, grandparent, brother/sister or child/dependent. Step-parent/grandparent/brother/sister/child/dependent are also included
- Victim of a serious crime
- Domestic problems (including divorce, separation, parental divorce).
- Exceptional work commitments (part time students and those repeating modules on a part time basis only)
- Difficulties associated with travel, but only where these difficulties are exceptional, impossible to anticipate in advance, not a result of poor planning or time management, and where there is clear independent evidence to substantiate the claim.
- Legal proceedings requiring attendance
- Other factors which may reasonably be deemed to have had an adverse impact comparable with those above.

The following are not grounds for mitigation:

- Misreading the examination timetable or any other information relating to timed assessments taking place at a particular point in time.
- IT failure, including but not limited to computer failure/storage device failure/printer failure, unless the University's LIS department provide proof that the University was at fault.
- Holidays or events such as weddings
- Submission of an incorrect document (eg a piece of work from another module or an incomplete draft of the assessment)
- Submission of the wrong file type or a corrupted file
- English not being the first language
- Work commitments for full time students
- Problems associated with travelling arrangements/holidays, traffic problems or stress caused by travel problems, unless these problems are exceptional, impossible to anticipate in advance, not a result of poor planning or time management, and where there is clear independent evidence to substantiate the claim. 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

### 7.3 Evidence in support of requests for the consideration of mitigating circumstances

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If a student has mitigating circumstances they may self-certify in support of an extension of up to and including 7 calendar days. See section on extensions for more information.

Requests for an extension of more than 7 calendar days, and all requests submitted to the Mitigating Circumstances Board in respect of a deferral, waiving of the late work penalty or extension to the registration period, must be accompanied by independent documentary evidence demonstrating the impact on the student. The following is intended to act as guidance only:

#### Medical

In order for the University to approve a request on medical grounds the evidence provided must:

- provide a clear diagnosis of illness or medical condition which would affect the student's ability to undertake assessment or to perform to the best of their ability. Evidence stating that, for example, 'the student informs me that they suffered from a virus.....' is not acceptable;
- provide the specific dates or a date range in which the student's performance or ability to undertake assessment would have been impaired. In cases where the nature of the illness or condition would have a significant and prolonged impact this must be clearly stated as students often submit claims for assessments due at different points in the academic year;
- be signed and dated by the medical practitioner and on headed paper which clearly details the name, address and contact details of the practice;
- be in English. Where the original documentation is in another language a certified translation must be provided
- in situations where the student has been affected by circumstances relating primarily to a third party (death or serious illness, for example) any medical evidence provided should relate to the impact on the student rather than on the third party.

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 mitigation.

The following provides some examples of the types of evidence which may be submitted to support a claim; it is intended to act as a guide and is indicative rather than exhaustive:

<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Examples of the type of evidence which may be submitted in support of a claim</b>
Close bereavement	A death certificate or confirmation from an independent relevant professional eg solicitor or undertaker, or an order of service from the funeral ceremony. If the student is severely affected by the death of someone not defined as close within this policy, evidence from an independent third party demonstrating the impact on the student would be required.
Work commitments (part time students and those repeating modules on a part time basis only)	A letter from the employer confirming that the student's workload during the period in question has been exceptional
Victim of a serious crime	Documentation from the police demonstrating that the student has reported a crime. An insurance claim or medical report may also be considered.
Disabilities for which reasonable adjustments are not yet in place and where the delay is not the fault of student	A letter or email from Student Futures
Exceptional and unforeseeable transport difficulties	Evidence of a major transportation incident, or a letter from the relevant transport company confirming the nature of the delay.

### **Practical problems**

The University will not take account of events such as 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 ensure their work is saved and not therefore lost.

### **Disability**

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

### **Evidence in respect of third parties**

The University is not permitted to consider documentation which includes personal information such as health details relating to a third party in support of any request for mitigation.

Where a student has been affected by the illness of a third party such as a family member or close friend, they must provide evidence which demonstrates the impact this had on them, for example via provision of a medical note.

The University is only permitted to consider documentation relating to a third party in the following cases:

- Where the third party is deceased.
- Where the third party is a dependent of the student's under the age of 12.

### **Evidence from the University**

In exceptional cases, a signed statement from the Director of Student Futures, or their 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, the relevant Head of Department, the nature of the mitigating circumstances are such that other independent documentary evidence could not reasonably be provided. The Director of Student Futures or nominee are under no obligation to provide a supporting letter and will only do so where they feel this is required by the circumstances.

If a student is ill during an examination or other formal timed assessment, a statement from a member of University staff who witnesses the condition of the student in or on leaving the assessment may be considered by the Mitigating Circumstances Board.

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.

## **7.4 Extensions**

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Students unable to complete an assessment on time may apply for an extension to the submission deadline, thereby allowing them to submit the work after the deadline without late-work penalties being imposed. Extensions are normally for relatively short periods of time as in all cases the mark for the work must be available to the Module Assessment Board at which the results of that module or modules are to be confirmed. If an academic department confirms that the length of extension requested by the student means the mark cannot be confirmed by the relevant Module Assessment Board, the student must instead request a deferral of the assessment to the next assessment period (see 7.5).

All extension requests, including those for which a student is self-certifying, must be submitted in advance of the deadline for the assessment for which the extension is sought; requests, including those for which a student self-certifies, submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

By their very nature, an extension is not possible for all types of assessment; it is not possible, for example, to have an extension for an assessment such as an examination or in-class test which takes place at a set time on a set date.

### **Evidence**

Students experiencing mitigating circumstances may self-certify for an extension of up to and including 7 calendar days; all extensions of more than 7 calendar days must be accompanied by independent documentary evidence (see 7.3). In cases where a student

self-certifies for 7 calendar days but then requires additional time, an additional request must be submitted with evidence.

## 7.5 Requests to the Mitigating Circumstances Board

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In cases where an extension is not appropriate, either because the assessment deadline has already passed, the nature of the assessment means an extension is not possible, or where an extension would give insufficient time for the assessment to be completed and marked in advance of the Module Assessment Board, the student should submit a claim to the Mitigating Circumstances Board. A claim can be submitted where the student has failed to submit the assessment, has submitted the assessment late, or where the assessment was submitted but where the student feels their mitigating circumstances meant the assessment was not completed to the best of their abilities.

Other than in the most exceptional circumstances, the outcome of a valid claim for mitigating circumstances shall be one of the following:

- a) to defer the assessment without penalty to the next assessment point. In all cases where the assessment was attempted, an approved deferral will replace any mark attained
- b) to have the late-work penalty revoked or reduced in the case of an assessment submitted after the deadline
- c) Where a student has a chronic condition or her/his circumstances are not improving, the Mitigating Circumstances Board may recommend an interruption of studies.

Under no circumstances will a mark ever be amended as a result of a claim to the Mitigating Circumstances Board.

The outcome determined by the Mitigating Circumstances Board shall be communicated 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.

If the claim is rejected by the Mitigating Circumstances Board no action will be taken and the original mark will stand, including the application of late work penalties where appropriate; if the student failed to submit the assessment a non-submission will be recorded.

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 breach of academic integrity.

In cases where a request for mitigating circumstances is approved, but the student is found to have breached the University's Academic Integrity Policy, any penalty imposed as a result of the breach of the Academic Integrity Policy will take precedence over the approved mitigating circumstances.

The constitution of the Mitigating Circumstances Board is as follows:

- A Dean, Deputy Dean, Associate Dean or a Head of an Academic Department, who will act as Chair of the Board
- Department Assessment Contacts or other members of staff nominated by their Head of Department or the Registrar, the number of which will be determined based on the volume of claims but will not fall below two

In attendance:

- Deputy Registrar and Head of Student Administration (or their nominee)
- Head of Academic Quality and Standards (or their nominee)
- Director of Student Futures (or their nominee)
- A member of Registry Services, who will service the meeting

In order to provide a more timely outcome for the student, claims may be considered in advance of the Mitigating Circumstances Board by staff nominated by the Head of the Academic Department or the Registrar. Those reviewing such claims are authorised to either accept the claim or refer it to the Mitigating Circumstances Board for further consideration; claims cannot be rejected via this pre-board process.

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

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The maximum periods of registration for University of Chester awards are set out in Section D of the Principles and Regulations. In exceptional cases, students may apply to the Mitigating Circumstances Board for an extension to their registration period. An extension 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 period of 12 months in excess of the approved period of registration; further extensions are not normally granted.

Where a request to extend a student's registration period is made on grounds related to disability, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, the extension will be approved where, in all the circumstances related to the student's application, it is deemed reasonable, provided that its approval would not result in the student's registration exceeding the maximum period permitted by the relevant Professional, Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB).

## 7.7 Application Process

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In respect of all the processes set out in this section of the Handbook, students must submit their applications online. Further specific details about the application process may be found on the Registry Services Portal pages.

## 7.8 Late Work

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1. The following applies to any piece of assessed work for which a submission time and 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

submission of an essay or project but not the presentation of a seminar, a drama performance, a written examination).

- Assessed work submitted late will be penalised and the penalty incurred will be 5 marks for work submitted up to 24 hours after the deadline and 5 marks per day (or part thereof) after this, including weekends, e.g.:

	<i>Intrinsic Merit</i> (% mark awarded by markers)	<i>Mark Following Penalty</i> %
Work up to 24 hours late	50	45
Work up to 48 hours late	50	40
Work up to 72 hours late	50	35
and so on, to 0.		

- The penalty for late work is applied only to the assessment component which was submitted late.
- 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.
- Assessed work submitted late should be marked in the usual way so that the student is given feedback on the standard of work achieved.
- In order to ensure that students encountering technical difficulties with an online submission have access to support from LIS, deadlines should not fall on a Friday and must be set for times during the working day. These must be publicised in the appropriate module handbooks or equivalent.
- 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.



University of  
Chester

# Assessment Boards

SECTION

8

Quality and Standards Manual

## HANDBOOK F: The Assessment of Students at Levels 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught Provision at Level 8

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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 Assessment Boards.

A Module Assessment Board has responsibility for the outcomes of modules assigned to that Board. An Awards Assessment Board has responsibility for the outcomes of the Programmes of Study assigned to that Board. The appropriate Awards 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 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, confirming marks and reporting on academic standards and the processes of assessment.
- Awards 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. Awards Assessment Boards shall meet on pre-determined dates and in line with the approved schedule. A Chief External Examiner has the right to attend any Awards Assessment Boards but will normally attend at least two boards per academic year, by arrangement with the Deputy Registrar and Head of Student Administration.

## 8.2 Terms of Reference and Membership

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### *AWARDS ASSESSMENT BOARDS*

#### Terms of Reference

- To consider the overall profiles of students at Levels 3, 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 condoned.
- To determine the candidates whose studies are to be terminated.

#### Membership

- Dean or Associate Dean of Faculty (Chair)
- Chief External Examiner<sup>1</sup>
- Representative of each Module Assessment Board which is subordinate to the Awards Assessment Board (normally, the Departmental Assessment Contact or Head of Department). Module Assessment Boards for professional programmes may be represented by more than one member.
- Head of Academic Quality and Standards (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)

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<sup>1</sup> An Awards Assessment Board can take place and decisions can be made without the presence of a Chief External Examiner.

- Representative of Registry 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).<sup>2</sup> 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 Module Assessment

### *Levels 3, 4, 5 and 6*

The following percentage marking scale shall be adopted for all academic provision at Levels 3, 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

<sup>2</sup> In the unavoidable absence of both the Head and Deputy Head of Department, the Board may be chaired by the Dean, Deputy Dean or Associate Dean of the relevant Faculty

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.

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.

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.

### *Levels 7 and 8*

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

<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Classification</b>
70 - 100	Distinction
60 - 69	Merit
50 - 59	Pass
0 - 49	Fail

The minimum aggregate pass mark for each module to which these regulations apply shall be 50%. 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 50% 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 49% 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.

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.

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.

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

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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 breaching the academic integrity policy

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 must have signalled their approval of the marks in order for the marks to go forward for consideration at the Awards Assessment Board.

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

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

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### Condonement of Failure

#### **Level 3**

In the case of a student who is registered for a minimum of 120 credit points at Level 3, 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 condonement of failed modules up to and including 20 credits at Level 3. 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. If these conditions are met, condonement 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 condoned module(s), although the fail marks themselves will stand and will be recorded on the student's transcript.

#### Level 4

In the case of a student who is registered for a minimum of 120 credit points at 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 condonement of failed modules up to and including 40 credits at Level 4. In order for condonement 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. If these conditions are met, condonement 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 condoned 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 who is 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 condonement of failed 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. If these conditions are met, condonement 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 condoned 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 who is 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 condonement of failed 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. If these conditions are met, condonement 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 condoned module(s), although the fail marks themselves will stand and will be recorded on the student's transcript.

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



Condonement 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 condonement is permitted at the level, condonement 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%.

Where, exceptionally, students are registered for programmes based upon a 15-credit modular structure, condonement as stated herein shall apply to up to 15 credits at Level 3, 30 credits at Level 4, 30 credits at Level 5 and 15 credits at Level 6.

Progression: Level 3 to Level 4, Level 4 to Level 5 and Level 5 to Level 6

Full time undergraduate students shall not be allowed to progress to the next level of study until all modules at a given level have been passed or condoned. However, a student with no more than 20 credits outstanding (deferral, reassessment or third assessment attempt) shall be allowed to progress conditionally to the next level of study. A student with more than 20 credits but no more than 40 credits outstanding shall be allowed to progress conditionally to the next level of study where the outstanding component(s) within the outstanding module(s) amount to no more than the equivalent of a full 20 credit module. A student with more than 20 credits but no more than 40 credits of outstanding assessment shall not be allowed to progress conditionally to the next level of study where the outstanding component(s) within the outstanding module(s) amount to more than the equivalent of a full 20 credit module. In both cases the percentage weightings assigned to the assessment components and the credit value of the modules shall be used in this calculation.

A student with more than 40 credits outstanding shall not be allowed to progress to the next level of study.

In no circumstances shall a student be permitted to commence Level 6 study until they have successfully completed all required credits at Levels 3 and 4.

Where a decision on a student who would be allowed to progress conditionally under the criteria set out above could not be taken by the Awards Assessment Board, and is taken more than 4 weeks after the commencement of the next level of study, the student will not normally be permitted to progress until the next occasion on which the level of study is offered. In these cases, the Assessment Review Board shall take into consideration the student's ability to cope with the additional assessment burden and the period of time the student will have already missed.

Students granted an opportunity for conditional progression may not cite the additional workload as a mitigating circumstance for purposes of requesting an extension, deferral or academic appeal. If a student does not wish to take up the offer of conditional progression they should confirm this in writing within the first 4 weeks following commencement of the next level of study.

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 Levels 3 and 4.

Part time students may register for modules at different levels during the same academic year. However, where a third assessment attempt has been granted in more than 20 credits, 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 Levels 3 and 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.

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.

#### **1. 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 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 Integrity Panel may make a recommendation on the calculation of the student's average mark or degree classification.

## 2. 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 condoned 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 Integrity 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.

### **3. 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 Integrity 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.

### **4. 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.

### **5. 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 (or their nominee) may take decisions on granting reassessments (or third assessment attempts), progression and awards, on behalf of the Board.

An Awards Assessment Board may, in exceptional circumstances, also delegate its authority to a subsidiary examination committee. Where an examination committee is required this must be approved by the preceding Awards Assessment Board. Examination Committees may not make awards. Further guidance is given in Appendix 8E.

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

### **6. Reassessment**

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

- the module is the subject of condonement
- an academic integrity panel has determined that reassessment is not permitted

- for professional or other reasons, approved by Academic Quality and Enhancement Committee on behalf of Senate, restrictions on reassessment opportunities within the programme should apply,
- their registration period has expired

Unless permitted by the in-year reassessment scheme, full time students at Levels 3, 4, 5 and 6 cannot be offered reassessment until the results have been confirmed by the Awards Assessment Board and will not be presented to the Awards Assessment Board until all module results at the level have been confirmed by the Module Assessment Board.

Students on pre-registration programmes, where condonement of failed modules is not permitted, may be presented to the Awards Assessment Board before all module results at the level have been confirmed by the Module Assessment Board.

The Awards Assessment Board shall automatically offer a third assessment attempt to a student who attempted or deferred **at least one component** for which reassessment was due. Students failing to attempt or defer **at least one component** for which reassessment was due will have their studies terminated. A student with reassessment in only one module will be offered a third assessment attempt, even if they failed to submit any of the components for which reassessment was due.

A student whose studies are terminated on the grounds stated above will, via their online results letter, be offered the opportunity to resume their programme to undertake third attempts in the failed components of the failed modules. In order to accept this offer, they must complete and submit the appropriate form to the Assessment Team in Registry Services, by the deadline stipulated in the official results information published online following the Awards Assessment Board at which studies were 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% at Levels 3, 4, 5 and 6 and 50% at Levels 7 and 8. 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 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% (levels 3, 4, 5 and 6)/49% (levels 7 and 8), or the arithmetical mark, whichever is the lower. Such module failure cannot be the subject of condonement.

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

At the point of reassessment, those components in which the student has already gained a pass mark 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% (levels 3, 4, 5 and 6) or 50% (levels 7 and 8).

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 in the same assessment period.

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% (levels 3, 4, 5 and 6) or 50% (levels 7 and 8) upon reassessment.

Where a student has both deferred and failed components, but the failed components have marks of 20% and above, at the next assessment point they are expected to submit only the deferred components; should the student feel it is in their best interests to also submit the failed components they may do so but the module mark will then be capped at 40% (levels 3, 4, 5 and 6) or 50% (levels 7 and 8).

Reassessment must be undertaken at the point determined by the Awards 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 June 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. Unless permitted by the in-year reassessment scheme, 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 Assessment 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.

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.

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 Assessment Board shall make appropriate alternative arrangements if necessary.

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 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught Provision at Level 8

2020 – 2021

Authored by: Registry Services  
Date of Approval: June 2020  
Version: 1.0

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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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Students will receive the marks/results for individual modules, and for each individual assessment component as set out in the module descriptor.

### 9.2 Disclosure of assessment results to students

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In cases where marks are released to students by academic departments; for example where marks and feedback are made available on Feedback Studio, these results must be clearly labelled as provision. Final, official assessment results are then issued on e-vision after confirmation by the Awards/Progression Assessment Board. These final, 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 e-vision at the relevant times. Students will be sent an email informing them when their results have been confirmed and are available on e-vision, with these results available for two weeks following publication.** Students are advised to discuss their results with their Personal Academic Tutor or the relevant module/programme leaders.

On completion of an award, the final results profile will take the form of a Higher Education Achievement Report or 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 in addition to via e-vision. The volume of Higher Education Achievement Reports/Diploma Supplements issued after each Awards/Progression Assessment Board means it can take up to two weeks for results to be posted; during this time students will be able to access their results via e-vision

### 9.3 Requests made before marks are finally determined

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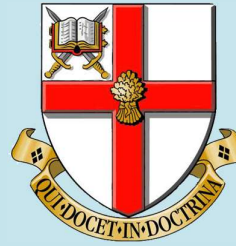
Registry Services will only issue a hard copy of final results which have been confirmed by an Awards/Progression Assessment Board; hard copies of provisional results transcripts will not be issued by Registry Services.

### 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.***



University of  
Chester

# Academic Appeals Procedure

SECTION

10

Quality and Standards Manual

## HANDBOOK F:

The Assessment of Students  
at Levels 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught  
Provision at Level 8

2020 – 2021

Date of Approval: July 2020  
Authored By: Academic Quality & Standards (AQS)  
Version: 1.0

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- 10A Academic Appeal Form AA-1
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## 1. Introduction

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The academic appeals procedure is intended to allow students of the University of Chester to raise concerns about their academic progress, where there is evidence to suggest that it is reasonable to do so. The procedure is designed to ensure that these concerns are fully considered and that, where appropriate, action is taken to deal with them.

It is in the student's interest to raise concerns informally with the department(s) concerned prior to submitting an academic appeal. This is especially true in cases where the student believes that there is clear evidence of an administrative error which could be corrected without the need to submit a formal appeal.

The academic appeals procedure does not allow students to challenge the marks that they have been awarded for a particular piece of assessment. The decisions made by the Examiners about the academic value of a piece of work are academic judgements and cannot be overturned.

The academic appeals procedure is designed to enable students to raise concerns relating to decisions of the Awards Assessment Board, the Progression Assessment Board, the Mitigating Circumstances Board and, in limited circumstances, the Academic Integrity Review Panel and its subgroup. Other matters that do not relate directly to these, such as alleged poor teaching, supervision or academic guidance, should be raised at the time through student representation arrangements or via the complaints procedure.

When a student or former student of the University submits an appeal they are referred to as 'the appellant'.

The academic appeals procedure is primarily evidence based. It is the appellant's responsibility alone to provide sufficient independent documentary evidence to substantiate the contents of their appeal. An appeal is highly unlikely to succeed if no suitable evidence is provided. The University will publish separate guidance on the type of evidence that appellants may wish to consider submitting.

Throughout these procedures, where reference is made to specific post-holders, the line manager of that post-holder may nominate another person to act instead.

Throughout these procedures, indicative timescales are given in calendar days. However, where a deadline (either for the appellant or the University) falls on a Saturday, Sunday, Bank Holiday or on any other day that the University is closed, the deadline is extended to 2pm the next weekday (i.e. Monday – Friday).

## 2. Rights and Responsibilities

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- 2.1. Any decision that is the subject of an academic appeal remains in force while the appeal is being considered and the appellant must abide by that decision until the academic appeals procedure has been completed. Where an appellant has completed a programme of study, they must not attend any award ceremony until the academic appeal is completed. Attendance at a ceremony will invalidate the appeal and all decisions will stand.

- 2.2. The University undertakes that any student who submits an academic appeal under this procedure will not be academically disadvantaged for having done so. Any student who believes that they have been disadvantaged by submitting an academic appeal at any point should contact the Head of Academic Quality and Standards immediately.
- 2.3. The University accepts that any student who submits an academic appeal under this procedure will do so in good faith and that any statements made in writing or verbally are truthful. However, it reserves the right to investigate the authenticity of any documents submitted in support of an academic appeal. Any student found to have deliberately attempted to deceive, manipulate or in any way interfere with the operation of this procedure will be subject to disciplinary action.
- 2.4. All members of staff who have been involved in the investigation, management or administration of an academic appeal will observe the requirements for confidentiality. The appellant has the right to restrict the extent to which any part of their appeal submission is disclosed outside of Academic Quality & Standards and to the Academic Appeals Board. However, appellants exercising this right must be aware that doing so may impair the full investigation of the case.
- 2.5. As long as the appellant has not had their studies at the University terminated or has otherwise completed their programme of study, they will retain the same rights of access to the resources and support of the University as any other student. Following submission of an appeal, communication which directly relates to the substance of that appeal must be channelled through the Academic Standards team in Academic Quality & Standards.
- 2.6. The University will use its best endeavours to ensure that academic appeals are dealt with in a timely way. If the appellant meets all of the deadlines outlined in these procedures, a decision by the Academic Appeals Board should normally be made within 60 days of the date of submission. Where any delay is caused by the University, the appellant will be kept informed and reasons will be provided.
- 2.7. To facilitate the swift handling of appeals, communication will be to the appellant's University of Chester email address and may be copied to one other alternate email address specified by the appellant. It is the appellant's responsibility to check their email regularly during the appeals process. The University will regard any email sent to an appellant by 4pm (Monday-Friday) as having been received on the same day.
- 2.8. If at any point in the conduct of an appeal under these procedures it appears that other students who may or may not have appealed have been affected by an alleged or identified irregularity, this will be reported to the Head of Academic Quality and Standards and the Deputy Registrar who jointly shall be empowered to instruct that appeals are considered on behalf of all students believed to have been affected.
- 2.9. In most cases the outcome of a successful appeal will be to allow the appellant a further opportunity to be assessed. Therefore, the academic judgements made by the Examiners and the marks agreed by them will not be altered unless an administrative error has been identified which warrants such a course of action.

- 2.10. Appellants who are registered for or seeking to return to a professional programme may be referred to the Professional Suitability Procedure where their appeal submission or supporting evidence suggests that it would be prudent to do so. Such a decision may be made by the Head of Academic Quality and Standards, the Academic Appeals Board or the Assessment Review Board.
- 2.11. The University will not be liable for any expenses an appellant might incur arising out of an Academic Appeal, irrespective of whether the appeal is successful or not.
- 2.12. The appellant is permitted to withdraw their appeal at any point until 5pm on the day prior to its hearing by the Academic Appeals Board. After this time, an appeal may not be withdrawn. In the event of the appeal being upheld, the appellant must abide by the decision of the Examiners which shall be determined by the Assessment Review Board.

### 3. Grounds for Appeal

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- 3.1. A student may appeal against a decision of the **Awards Assessment Board** or the **Progression Assessment Board** on the following grounds only:
  - 3.1.1. That there were procedural or administrative irregularities in the conduct of the assessment process;
  - 3.1.2. That there were factors which materially affected the appellant's performance, provided that these circumstances were not known by the Examiners **and** there are compelling reasons why the appellant failed to follow the procedures for requesting an extension or deferral or for submitting an application to the Mitigating Circumstances Board;
  - 3.1.3. That the appellant had been assessed as having a specific learning difference during the current academic session, provided that the provisions of section 5 of this procedure has been adhered to.
- 3.2. A student may appeal against a decision of the **Mitigating Circumstances Board** on the following grounds only:
  - 3.2.1. That there is evidence of procedural or administrative irregularity in the conduct of the Mitigating Circumstances Board;
  - 3.2.2. That there exists some new evidence which, for compelling reasons, could not be made available prior to the meeting of the Mitigating Circumstances Board.
- 3.3. A student may appeal against a decision of the **Academic Integrity Review Panel or its subgroup** on the following grounds only:
  - 3.3.1. That there is evidence of procedural or administrative irregularity in the conduct of the published procedure relating to breaches of the Academic Integrity Policy;



- 3.3.2. That the appellant, for compelling reasons that can be substantiated, was unable to mount a defence of the allegation of a breach of the Academic Integrity Policy.

## 4. Submission of an Academic Appeal

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- 4.1. A student may only submit an appeal after the formal publication of results by the Awards Assessment Board or the Progression Assessment Board, or after receiving final notification of the decision of the Mitigating Circumstances Board, the Academic Integrity Review Panel or its subgroup.
- 4.2. In all cases, appeal submissions must be made using the appropriate form and be received by the University no later than **10 days** after the date of publication of results or notification of outcome.
- 4.3. Academic Appeals may be submitted as email attachments to [academicappeals@chester.ac.uk](mailto:academicappeals@chester.ac.uk). Where an appellant chooses to submit an appeal by email, it must meet the following requirements:
  - 4.3.1. Documentary evidence provided in support of an appeal (e.g. medical certificates, letters etc.), must be attached to the email as **full colour scans** and preferably as PDF files.
  - 4.3.2. It is the appellant's responsibility to be able to produce the original documents submitted in support of an academic appeal if requested to do so by the University. Failure to produce such original documents will invalidate the appeal.
- 4.4. Academic Appeals may be submitted in hardcopy to one of the following authorised receiving departments:
  - 4.4.1. Academic Quality & Standards (by post only);
  - 4.4.2. Chester Students' Union (in person only);
  - 4.4.3. Student Welfare / Disability & Inclusion (located in Student Futures).
- 4.5. Irrespective of the method chosen to submit, it is the appellant's responsibility to ensure safe receipt of an appeal submission:
  - 4.5.1. If emailed or submitted to the University in person, the appellant should expect to receive an acknowledgement from Academic Quality & Standards within 7 days.
  - 4.5.2. Where the appellant chooses to post their appeal submission, they are strongly advised to use a suitable tracking service. The appellant should expect to receive an acknowledgement from Academic Quality & Standards within a reasonable amount of time depending upon where the documents were posted from and, in every case, should make contact if no acknowledgement is received within 14 days of posting.

- 4.5.3. Appellants submitting appeals from outside the UK are likely to find it more convenient to make their submission via email. However, if this is not possible, the appellant is advised to notify Academic Quality & Standards to ensure that the submission is not inadvertently considered late.
- 4.6. Where it is not possible to provide all of the supporting documentation with the appeal submission, the appellant must clearly indicate this and undertake to provide it separately, normally within no more than 10 days.
- 4.7. The Academic Standards team in Academic Quality & Standards will receive appeal submissions.
- 4.8. If an appeal is submitted late it will not normally be considered unless the Quality Manager (Academic Standards) determines that this would be unreasonable in the circumstances. An appellant who submits a late appeal must clearly explain why it was not possible to adhere to the relevant deadline.
- 4.9. The appellant may give consent for their appeal to be discussed with a nominated third party by indicating this on the Academic Appeal Form.
- 4.10. Where the appellant supplies supporting evidence that is not in English, it is their responsibility to arrange for translation by a qualified, certified translator with copies appropriately marked.

## 5. Appeals relating to Specific Learning Differences

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- 5.1. If a student wishes to appeal a decision of the **Awards Assessment Board** or the **Progression Assessment Board** on ground 3.1.3 (diagnosis of a Specific Learning Difference in the current academic session *and* not being in receipt of the reasonable adjustments for assessment indicated on the student's Inclusion Plan), the student must contact the Disability & Inclusion team as possible.
- 5.2. The Disability & Inclusion team will notify Academic Quality & Standards of any student wishing to submit an appeal on ground 3.1.3 and the deadline for receipt of the appeal shall automatically be extended to **21 days**.
- 5.3. The Disability & Inclusion team will, in consultation with the appellant, determine whether **all** of the following hold:
  - 5.3.1. The student had been diagnosed in the current academic session, and before the meeting of the relevant Awards Assessment Board or Progression Assessment Board; **and**
  - 5.3.2. The Disability & Inclusion team is in receipt of a report compiled by an Educational Psychologist or other person qualified to diagnose Specific Learning Differences; **and**
  - 5.3.3. The student had not been afforded all opportunities agreed in a full Inclusion Plan to support the assessment or examination in question.

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- 5.4. If the Disability & Inclusion team is unable to verify that all of the provisions of 5.3 hold, the appellant will be notified and advised of their right to submit an appeal on any of the other grounds listed at 3.1.
- 5.5. If the Disability & Inclusion team verifies that all of the provisions of 5.3 hold, the Academic Appeals Form should be completed in consultation with the appellant and sent to Academic Quality & Standards with the following:
  - 5.5.1. Confirmation that the appellant had been diagnosed in accordance with the requirement of 5.3.1. in the current academic session;
  - 5.5.2. A copy of the report compiled by an Education Psychologist or other person qualified to diagnose Specific Learning Differences;
  - 5.5.3. A copy of the appellant's full Inclusion Plan; and
  - 5.5.4. Confirmation that the appellant had not been afforded all opportunities agreed in a full Inclusion Plan in accordance with the requirement of 5.3.2.
- 5.6. On receipt of the Academic Appeals Form and other documentation outlined in 5.5, the Head of Academic Quality and Standards is empowered to grant a deferral of assessment without the need to convene a meeting of the Academic Appeals Board.
- 5.7. In no circumstances will a deferral of assessment be granted in respect of assessments taken in a previous academic session.
- 5.8. Where the Head of Academic Quality and Standards determines that there is doubt about whether the requirements of 5.3. or 5.5. have been fulfilled, the matter shall be sent to the Academic Appeals Board for resolution. Where this happens, both the appellant and the Disability & Inclusion team will be notified.

## 6. Preliminary Stage

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- 6.1. The Quality Manager (Academic Standards) will nominate an Officer to initially consider appeal submissions. The Officer will review the submission and may make some limited investigations, only to the extent of verifying information contained in the appeal.
- 6.2. The Officer will make a recommendation to the Quality Manager (Academic Standards) or nominee that either:
  - 6.2.1. There are sufficient reasons to accept the submission for further investigation; or
  - 6.2.2. The appeal should be rejected.
- 6.3. A decision to reject the appeal at this stage may be based on any of the following:

- 6.3.1. The appeal has been submitted outside of the stipulated deadline, the appellant has not given a sufficient explanation for the delay and nothing in the submission gives cause to suspect that it would be unreasonable to declare it ineligible;
- 6.3.2. The appeal is based wholly on disagreement with academic judgement;
- 6.3.3. The appeal is not accompanied by appropriate or relevant independent documentary evidence, the appellant has not indicated that this is to follow and/or the appellant has failed to provide documentary evidence requested by the Officer by the stipulated deadline;
- 6.3.4. The appeal is based wholly on factors which were outside of the University's control and which the appellant might reasonably have been expected to foresee and/or taken reasonable steps to avoid.
- 6.4. If the appellant has indicated that further documentary evidence is to follow, it will normally be expected within **10 days** of the appeal submission deadline. Where the appellant cannot meet this deadline, it is their responsibility to notify Academic Quality & Standards (Academic Standards) and suggest a reasonable deadline.
- 6.5. The appellant alone is responsible for the content of their appeal submission and any accompanying documentary evidence. However, where it is reasonable to do so based on the full submission received, the Officer or the Quality Manager (Academic Standards) may delay the decision and invite the appellant to provide further documentary evidence. Where this happens, the appellant will normally be invited to supply evidence within a reasonable amount of time (normally no less than 10 and no more than 28 days).
- 6.6. The decision of the Quality Manager (Academic Standards) will be communicated to the appellant by the Officer, normally within **7 days** of the deadline for the appeal submission. If the appeal had been submitted late, or if the appellant was asked to provide further evidence, the decision will be communicated within **14 days** of the date of the submission or receipt of evidence.
- 6.7. If the decision is to **reject** the appeal at this stage, the Officer will:
  - 6.7.1. Write to the appellant giving reasons for the decision to reject the appeal;
  - 6.7.2. Explain any additional information that was requested of the department/service which was the subject of the appeal at the preliminary stage;
  - 6.7.3. Explain whether there might be a different procedure that the appellant can use to pursue the case (for example, the Complaints Procedure);
  - 6.7.4. Explain the review procedure and the grounds upon which an appellant whose appeal has been rejected at the preliminary stage can request a review of that decision;

- 6.7.5. Explain the procedure for requesting a Completion of Procedures Statement if the appellant does not believe that they have grounds to request a review; and
  - 6.7.6. Offer the opportunity of a telephone conversation or, in some circumstances, a meeting with the appellant within **28 days**. Any such conversation or meeting will be to clarify the reasons why the appeal was rejected and is not an opportunity to have the decision reviewed or overturned.
- 6.8. If the decision is to **accept the appeal for further investigation**, the Officer will:
- 6.8.1. Write to the appellant to explain that the appeal is to be investigated further and give an estimated date when the case might be heard by the Academic Appeals Board (however appellants should note that this date is subject to change to accommodate the prioritisation of cases according to 10.3.);
  - 6.8.2. Explain the possible outcomes if the Academic Appeals Board was to uphold the appeal, where it seems that the appellant's expectations go beyond what the Academic Appeals Board might reasonably be expected to do.
- 6.9. If in the opinion of the Quality Manager (Academic Standards) there is clear evidence of an administrative error, the department(s) concerned will be invited to correct the error in accordance with the procedure outlined in section 9.

## 7. Review of the Preliminary Stage

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- 7.1. If an appeal is dismissed at the preliminary stage, the appellant may request a review of that decision by the Head of Academic Quality and Standards.
- 7.2. A request for a review of the decision at the preliminary stage may only be made on the following grounds:
  - 7.2.1. That the preliminary stage was not conducted in accordance with the procedures outlined in section 6; and/or
  - 7.2.2. That new evidence has come to light which could not have been disclosed in time to be considered at the preliminary stage.
- 7.3. An appellant wishing to request a review of the decision at the preliminary stage must do so in writing to the Head of Academic Quality and Standards within **10 days** of receiving the letter outlining the reasons why the appeal was dismissed.
- 7.4. If, on receipt of the request for review, the Head of Academic Quality and Standards identifies any potential conflict of interest, a Dean of an Academic Faculty will be asked to undertake the review.

- 7.5. The Head of Academic Quality and Standards will consider the request and determine either:
  - 7.5.1. The decision to reject the appeal at the preliminary stage should stand and that a Completion of Procedures Statement should be issued; or
  - 7.5.2. The decision to reject the appeal at the preliminary stage should be overturned and that the case should be accepted for further investigation.
- 7.6. When considering the request, the Head of Academic Quality and Standards will have due regard to whether the decision to dismiss the appeal at the preliminary stage was reasonable in all of the circumstances.
- 7.7. The decision of the Head of Academic Quality and Standards will be communicated to the appellant, normally within **21 days** of the date that the request was received.

## 8. Investigatory Stage

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- 8.1. The Quality Manager (Academic Standards) will nominate an Investigating Officer to handle an appeal that has been accepted for investigation. The appellant will receive the name and contact details of the Investigating Officer.
- 8.2. Where necessary, the Investigating Officer will contact the appellant to clarify any aspect of the appeal submission at any point during the investigatory stage.
- 8.3. Where the appeal relates to a decision of the Mitigating Circumstances Board, the Academic Integrity Review Panel or its subgroup, the Investigating Officer will normally request information from the Secretary of the relevant Board or Panel.
- 8.4. In all other cases the Investigating Officer will, subject to the provisions of 2.4, forward the submission to the department(s) referred to in the appeal with a request to:
  - 8.4.1. Provide a response addressing the central issues of the appeal, including the reasons and justifications that the appellant advances;
  - 8.4.2. Provide details of any additional factors which might have a bearing on the case;
  - 8.4.3. Provide details of any actions undertaken in relation to the appellant and the case;
  - 8.4.4. Provide details of any constraints imposed by any Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body;
  - 8.4.5. Respond to any specific questions which the Investigating Officer feels are pertinent to the appeal.
- 8.5. If the appellant has indicated that some part of their appeal submission or supporting evidence should not be disclosed to the department(s) referred to in the

appeal, they may opt to provide a summary instead. The Investigating Officer may consult with the appellant to determine what may be disclosed.

- 8.6. The department(s) referred to in the appeal will be asked to respond within a reasonable amount of time which shall not normally exceed **28 days**. Where additional time is requested, reasons for this will be communicated to the appellant.
  - 8.6.1. If a department fails to respond within a reasonable amount of time, the Academic Appeals Board will be notified. The Board may draw whatever conclusions it wishes from a failure to respond or it may compel the department to respond under powers delegated to it by Senate.
- 8.7. On receipt of the responses from the department(s), the Investigating Officer will review and decide one of the following:
  - 8.7.1. The department(s) have accepted that the appeal submission is with merit **and** there would be no detriment to the appellant or other students by seeking a resolution to the case prior to its hearing by the Academic Appeals Board; or
  - 8.7.2. The case should be heard by the Academic Appeals Board.
- 8.8. Appeals which relate to decisions of the Mitigating Circumstances Board, the Academic Integrity Review Panel or its subgroup will normally only be resolved by a hearing of the Academic Appeals Board.
- 8.9. Where the Investigating Officer decides in accordance with 8.7.1., the decision must be ratified by the Quality Manager (Academic Standards) and the procedure at Section 9 must be followed.
- 8.10. Where the Investigating Officer decides in accordance with 8.7.2., the response(s) received will be summarised and forwarded to the appellant. The appellant will also be advised of the date that the Academic Appeals Board will hear the case.
- 8.11. Appellants who wish to exercise their right to see the full case file before it is presented to the Academic Appeals Board will be notified that this may cause a delay to the hearing. This is to allow additional time for the file to be checked in order that the confidentiality of others is not inadvertently breached.
- 8.12. If they wish, the appellant may comment in writing on the response received from the department(s) and this will be presented to the Academic Appeals Board. However, the appellant may not introduce new evidence which, in the opinion of the Academic Appeals Board, could have been disclosed with the original submission.

## 9. Resolution Prior to the Academic Appeals Board

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- 9.1. During the course of the investigation, if it becomes clear that the department(s) referred to in the appeal accept that the case is with merit, it might be possible to resolve the matter without it being heard by the Appeals Board. Normally, this will



only happen where an administrative error is clearly identified (for example, an incorrect mark having been entered).

- 9.2. The Investigating Officer will present the case to the Head of Academic Quality and Standards who will decide whether or not to permit an attempt at resolution. A decision to allow such an attempt may only be made where the Head of Academic Quality and Standards is satisfied that there would be no detriment to the appellant or other students by concluding the case without it being heard by the Academic Appeals Board.
- 9.3. On behalf of the Head of Academic Quality and Standards, the Investigating Officer will liaise with the department(s) concerned to determine how the error might be corrected. This will normally entail the department(s) following another procedure, for example, the mark amendment process. A reasonable deadline for resolving the error will be agreed.
- 9.4. The Investigating Officer will write to the appellant to explain the proposed course of action and confirm that the appeal will be suspended while the matter is dealt with.
- 9.5. In very exceptional circumstances, the appellant may challenge the proposed course of action. Where this happens, the appellant must give their reasons in writing. The case will be referred to the Academic Appeals Board and the appellant advised of the date that the case will be heard.
- 9.6. The department(s) concerned will confirm to the Investigating Officer when the agreed course of action has been completed. The Investigating Officer will write to the appellant with details of the outcome.
- 9.7. If any procedure that is initiated does not result in a new assessment outcome, or if the department(s) concerned refuse the suggested resolution, the appeal will be recommenced.
- 9.8. The appellant will have **10 days** in which to reject the outcome and request that the case is heard by the Academic Appeals Board. If the appellant fails to respond within this time, it will be assumed that the resolution has been accepted.

## 10. Hearings of the Academic Appeals Board

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- 10.1. The Academic Appeals Board operates with the full delegated authority of Senate. This means that it has the power to require staff and students of the University to make written submissions, give evidence and answer any questions.
- 10.2. The Academic Appeals Board will meet as frequently as necessary to deal with cases referred to it in a timely way. Normally, it will meet not less than once per calendar month.
- 10.3. Cases will be referred to the Academic Appeals Board according to the following order of priority:

- 10.3.1. Appeals against decisions which have led to the appellant's programme of study being terminated;
- 10.3.2. Appeals against decisions which have led to the appellant being prevented from progressing to the next level of study;
- 10.3.3. Appeals against decisions which have resulted in the appellant's ability to commence (or continue) employment is affected, where this can be confirmed independently by the employer concerned in writing;
- 10.3.4. Appeals against decisions not covered by 10.3.1., 10.3.2. or 10.3.3., but where the appellant has not yet completed their programme of study;
- 10.3.5. Appeals where the effect of a decision to uphold would result in the appellant needing to undertake further assessment;
- 10.3.6. Appeals which do not fall into one of the previous categories;
- 10.3.7. Appeals received late, but which were accepted for investigation.
- 10.4. The members of the Academic Appeals Board will be appointed by Senate for a two year term. Retiring members may be re-nominated.
- 10.5. Each Academic Appeals Board will be composed as follows:
  - 10.5.1. A Chair, who will normally be a Dean, Associate Dean or a Director of School; and
  - 10.5.2. Normally two members of academic staff.
- 10.6. Wherever possible no member of the Academic Appeals Board should work in the department(s) within which the appellant's programme of study resides. Any member from the appellant's department(s) will be asked to declare any perceived interest which could give rise to conflict at the beginning of the meeting and this will be recorded. If deemed appropriate by the Chair, the member will absent themselves from any relevant areas of discussion.
- 10.7. The Quality Manager (Academic Standards), or other nominee of the Head of Academic Quality and Standards will attend the Academic Appeals Board to give regulatory advice and make a record of the hearing, but will not be a member of the Board.
- 10.8. The appellant is not permitted to attend the hearing.
- 10.9. Other than through the presentation of their case via the means explained in this procedure, appellants must not seek to influence the Chair or members of the Academic Appeals Board or in any other way seek to sway the operation of the Academic Appeals Procedure.
- 10.10. For each case, the relevant Investigating Officer will be present to answer any questions about the investigatory stage and will hear the full deliberations and decisions of the Board in order to communicate them to the appellant. The Investigating Officer will not offer an opinion on the validity or otherwise of the

appeal submission and the academic members of the Board alone will make the decision on whether to uphold or reject the appeal.

- 10.11. Neither the University nor the appellant may be legally represented at meetings of the Academic Appeals Board. However, the Academic Appeals Board may take advice from a member (or members) of staff of the University with appropriate clinical expertise or from others with such expertise relating solely to the interpretation of medical or other evidence supplied in support of an academic appeal. Any such advice is to be requested and received in writing and made available to the appellant.
- 10.12. The Academic Appeals Board will consider each case individually and on its own merits.
- 10.13. The Academic Appeals Board will not be bound by legal rules of evidence nor by previous decisions and in all cases will have due regard to whether a decision that is the subject of an appeal was reasonable in all the circumstances.
- 10.14. For each case, the Academic Appeals Board will receive a file containing the following:
  - 10.14.1. A copy of the appellant's original submission with all supporting evidence provided;
  - 10.14.2. A copy of any report or response received during the investigatory stage;
  - 10.14.3. A copy of any further comments made in writing by the appellant following receipt of the responses received during the investigatory stage;
  - 10.14.4. A copy of the appellant's most recent academic results transcript.

## 11. Outcomes of the Academic Appeals Board

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- 11.1. For each case, the Academic Appeals Board will decide either:
  - 11.1.1. The appeal should be upheld in part or in full or;
  - 11.1.2. The appeal should be dismissed and the original decision should stand.
- 11.2. Where the Academic Appeals Board decides in accordance with 11.1.1. it will determine a remedy using the procedure at section 12. The appellant will receive a letter from the Investigating Officer within **14 days** of the decision containing the following:
  - 11.2.1. Where necessary, the reasons for the decision in relation to each part of the appeal submission; and
  - 11.2.2. Details of the remedy decided upon by the Academic Appeals Board.

- 11.3. Where the Academic Appeals Board decides in accordance with 11.1.2. it will give full reasons for the decision. The appellant will receive a letter from the Investigating Officer within **14 days** of the decision containing the following:
- 11.3.1. The reasons for the decision in relation to each part of the appeal submission;
  - 11.3.2. Advice on whether there might be a different procedure that the appellant can use to pursue the case (for example, the Complaints Procedure);
  - 11.3.3. An explanation of the review procedure and the grounds upon which an appellant whose appeal has been dismissed can request a review of that decision;
  - 11.3.4. An explanation of the procedure for requesting a Completion of Procedures Statement if the appellant does not believe that they have grounds to request a review; and
  - 11.3.5. An offer of a telephone conversation or, in some circumstances, a meeting with the appellant within **28 days**. Any such conversation or meeting will be to clarify the reasons why the appeal was rejected and is not an opportunity to have the decision reviewed or overturned.

## 12. Powers of the Academic Appeals Board

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- 12.1. The Academic Appeals Board operates with the full delegated authority of Senate. Therefore, when it decides to uphold an appeal, it can impose whatever remedy it deems is reasonable to resolve the matter, **except it can never:**
- 12.1.1. Increase (or decrease) the marks awarded by the Examiners;
  - 12.1.2. Alter a degree classification determined by the Awards Assessment Board; or
  - 12.1.3. Quash a decision that the student has submitted work which breaches the Academic Integrity Policy.
- 12.2. Where the Academic Appeals Board decides to uphold an appeal against a decision of the **Awards Assessment Board** or the **Progression Assessment Board** it may normally:
- 12.2.1. In the case of mitigating circumstances being established and the Academic Appeals Board being satisfied that there are justifiable reasons for the appellant having not used one of the other procedures available, make a recommendation to the Assessment Review Board that the relevant assessment attempt(s) be set aside or that any late penalty be revoked.
  - 12.2.2. In the case of procedural or administrative error, instruct the department(s) concerned to correct the matter using one of the University's established procedures.
  - 12.2.3. In the case of a Specific Learning Difference diagnosis not resolved under section 5, to grant a deferral of the affected assessments.

- 12.3. Where the Academic Appeals Board decides to uphold an appeal against a decision of the **Mitigating Circumstances Board**, a recommendation will be made to the Assessment Review Board that the relevant assessment attempt(s) be set aside or that any late penalty be revoked.
- 12.4. Where the Academic Appeals Board decides to uphold an appeal against a decision of the **Academic Integrity Review Panel or its subgroup**, it will decide the stage that the case should be referred back to (i.e. department, Panel or subgroup and whether the whole case should be heard again or a review of the penalty decision undertaken). The Board may also specify if the previous Panel which heard the case should be involved or whether a new Panel should be convened.
- 12.5. In very exceptional circumstances, where the Academic Appeals Board does not believe that any of the normal remedies outlined at 12.2., 12.3., or 12.4., are sufficient to resolve the matter, it may decide on another remedy. Where it does this, the Chair of the Academic Appeals Board must provide a report to Academic Quality & Enhancement Committee.
- 12.6. Where the Academic Appeals Board decides on a remedy that does not involve the Assessment Review Board, the Officer who investigated the case will monitor compliance with the Academic Appeals Board's decision.

### 13. Assessment Review Board

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- 13.1. Where the Academic Appeals Board instructs the Assessment Review Board to reconsider an assessment decision, it will normally provide reasons which must be taken into consideration when determining any amended outcome.
- 13.2. The Deputy Registrar (or nominee) will receive the Academic Appeal Board's decision and, normally within **10 days**, will determine the level of discretion available to the Assessment Review Board to amend the original assessment decision. The Deputy Registrar (or nominee) will then decide either:
- 13.2.1. The Assessment Review Board would have no discretion and the original decision of the Awards Assessment Board or the Progression Assessment Board must be amended according to the regulations and conventions of the University; or
- 13.2.2. The Assessment Review Board may have some discretion on matters relating to progression or for any other reasons deemed relevant.
- 13.3. Where the Deputy Registrar (or nominee) decides in accordance with 13.2.1., the Chair of the Assessment Review Board will be invited to authorise an amendment to the original decision of the Awards Assessment Board or the Progression Assessment Board according to advice from the Deputy Registrar (or nominee). Any such amendment will be reported to the next meeting of the Awards Assessment Board.

- 13.4. Notwithstanding the advice of the Deputy Registrar (or nominee) the Chair of the Assessment Review Board may determine that there is sufficient reason for the matter to be considered at a full meeting of the Assessment Review Board.
- 13.5. Where the Deputy Registrar (or nominee) decides in accordance with 13.2.2., the Head of Academic Quality and Standards (or nominee) will be invited to convene a meeting of the Assessment Review Board.
- 13.6. The Assessment Review Board will be composed as follows:
  - 13.6.1. A Chair who shall normally also be the Chair of the Awards Assessment Board or Progression Assessment Board; and
  - 13.6.2. Normally two, but no fewer than one, members of academic staff, at least one of whom has some knowledge of the appellant's programme of study.
- 13.7. The Assessment Review Board will be advised by the Deputy Registrar (or nominee).
- 13.8. The Investigating Officer will normally be present to take a record of proceedings.
- 13.9. Where a full meeting of the Assessment Review Board is convened it must meet within a reasonable amount of time to consider the cases referred to it, taking into consideration the reasons advanced by the Academic Appeals Board. The Assessment Review Board must act in a way that is compatible with the decision of the Academic Appeals Board and it is not empowered to overturn any decision of the Academic Appeals Board.
- 13.10. The Assessment Review Board may decide as follows:
  - 13.10.1. The original decision of the Awards Assessment Board or Progression Assessment Board shall be overturned and a new recommendation for the relevant assessment(s) is made; or
  - 13.10.2. Exceptionally, the original decision of the Awards Assessment Board shall be upheld and the original recommendation confirmed.
- 13.11. Where the Assessment Review Board decides in accordance with 13.10.1., the Deputy Registrar (or nominee) will write to the appellant and the Investigating Officer to confirm the new outcome. The decision of the Assessment Review Board will be final. If the appellant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they may request a Completion of Procedures Statement and refer the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.
- 13.12. Where the Assessment Review Board decides in accordance with 13.10.2., the Chair of the Assessment Review Board will write to the Chair of the Academic Appeals Board giving reasons for the decision. On receipt of this, the Chair of the Academic Appeals Board may decide to refer the matter to the review stage. The Investigating Officer will write to the appellant with further information.

## 14. Review of the decision of the Academic Appeals Board

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- 14.1. At the conclusion of the process, the appellant may request a review of the academic appeal under the following circumstances:
  - 14.1.1. If the Academic Appeals Board decided to dismiss the appeal. Where the appeal was upheld in part, a review may be requested only of those parts which were not upheld; or
  - 14.1.2. If the Academic Appeals Board decided to uphold the appeal (either in full or in part), but the Assessment Review Board declined to amend the relevant assessment outcome, provided that the Chair of the Academic Appeals Board has not already referred the case for review.
- 14.2. In order to request a review of the academic appeal, the appellant must be able to demonstrate one or both of the following:
  - 14.2.1. There is evidence of some procedural or administrative irregularity in the operation of the Academic Appeals Procedure;
  - 14.2.2. New evidence has come to light which could not have been disclosed in time to be considered by the Academic Appeals Board.
- 14.3. An appellant wishing to request a review of an academic appeal must do so in writing to the Head of Academic Quality and Standards within **10 days** of receiving the full outcome of the Academic Appeals Board.
- 14.4. If, on receipt of the request for review, the Head of Academic Quality and Standards identifies any potential conflict of interest, a Dean of an Academic Faculty will be asked to undertake the review.
- 14.5. On receipt of the request for a review of an academic appeal, the Head of Academic Quality and Standards will consider only the conduct of the Academic Appeals Procedure and/or the evidence submitted. The review is not an opportunity for the case to be re-heard and consequently the circumstances which lead to the decision that was subject to appeal will not normally be considered.
- 14.6. The Head of Academic Quality and Standards will consider the request and determine either:
  - 14.6.1. The decision of the Academic Appeals Board to dismiss the appeal should stand and that a Completion of Procedures Statement should be issued; or
  - 14.6.2. The case shall be reconsidered by the Academic Appeals Board;
- 14.7. When considering the request, the Head of Academic Quality and Standards will have due regard to whether the decision to dismiss the appeal in full or in part was reasonable in all of the circumstances.

- 14.8. Where a request for review has been made because the Assessment Review Board has declined to amend the original decision of the Awards Assessment Board despite the recommendation of the Academic Appeals Board, the Head of Academic Quality and Standards will present the case to the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic) whose decision will be final.
- 14.9. The decision of the Head of Academic Quality and Standards will be communicated to the appellant, normally within **21 days** of the date that the request was received.
- 14.10. Where the Head of Academic Quality and Standards decides in accordance with 14.5.2., the case will be referred to the next meeting of the Academic Appeals Board.

## 15. Mark amendments

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- 15.1. If at any point during the conduct of an appeal, a department agrees to or is required to submit an amendment to a mark previously agreed by the Awards Assessment Board or the Progression Assessment Board, the procedures outlined in this section will be used.
- 15.2. The Chair of the relevant Module Assessment Board, or nominee, will complete a mark amendment form supplied by Registry Services for this purpose. The form will outline the reasons for the amendment, where appropriate, referring to a decision made during the conduct of an appeal.
- 15.3. Where, in the view of the Deputy Registrar, or nominee, the nature and reasons given for the amendment indicate a serious breach of process, or would change an assessment outcome decision to the detriment of a student, the request will be referred to the Registrar.
- 15.4. Where a request for a mark amendment is referred to the Registrar, the nature and extent of the circumstances which led to the request will be determined. The Registrar will authorise any action deemed necessary to avoid a reoccurrence.

## 16. Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

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- 16.1. If an appellant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal, they may ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) to review their case. In order to do this, the appellant must normally have been issued with a Completion of Procedures Statement.
- 16.2. The University will automatically issue a Completion of Procedures Statement when an appellant has exhausted all of the University's internal procedures. Normally, this will only be following a review either of the preliminary stage or following a review of the decision of the Academic Appeals Board.



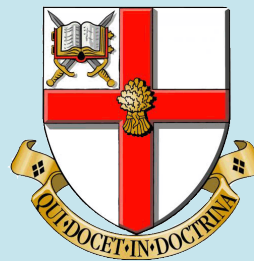
- 16.3. An appellant is entitled to request a Completion of Procedures Statement at an earlier point provided that they confirm their understanding that they do not have grounds to request a review according to these procedures.
- 16.4. Further and specific details about the OIA can be obtained from its website: [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk).

## 17. Enhancement Opportunities

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- 17.1. The University will use information gathered throughout the conduct of appeals to determine areas of its practice that might be enhanced.
- 17.2. The outcome of each academic appeal will be communicated to the relevant Head of Department and to the Deputy Registrar (or nominee).
- 17.3. Where the need arises, the Academic Appeals Board will write to the Head of Academic Quality and Standards and, where appropriate, other office holders to draw attention to any specific matters that may require attention or to general issues of policy that the University may wish to reflect on.
- 17.4. Academic Quality & Standards (Academic Standards) will record details of each appeal received, its nature and the outcome. Statistical data will be compiled on an annual basis in order to provide reports to Senate, via Academic Quality & Enhancement Committee. Such reports will not include any personally identifiable information.

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University of  
Chester

## Certification

SECTION

11

Quality and Standards Manual

**HANDBOOK F:  
The Assessment of Students  
at Levels 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught  
Provision at Level 8**

**2020 – 2021**

Authored by: Registry Services

Date of Approval: June 2020

Version: 1.0

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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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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
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)
3. All University certificates incorporate the appropriate level of authentication outlined in Annex A
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
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
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
7. Certificates will not be issued to those in debt to the University

8. Replacement 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. Certificates for awards made prior to 1993 are issued by the University of Liverpool.
9. All certification will be issued in the initial instance without charge. A charge will be made for replacements
10. Only one certificate should be in circulation at any given point. Where a request is made to replace a damaged certificate, the original certificate must be returned prior to a replacement being issued
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 replacement of a certificate. Replacement 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'
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
13. 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.

## 11.2 Diploma Supplements/Higher Education Achievement Reports/Results Profiles

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1. Results remain provisional until they have been confirmed by an Awards Assessment Board, Progression Assessment Board or Examination Committee
2. All students are expected to access results online in accordance with the policy set out in Section 9 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, Progression Assessment Board or Examination Committee; provisional results will not be issued on an official results profile

3. A Higher Education Achievement Report or Diploma Supplements is 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
Final Results Profile/Diploma Supplement/ HEAR	Registry Services	Registrar <sup>2</sup>	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

<sup>2</sup> Diploma Supplement and HEAR only

## 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>3</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>3</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 or Higher Education Achievement Report<sup>4</sup>

ARCHIVED COPY  
DO NOT USE

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<sup>4</sup> this statement will appear on the certificates of awards made on or after 1 October 2012





# External Examiners

SECTION  
**12**

Quality and Standards Manual

**HANDBOOK F:  
The Assessment of Students  
at Levels 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught  
Provision at Level 8**

2020 – 2021

Date of Approval: June 2020  
Authored By: Academic Quality and Standards (AQS)  
Version: 1.0

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## SECTION 12. EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

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### 12.1 The Role of the External Examiner

External Examiners perform an essential role in the management and enhancement of academic quality and standards. The University expects external examiners to provide informative comment and recommendations in accordance with the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*, (QAA, November 2018), <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/advice-and-guidance-external-expertise.pdf>

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 AQS at the earliest possible opportunity.

Any credit that is awarded by the University must be subject to scrutiny of an external examiner. This includes any free standing modules.

#### **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**

Chief External Examiners are required to attend at least two assessment boards a year. These will normally include the meetings at which a majority of University awards are conferred in December and June. They may also attend another meeting of the AAB during the academic year. 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 AQS as soon as possible to agree an alternative process.

### **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

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### **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;
- (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 Head of Academic Quality and Standards (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. An External Examiner must not advise a change of mark of an individual student, unless he/she has seen the work of the complete cohort. However, an External Examiner may propose changes to individual marks in the fail category without having seen the work of the complete cohort, providing he/she has seen all the work in the fail

category. 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 Appendix 12G);

- (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 Head of Academic Quality and Standards (via AQS), 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 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;
- (g) 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;
- (h) moderate and provide comments on component and overall module grades achieved by students.
- (i) review whether in their judgement the assessment process has accorded with the University's regulations and requirements and has been fair;
- (j) 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**

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 Levels 3 and 4, the sample should be sufficient to enable the External Examiner to confirm all marks in the Fail category and to see a selection from each class, including those at borderlines, in order to be satisfied that each student is fairly placed in relation to the rest of the module cohort. At Level 3 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 module, by negotiation.

In cases where there is more than one first-marker, the statements set out above shall apply to each first-marker in order that both the internal monitor and the External Examiner see a sufficient number of assessments to be able to satisfy themselves that the marking of all first-markers is both consistent and at the appropriate level.

**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).

**Data Protection**

External Examiners may, during the course of their appointment, have access to personal information about other individuals. External Examiners have responsibilities under Data Protection Act 2018 which incorporates the EU General Data Protection Regulation for any personal data relating to other individuals which may be accessed during their appointment and must treat this in a responsible and professional manner. This responsibility is in addition to any obligations arising from professional ethics or codes of conduct.

Information obtained in the expectation of a duty of confidence should be treated as confidential and generally not disclosed without the subject's consent.

The University takes its data protection responsibilities and obligations to maintain confidentiality seriously and will consider termination of an appointment in the circumstances of a breach.

External Examiners should not identify students or staff by name in their reports. Where an External Examiner identifies a student, the student may have the right under the Data Protection Act 2018 to make a subject access request. Even if a student is not named it may be possible to identify the student through other material, such as a number.

If as part of your duties during appointment you breach data protection or discover such a breach, report it immediately to the University's Data Protection Officer, Mr Rob Dawson (dpo@chester.ac.uk) in accordance with the University's breach procedures, available here: [http://ganymede2.chester.ac.uk/view.php?title\\_id=947005](http://ganymede2.chester.ac.uk/view.php?title_id=947005)

### 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 and Standards. 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 AQS.

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 page 3.

#### ***External Examining Arrangements for MRes Programmes***

For the taught elements of an MRes programme - An external examiner will be appointed in the normal way.

For the research element of an MRes programme – Where possible, the external examiner responsible for the taught elements of the programme will also take responsibility for the dissertation (or equivalent). Where the nature of the programme means that specific expertise is required for the dissertation (or equivalent), a separate external examiner may be appointed using the form in Appendix 12C. Following approval at Faculty level by the Senior Faculty PGR Tutor, this form must be forwarded to AQS for the Head of Academic Quality and Standards to give authorisation for the external examiner's fee to be paid from the AQS budget, upon completion of the external examiner's duties.

#### ***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) in Academic Quality and Standards.

The nomination will then be presented to the External Examiner Approvals Sub-Group, chaired by the Head of Academic Quality and Standards. 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) 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) 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 previously 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.

- f. Nominee's should normally have at least five years' experience teaching and assessing in higher education.
- g. Where a high proportion of a nominee's teaching experience has been acquired as an honorary appointment, or similar, departments should specifically detail the nature and volume of teaching and assessing actively undertaken.'

### *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.

#### **MRes (Dissertation) nomination form (Appendix 12C)**

- For appointing External Examiners to the dissertation element of an MRes programme

#### **Module allocation amendment 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 subject area(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 subject area(s) as the External Examiner's current programmes.*

#### **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.

***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 AQS.

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 AQS along with other relevant documentation. AQS 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 AQS 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.

**A copy of all External Examiner's identity documents will be held by AQS both in hard copy and electronically for a maximum of five years or until the External Examiner has completed their term of office with the University. Any copies held by the academic department should be securely destroyed as soon as the nomination form has been sent to AQS.**

## 12.4 Discontinuation and non-renewal of appointment

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 external examiner at assessment boards;
- circumstances where a conflict of interest has arisen during the External Examiner's term of office;
- changes in circumstances or demands, for example workload allocation, within the academic department;
- changes in the relationship between the external examiner and the department.

The decision not to renew an appointment will be taken by the Head of Academic Quality and Standards, or representative, in discussion with relevant members of the academic department.

The University may at any time terminate the appointment of an External Examiner whom it considers not to be fulfilling his/her responsibilities to the institution's satisfaction, or for other good and substantial cause.

Academic Quality and Standards will inform the External Examiner in writing if their appointment is not being renewed or is terminated.

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

## 12.5 Documentation to be provided to External Examiners

### ***Information to be provided by Academic Quality and Standards***

AQS automatically set up (via LIS) individual Portal accounts for new External Examiners. This takes place upon appointment using the module list provided on the nomination form. If departments wish to make any amendments to the list of modules their external examiner has been appointed to they should use the relevant form indicated in Section 12.3 of this handbook.

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: Advice and Guidance – External Expertise;
- 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 Portal (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
- confidential details form (distributed on behalf of Payroll).

Additional documentation can be provided on request.

Academic Quality and Standards 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 Department, detailing action taken in response to the previous year's External Examiner report, and/or the relevant extract from the programme CME 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;
- completed monitoring forms (for further information regarding monitoring forms see Handbook F: Section 5.4).

## 12.6 Induction of New External Examiners

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

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 CME 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 External Examiner (normally based within the same department), who has previous experience of external examining. External Examiners who are themselves new to the University of Chester,

but have had experience of external examining elsewhere, are eligible to be appointed as mentors.

- (f) Following the appointment of a new External Examiner with a named mentor the Policy Implementation Officer (External Examiners) 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. AQS holds a list of new external examiners who are being mentored and the name of their appointed mentor.

### *The role of the mentor:*

- A mentor is someone with previous external examining experience, who is not a member of University of Chester staff, from outside of the institution who can be approached as a 'sounding board' by the new external examiner for any concerns they may have. These may include discussions as to whether an issue is within their remit, whether or not they have the authority to raise an issue and strategies for raising issues in a constructive manner;
- Mentors should be approachable and ensure that the mentee knows they can ask for general guidance in confidence;
- The mentor should be prepared to respond promptly to any queries received from new external examiners.

### *Mentors should not be expected to:*

- Provide subject specific advice;
- Look at scripts (for example if there are concerns about marking);
- Provide advice on University regulations and procedures.

If a mentor is approached about any of these issues they should advise the new external examiner to seek guidance from AQS or the academic department.

It is the responsibility of the academic department to facilitate an introduction between the new external examiner and their mentor.

## 12.8 Annual Reports

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 Head of Academic Quality and Standards 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 Characteristics Statement (QAA, September 2015). 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.

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.

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.

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 AQS. Issues raised inform the action plan(s) in the relevant CME report(s) which are considered by Faculty Boards of Studies. External examiners' reports must also be made available to 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 and Standards 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 AQS.

all undergraduate reports:

**SUBMISSION DATE: 2<sup>nd</sup> JULY 2021**

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

**SUBMISSION DATE: 4<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2022<sup>1</sup>**

reports for undergraduate Assessment Boards held after 18<sup>th</sup> June, or for postgraduate programmes with an Assessment Board which takes place outside the November 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.

All fee and expense claims must be submitted within three months of the work it relates to being completed.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that this date is for submission of postgraduate reports relating to the 2020-21 cohort. The deadline for postgraduate reports relating to the 2019-2020 cohort is 5<sup>th</sup> February 2021.



All departments must ensure that copies of External Examiner Reports are made available to students. Departments may choose to do this in a number of ways. The method recommended by AQS is to make students aware of the following page on Portal: <https://psmd.chester.ac.uk/pos/index.php?th=931> .

Through this facility students are able to search for their programme and view the relevant external examiner report.

## 12.9 Internal Staff as External Examiners

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Members of the University who begin or end an external examiner position with another institution must ensure that they inform the relevant Faculty Administrator as soon as possible of the details of the appointment.

Faculty Administrators are responsible for holding a full list of all External Examiner appointments for staff within their Faculty ensuring that, where appropriate, the name of the validating institution is also recorded.

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