



University of  
Chester

**HANDBOOK F**  
**TO ACCOMPANY THE**  
**PRINCIPLES AND REGULATIONS:**

**THE ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS**  
**AT LEVELS 4, 5, 6, 7 AND TAUGHT**  
**PROVISION AT LEVEL 8**

**2011 – 2012**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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

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

In order for these requirements to be applied with complete equity to all students, it is of paramount importance for examiners and assessors to discharge their duties disinterestedly. Consequently, it is a requirement of University of Chester that any member of staff, academic or administrative, whose ability to engage in the assessment of students may be influenced by a personal relationship or a personal consideration relating to any student who is subject to assessment, shall declare such an interest in advance to the Chair of the Awards or Subject or Programme Assessment Board as appropriate. When such a declaration has been made, it is incumbent upon that Chair, in conjunction with the Director of Registry Services, to take such steps as are necessary to safeguard

the integrity and equity of the assessment process. Measures available to the Chair of the Awards or Subject or Programme Assessment Board shall include requiring the member of staff in question to absent himself or herself from and/or withhold himself or herself from participation in a stage or stages of the assessment process.

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

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

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

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## **2. OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS TO BE OBSERVED BY EXAMINERS AND EXAMINEES IN THE COURSE OF THE PROCESS OF ASSESSMENT**

### **2.1 Written Examinations: Rules for Examinees**

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

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

with each other, except in cases of urgent necessity, prior to their return to the examination room.

24. Candidates are expected to ensure the entire contents of their exam script are legible; in cases where anyone involved in the marking of the work is unable to read the full script, the department will offer the option of the formal transcription of the paper by a scribe designated by the University, with the student translating their original script. The student must pay the transcription fee directly to the service provider. In order to avoid delays with the processing of results, the student will be given seven days from original notification to make themselves available for the transcription session. Upon completion of the transcription, the student must sign a statement confirming that the transcription represents precisely the contents of the original script. Any alteration from the original may be considered academic malpractice. Should the student fail to make themselves available within the specified period, the illegible section of the script will not be marked and the final mark will be derived from the legible sections.
25. Except where a foreign language is the subject of the assessment, papers should normally be set and answered in English.
26. Formal examinations are always held in accessible locations. Department organised assessments should also take place in locations accessible to all students due to undertake the assessment.

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

Students are expected to undertake examinations and other formal timed assessments at the University of Chester or Partner organisation as appropriate. However, there may be exceptional cases where this is not possible and where students may request permission to undertake assessment from overseas. The request will normally only be considered for students whose country of domicile is outside the United Kingdom and for examinations which take place outside the University's official term dates. Holidays are not considered legitimate grounds for failing to undertake assessment at the specified venue. Students must contact the Deputy Director of Registry Services 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 6 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 3 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.

## **2.2 Written Examinations: Procedures for Examiners**

1. Registry Services (Student Programmes) will be responsible for delivering the question papers and attendance sheets to the examination room.
2. Any examination offered during an assessment period by both a Collaborative Partner and the University, and any examination taken at different campuses or sites of the University, must take place simultaneously at all locations.
3. An examiner, or in her/his unavoidable absence a representative from the department concerned, who is knowledgeable about the contents of the question paper, must be present in the examination room for ten minutes before the examination is due to begin and for five minutes after the start of the examination.
4. Before the examination begins the examiner shall check her/his papers for any errors. If there are any amendments to be made she/he shall inform an invigilator who will normally make the necessary announcements.
5. Before leaving the examination room an examiner shall inform the chief invigilator where s/he may be contacted in the University for the duration of the examination, in the event of any question from a candidate about the paper.
6. It is the responsibility of invigilators to supervise examinations in accordance with the Operational Requirements to be observed by examiners and examinees.
7. All invigilators must be present in the examination room to which they have been appointed, from fifteen minutes before the commencement of the examination, until all answer books have been removed from the examination room after the conclusion of the examination.
8. Invigilators are responsible for the distribution of question papers before the commencement of each examination, for the collection of answer books from each candidate, for checking attendance sheets provided and noting absentees.
9. Identification checks on female students choosing to cover their face must be conducted with discretion by a female member of staff
10. Candidates may sit at any desk within the room to which they have been allocated under the direction of the chief invigilator and should be seated in such a way that no candidate can overlook the papers of another candidate.



11. No examination may be left without an invigilator while the paper is in progress.
12. Under normal circumstances, at least two invigilators must remain in the examination room throughout the examination except when their invigilation duties require them to leave.
13. At the time scheduled for the start of the examination the chief invigilator shall:
  - make an announcement to the effect that candidates must satisfy themselves that they are in possession of the correct paper;
  - ask candidates to study carefully the instructions at the head of the examination paper;
  - make all other necessary announcements.
14. Invigilators shall check that all candidates listed on the relevant attendance sheets are present and note the names of any candidates who are absent. Attendance sheets shall be collected by a member of Registry Services (Student Programmes) staff at the end of the examination.
15. An invigilator shall require a candidate to leave the examination if, in the opinion of the invigilator, her/his conduct is disturbing other candidates or is disrupting the smooth progress of the examination. Any irregularities of conduct within the examination room shall be reported to the Senior Assistant Registrar (Student Programmes), who shall have the power to exclude the candidate from the examination room and shall report the matter to the Chair of the Awards Assessment Board for investigation.
16. Invigilators who suspect that breaches of the Operational Requirements to be observed by examiners and examinees have occurred shall inform the Chair of the relevant Programme (or Subject) Assessment Board in writing. Invigilators shall warn a candidate that such a report will be made, but the candidate shall normally be permitted to complete the written examination. The Senior Assistant Registrar (Student Programmes) shall also be notified that such a breach has been observed.
17. Candidates wishing to make a temporary withdrawal from the examination room for personal reasons must be accompanied by an invigilator or by a person authorised by the chief invigilator to ensure against any possibility of academic malpractice.
18. In certain special cases, candidates shall be allowed additional time for completion of their examination. Such candidates will have been identified by Registry Services (Student Programmes) in advance of the paper and may be sitting separately. It is the responsibility of the invigilators to complete the full invigilation of all candidates assigned to them.
19. It is the responsibility of subject departments to provide any special requirements for specific examinations. Guidance for amanuenses appears in Appendix V(ii).
20. Registry Services (Student Programmes) shall be responsible for providing examination answer books and graph paper for each examination room. Large envelopes for transporting completed scripts shall be available in each room. The chief invigilator shall be responsible for ensuring that a copy of the relevant question paper is placed in the appropriate envelope, together with the completed scripts for marking purposes.
21. Invigilators shall be responsible for ensuring that completed scripts are delivered to the relevant department(s) for marking purposes.

22. Any changes to the original invigilation list shall be notified to Registry Services (Student Programmes) in advance of the assessment date. It is the responsibility of the Departmental Assessment Contact to find replacement invigilators. Last minute substitutes should not be sent, other than in unforeseen circumstances, as this may affect the gender balance in the examination room.
23. The invigilators shall inform the Senior Assistant Registrar (Student Programmes) (or her/his representative) immediately of any unsatisfactory conditions or activities which they consider detrimental to the conduct of examinations.
24. The Operational Requirements to be observed by examiners and examinees shall be published prior to each assessment period by Registry Services (Student Programmes), setting out details of the procedures to be followed for the conduct of examinations.
25. In the event of a fire alarm or other emergency requiring the evacuation of the examination room the chief invigilator shall note the time the assessment was interrupted and shall instruct the candidates to cease writing and to leave all materials, including question papers and examination answer books, on their desk. Candidates should leave the room in an orderly fashion and assemble at the specified place where names will be checked to ensure that all candidates are accounted for. On return to the examination room, candidates shall be allowed additional time to compensate for time lost, at the discretion of the chief invigilator, who shall record the time of the resumption of the examination.
26. In all cases of emergency, invigilators should contact Registry Services (Student Programmes) on extension 1486, 1523 or 1509 (Chester); 4396 or 4234 (Warrington).
27. Departmental Assessment Contacts will be asked to provide names of invigilators for each session at which a written paper is being offered by that department. Taking into account the requirement for there to be at least two invigilators present in the venue, invigilation ratios are as follows:

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

### **2.3 Anonymous marking of students' assessed work**

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

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

Students assessed under (a) or (b) above who choose to identify themselves, and those whose special circumstances make it impossible to conceal their identity, shall not deprive

the remaining students taking an assessment component of their entitlement to anonymous marking.

Notes of guidance on anonymous marking appear as Appendix A.

## **2.4 Submission of other work for formal written assessment**

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

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

Where candidates are presenting written work for formal assessment, other than examinations, such work must be submitted by the due date prescribed by the Department. Except when prevented by illness or by other sufficient cause (please refer to mitigating circumstances procedures), the marks of any student who fails to submit work by the prescribed date shall be subject to penalty deduction in accordance with the scale as specified in the section on Late Work below (section 3.6 of this Handbook). It shall be the duty of Heads of Subject to ensure that students are notified of due submission dates and the penalty scale to be applied in the case of late submission.

## **2.5 Oral assessment and presentations**

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

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

A student who does not attend an oral assessment or presentation within the time period allocated will be awarded a mark of 0 for that assessment, unless there are valid mitigating circumstances. (See section 3 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.

## **2.6 Open book assessment and advanced publication of papers**

Methods of assessment are specified in the module descriptor as validated, but reference to an 'examination' without further qualification is taken to mean a 'closed' 'unseen' written examination, i.e. one in which candidates have not seen the paper in advance and are not permitted to take materials into the examination room except as in 2.1 above. Where an

'Open Book' assessment is specified, the Head of Subject or Department concerned shall be required to inform the candidates in writing of the following:

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

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

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

## **2.7 Accepting Coursework Assessments Electronically**

The decision as to whether to allow electronic submission of coursework assessment rests with the Module Leader with the agreement of the Head of Subject.

Electronic submission shall normally only be accepted via the modules learning engine facility on the Sharepoint Portal. The only exception to this procedure will be instances where the process of electronic submission itself is part of the assessment for that module.

Electronic submission via the Sharepoint Portal shall only be permissible if all the coursework assessments for a module and the work of all students on that module are to be submitted electronically. An exemption for an individual student shall only be granted in the most exceptional circumstances.

Submission must be via the student's own user account and not through another student's account.

Once the assignment has been sent, the Sharepoint Portal will send an acknowledgement to the sender, the module leader and the departmental administrator, which will record the time the assignment was sent.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the assignment has been sent.

The module leader will be responsible for printing off the assignment.

Students should keep backup copies of all assignments sent electronically.

The Module Leader shall be responsible for turning off the Assignment Submission facility once the submission deadline has passed.

Notes of guidance on electronic submission of coursework appear as Appendix M.

**Further requirements relating to the marking of assessed work appear in Section 4.**

### 3. MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

#### 3.1 Mitigating Circumstances

1. Mitigating circumstances are those which may adversely affect a student's performance in assessment, and in respect of which a student formally advances a claim for special consideration.
2. The Registry Services Officer responsible for the co-ordination of all documentation related to mitigating circumstances and associated cases is the Assistant Registrar: Undergraduate Programmes.
3. All claims for mitigating circumstances shall be considered by the University's Mitigating Circumstances Board, which shall meet as required and shall have the following composition:
  - A Chair of an Awards Assessment Board
  - Deans of Faculties (or their representatives)
  - Dean of Academic Quality and Standards (or their representative)
  - Head of Student Support
  - Assistant Registrar: Undergraduate Programmes

The Head of Student Support will not participate in the decision making process in relation to those students for whom he or she has provided evidence (see 3.4)

4. Where claims for mitigating circumstances relate to assessment for which the deadline date has already passed, applications should be submitted on form MC1 to Registry Services (Student Programmes). Claims should be supported with medical or other evidence (signed by a doctor or other relevant authority). The deadline date for submission shall be advertised at the beginning of the academic session. Claims submitted after the deadline date may, at the discretion of the Mitigating Circumstances Board, be considered, but in no circumstances shall claims be considered by the Mitigating Circumstances Board after the relevant Programme (or Subject) Assessment Board has taken place. The date of the written evidence must be concordant with the dates of the assessment for which mitigation is being sought.
5. Students must specify which component of the module(s) (e.g. written coursework; oral presentation; examination) is affected by their circumstances, and for which they are seeking mitigation. 'Blanket' applications (i.e. applications which seek to claim mitigation across all components of all modules) will not normally be accepted.
6. The normal outcome of a valid claim for mitigating circumstances shall be one of the following:
  - (a) to be allowed to miss an assessment component and to be granted the opportunity to take that missed component, on a future occasion, as if for the first time (deferred assessment). Students will normally be required to submit themselves for deferred assessment on the next designated occasion when the relevant assessment opportunity is made available
  - (b) where an assessment component has been attempted, to have the mark for that component set aside, so that the student attempts the component again, as if for the first time (deferred assessment). Where a student undertakes a deferred assessment, as a consequence of mitigation, the mark for that deferred assessment must replace any previous mark.

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

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

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

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

### **3.2 Extensions and Deferrals**

- 1. Where a student is aware in advance of the relevant deadline that they wish to postpone the submission of an assignment, they may take one of two courses of action.
  - (a) If seeking an extension to the deadline for the submission of an assignment which falls within the period set in the University timetable for the delivery and assessment of the module concerned, the student shall complete form EX1 (available from Registry Services (Student Programmes)) in advance of the deadline date. This form, with accompanying medical or other evidence (signed by a doctor or other relevant authority), shall be submitted to the relevant Head(s) of Subject (as Chair(s) of the Programme or Subject Assessment Board(s)) or nominee. The student must obtain the signature of the Head of Subject, or nominee, who will make a decision based on the written evidence before returning form EX1 and the written evidence to Registry Services (see section 3.4 on Acceptable Evidence). A copy of form EX1 will be kept by the department who will confirm the new submission date with the student. Where such extensions are granted at the discretion of a Head of Subject, or nominee, they will normally only be reported to the Mitigating Circumstances Board in cases where students may appear to be claiming mitigation over and above that already allowed by the extensions.

- (b) If seeking an extension to the deadline for the submission of an assignment which falls after the period set in the University timetable for the delivery and assessment of the module concerned, the student is deemed to be seeking a deferral of assessment. S/he shall complete form DF1 (available from Registry Services (Student Programmes)). This form, with accompanying medical or other evidence (signed by a doctor or other relevant authority), should be submitted to the relevant Head(s) of Subject (as Chair(s) of the Programme or Subject Assessment Board(s)), or Deputy Head, for approval (Please see section 3.4 on Acceptable Evidence). The student must obtain the signature of the Head of Subject, or Deputy Head, who will make a decision based on the written evidence before returning form DF1 and the written evidence to Registry Services.

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

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

Heads of Subject, or Deputy Heads, may only grant extensions or deferrals up to the final meeting of the relevant Programme (or Subject) Assessment Board in a given academic session. Deferrals beyond this meeting, including any further deferrals arising from work not submitted by a previously-extended or previously-deferred deadline, shall only be granted on the authority of the Mitigating Circumstances Board, according to the procedures set out in the section on **Mitigating Circumstances** above.

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

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

### 3.3 Categories of acceptable mitigating circumstances

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

- Those students with a specific need or disability. Guidelines for dealing with such students should be consulted and the procedures applied prior to the assessment period, subject to written medical evidence or an up-to-date psychologist's report.
- Those students who have long term illness/medical conditions, for whom medical evidence has been submitted in advance of their assessment periods.
- Those students who sit an examination or complete and submit a piece of work when they are ill or troubled in some way.

- Those students whose preparation for assessment is affected by illness or other adverse circumstances.
- Those students for whom mitigating circumstances have arisen during an assessment period which may have affected only a part of the assessment, for example in one subject area only.
- Bereavement (family or otherwise).
- Domestic problems (including divorce, separation, parental divorce).
- Work commitments (part time students and those repeating modules on a part time basis only)
- Other factors which may reasonably be deemed to have had an adverse impact comparable with those above.

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

The following are unacceptable reasons for mitigation:

- Misreading the timetable resulting in absence from an examination.
- Computer failure/disk failure/printer failure.
- Work commitments for full time students
- Problems associated with travelling arrangements/holidays traffic problems or stress caused by travel problems. It is the responsibility of the student to make appropriate arrangements to ensure that assignments are submitted on time and/or that they present themselves for an examination on time. This should be borne in mind when making any plans to return to University after a home visit or when making holiday/travel arrangements. In cases of extremis, travel issues may be taken into account for students with disabilities where the combination of unforeseen circumstances and disability related issues impinge on attendance

### **3.4 Acceptable evidence in support of mitigating circumstances**

#### **Medical**

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

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

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

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



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

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

## **Practical problems**

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

## **Disability**

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

## **Evidence from the University**

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

Late penalties will normally be waived 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.

## **3.5 Illness during examinations**

1. A candidate who is absent from part or the whole of an examination on account of illness must inform Registry Services (Student Programmes) and provide a valid medical certificate without delay. A properly-evidenced claim for mitigating circumstances should be submitted on form MC1 before the published deadline.
2. If an invigilator or an examiner considers that a candidate's performance in an examination may have been impaired by ill-health, she/he should report the circumstances in writing to Registry Services (Student Programmes) who will inform the Mitigating Circumstances Board. In such cases candidates should be advised to report to a Medical Practitioner, to obtain corroborating evidence for the Mitigating Circumstances Board.
3. Wherever possible, written examinations will be taken by candidates in recognised assessment rooms and every effort will be made to avoid the necessity of making specific assessment arrangements elsewhere.
4. Where a candidate is unable due to illness or temporary disability to sit a written examination at the published venue, arrangements will be made, if feasible, for the written examination to be taken in another room under the control of staff of the University.
5. A candidate seeking such specific arrangements must report to Registry Services (Student Programmes) as far as possible in advance of the start of the written examination.

6. Students with a notifiable, communicable disease must not attend examinations and should obtain medical evidence in support of a deferral or claim to the mitigating circumstances board
7. Where a request is made for the written examination to be taken in a hospital, approval of the request will be dependent upon the provision of suitable facilities and access to such facilities by a supervisor of the University.
8. In cases where candidates complain of feeling unwell and leave the written examination temporarily, they will be permitted to return to the examination room provided that they have been accompanied during their absence by a person authorised to do so by the chief invigilator. In cases where a candidate is unable to return to the scheduled room, every effort will be made for the written examination to be continued in a separate room provided that the candidate has been accompanied during her/his absence by a person authorised to do so by the chief invigilator.
9. In cases described under (7), the chief invigilator will be required to enter in the candidate's answer book and on the attendance sheet the time of departure and, where appropriate, subsequent return and to sign against these entries.
10. If a student is unable, through disability, to be assessed by the normal methods specified in the module assessment requirements the Head of Subject, in consultation with the External Examiner, may vary the assessment methods as appropriate, bearing in mind those competence standards which inform the learning objectives. Any such alternative assessment shall be approved in advance by the University's Disabilities Coordinator or equivalent (Principles and Regulations F2.13). Advice on the types of alternative assessment may be sought from the Dean of Learning and Teaching.

### 3.6 Late Work

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

5. LATE assessed work will be penalised and the penalty incurred will be **10 marks for work submitted up to 24 hours after a deadline and 10 marks per day after this, including weekends, e.g.:**

	<i>Intrinsic Merit</i> (% mark awarded by tutor)	<i>Penalty Mark</i> %
Work up to 24 hours late	65	55
Work up to 48 hours late	65	45
Work up to 72 hours late and so on, to 0.	65	35

7. In order to enforce this rule of procedure effectively, deadlines should normally be set for days other than Fridays and for times during the working day. These should be publicised in the appropriate module handbooks, along with details of where, within each Department, to hand in assignments.
8. 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 Programme (Subject) Assessment Board.

### **3.7 Extensions to a student's period of registration**

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

## 4. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MARKING OF ASSESSED WORK

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

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

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

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

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

Students shall be informed in writing of Faculty / department / programme practice on second-marking, as agreed at the final Programme / Subject Assessment Board of the previous year, via handbooks and / or noticeboards (see QAA Code of Practice on Assessment, precept 7).

### 4.1 External approval of examination and coursework questions

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

### 4.2 Composition of samples

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

The sample shall normally comprise at least 25% of the total number of assignments. In cohorts of 24 students or less, the minimum size of the sample (including best work and

fails) shall be six assignments. In cohorts of over 100 students, a sample smaller than 25% may be second-marked, but in no such case shall the number of assignments second-marked be less than 25. It is good practice to include within the sample some cases of identified specific needs, so that the handling of such cases can be monitored.

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

### **4.3 Changes to marks**

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

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

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

### **4.4 Monitoring Form**

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

The Monitoring Form shall:

- (i) include brief guidance from the first marker to the monitor on the performance of the cohort, and (if appropriate) on any issues for attention;
- (ii) include comment by the monitor based on the second-marking of the sample, either verifying the overall marks awarded, or proposing the moderation of the entire cohort up or down, or requiring the re-marking of the entire cohort. (It shall be left to the discretion of the Chair of the relevant Programme/Subject 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 Programme/Subject Assessment Board shall arbitrate, with recourse as necessary to a third marker;

- (iii) record the total number of assignments passed to the monitor, and the names (or numbers) of students whose assignments were in the sample second-marked, as evidence that procedures have been followed;
- (iv) record all cases in which changes have been proposed to marks of 69% and above, or 40% and below, together with the agreed internal marks;
- (v) on completion, be made available to the Departmental Assessment Contact, or other designated person, who shall pass it to the External Examiner with the work of the relevant cohort. The External Examiner shall take account of the comments on the Monitoring Form in reaching a judgment on the assessment.

#### **4.5 Double-marking**

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

#### **4.6 New first-markers**

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

#### **4.7 Oral assessments**

Oral assessments (presentations, dialogues, debates, etc.) shall, as far as practicable, have two markers present to determine the marks awarded. Where this is not practicable and only one marker is present, arrangements to assure the consistent standard of marking (such as appropriate staff development and the observation of every marker on at least one occasion) shall be agreed with the External Examiner. These arrangements should, where possible, include the submission of evidence of each student's performance, for example via recordings, copies of OHPs and PowerPoint slides, or a written script. Where recordings are made, all students undertaking an assessment must be recorded in order to ensure consistency of practice; a monitor will sample the recordings and a Monitoring Form will be completed in the manner set out for written work in paragraph 4.4 above. For work at 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.

#### **4.8 Practical work**

Practical work (other than written work arising therefrom) shall be subject to monitoring according to established professional procedures, and/or as agreed with External

Examiners and approved by validation panels. No student shall be recorded as having failed without a second opinion having been obtained. Written assignments arising from practical work shall be subject to the normal procedures set out in paragraphs 4.2 to 4.4 above.

#### **4.9 Internal compensation**

In the assessment of a given module, compensation between components of the modular assessment shall normally be permitted in the case of determining whether or not a student shall be deemed to have passed the module, provided that a minimum mark of 20% has been obtained for the failed component. In cases where a minimum level of attendance must be attained as a precondition for the passing of the module, this must be made explicit in the module descriptor. The overall module mark awarded for the work of a student who fails because either the mark obtained for a component or the level of attendance was below the minimum required shall normally be either the arithmetical mark actually attained, or 39%, whichever is the lower.

#### **4.10 Calculation of marks**

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

#### **4.11 Viva Voce examination**

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

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

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

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

#### **4.12 Complaints about provisional marks**

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

#### **4.13 Feedback on assessed work**

Written feedback on coursework (other than for final-year dissertations) shall normally be available to students in good time to be of assistance in preparation for the next assignment (where applicable) and within four term-time working weeks of the submission deadline. Feedback shall show the agreed internal mark following the second-marking process. In cases where, for good reason, the four-week schedule cannot be adhered to, students shall be notified by the relevant Subject Department with an accompanying rationale and a revised schedule. (Notification may be through letters, e-mails, an announcement on the Sharepoint Portal or on a Departmental noticeboard, as appropriate). Feedback on dissertations may be deferred until after the relevant P/SAB has met, but students shall be informed of departmental practice on this matter. In a case of suspected academic malpractice, the initial letter of accusation to the student shall stand in place of the normal feedback (see QAA Code of Practice on Assessment, precept 9).

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

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

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

#### **4.14 Reassessed/Deferred work**

When marking reassessed or deferred work, in circumstances in which the total number of scripts is often very small, the requirements for second-marking shall be interpreted flexibly within the spirit of paragraphs 4.2 to 4.4 above. All work proposed (before adjustment for reassessment) for a mark of 40% or below shall be second-marked, plus a representative sample of work proposed for higher marks (prior to any adjustment to 40%). All work subject to second-marking shall be recorded on the Monitoring Form in the standard fashion, with a sample (including all proposed fails) sent to the External Examiner, whose rights and responsibilities are as set out in section 11.8 of this Handbook. Paragraphs 4.5 to 4.8 shall be observed without modification.

#### **4.15 Staff development**

Every Faculty or department shall hold staff development in relation to assessment, such as a marking exercise, in advance of a major assessment period at least once a year (see QAA Code of Practice on Assessment, precept 10).



#### 4.16 Retention of student work

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

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

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## 5. ASSESSMENT BOARDS

### 5.1 Assessment Board Structure and Operation

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

A Programme/Subject 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 progression, re-assessment and third assessment attempts. An Appeals Board deals only with appeals against the decision of an Awards Assessment Board.

Both Programme/Subject and Awards Assessment Boards have External Examiner(s) appointed to them, and their composition is presented below.

- External Examiners shall be equal members of Programme/Subject Assessment Boards, whose role shall involve acting as a specialist academic advisor, 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 Liverpool Ordinances and University of Chester Principles and Regulations concerning assessment, and also in accordance with any special Ordinances and Regulations affecting the particular programme of study on which the Board is adjudicating.

Only component marks, coursework and/or examination marks, as finally approved by the Programme/Subject Assessment Board, shall be disclosed to students.

Programme/Subject Assessment Boards shall meet formally at an appropriate time following a student assessment period, which may involve several meetings in each academic session. Unless prevented from doing so by exceptional circumstances, the External Examiner(s) shall attend at least one of these meetings of the Board each year. This will normally be at the end of the summer term for undergraduate programmes and January for postgraduate programmes. Awards Assessment Boards shall meet, normally with a Chief External Examiner present whenever significant numbers of students are being considered for the award of a degree. If the Chief External is not present, s/he must be consulted and signal approval of the decisions of the Awards Assessment Board.

For awards of the University of Liverpool, the list of successful candidates qualifying for the award of a degree, diploma or certificate shall be forwarded to the Senate Committee for the Award of Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates, for approval.

## 5.2 Terms of Reference and Membership

The terms of reference and membership of the following Boards is detailed below: -

1. Undergraduate Awards Assessment Boards
2. Postgraduate Awards Assessment Boards
3. Undergraduate Programme/Subject Assessment Boards
4. HND Programme Assessment Boards
5. Postgraduate Programme Assessment Boards

### UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS ASSESSMENT BOARDS

#### Terms of Reference

To consider the overall profiles of students at Levels Z, 4, 5, 6.

To make recommendations to Senate for the award of Degrees, Diplomas or Certificates for candidates who have successfully completed programmes of undergraduate study at University of Chester and, in the case of awards of the University of Liverpool, to make recommendations to the University of Liverpool's Senate Committee.

To determine on the results of earlier levels of study, the names of candidates who may progress to the next level of study. To determine the names of candidates who may be reassessed in modules. To determine the names of candidates who shall be offered a third assessment attempt.

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

#### i) BA/BSc/BTh/LLB Undergraduate Awards Assessment Board

##### Membership

- Dean or Associate Dean of Faculty as appropriate to the areas of study (Chair): another approved senior member of academic staff may act in this capacity
- Chief External Examiner
- Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement (or nominee)
- Director of Undergraduate Modular Programmes
- Representative of each Subject (or Programme) Assessment Board which is subordinate to the Awards Assessment Board (normally, the Departmental Assessment Contact or Head of Subject)
- One representative of each Partner Organisation with students under consideration by the Board

*In attendance:* Registry Services representative(s)  
A secretary who is responsible for servicing the Board

ii) B.Ed Undergraduate Awards Assessment Board

Membership

- Dean or Associate Dean of Faculty of Education & Children's Services (Chair): another approved senior member of academic staff may act in this capacity
- Chief External Examiner
- Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement (or nominee)
- ITT Co-ordinator
- Programme Leader
- Partnerships Manager
- Subject Co-ordinators/Curriculum Leaders

B.Ed Year 1 Co-ordinator  
B.Ed Year 2 Co-ordinator  
B.Ed Year 3 Co-ordinator  
B.Ed Year 4 Co-ordinator

*In attendance:* Registry Services representative(s)  
A secretary who is responsible for servicing the Board

iii) Faculty of Health and Social Care Undergraduate Awards Assessment Board

Membership

- Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) of Faculty of Health and Social Care (Chair): another approved senior member of academic staff may act in this capacity
- Chief External Examiner
- Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement (or nominee)
- Associate Deans
- Heads of Subject
- Programme Leaders or other representatives of each subordinate Programme Assessment Board
- Branch Leaders
- Departmental Assessment Contact
- Representative from Isle of Man DHSS Education & Training Centre when IoM students are under consideration by the Board

*In attendance:* Registry Services representative(s)  
A secretary who is responsible for servicing the Board

iv) Foundation Degree Awards Assessment Board

Terms of reference:

- To consider the overall profiles of students at Levels 4 and 5
- To make recommendations to Senate for the award of Foundation Degrees and any appropriate interim awards for candidates who have successfully completed a relevant programme of study with the University of Chester or one of its partner organisations
- To determine on the results of Level 4 of study, the names of students who may progress to Level 5 of study. To determine the names of

candidates who may be reassessed in modules. To determine the names of candidates who shall be offered a third assessment attempt.

- External Examiners who are members of subordinate Subject or Programme Assessment Boards shall have a right to attend the Awards Assessment Board. Such right of attendance shall carry with it the status of observer and adviser only.

#### Membership

- Dean or Associate Dean of Faculty as appropriate to the areas of study (Chair): another approved senior member of academic staff may act in this capacity
- Chief External Examiner
- Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement (or nominee)
- Programme Leader of each programme with students under consideration by the Board
- H.E. Co-ordinator or equivalent from each Partner Organisation with students under consideration by the Board
- One representative from each 'home' department at University of Chester, where Foundation Degrees are delivered by Partner College(s) or other partner organisations.

*In attendance:* Registry Services representative(s)  
Secretary who is responsible for servicing the Board.

### **POSTGRADUATE AWARDS ASSESSMENT BOARDS**

#### Terms of Reference

To make recommendations to the appropriate awarding body for awards at postgraduate level.

To determine, on the results of modules, the names of candidates who may proceed to the next modules of study. To determine the names of candidates who may be reassessed in modules. To determine the names of candidates who may be offered a third attempt.

#### Membership

The membership will normally be:

- Dean of Faculty (as appropriate to the area of study) (Chair) another approved senior member of academic staff may act in this capacity
- External Examiner serving as Chief External Examiner
- Head/s of Subject
- Programme Leader(s) or other representative(s) of each subordinate Programme Assessment Board
- Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement, or nominee

*In attendance:* Registry Services representative(s)  
A secretary who is responsible for servicing the Board

## PGCE Primary and PGCE Early Years Awards Assessment Board

### Membership

- Dean or Associate Dean of Faculty of Education and Children's Services (Chair); another approved senior member of academic staff may act in this capacity
- The Chief External Examiner
- Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement (or nominee)
- ITT Co-ordinator
- PGCE Primary Co-ordinator
- PGCE Early Years Co-ordinator
- Partnerships Manager
- Subject Co-ordinators/Curriculum Leaders

*In attendance:* Registry Services representative(s)  
A secretary who is responsible for servicing the Board

## PGCE Secondary Awards Assessment Board

### Membership

- Dean or Associate Dean of Faculty of Education and Children's Services (Chair); exceptionally, another senior member of academic staff may act in this capacity
- The Chief External Examiner
- Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement
- ITT Co-ordinator
- Programme Leader(s) and tutors

*In attendance:* Registry Services representative(s)  
A secretary who is responsible for servicing the Board

## **UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMME/SUBJECT ASSESSMENT BOARDS**

### Terms of Reference

To make recommendations on the results of individual modules of study at Levels Z, 4, 5 and 6.

### Membership

- Head of Subject (Chair, who must be a member of University of Chester staff; in his/her absence, this may be delegated to the Deputy Head of Subject or Departmental Assessment Contact)
- External Examiner/s
- All members of the academic staff responsible for assessment within the subject
- Head of Subject
- Departmental Assessment Contact

*In attendance:* A member of the University staff who shall act as secretary

### Membership of Panel of School Practice Assessors (in Faculty of Education & Children's Services)

- Chief External Examiner
- Local Head teachers (one of whom shall act as Chair)
- Head teacher from LEA not used by the University
- Higher Education Representative

## **POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT BOARDS**

### Terms of Reference

To make recommendations on the results of individual modules from postgraduate programmes of study.

### Membership

- Programme Leader (Chair, who must be a member of University of Chester staff; in exceptional circumstances this may be delegated to a senior member of the programme team)
- External Examiner/s
- Head of Subject (subject areas contributing to the Programmes of study under consideration by the Board)
- All academic staff responsible for assessment on the programme

*In attendance:* A member of the University staff who shall act as secretary

## **5.3 Awards**

### **Foundation Certificate**

The award of Foundation Certificate shall involve the accumulation of 120 credit points at Level 2.

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

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

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

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

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

For students on pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery programmes, the award of Diploma of Higher Education is dependent upon the student passing the practice element of the programme, in addition to gaining 240 academic credits. This is a requirement of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC).

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

### **Foundation Degree (FdA/FdSc)**

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

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

### **Intermediate Certificate in Professional Studies**

The award of Intermediate Certificate in Professional Studies shall involve the accumulation of 40 credit points at Level 6.

### **Intermediate Diploma in Professional Studies**

The award of Intermediate Diploma in Professional Studies shall involve the accumulation of 80 credit points at Level 6.

### **Certificate in Professional Development**

The award of Certificate in Professional Development shall involve the accumulation of 30 credit points at Level 6.

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

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

### **Professional Certificate**

The award of Professional Certificate shall involve the accumulation of 60 specific credit points. Credit may be accumulated entirely at Level 4, entirely at Level 5 or progressively at Levels 4 5 and/or 6, but shall not be accumulated exclusively at Level 6. The Professional Certificate shall be awarded on the successful completion of modules formally approved for inclusion within a programme appropriate to that award, provided that a student was registered for the Professional Certificate award by the time of registration for the second module to be studied. The Professional Certificate is not available as an exit award for students initially registered for a different award.

### **Graduate Certificate**

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

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



### **Graduate Diploma**

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

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

### **Bachelor's Degree with Honours (BA/BSc/BTh/LLB)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Church Colleges' Certificate**

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

### **Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert)**

The award of Postgraduate Certificate (including the Certificate in Management Studies) shall require the accumulation of 60 specific credit points at Level 7, or, where validated for such provision, the accumulation of a maximum of 20 credit points at Level 6 with the remainder at Level 7.

A distinction may be awarded to a candidate who has attained a mark of 70% or higher in Level 7 modules representing at least half the credits for which numerical marks were available.

### **Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip)**

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

validated for such provision, the accumulation of a maximum of 20 credit points at Level 6 with the remainder at Level 7.

A distinction may be awarded to a candidate who has attained a mark of 70% or higher in Level 7 modules representing at least half the credits for which numerical marks were available.

### **Masters Degrees (MA/MSc/MEd/MTh)**

The award of Masters degree shall require the accumulation of 180 specific credit points at Level 7, or, where validated for such provision, the accumulation of a maximum of 20 credit points at Level 6 with the remainder at Level 7.

A distinction may be awarded to a candidate who has attained a mark of 70% or higher in Level 7 modules representing at least half the credits for which numerical marks were available. The modules may include the dissertation.

### **Postgraduate Awards from programmes validated with 15 credit modules**

Postgraduate Awards which are the outcome of programmes validated in modules of 15 credits or multiples thereof may not involve the accumulation of more than 30 credit points at Level 6.

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

In circumstances whereby a student's name changes during their programme of study, the University will change the official record, providing acceptable proof of the change of name is provided. Under no circumstances, except where required by law, will the University amend a student's name after the original certificate has been issued.

## **5.4 Module Assessment**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Level 7**

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

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

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

The formal programme 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.

### **5.5 Requirements for the conduct of assessment by Programme (or Subject) Assessment Boards**

1. For purposes of conducting the assessment of all those modules which have been assigned to a given Programme (or Subject) 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 Programme (or Subject) Assessment Boards (Appendix C).
2. The Programme (or Subject) Assessment Board must determine the marks of all students being assessed in all modules within its jurisdiction without regard to the ultimate profile of any individual student. Once marks have been determined, for each module within the Board's jurisdiction, changes to individual outcomes may occur for the following reasons only:
  - the identification of an administrative error
  - a successful appeal against a decision of the Board
  - a ruling by the relevant Assessment Board in the light of a student having been found guilty of academic malpractice

3. Where such changes are necessitated, action may be taken by the Chair of the Programme (or Subject) Assessment Board in consultation with the relevant External Examiner.
4. The Programme (or Subject) Assessment Board shall be required to abide by any decision concerning a student which has already been taken by the Mitigating Circumstances Board.
5. All decisions taken by the Programme (or Subject) 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.
6. In any event, no decision concerning the assessment of a student or students shall be taken by a Programme (or Subject) 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.
7. It is a requirement of University of Chester that the proceedings of a Programme (or Subject) Assessment Board shall be minuted by a member of staff of University of Chester in accordance with guidelines issued by Registry Services (Student Programmes) (Appendix C).
8. External Examiners shall sign the confirmed marks cover sheet at the end of the meeting of the Programme (or Subject) Assessment Board (Appendix C).

A student who does not avail himself/herself of the opportunity of reassessment will not be granted a third assessment attempt.

Further guidance on matters relating to the conduct of Programme (or Subject) Assessment Boards is given in Appendix C of this Handbook.

## **5.6 Requirements for the conduct of assessment by Awards Assessment Boards**

### **1. Progression: Level Z to Level 4 and Level 4 to Level 5**

It is the function of an Awards Assessment Board to take such decisions in matters of assessment as are necessary for students either to progress to the next level of study or to be granted an award within the jurisdiction of that Board. An Awards Assessment Board shall also have the power to allow a student to proceed conditionally to the next level of study, where that student meets the necessary criteria as set out in Section F2.10 of the Principles and Regulations.

- (a) In order to progress from one level of study to the next, a student shall normally be required to have obtained the requisite number of module credits (120) at the lower level. These credits may be obtained by means of first assessment, reassessment, or, where permitted, third assessment attempt.
- (b) University of Chester has determined that, at Levels Z, and 4 where the conditions set out in the Principles and Regulations are met, a student's overall performance may compensate for failure in the assessment of up to and including two single 20 credit modules (one double credit module) at each level. In order for this to apply, the student must have a profile with only two failed modules (or one failed double-credit module) and an average mark for the level of study of 40%.

- (c) Compensation may not be applied to a module that, for professional reasons, is stated in the formal programme documentation to be essential to the fulfilment of programme objectives, or to any other module specifically precluded from compensation by the formal programme documentation (F4.3 of the Principles and Regulations).

In the application of compensation under regulation F4.3 (Principles and Regulations) the Awards Assessment Board shall make a decision on the basis of the profile of marks presented to it, notwithstanding the fact that some assessment results may be deferred. Thus, if a Level 4 student has a profile with two failed 20-credit modules, the marks for which are in the range 30%-39% (with no component mark below 20%) and an average mark of 40% or higher for modules completed by the time the AAB meets, the AAB may grant compensation for the failed modules. However, if the average mark for completed modules is below 40% the AAB shall require reassessment in all failed modules.

If a Level Z or Level 4 student fails up to and including two 20 credit modules, one of which is with a mark of less than 30% and one with a mark in the range 30%-39% (with no component mark below 20%) and an average mark of 40% or higher, reassessment is required only in the module with the mark below 30% and the module mark between 30%-39% will be compensated

Regardless of the number of credits outstanding, all candidates will be reassessed at the first opportunity following initial failure.

If, following reassessment, or a third assessment attempt, a Level Z or Level 4 student has a profile of up to and including two single 20 credit modules (or one double module) with an overall mark within the range 30-39% and there is no component mark below 20%, all other modules at Levels Z and 4 having been passed, the average mark for the level of study being 40% or greater, the Awards Assessment Board may allow that student's overall performance to compensate for failure in the two 20 credit modules (one double module) (F4.3).

If, following reassessment, a Level Z or Level 4 student fails up to and including two 20 credit modules, one of which is with a mark of less than 30% and one with a mark in the range 30%- 39% (with no component mark below 20%) and an average mark of 40% or higher, a third attempt, if granted, is required only in the module with the mark below 30%.

The Awards Assessment Board has the power to terminate a student's studies in cases where the candidate has failed a third assessment attempt (F2.9). The final profile of marks will include results from the most recent sitting; marks for failed modules are not carried forward from previous sittings.

- (d) Subject to the provision for compensation in (b) and (c) above, no student shall be allowed to progress to the next level of study until all modules at a given level have been passed. However, a student who fails the deferred assessment of a single module (or exceptionally two) or defers a reassessment of a single module (or exceptionally two) may, at the discretion of the Awards Assessment Board, be allowed to progress conditionally to the next level of study (F2.10). Conditional progression in one, or exceptionally two, modules may also be granted at the discretion of an Awards Assessment Board, in circumstances in which the completion of deferred assessments results in a profile for a level where reassessments are required, and there is no scheduled opportunity for such reassessments to take place prior to the commencement of the next academic session.

### **Students granted a third assessment attempt are not permitted to progress to 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 carrying failed or deferred modules at Level 4.

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

- any professional requirement which may prohibit such conditional progression;
  - any prerequisites which must have been met before students can be admitted to modules at the next level of study;
  - any other circumstances which might, in the opinion of the Board, adversely affect the student's performance.
- (e) Within the LLB programme, the University's normal regulations governing compensation of modules marked in the range 30%-39% shall not apply to modules designated as Foundations of Legal Knowledge, all of which must be passed with a mark of 40% or more, unless a student signifies in writing to the University that she/he no longer wishes to have Qualifying Law Degree status. A student who does not wish to have Qualifying Law Degree status may be compensated in any modules within the LLB programme, in accordance with the University's normal regulations.
- (f) Where a student is registered for study in the part-time mode, reassessment may take place prior to the conclusion of his or her studies at a given level (F4.4).
- (g) Where a student registered for study in the part-time mode completes the assessment at a given level, permission to progress conditionally to the next level may be granted by the University's Director of Undergraduate Modular Programmes, subject to a recommendation on progression being made at the next meeting of the relevant Awards Assessment Board
- (h) Part time students may register for modules at different levels during the same academic year. However, where a third assessment attempt has been granted, a part time student is not permitted to register for any further modules at the higher level until the third assessment attempt has been successfully completed. Under no circumstances will a student be permitted to register for modules at Level 6 until they have successfully completed all modules at Level 4
- (i) Where programmes are validated to include requirements for progression and completion which do not contribute to the classification 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 (D1.9).

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

#### **2. Progression: Level 5 to Level 6**

It is the function of an Awards Assessment Board to take such decisions in matters of assessment as are necessary for students either to progress to the next level of study or

to be granted an award within the jurisdiction of that Board. An Awards Assessment Board shall also have the power to allow a student to progress conditionally to the next level of study, where that student meets the necessary criteria as set out in Section F2.10 of the Principles and Regulations.

- (a) In order to progress from one level of study to the next, a student shall normally be required to have obtained the requisite number of module credits (120) at the lower level. These credits may be obtained by means of first assessment, reassessment, or, where permitted, third assessment attempt.
- (b) University of Chester has determined that, at Level 5, where the conditions set out in the Principles and Regulations are met, a student's overall performance may compensate for failure in the assessment of one single 20 credit module. In order for this to apply, the student must have a profile with only one failed module the marks for which shall be in the range 30-39% (with no component mark below 20%), and an average mark for the level of study of 40%.
- (c) Compensation may not be applied to a module that, for professional reasons, is stated in the formal programme documentation to be essential to the fulfilment of programme objectives, or to any other module specifically precluded from compensation by the formal programme documentation (F4.3).

In the application of compensation under regulation F4.3 (Principles and Regulations) the Awards Assessment Board shall make a decision on the basis of the profile of marks presented to it, notwithstanding the fact that some assessment results may be deferred. Thus, if a level 5 student has a profile with one failed 20-credit module, the mark for which is in the range 30%-39% (with no component mark below 20%) and an average mark of 40% or higher for modules completed by the time the AAB meets, the AAB may grant compensation for the failed module. However, if the average mark for completed modules is below 40% the AAB shall require reassessment in all failed modules.

Regardless of the number of credits outstanding, all candidates will be reassessed at the first opportunity following initial failure

If, following reassessment, or a third assessment attempt, a Level 5 student has a profile of one single 20 credit module with an overall mark within the range 30-39% and no component mark below 20%, all other modules at Level 5 have been passed, the average mark for the level of study being 40% or greater, the Awards Assessment Board may allow that student's overall performance to compensate for failure in the one 20 credit module. (F4.3).

The Awards Assessment Board has the power to terminate a student's studies in cases where the candidate has failed a third assessment attempt (F2.9). The final profile of marks will include results from the most recent sitting; marks for failed modules are not carried forward from previous sittings.

- (d) Subject to the provision for compensation in (b) and (c) above, no student shall be allowed to progress to the next level of study until all modules at a given level have been passed. However, a student who fails the deferred assessment of a single module (or exceptionally two) or defers the reassessment of a single module (or exceptionally two), may, at the discretion of the Awards Assessment Board, be allowed to progress conditionally to the next level of study (F2.10) Conditional progression in one, or exceptionally two, modules may also be granted at the discretion of an Awards Assessment Board, in circumstances in which the completion of deferred assessments results in a profile for a level where reassessments are required, and there is no scheduled opportunity for such

reassessments to take place prior to the commencement of the next academic session.

**Students granted a third assessment attempt are not permitted to progress to 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 carrying failed or deferred modules at Level 4.

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

- any professional requirement which may prohibit such conditional progression;
  - any prerequisites which must have been met before students can be admitted to modules at the next level of study;
  - any other circumstances which might, in the opinion of the Board, adversely affect the student's performance.
- (e) Within the LLB programme, the University's normal regulations governing compensation of modules marked in the range 30%-39% shall not apply to modules designated as Foundations of Legal Knowledge, all of which must be passed with a mark of 40% or more, unless a student signifies in writing to the University that she/he no longer wishes to have Qualifying Law Degree status. A student who does not wish to have Qualifying Law Degree status may be compensated in any modules within the LLB programme, in accordance with the University's normal regulations.
- (f) Where a student is registered for study in the part-time mode, reassessment may take place prior to the conclusion of his or her studies at a given level (F4.4).
- (g) Where a student registered for study in the part-time mode completes the assessment at a given level, permission to progress conditionally to the next level may be granted by the University's Director of Undergraduate Modular Programmes, subject to a recommendation on progression being made at the next meeting of the relevant Awards Assessment Board
- (h) Part time students may register for modules at different levels during the same academic year. However, where a third assessment attempt has been granted, a part time student is not permitted to register for any further modules at the higher level until the third assessment attempt has been successfully completed. Under no circumstances will a student be permitted to register for modules at Level 6 until they have successfully completed all required credits at Level 4
- (i) Where programmes are validated to include requirements for progression and completion which do not contribute to the classification 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 (D1.9).

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



### 3. Procedure for the determination of interim awards

The following circumstances are those in which an Awards Assessment Board shall normally recommend the granting of an interim award to a student who fails to gain the required number of module credits for the granting of the award for which he or she is registered, but who has gained the required number of module credits for that interim award.

- (a) Where a student requests, for reasons deemed valid by the Awards Assessment Board, to withdraw from the approved studies for which she/he is registered prior to the completion of those studies, she/he may be recommended for the highest interim award to which she/he is entitled.
- (b) Where, following reassessment and third attempt assessment (if offered), a student is deemed to have failed the award for which she/he is registered and, as a consequence has her/his studies terminated, she/he will be recommended for the highest interim award to which she/he is entitled.
- (c) Where a student ceases to attend her/his approved studies without formal notification of an intention to withdraw, that student will be recommended for the highest interim award to which she/he is entitled.

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

- (a) These Requirements are sequential and shall be applied in numerical order.
- (b) Programme (or Subject) 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 Programme (or Subject) Assessment Board is not empowered to make recommendations concerning honours degree classifications.
- (c) University of Chester has determined that at Level 6 where the conditions set out in the Principles and Regulations are met, a student's overall performance may compensate for failure in the assessment of one 20 credit module. In order for this to apply, the student must have a profile (following initial assessment, reassessment or a third assessment attempt) with only one failed module at Level 6, the marks for which shall be in the range 30 - 39% (with no component mark below 20%), and an average mark for the level of study in question of 40% or higher.
- (d) 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. These averages will then be combined with a weight of one-third for the Level 5 mark and two-thirds for the Level 6 mark. Figures used in the calculation will not be rounded and will be expressed to two decimal places.
- (e) 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, the calculation will be based on the

highest 100 credit marks; where numerical marks exist for in excess of 120 credits, the lowest 20 credit mark will be deducted from the calculation.

- (f) Where a student has been admitted by direct entry to part of Level 5 the average for Level 5 will only be used for degree classification purposes if 50% or more of the required Level 5 credits are taken.
- (g) 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

- (h) 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.

- (i) 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

- (j) 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 module marks at Level 6 in the higher class, that student shall be placed in the higher class. In calculating the number of Level 6 marks in the higher class, a double module shall be counted as two modules, a triple module shall be counted as three modules and a quadruple module shall be counted as four modules.

- (k) Where a student has been found guilty of academic malpractice the outcome may be that modules omitted from the calculation shall not include the modules penalised by the Academic Malpractice Panel

## 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 may take decisions on granting reassessments (or third assessment attempts), progression and awards, on behalf of the Board. In all cases involving the grant of an award, the relevant Chief External Examiner must be consulted.

An Awards Assessment Board may also delegate its authority to a subsidiary examination committee, of which at least one External Examiner in a programme leading to the award shall be a member (Appendix O).

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: Levels Z, 4, 5 and 6

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

Formal programme documentation shall specify a minimum mark of 20% which must be attained in all assessment components within a given module in order that that module may be passed overall. In the event of failure on these grounds, the module mark to be recorded shall be 39% or the arithmetical mark, whichever is the lower (F4.2). Such module failure cannot be the subject of compensation.

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

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

- the module is the subject of compensation
- such provision is contrary to the regulations of any party to the award
- the failure is the result of serious academic malpractice
- for professional or other reasons, recommended for approval by a validation panel, and ultimately approved by Quality and Standards Committee on behalf of Senate, restrictions on reassessment opportunities within the programme should apply,

In the last case, the Awards Assessment Board shall exercise discretion on whether to allow the reassessment, based on the recommendations of an Academic Malpractice Panel.

In determining reassessment requirements (and any compensation entitlement), the Awards Assessment Board considers a student's profile as presented to it and on completion of first assessment in all modules at a given level.

Regardless of the number of credits outstanding, all candidates will be reassessed at the first opportunity following initial failure. Guidance on the availability of reassessment opportunities appears as Appendix D

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, at the discretion of the Awards Assessment Board, 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. In exercising its discretion to grant a third assessment attempt, an Awards Assessment Board shall not grant a third assessment attempt to a student who did not avail herself/himself of the opportunity for reassessment in all outstanding assessment components. (For further guidance on Third Attempts see Appendix D.)

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

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.

Following the final Awards Assessment Board of the academic session, a student must avail herself or himself of the opportunity for reassessment within twelve months of the relevant decision of the Awards Assessment Board, unless a claim for exceptional or mitigating circumstances is deemed valid by the Mitigating Circumstances Board within that twelve-month period, in which case a deferral may be granted. A student who does not avail herself or himself of the opportunity for reassessment within the specified period shall have her/his studies terminated by the Awards Assessment Board and be recommended for an interim award, where applicable.

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

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

Where a student is required to be reassessed in more than one component of a module, the student shall be required to submit herself or himself for reassessment in those components at the same point, unless a claim for mitigating circumstances is deemed to be valid by the Mitigating Circumstances Board. Guidance is given in Appendix D.

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

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

#### 7. Reassessment Pre Registration Programmes (Faculty of Health and Social Care)

The minimum aggregate pass mark for each module to which these regulations apply shall be 40%. There is no compensation between components. All components must be passed in order that the module be passed overall, including the practice component where applicable. 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. (F4.2).

Where a student has both deferred and failed components within the same module, at the next assessment point they must submit both the deferred and failed components. Upon successful completion the module mark will be capped at 40%.

Failure to successfully complete the required practice outcomes at the first attempt will result in a reassessment opportunity. Failure successfully to complete the required practice outcomes at reassessment will result in discontinuation from the programme; there are no third attempts following such failure.

Students who fail a non practice component (theoretical component) will be offered reassessment in that component. A student who fails a module at reassessment may at the discretion of the Awards Assessment Board be offered a third assessment attempt. In exercising its discretion to grant a third assessment attempt, an Awards Assessment Board shall not grant a third assessment attempt to a student who did not avail herself/himself of the opportunity for reassessment in all outstanding assessment components, unless there were valid mitigating circumstances pertaining to reassessment.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council requires all students to meet the following:

All Common Foundation Programme (Level 4) outcomes are to be achieved and confirmed within 12 weeks of entering the branch programme (Level 5).  
(NMC Circular 16/2006)

Students who do not meet this requirement will not be permitted to progress from Level 4 to Level 5 of the programme.

#### 8. Reassessment: Level 7

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

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

- such provision is contrary to the regulations of any party to the award
- the failure is the result of serious academic malpractice

In the last case, the Awards Assessment Board shall exercise discretion on whether to allow the reassessment, based on the recommendations of an Academic Malpractice Panel.

Where a student is registered for study at Level 7, reassessment may take place prior to the conclusion of studies. The student shall be offered reassessment in failed modules at the first opportunity. Such a first opportunity is deemed to be the next occasion when reassessment in that module is made available, following the confirmation of results at the Awards Assessment Board or Examination Committee. Guidance on Examination Committees appears as Appendix O.

A student who, at the discretion of the Awards Assessment Board, has been granted a further reassessment (third assessment attempt) following failure in reassessment shall be offered that third assessment attempt at the time when the equivalent components of the failed module(s) are being assessed within the next academic session. In exercising its discretion to grant a third assessment attempt, an Awards Assessment Board shall not grant a third assessment attempt to a student who did not avail herself/himself of the opportunity for reassessment in all outstanding assessment components unless there were valid mitigating circumstances pertaining to reassessment.

A student required to be reassessed in a module must pay a reassessment fee. 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 at 40%.

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.

Following the Awards Assessment Board or Examination Committee, a student must avail herself or himself of the opportunity for reassessment within twelve months of the relevant decision of the Awards Assessment Board or Examination Committee, unless a claim for exceptional or mitigating circumstances is deemed valid by the Mitigating Circumstances Board within that twelve-month period, in which case a deferral may be granted. A student who does not avail herself or himself of the opportunity for reassessment within the specified period shall have her/his studies terminated by the Awards Assessment Board and be recommended for an interim award, where applicable.

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

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

Where a student is required to be reassessed in more than one component of a module, the student shall be required to submit herself or himself for reassessment in those components at the same point, unless a claim for mitigating circumstances is deemed to be valid by the Mitigating Circumstances Board. Guidance is given in Appendix D.

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

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

#### 9. Aegrotat

Where a student has attained at least 75% of the credits for an award, and the Awards Assessment Board is satisfied that, but for serious illness or similar valid cause notified to the Board, the student would have attained the remaining credits for that award, the Board may recommend to Senate the award of an Aegrotat degree or other Aegrotat award as appropriate. Such an award shall be unclassified. The student, or her/his designated representative, must signify in writing a willingness to accept such an award should Senate decide that it be conferred. It must be explained to the student that in accepting an Aegrotat award, she/he waives the right to reassessment of any failed modules.

### **5.7 Requirements governing Programme Boards**

Where a programme consists of modules assigned to different Programme (or Subject) Assessment Boards, a Programme Board shall be convened at least once a year to take

cognisance of the results profiles of students on that programme. Such a Programme Board shall be composed of members of the programme team, and shall be chaired by the programme leader (or her/his nominee). It shall meet after the relevant Programme (or Subject) Assessment Boards have met to determine marks, and shall in no circumstances have the power to alter those marks. The purposes of a Programme Board shall be to monitor student performance and to consider issues of quality management and enhancement, and the maintenance of standards, in the light of that performance.

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## 6. REQUIREMENTS GOVERNING THE OCCURRENCE OF ACADEMIC MALPRACTICE BY STUDENTS IN THE COURSE OF ASSESSMENT

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

The definition of Academic Malpractice is given below.

### 6.1 Definition of Academic Malpractice

Academic malpractice may be deemed to have occurred where a student has gained, or sought to gain, advantage in assessment contrary to the established conditions under which students' knowledge, abilities or skills are assessed for progression towards, or the conferment of, academic credit.

*Note: students may be penalised in the normal course of assessment for work which, in the judgement of the examiners, relies too heavily on the verbatim reproduction of work derived from other published sources where those sources are acknowledged. However, such over-reliance on work reproduced directly from published sources but acknowledged by the student to be taken from those sources may also be regarded as academic malpractice as defined in section F, sub-section F2.14 of the Principles and Regulations, if a student is judged to be implying that the phraseology is her or his own. Plagiarism, and other forms of academic malpractice, can occur whether or not the student intends to deceive.*

Specific practices which shall be deemed to constitute academic malpractice are:

- a) plagiarism, that is, where a student incorporates another person's work (including another student's as well as published sources) by unacknowledged quotation, paraphrase, imitation or other device, in a way which suggests that it is the student's original work. Work in this context is to be taken as any intellectual output being assessed for academic credit, and may include text, images, data, oral presentation, sound or performance.

Examples of plagiarism are:

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

Plagiarism in creative work

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



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

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

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

- p) preventing or attempting to prevent another student's assessment taking place properly;
- q) fabricating evidence in support of a mitigating circumstances claim;
- r) fabricating evidence in support of an academic appeal;
- s) any other dishonest practice resulting in, or intended to result in, a student gaining an unfair advantage in assessment, or disadvantaging other students' assessments.

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

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

Where a formal accusation of academic malpractice has been made, the University shall not normally permit suspension of studies until the matter is resolved.

## **6.2 Academic Malpractice and Disciplinary Procedures**

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

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

In cases of suspected academic malpractice by a student on a professional programme, these procedures should normally be used. However, where the Chair of the SAB considers that the Professional Suitability Procedure to be the more appropriate procedure, advice should be sought from Senior Assistant Registrar (Review and Student Affairs) in the first instance.

## **6.3 Initial Witnessing and Accusation: Examination – levels 4, 5, 6 and 7**

If an invigilator suspects that a student is engaging in academic malpractice (and provided that the student is not disturbing other candidates) the student shall be allowed to continue the examination. However, the invigilator shall immediately require another invigilator to act as a witness and any unauthorised materials shall be removed. The script (or other assessment form where appropriate) shall be endorsed by the invigilator at the point where the occurrence of cheating is suspected, and on the front cover of the examination answer book. In a practical examination, the invigilator will take note of the stage reached when the infringement was observed.

The invigilator should instruct the student to report to them at the end of the examination when other students have been dismissed from the examination hall. The invigilator and student should then meet with the Examinations Officer (or other senior member of the Registry) who will make a written record of the circumstances and retain or make notes regarding any relevant materials. A form for this purpose may be found as Appendix F. A

copy of this record should be sent to both student and invigilator for them to sign and record any comments as soon as possible and no later than 2 working days following the incident.

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

A student who, in the opinion of an invigilator, is behaving in a manner which may disturb other examination candidates or may disrupt the smooth progress of the examination shall be required to leave the examination room forthwith. At the discretion of the chief invigilator, examination candidates may be allowed additional time to compensate for the time lost as a result of any disturbance/disruption.

#### **6.4 Initial Witnessing and Accusation: Coursework**

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

##### **(a) Occurrence of Academic Malpractice by Students at Level 4 (coursework)**

###### *i) Accusation*

First (alleged) offences of academic malpractice at Level 4 will normally be dealt with initially by the Subject (or Programme) Assessment Board, without recourse to University Academic Malpractice Panel

If the Chair, or nominee, of the Subject (or Programme) Assessment Board is of the opinion that it is likely that academic malpractice may have occurred, the Chair, or nominee, will write to the student (using the format in Appendix G (i) notifying her/him of the allegation and require her/him to provide a written response to the allegation within 7 days. The letter shall be accompanied by a copy of the evidence and will state that the student should attend an interview with the Chair, or nominee, where the allegation and the student's written reply will be discussed. The student may be accompanied by a fellow student of the University of Chester or an officer of the Chester Students' Union (CSU). A copy of this section of the Handbook should be included with the letter along with a copy of the relevant evidence.

###### *(ii) Outcome*

If the student accepts that academic malpractice has taken place the Chair, or nominee, will inform the student orally that the Subject Assessment Board will impose a penalty. The Chair should also counsel the student on approaches to study, and sources of study skills support, which could assist the student in developing academic skills and avoiding any recurrence of the offence in future.

*Note: It may be the case that the Chair decides that academic malpractice has not occurred.*

iii) Penalty

The penalty would normally be recommendation (c) in Section 6.9 of this Handbook. A copy of the letter containing confirmation of the offence from the Chair to the student should be sent to AQSS, together with notification of the penalty applied.

*Note: All cases of academic malpractice accepted by students after an interview with the Chair of the Subject Assessment Board must be reported directly to AQSS.*

iv) Second and subsequent<sup>1</sup> (alleged) offences of academic malpractice at Level 4

If the student contests the allegation, or if having been dealt with as in the previous paragraph, a student is accused of a second or subsequent offence at Level 4 and the Chair, or nominee, is of the opinion that there is a *prima facie* case, then the allegation will be referred to a University Academic Malpractice Panel, as described elsewhere in this Handbook. The Chair will write to AQSS, using the form in Appendix G(ii) and request the convening of the University Academic Malpractice Panel.

## **6.5 Formal Accusation levels 5, 6 and 7, and relevant cases at level 4**

The decision to accuse a student of academic malpractice shall be made only by the relevant Chair of the Subject (or Programme) Assessment Board. Academic malpractice procedures may not be implemented if a mark has already been confirmed by an Awards Assessment Board.

Within five working days of receiving notification of an allegation of academic malpractice, the Chair of the relevant Subject (or Programme) Assessment Board will review the evidence submitted. The Chair may consult with other academic officers as appropriate. The Chair of the SAB may decide to conduct a *viva voce* examination where there is a suspicion that academic malpractice has been committed, but where no evidence can be produced. Guidelines are available at Appendix G(iv).

If s/he is of the opinion that there is a *prima facie* case (sufficient evidence to proceed to a University Academic Malpractice Panel, the Chair of the Subject (or Programme) Assessment Board will write to the student, by pro forma letter (Appendix G(i)), notifying her/him of the allegation and requiring her/him to provide a written response to the allegation within seven days of the date of the letter. The letter shall be accompanied by a copy of the evidence and will state that the student should attend an interview with the Chair, or nominee, where the allegation and the student's written reply will be discussed. A copy of the relevant sections of this handbook should be included with the letter. In a case of suspected academic malpractice, the initial letter of accusation to the student shall stand in place of the normal feedback.

If the Chair of the Subject (or Programme) Assessment Board judges, if necessary after the conduct of a *viva voce* examination, that there is insufficient evidence to proceed, the case will be dismissed with no blame attached. Where, for any reason, the student has been made aware of the initial accusation, but where the case is dismissed by the Chair of the Subject (or Programme) Assessment Board, the Chair shall inform the student by letter that she/he has been exculpated.

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<sup>1</sup> In the event of one or more offences of plagiarism, all cases at Level 4 will be regarded as concurrent, until formal written feedback about plagiarism has been given to the student. Any further academic malpractice in work submitted for assessment after this point will be regarded as constituting a subsequent offence

If the Chair judges, on the basis of the evidence available to him or her, that there is a *prima facie* case for proceeding to the stage of a University Academic Malpractice Panel, the Chair shall write to AQSS, using the form in Appendix G(ii), and request the convening of such a Panel.

The student shall then be informed by AQSS of the appointed time at which the panel will be held and shall be informed of her/his right to appear before the Panel and/or submit a further written statement beyond that already made to the Chair of the Subject (or Programme) Assessment Board. Before the University Academic Malpractice Panel meets, the student against whom the allegation has been made will be supplied with a copy of the written evidence submitted by the member of academic staff submitting the accusation. However, if further evidence of malpractice in the piece of work comes to light during or before the hearing, the University reserves the right to take this additional evidence into account.

## **6.6 Acceptance of the Charge of Academic Malpractice**

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

## **6.7 University Academic Malpractice Panel: Composition**

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

### Chair

Each Faculty shall nominate a Chair who is either a head or deputy head of subject or a Chair of a Programme Assessment Board.

### Members

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

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

**A written submission shall be presented to the panel by the department, on a form provided by AQSS (Appendix G (ii)) unless the Chair of the University Academic Malpractice Panel has requested that a member of staff with knowledge of the alleged offence attend the hearing.**

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

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

## 6.8 The Meeting of the University Academic Malpractice Panel

The University shall endeavour to schedule Academic Malpractice Panel Hearings during term time. However, given that much coursework is submitted towards the end of term, this is often not possible. The student may request a rescheduling of a hearing on one occasion only, and for good reason. Such reason during term time being, but not exclusively, a clash with an examination or class test; a clash with a field trip or with Work Based Learning; a clash with another academic requirement (application for deferral for an academic reason shall be accompanied by a written confirmation from the programme or module leader confirming the requirement); illness of the student, or someone for whom the student has a caring responsibility (application for deferral due to illness must be accompanied by a medical certificate). A request for deferral of a hearing due to a holiday taken during term time will not be permitted.

For hearings during vacation time, requests may be made for the reasons stated above, because of a pre-booked holiday, or because of work commitments. In either term or vacation time, a student may request that the hearing goes ahead in their absence.

At its meeting, the Panel shall consider:

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

The student shall have the right to see and comment on any evidence the University Academic Malpractice Panel intends to take into account, and the Chair of the University Academic Malpractice Panel shall adjourn the hearing if necessary to give the student the opportunity to do this. Where a student elects to make an oral statement to the Panel, she/he may be accompanied by a member of the University of Chester, who should be either a fellow student or an officer of Chester Students' Union. The student's parent or guardian shall only be permitted to attend the hearing if the student is under 18 years of age. At the discretion of the Chair of the Panel, the person accompanying the student may be invited to make a statement. The name and status of the person accompanying the student shall be communicated in advance to the Chair of the Panel. The student shall respond to the allegation personally and cannot delegate the response to a third party, nor shall a third party be permitted to attend the hearing on behalf of a student without their presence. No discussions will be entered into with a third party about the matter. If the student elects not to make an oral statement, the case will be heard in their absence. Further information about the status of the person accompanying the student can be found in appendix G (ix)

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

## 6.9 Decision and Subsequent Recommendation of Penalty

**If the department considers that the affected portion of the work is particularly significant to the assessed work, and merits a more severe application of a penalty than the guidelines would suggest, they may make application to the University Academic Malpractice Panel, before or during the hearing, providing a written or oral rationale.**

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

That the student:

- (a) has not engaged in academic malpractice, and that the assessment marks should therefore be released in the normal way
- (b) has engaged in academic malpractice and that the student receives a formal warning as to future conduct and shall be given a mark reduction for the module in question. The mark reduction shall be as follows:

That the student:

- i) should fail (with a mark of 0%) the particular element within an assessment component to which the accusation relates;
- ii) should fail (with a mark of 0%) the entire component of assessment within the relevant module (e.g. all the examination component or all the course work component);
- iii) should fail (with a mark of 0%) the entire module;

In exceptionally serious cases, where the Panel finds the student has engaged in academic malpractice, the Panel may recommend that the student:

- iv) has marks for all modules at a particular level capped at 40%
- v) should have their degree classification lowered;
- vi) should fail (with a mark of 0%) the entire level;
- vii) at Level 7, the student shall only be permitted the award of Postgraduate Diploma, and may not take further modules which may lead to the award of a Masters' degree.
- viii) at Level 7, the student shall only be permitted the award of Postgraduate Certificate, and may not take further modules which may lead to the award of Postgraduate Diploma
- ix) be required to withdraw from the University and may not enrol for any other award at the institution. Where this penalty is applied, the penalty of a reduction of marks shall also be specified.

The penalty shall include a recommendation, where appropriate, about whether reassessment is permissible. However, the panel shall not normally recommend a penalty less severe than the outcome which would have resulted from a failure to submit the work in question. In all cases of academic malpractice at Level 7, the student shall be barred from being awarded a distinction.

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

## **6.10 The Role of the Assessment Board**

The Assessment Board shall ratify the penalty judgement.

Normally, the final module mark(s) awarded shall be treated in the same way, and have the same consequences with regard to the assessment of the candidate's overall performance, as a similar mark awarded to other candidates. However, the result of any module in which a student has been found to have committed academic malpractice may not be discounted for the purpose of calculating the degree classification. When reassessment is allowed in modules which the student is deemed to have failed on account of academic malpractice, the requirements governing reassessment shall apply (please refer to Requirements for the Conduct of Assessment by Awards Assessment Boards).

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

## **6.11 Appeal against the decision of the Academic Malpractice Panel**

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

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

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

Appeals against the decision of the Academic Malpractice Panel shall be considered under the academic appeals procedure (see section 7 of the assessment handbook).



A student should lodge notice of intent to appeal within 7 calendar days of notification of the decision of the Academic Malpractice Panel up publication of the Awards Assessment Board's decision.

Where an appeal against the decision of an Academic Malpractice Panel has been upheld, the decision of the Appeals Committee (or Assessment Review Board) shall normally be that the student shall be afforded the chance to defend the allegation at a hearing of the Academic Malpractice Panel as if for the first time.

## **ACADEMIC APPEALS PROCEDURE**

### **7.1 Introduction**

- 7.1a These procedures describe how a student may submit an Academic Appeal and the grounds under which they may do so. A student submitting an Academic Appeal is referred to in these procedures as 'the appellant'.
- 7.1b These procedures apply to students studying at the University of Chester for undergraduate and taught postgraduate awards made at this institution. Academic Appeals may only be made after a decision has been made by an Awards Assessment Board or an Examination Committee which are the bodies charged with making decisions on student progression and awards (or exceptionally, by the Chair of an Awards Assessment Board or Examination Committee acting on its behalf), and must be made within the specified time limit.
- 7.1c The purpose of these procedures is to safeguard the interests of all students. They may be used only when there are adequate grounds for doing so and may not be used simply because a student is dissatisfied with the outcome of his/her assessment or other decision concerning their academic position or progress or as an alternative to using the Mitigating Circumstances or complaints procedure at the proper time.
- 7.1d The University expects that students take responsibility for managing their learning, revision and assessment activities throughout the duration of their studies. However, the University acknowledges that exceptional or mitigating circumstances may at times affect a student's performance. Thus, the University has put in place a system of extensions and deferrals for which a student may apply when such difficulties arise. The University also provides extensive student support through the PAT system and SSG. A student in difficulties is expected to make use of support systems put in place by the University and to request an extension or deferral if appropriate.
- 7.1e Students should appreciate that Academic Appeals do not always produce the outcome preferred by an appellant.

## 7.2 Right to Appeal

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

- 7.2.1.1 that the appellant's performance in the assessment was adversely affected by personal illness or other exceptional personal circumstance(s) only if s/he was unable, or for valid and compelling reasons unwilling, to divulge such illness or circumstance(s) before the Awards Assessment Board or Examination Committee reached its decision. Such illness or circumstance(s) must have had a demonstrable and substantial negative impact on the resulting assessment outcome;
- 7.2.1.2 that the assessment was not conducted in accordance with the relevant assessment regulations, leading to a demonstrable and substantial negative impact on the resulting assessment outcome;
- 7.2.1.3 that there was administrative error, on the part of the University, which had a demonstrable and substantial negative impact on the resulting assessment outcome;
- 7.2.1.4 that some other material irregularity on the part of the University occurred in the conduct of the assessment which had a demonstrable and substantial negative impact on the resulting assessment outcome;
- 7.2.1.5 that the appellant has been assessed as having a specific learning difficulty during the current academic session, subject to the following.

A student who is diagnosed during a programme, and who is debarred from submitting a retrospective claim to the Mitigating Circumstances Board under section 3 of the handbook governing the assessment of students, may none the less lodge an appeal in respect of assessment taken prior to, but in the same academic session (year) as, the diagnosis. A successful appeal in these circumstances will mean that the results of such assessments are set aside, and deferred assessments are granted. In no circumstances will deferral of assessment be granted in respect of assessment taken in a previous academic session.

The Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement is empowered to grant a deferral of assessment on receipt of satisfactory evidence of the diagnosis of a Specific Learning Difficulty, provided the conditions set out in paragraphs 3 and 4 of section 9 of the handbook governing the assessment of students apply, without the need to convene an Appeals Board. In cases of doubt, recourse shall be had to the full Appeals procedure. In the case of students on professional programmes, those academic appeals which have been upheld on this ground shall normally be referred to the Assessment Review Board, in order that assessment of the professional components may be considered.

7.2.2 Academic Appeals on other grounds shall be deemed inadmissible.

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

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

- 7.2.4 The decision of an academic malpractice panel is one of academic judgement, and thus a student may not appeal against the decision of an academic malpractice panel merely because they disagree with the decision.
- 7.2.5 Students are assured that they will not be subject to discrimination for lodging an Academic Appeal in good faith, irrespective of the outcome of the Academic Appeal.
- 7.2.6 Students should note that the University's complaints procedure should be invoked in other areas of potential dispute. There may be appeals against academic decisions that refer to matters or allegations that are, or that become, the subject of a formal complaint. In cases where matters that are the substance of a complaint are linked to matters which are the substance of an Academic Appeal, the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement and the University Proctor shall decide whether the cases shall be considered concurrently or consecutively.
- 7.2.7 Students studying under a collaborative partnership agreement at another institution or overseas on taught programmes delivered by University of Chester shall be expected to comply with the Academic Appeals Procedures as detailed herein, and to submit full written evidence in support of any Academic Appeal to the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement, University of Chester.
- 7.2.8 Neither students, nor their representatives, nor members of staff may lobby the Chair or Members of an Appeals Board about an academic appeal which has been submitted, or is expected or proposed to be submitted. Doing so may lead to the Appeals Board to either defer the hearing of the Academic Appeal until a new Appeals Board with a different Chair and Members can be convened, or to the Appeals Board rejecting the Academic Appeal outright.

### 7.3 Exclusions from Academic Appeal

- 7.3.1 The following are illustrations of claims that cannot be considered as the basis for an Academic Appeal:
- 7.3.1.1 disagreement with academic judgement of a Programme (or Subject) or an Awards Assessment Board in assessing the merits of an individual piece of work or in reaching any assessment decision based on the marks, grades and other information relating to a student's performance;
- 7.3.1.2 disagreement of an academic malpractice panel;

- 7.3.1.3 complaints related to teaching, supervision or services. These must be raised at the time when they occur and through the appropriate channels e.g. Personal Academic Tutor, Head of Subject, Staff-Student Liaison Committee, or the University's Complaints Procedure;
- 7.3.1.4 any other complaint which can be properly dealt with, or has already been dealt with, under the University's Complaints Procedure, unless the agreed outcome of the complaint was that the matter be referred to the Academic Appeals Board;
- 7.3.1.5 circumstances which have already been considered by the Mitigating Circumstances Board or relevant Assessment Board;
- 7.3.1.6 circumstances which could have been considered, had notice been given prior to the meeting of the Mitigating Circumstances Board or Assessment Board, and where the student has no valid reason for having failed to give such notice;
- 7.3.1.7 circumstances which do not fall within one of the permitted grounds, or are wholly without substance or merit, or are frivolous or vexatious, or are unsupported by evidence;
- 7.3.1.8 claims that academic performance was adversely affected by factors such as ill health, where there is no independent medical or other evidence;
- 7.3.1.9 claims that academic performance was adversely affected by factors such as ill health which are accompanied by medical evidence which does not contain opinion or diagnosis, but merely repeats what the student has *post hoc* reported to the doctor (or other medical practitioner).
- 7.3.1.10 claims that academic performance was adversely affected by factors such as ill health which are accompanied by medical evidence stating that the illness 'may have an impact' or which state "the patient informs me".
- 7.3.1.11 mitigating circumstances in cases where the student could reasonably have avoided the situation or acted to limit the impact of the circumstances. Examples of mitigating circumstances which would not be considered by an Appeals Board can be found in the accompanying guidance;
- 7.3.1.12 circumstances which might have fallen within one or more of the permitted grounds for Academic Appeal, but which were not the subject of an Academic Appeal at the relevant time.
- 7.3.1.13 Academic appeals on the grounds of specific learning difficulties where the appellants began the process of diagnosis after the assessment in question.
- 7.3.1.14 Appeals against the decision of an academic malpractice panel which have already been considered by an Appeals Committee

*The above list is not exhaustive.*

## **7.4 Responsibilities of the student**

- 7.4.1 The University acknowledges that there may be exceptional or mitigating circumstances where a student cannot divulge such circumstances at the relevant time. However, if a student wishes to lodge an Academic Appeal, the Appeal should be lodged at the first available opportunity i.e. where the circumstances are long-

standing an Academic Appeal based on such circumstances should be made at the failure of the first attempt at the assessment rather than waiting until failure at reassessment or third attempt. If a student has a long-term condition or problem which may affect her/his study and assessment, it is the responsibility of the student to seek advice as early as possible, to use the support services available through the University, and to utilise procedures such as extension, deferral or mitigating circumstances procedures where appropriate and permissible.

7.4.2 It is the responsibility of the student to:

7.4.2.1 ensure the submission of an Academic Appeal and supporting evidence is submitted within the published timescale;

7.4.2.2 ensure that the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement has an address for correspondence for the timescale of the Academic Appeal;

7.4.2.3 compile documentation in support of an Academic Appeal. The University does not contact medical practitioners or other professionals on behalf of an appellant for supporting evidence. Impartial guidance about the compilation of supporting evidence can be obtained from the Students' Union.

## 7.5 Procedures for Academic Appeal

7.5.1 A student wishing to appeal MUST:

7.5.1.1 within seven calendar days of the publication of results, give notice in writing to the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement of the intention to appeal, using form APP1 or APP1 (H) signed by the appellant stating the grounds for such an Academic Appeal;

7.5.1.2 or, if appealing against the decision of an academic malpractice panel, within seven calendar days of notification of the outcome, give notice in writing to the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement of the intention to appeal, using form APP1M or APP1M (H) signed by the appellant stating the grounds for such an Academic Appeal;

7.5.1.3 or, if appealing against the decision of an academic malpractice panel, within fourteen calendar days of notification of the outcome, submit form APP2M or APP2M (H) signed by the appellant and present a full case for an Academic Appeal in writing, including appropriate documentary evidence;

7.5.1.4 within fourteen calendar days of the publication of results, submit form APP2 or APP2 (H) signed by the appellant and present a full case for an Academic Appeal in writing, including appropriate documentary evidence;

7.5.1.5 not proceed to any awards ceremony pending determination of the Academic Appeal. An Academic Appeal will not be considered once an award has been conferred.

7.5.2 An Academic Appeal signed by someone other than the appellant shall not be considered, unless prior permission is granted by the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement.

## **Time Limits**

7.5.3 Failure by an appellant to comply with any of the time limits specified in these procedures will render an Academic Appeal inadmissible, with the consequence that it cannot be pursued further, unless the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement is satisfied that circumstances exist which made it not feasible for the appellant to have complied within the time limit specified.

## **Evidence**

7.5.4 All Academic Appeals on the grounds of illness or other exceptional circumstances as described in section 2.1.1 or 2.3.1 must be accompanied by medical, professional or other sufficiently independent evidence which is contemporaneous with the period of the assessment concerned. Other than in exceptional cases, retrospective medical or other certification will not be accepted as valid.

7.5.5 Any medical or other certification submitted in support of an Academic Appeal must relate specifically to the dates, nature, onset and duration of the illness or circumstances. Additionally, in the case of illness, the certification must contain a clear medical diagnosis, opinion or description of symptoms and a statement on the severity of the impairment, and not merely report the student's claim that s/he felt unwell, nor report the student's claim that s/he had reason to believe s/he was ill.

7.5.6 Where the appellant is appealing because of illness or circumstances relating primarily to family or friends, medical or other evidence must be submitted demonstrating how the illness or circumstances have affected the appellant, and also must comply with the evidence requirements in 7.5.4 and 7.5.5.

7.5.6 Letters of support from family members or friends will not be considered as independent evidence.

7.5.7 All supporting evidence should be in English. Where original documentary evidence is in another language, it must be accompanied by a certified translation into English.

7.5.8 Where an appellant submits falsified evidence in support of an Academic Appeal, the University reserves the right to disallow the Appeal and to institute disciplinary or other appropriate procedures.

7.5.9 Where an appellant is studying on, or having had their studies terminated, is seeking to return to, a professional programme, at any stage in the procedure the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement, the Appeals Board or the Assessment Review Board may advise or require that professional suitability procedures are invoked, if the nature of the academic appeal, or the evidence supplied in support of the academic appeal occasions this course of action.

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

7.5.10 The decision of an Awards Assessment Board remains until and unless it is overturned by an Assessment Review Board. In the case of continuing students, the appellant should prepare for and submit any assessments or reassessments by the given deadline and sit any examinations on the scheduled dates. Where a student has not been permitted to progress to the next level, they may not attend lectures nor submit work for the next level unless a decision to that effect has been made by an Assessment Review Board, or in the case of an undisputed administrative error, by the Chair of an Awards Board. In the case of students whose studies have been terminated, the student may not recommence studies unless a decision to that effect

has been made by an Assessment Review Board, or in the case of an uncontested administrative error, the Chair of an Awards Assessment Board has taken action.

## **7.6 Preliminary consideration of Academic Appeal**

7.6.1 The Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement (or nominee) and a designated member of the senior staff of Academic Quality Support Services shall decide as soon as reasonably practicable whether the Academic Appeal merits further consideration by an Appeals Board (or Appeals Committee in the case of appeals against academic malpractice decisions which have not been ratified by the Awards Assessment Board). The Dean and senior member of Academic Quality Support Services may make one of the following decisions:

7.6.1.1 that the appellant's case does not have substance. This decision shall be based on the guidelines appended (Appendix Hx). The Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement will notify the appellant by letter of the reasons for the decision;

7.6.1.2 that the appellant's case wholly or partly warrants further consideration by an Appeals Board (or Committee);

7.6.1.3 that the Academic Appeal should be dealt with under the process for students identified as having a specific learning difficulty during an academic session;

7.6.1.4 that an Academic Appeal made on the grounds specified in sections 2.1.2, 2.1.3 and/or 2.1.4 is established and a letter is received from the Head of Subject or nominee confirming the error. In this case the Dean shall refer the case directly to the Chair of the relevant Awards Assessment Board.

7.6.2 Where an appellant is studying on, or having had their studies terminated, is seeking to return to a professional programme, at any stage in the procedure the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement, the Appeals Board or the Assessment Review Board may advise or require that professional suitability procedures are invoked, if the nature of the academic appeal, or the evidence supplied in support of the academic appeal occasions this course of action.

## **7.7 Request for a review of the decision at the preliminary stage**

7.7.1 Following the rejection of an Academic Appeal at the preliminary stage, the appellant may request a Dean of an academic Faculty (not the Chair of the Appeals Board) to review the decision. The request for a review must be made within 7 calendar days of the notification of the decision of the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement. This request should be sent to the Appeals Section of Academic Quality Support Services who will forward the request together with the relevant papers to the reviewing Dean.

7.7.2 A request may only be made on the grounds that the appeals procedure was not carried out correctly, or that new evidence had come to light which could not have been made known to the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement at the relevant time. The reviewing Dean may decide:

7.7.2.1 to confirm that the appeal is unsuccessful. A 'Completion of Procedures' letter will be issued (See Section 11.1 below);  
*or*

7.7.2.2 that the appeal should be forwarded for further consideration by the Appeals Board (or Committee).

## 7.8 Appeals Board

7.8.1 The Appeals Board acts with the full delegated authority of Senate. It has the power to require staff and students of the University to make written submissions, attend, give evidence and answer questions.

7.8.2 Following the Awards Assessment Boards, the Appeals Board (Annex A) will meet as soon as reasonably practicable to consider all written submissions referred by the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement within the specified time limits other than those rejected during the initial consideration, and those on which the Dean has been able to take other action.

7.8.3 The Appeals Board may take advice from a member (or members) of staff with appropriate clinical expertise, or other persons with such expertise, about the interpretation of medical or other evidence supplied in support of an academic appeal.

7.8.4 After considering all the evidence, the Appeals Board may decide as follows:

7.8.4.1 that the Academic Appeal is unsuccessful, the original decision of the Awards Assessment Board or Examination Committee stands;  
*or*

7.8.4.2 that the Academic Appeal is successful: the Appeals Board shall request the Chair of the relevant Awards Assessment Board to convene an Assessment Review Board.

7.8.5 Where an appellant is studying on, or having had their studies terminated, is seeking to return to a professional programme, at any stage in the procedure the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement, the Appeals Board or the Assessment Review Board may advise or require that professional suitability procedures are invoked, if the nature of the academic appeal, or the evidence supplied in support of the academic appeal occasions this course of action.

7.8.6 The Appeals Board may decide at any stage of its deliberations to adjourn for the purpose of obtaining further evidence in writing or in person.

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

7.8.7 Normally the Appeals Board will only consider written submissions. However, if the Appeals Board decides to adjourn to receive further evidence, a further meeting of the Board shall be convened. The Appeals Board may request further evidence in writing or in person from either the appellant or staff of the University. If the Chair deems that oral evidence is appropriate, the Board may request that (an) appropriate member(s) of staff and the appellant attend the reconvened Board.

7.8.8 The appellant may be accompanied by a "friend" if s/he wishes. The "friend" shall be a member of the University of Chester, either a fellow student or an officer (or of Chester Students' Union. Exceptionally, the "friend" may be a member of SSG. The name and status of the "friend" shall be notified in advance to the Secretary of the Appeals Board. The role of the "friend" is to support the appellant, and not to act as a legal representative. At the discretion of the Chair, the "friend" accompanying the appellant may be invited to make a statement.

7.8.9 In cases of an oral hearing the appellant shall be sent one copy of all documents made available to the Appeals Board in advance of the hearing.

7.8.10 Where an appellant attends an Appeals Board at the request of the Board, travel expenses limited to the cost of a second class rail fare (mainland only) from the appellant's declared home address shall be permitted.



## 7.9 Appeals Committee

- 7.9.1 The Appeals Committee acts with the full delegated authority of Senate. It has the power to require staff and students of the University to make written submissions, attend, give evidence and answer questions.
- 7.9.2 Following ratification of an academic malpractice decision by the Subject (or Programme) Assessment Board (or a decision undertaken by the Chair, acting on behalf of the SAB or PAB), the Appeals Committee (Annex C) will meet as soon as reasonably practicable to consider all written submissions referred by the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement within the specified time limits other than those rejected during the initial consideration, and those on which the Dean has been able to take other action.
- 7.9.3 The Appeals Committee may take advice from a member (or members) of staff with appropriate clinical expertise, or other persons with such expertise, about the interpretation of medical or other evidence supplied in support of an academic appeal.
- 7.9.4 After considering all the evidence, the Appeals Committee may decide as follows:
- 7.9.4.1 that the Academic Appeal is unsuccessful, the original decision of the academic malpractice panel, as ratified by the Subject (or Programme) Assessment Board, stands.
  - 7.9.4.2 that the Academic Appeal is successful: the Appeals Committee shall normally request either:
    - that a new academic malpractice panel be convened to hear the case
    - or:
    - that the original academic malpractice panel be reconvened to reconsider the penalty applied.
- 7.9.5 Where an appellant is studying on, or having had their studies terminated, is seeking to return to a professional programme, at any stage in the procedure the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement, or the Appeals Committee may advise or require that professional suitability procedures are invoked, if the nature of the academic appeal, or the evidence supplied in support of the academic appeal occasions this course of action.
- 7.9.6 The Appeals Committee may decide at any stage of its deliberations to adjourn for the purpose of obtaining further evidence in writing or in person.

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

- 7.9.7 Normally the Appeals Committee will only consider written submissions. However, if the Appeals Committee decides to adjourn to receive further evidence, a further meeting of the Committee shall be convened. The Appeals Committee may request further evidence in writing or in person from either the appellant or staff of the University. If the Chair deems that oral evidence is appropriate, the Committee may request that (an) appropriate member(s) of staff and the appellant attend the reconvened Board.
- 7.9.8 The appellant may be accompanied by a "friend" if s/he wishes. The "friend" shall be a member of the University of Chester, either a fellow student or an officer (or of Chester Students' Union. Exceptionally, the "friend" may be a member of SSG. The

name and status of the “friend” shall be notified in advance to the Secretary of the Appeals Committee. The role of the “friend” is to support the appellant, and not to act as a legal representative. At the discretion of the Chair, the “friend” accompanying the appellant may be invited to make a statement.

7.9.9 In cases of an oral hearing the appellant shall be sent one copy of all documents made available to the Appeals Committee in advance of the hearing.

7.9.10 Where an appellant attends an Appeals Committee at the request of the Board, travel expenses limited to the cost of a second class rail fare (mainland only) from the appellant’s declared home address shall be permitted.

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

7.10.1 If the Academic Appeal is unsuccessful, the appellant may submit a request in writing for a review of the decision. This request must be made within 14 calendar days of the Appeals Board’s(or Appeals Committee’s) decision and should be made to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) (or a nominated other Pro Vice-Chancellor). This request should be sent to the Appeals Section of Academic Quality Support Services who will forward the request together with the relevant papers to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

7.10.2 Normally, there should be new grounds put forward to substantiate the request for review. These might constitute either:

7.10.2.1 evidence of some administrative irregularity in the operation of the Academic Appeals procedures

or

7.10.2.2 additional evidence of illness or other exceptional circumstances, which could not have been known or presented to the original Appeals Board (or Committee).

7.10.3 Where possible, the review should be completed within 21 calendar days of receipt of the request in writing from the appellant. The Pro Vice-Chancellor may decide one or more of the following:

7.10.3.1 no irregularity in procedure is found - Academic Appeal is unsuccessful and a ‘Completion of Procedures’ letter will be issued (see Section 11.1);

7.10.3.2 some irregularity in procedure - Academic Appeal is referred back to the Appeals Board (or Appeals Committee);

7.10.3.3 no new evidence supplied in mitigation - Academic Appeal is unsuccessful and a ‘Completion of Procedures’ letter will be issued (see Section 11.1);

7.10.3.4 valid new evidence of mitigating circumstances supplied - Academic Appeal is referred back to the Appeals Board (or Appeals Committee);

7.10.3.5 there is doubt that natural justice has been applied - Academic Appeal is referred back to the Appeals Board (or Appeals Committee);.

7.10.4 Where the Pro Vice-Chancellor refers a case back to the Appeals Board(or Appeals Committee); in accordance with sections 9.3.2, 9.3.4 or 9.3.5, the Appeals Board shall meet to determine the Academic Appeal as soon as reasonably practicable following the Pro Vice-Chancellor's decision. The decision of that Appeals Board shall be final and if the Academic Appeal is unsuccessful at this stage a 'Completion of Procedures' letter will therefore be issued (see Section 12.1).

## 7.11 Assessment Review Board

7.11.1 If an Academic Appeal against the decision of an Awards Assessment Board is successful, an Assessment Review Board (Annex B) shall carry out a review of those decisions of the Awards Assessment Board that were the subject of the Academic Appeal.

7.11.2 The Assessment Review Board shall as soon as reasonably practicable consider the evidence and any recommendations from the Appeals Board in as much these pertain to a decision the Assessment Review Board makes on the new recommendation for assessment. The Assessment Review Board may not overturn the decision of the Appeals Board.

7.11.3 The options available for recommendation are as follows:

7.11.3.1 the original decision of the Awards Assessment Board is overturned and a new recommendation for the relevant assessment(s) is made.  
or

7.11.3.2 exceptionally, the original decision of the Awards Assessment Board is upheld and the original recommendation confirmed.

7.11.4 In the case of an Academic Appeal being successful on the grounds specified in sections 2.1.2, 2.1.3 or 2.1.4 the Assessment Review Board may consider the effects of the error or other irregularity on other students who may or may not have appealed and be empowered to review the decisions made by an Awards Assessment Board in respect of those students also.

7.11.5 In the case of an Academic Appeal being successful on the grounds specified in sections

2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.3.3 or 2.3.4, the Assessment Review Board shall normally direct that the student shall be afforded the opportunity to defend the charge of academic malpractice at a hearing of an Academic Malpractice Panel as if for the first time.

7.11.6 In the case of a student studying on a professional programme as defined by the University's Professional Programmes Handbook, the Assessment Review Board, after considering medical or other evidence submitted in support of the academic appeal may advise or require the initiation of Professional Suitability procedures.

7.11.7 The decision of the Assessment Review Board is final, and there is no right to request a review of this decision. A 'Completion of Procedures' letter will therefore be issued (see Section 11.1) at this point.

7.11.8 If, exceptionally, the Assessment Review Board confirms the original decision of the Awards Assessment Board, the Chair of the Assessment Review Board shall write to the appellant, giving reasons for the decision. The Chair shall also write to the Chair of the Academic Appeals Board, giving reasons for the decision.

7.11.9 The decision will be reported to the next meeting of the relevant Awards Assessment Board.

## **7.12 Timescale for the process**

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

## **7.13 Office of the Independent Adjudicator**

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

## **7.14 Internal Monitoring of Process**

7.14.1 Academic Quality Support Services will maintain a record of:

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

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

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

### Terms of Reference

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

### Composition

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

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

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

*A minuting secretary will be in attendance.*

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

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

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

### **Terms of Reference**

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

### **Composition**

There shall be an Assessment Review Board.

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

*Members:* Two members of the Awards Assessment Board, one of whom shall normally be the Chief External Examiner.

*A minuting secretary and a member of Registry Services will be in attendance.*

If the Chief External Examiner is unavailable to serve on the Assessment Review Board, an alternative member of the Awards Assessment Board shall be nominated by the Chair. The Chief External Examiner shall nevertheless be consulted over the review proceedings and confirm the decision of the Assessment Review Board.

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

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

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

### **Terms of Reference**

1. To decide Appeals against the decision of a University Academic Malpractice Panel. In doing so the Academic Appeals Committee acts with the full delegated authority of Senate. It has the power to require staff and students to make written submissions, attend the Appeals Committee, give evidence and answer questions.
2. To communicate in writing to an unsuccessful appellant the reason(s) why the Academic Appeal was unsuccessful.
3. To require a University Academic Malpractice Panel to reconvene, or to convene a new University Academic Malpractice Panel to convene to consider the case where an academic appeal in the case of a successful appeal against the decision of an academic malpractice panel.
4. The University Academic Malpractice Panel may be required either:
  - a) to consider the academic malpractice panel afresh,
  - or
  - b) to reconsider the penalty originally applied.
5. To note any matters arising from the Academic Appeals considered, and where appropriate, bring matters to the attention of a subject or support department, faculty, relevant committee or the pool of members of academic malpractice panel members.

### **Composition**

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

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

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

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

*A minuting secretary will be in attendance.*

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

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

## **8. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DISCLOSURE OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

### **8.1 Categories of marks to be disclosed**

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

### **8.2 Disclosure of assessment results to students**

Students will be able to access provisional assessment results via the Sharepoint Portal during the course of the academic year. Final, official assessment results are then issued at pre-determined dates (see the Registry Services Sharepoint Portal pages for further details). Students are advised to discuss their results with their Personal Academic Tutor. On completion of an award, the profile will take the form of a Diploma Supplement which will be issued after the meetings of Awards Assessment Boards, and be sent to each student by post to the home address held on the central student record system. Only students who have successfully completed their award, withdrawn or had their studies terminated will receive results via the post

### **8.3 Requests made before marks are finally determined**

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

### **8.4 Non-disclosure to other persons**

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.***



## 9. REQUIREMENTS FOR REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS TO ASSESSMENT

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

### Procedures for Approval of Reasonable Adjustments for Assessment

A student who wishes to claim reasonable adjustments for assessment must complete the Request for Specific Assessment Arrangements form (SN1) and provide **written evidence** of her/his disability or medical condition. Students with specific learning difficulties (SpLD e.g. dyslexia) must provide a statement from an educational psychologist confirming their condition and indicating their needs. The document(s) should be passed to a Disability Support Officer (in Disability Support Student Support and Guidance) when an application is first made and these will be retained in the student's personal file.

The likely needs of the student will then be assessed by the Disability Support Officer in discussion with the student. These will depend on the student's disability or condition, on the format and duration of the assessment and on recommendations made by educational psychologists or similar advisers. Guidance may also be sought from RNIB, RNID, Occupational Health or one of the National Federation of Access Centres. A decision will then be made by the Disability Support Officer on what reasonable adjustments are appropriate to meet the student's needs...

Having identified the student's needs the Disability Support Officer will complete and sign the Request for Specific Assessment Arrangements form (SN1), which will be returned to Registry Services (Student Programmes).

The student shall be informed, in writing, by Registry Services (Student Programmes) 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**

In recognition of the significant timeframes involved in the process outlined above, students who, as an outcome of screening, have been referred for a psychological assessment will be granted 25% additional time in both formal examinations and in-class tests. This measure seeks to minimise disruption to their studies and avoid a backlog of assessments. However, this arrangement will only remain in place for one set of examinations (or in-class tests until the first set of examinations). Students shall not be entitled to additional time in any further examinations until the educational psychologist's report has been received and approved. In exceptional circumstances where it is not possible to obtain an educational psychologist's assessment the Head of Student Support (or nominee) will confirm to Registry Services that additional time may be granted for further assessment periods.

Students receiving the additional time shall not be eligible to appeal on the grounds of mitigating circumstances unless the educational psychologist's report subsequently recommends that modifications in addition to 25% extra time are appropriate. In such cases the appeal shall only be considered in relation to assessment undertaken in the

current academic session; under no circumstances will appeals be considered in relation to assessment undertaken in previous academic sessions.

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.

Once a student is referred for a psychological assessment, Disability Support will send a temporary SN1 form to the student's academic department(s) and Registry in order to alert them that the student is entitled to additional time.

### **Alternative Forms of Assessment**

If a student is unable, for reasons relating to his/her disability, to be assessed by the normal methods specified in the module assessment requirements the Head of Subject, 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 Disabilities Co-ordinator or equivalent. Advice on alternative forms of assessment may be sought from Disability Support and the Dean of Learning and Teaching.

Guidance on options available to students with specific needs appears in Appendix E.

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## 10. REQUIREMENTS FOR EXCESS WORD COUNT

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

The word count shall not include appendices, bibliographies or references to sources. Quotations may also be excluded from the word count at the discretion of the relevant Programme (Subject) 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 J.

## 11. EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

### 11.1 The Role of the External Examiner

External Examiners perform an essential role in the management and enhancement of academic quality and standards. In accordance with section 4 of the *Code of Practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*, (QAA, August 2004), the main purposes of the University external examining system are:

to verify that standards are appropriate for the award or award elements, which the External Examiner has been appointed to examine;

to assist the University in the comparison of its academic standards across higher education awards and award elements nationally;

to ensure that the University's assessment processes are fair, and are fairly operated in accordance with its Regulations.

In accordance with these purposes, External Examiners are asked to report and comment on the use made of and compliance with the requirements of the national academic infrastructure (UK Quality Code for Higher Education) - namely, published national subject benchmarks, the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, and programme specifications.

The primary role of the External Examiner is to fulfil the above functions in relation to the assessment of students registered for programmes of study at the University of Chester.<sup>2</sup> The aims and objectives of each programme of study are published in the Programme Specification, which has been written in accordance with national guidelines (QAA, 2006), and takes into account the relevant subject benchmark statements, where available. The External Examiner should be provided by the Programme Leader with the relevant Programme Specification(s) on taking up appointment, and will be invited to comment on these as part of the Examiner's advisory role. The rationale for, and specification of the appropriate assessment strategies for the programme and its individual components will have been approved separately through the validation process, although External Examiners may wish to comment on these.

An External Examiner is responsible for a designated batch of identified modules. A Programme of Study may have allocated to it several External Examiners, consisting of subject specialists drawn from the Higher Education sector, or from professional, commercial or industrial practice. Examiners should bring to the role some prior experience of student assessment on comparable programmes of study. The External Examiners join the University Examiners to constitute the Subject or Programme Assessment Board.

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 responsible for writing the annual report for a programme which uses External Moderators are 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.

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<sup>2</sup> Programme of Study implies an award-bearing programme as well as its constituent modules or parts. In the Combined Honours Degree Programme, it should be read as academic subject or discipline.

Chief External Examiners are appointed to undergraduate and postgraduate Awards Assessment Boards. Here, the role is more concerned with assessment strategies and their operation, and with the fairness and equitability of the assessment processes. A Chief External Examiner should bring relevant experience of modular schemes and credit accumulation and transfer.

Under no circumstances are students permitted to independently contact an External Examiner.

## **11.2 Appointment Procedures**

Academic Quality Support Services will maintain schedules for the appointment and reappointment of all External Examiners and Chief External Examiners. They will advise the Faculty Administrator when an appointment needs to be made. Once a programme has been validated and approved to run, steps must be taken to appoint an External Examiner, who should normally be available to advise on the progress of the first cohort. The advice of an External Examiner is invaluable to the Programme Team in the early days of delivery of a new programme.

The Programme Leader/Head of Subject will submit the appropriate pro-forma (if required) for approval to the appropriate Board of Studies with a full CV of the proposed examiner. Copies of the pro-formas, which must be completed electronically, are available on SharePoint (by following links on the Quality and Standards page to Academic Quality Support Services/External Examiners). Proposals must be submitted in time to permit the Board of Studies to give full consideration before the Examiner is to start her/his duties. A recommendation from the Board of Studies, together with the full paperwork, should be submitted to the officer in Academic Quality Support Services responsible for the administration of the External Examiner system. AQSS will present the full proposals to the External Examiner Approval Sub-Group, chaired by the Associate Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement, which will consider them in detail and recommend approval or rejection to Academic Quality and Enhancement Committee.

A small number of students at University of Chester are still registered for awards of the University of Liverpool. University of Liverpool approval is required for all examiner nominations on programmes which lead to its awards. Following approval by Academic Quality and Enhancement Committee, AQSS refers appropriate nominations to the University of Liverpool for approval.

All approved nominations will be recorded in AQSS and the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement will send a letter of appointment to the Examiner. Documentation, including a Handbook detailing the External Examiner duties and responsibilities, and details of relevant University Policies, Rules of Procedure and Regulations, will be e-mailed to the Examiner. 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 three years in the first instance with an optional fourth year on request.

For further guidance relating to external examining for Professional Doctorates see Handbook G: Research Supervision and Assessment of Students.

### **Nomination forms**

There are two nomination pro-formas available to Faculties wishing to appoint (or reappoint) an External Examiner. The following criteria indicate which of these shall be used in a particular circumstance, or when a nomination form is not required:

#### **No nomination form**

When increasing the range of academic provision within an existing External Examiner's duties, a nomination form is **not** required if:

- *New* modules are being added to the programme(s) currently examined, unless they are at a higher level (e.g. Level 7) than those currently included within the existing Examiner's duties, or lie outside of the department(s) to which the External Examiner's current programme(s) belong.
- *Existing* modules from other programmes within the department are added to an External Examiner's duties, unless they are at a higher level (e.g. Level 7) than those currently included within the existing Examiner's duties, or lie in an unrelated programme within the same department.

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

### **Full nomination form**

A full nomination form is required:

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

### **Abridged nomination form**

The abridged nomination form should be used:

- When another programme, including a WBIS pathway, is being added to the existing Examiner's duties.  
*Note: Once an extension for WBIS has been approved, additional modules can be covered without the need for an extension form. The addition of another pathway would require the completion of an extension form in line with the regulations.*
- When *new* or *existing* modules are being added to an existing Examiner's duties and these modules are at a higher level than those currently examined.
- When *new* modules are being added to an existing Examiner's duties and these modules lie outside of the department(s) to which the External Examiner's current programme(s) belong.
- When *existing* modules from other programmes within the department are being added to an existing Examiner's duties and these modules belong to an unrelated programme within the same department.

### **Letter of Continued Currency**

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

### 11.3 Criteria for Appointment

These criteria apply to all proposed new Examiners who are nominated to examine awards of the University of Chester and/or awards of the University of Liverpool.

When considering the suitability of a particular examiner for appointment, Programme Teams should respond to the following questions. Additionally, any requirements of professional bodies who have approved or accredited a programme of study should be considered. The questions are intended to confirm the suitability of the proposed appointee and the ability of this person to fulfil the responsibilities set out below. Where the answer to any of the questions is 'no', additional information should be provided to the Board of Studies to justify the appointment.

1. Describe the proposed Examiner's relevant experience and knowledge of the subject area and/or modular degree programmes and/or programme of study management and assessment.
2. Describe the proposed Examiner's previous experience within HE (normally 5 years) as an internal examiner in the relevant academic discipline(s).
3. If relevant, describe the proposed Examiner's previous experience within HE as an External Examiner in the appropriate academic discipline(s). **Mentoring must be provided to all new appointees who do not have previous experience as an External Examiner.** The name(s) of existing External Examiner(s) who can act as mentors should be indicated.
4. Please confirm that the proposed Examiner is not currently employed or has not been employed within the last 6 years, by the University of Liverpool or University of Chester, nor has been a student of either Institution, nor had any other direct interest or ties with the University of Chester. Please confirm that the proposed Examiner was not directly involved as an external member of the validation panel for this programme.<sup>3</sup> *The regulation relating to the University of Liverpool applies in all instances including where the programme does not lead to a University of Liverpool award due to the close working relationship which still exists between the institutions.*
5. Please confirm that the proposed Examiner is not from an institution at which an internal examiner in the programme(s) in question is also an External Examiner. Is it confirmed that the proposed Examiner is not from an institution at which an internal Examiner in the programme(s) in question is also an External Examiner?
6. Please give the institution of the retiring Examiner, so as to confirm that the proposed Examiner is not from the same institution. Is it confirmed that the proposed examiner is not from the same department/institution as the retiring examiner?
7. Please give details of any other External Examiner commitments currently held by the proposed Examiner. (A proposed Examiner should not normally hold currently more than one other major External Examining role.)
8. Please confirm that External Examiners within a subject area/programme of study are drawn from a range of institutions.

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<sup>3</sup> The requirement that an External Examiner must not have been directly involved as an external member of the validation panel for the programme will be implemented from the second cycle of Board of Studies meetings onwards in 2011/12.

9. Describe how this appointment would secure and maintain an appropriate balance and mixture of professional experience within the External Examiners for this course.
10. Please confirm that the Examiner would not incur excessive expenses through long distance travel? (The University would not normally pay expenses outside UK/Northern Ireland and Eire.)
11. Appointments are normally for four years – if this is an extension of tenure rather than a new appointment, clearly describe the grounds for the reappointment and why there should not be a new appointment in this case.
12. Where this is a joint appointment with a professional or other validating body, clearly describe how the proposed Examiner will be acceptable to that body.
13. Please confirm that the Examiner does not have any non-professional association with a member or members of the University which might prove prejudicial to her or his role as an Examiner.
14. Please confirm that the Examiner is eligible to work in the UK. (A photocopy of appropriate documentation must be attached to the nomination pro-forma when it is forwarded to AQSS for consideration at the External Examiner Approvals sub-group.)  
*Please see information below –‘Eligibility to work in the UK: UK Border Agency Requirements’ for further details.*
15. Please confirm that there are no other grounds for concern over this appointment.

**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.

Although External Examiners are not employees of the University, it has been confirmed by Universities UK and the UK Borders 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**
- a document confirming their National Insurance number **and** a UK birth or adoption certificate (specifying parents' names)

The photocopies should include:

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

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

### **Verifying the Original Documentation**

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

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

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

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

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

The abridged pro-forma should be used for nominations to increase the range of academic provision within an existing Examiner's duties. The abridged proforma consists of the following questions:

1. Clearly describe the Examiner's relevant experience and knowledge of the proposed subject area and/or modular degree programmes and/or programme of study management and assessment.
2. Explain why an increase in the scope of the existing External Examiner's duties is appropriate in this case.

3. Clearly describe the current distribution of External Examiner workload within the relevant subject area, and how it will change as a result of this appointment.
4. Other than the above, please describe any other circumstances or relevant issues occurring since the initial nomination that may have a bearing on this appointment.

The term of office of an External Examiner shall normally extend to no more than four years. 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 Code of Practice on External Examining: QAA, August 2004.

In cases where a proposed examiner has previously worked as an examiner with the University of Chester, there should be an 8 year gap between posts.

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. 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 Approvals 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.

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.

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.

#### **11.4 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 examiner at examination/assessment boards
- circumstances where a conflict of interest has arisen during the external examiner's term of office

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

It is expected that an External Examiner intending not to renew their appointment notifies the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement in writing and in sufficient time for a replacement appointment to be made.

### **11.5 Induction of New External Examiners**

It is University policy that all External Examiners should attend an induction/briefing meeting during their first year of appointment. Those Externals who are unable to attend on the date(s) specified will be invited to attend a subsequent event. Heads of Subject, as Chairs of Subject Assessment Boards, are also invited to the general, plenary session, plus Programme Leaders, where this is not the Head of Subject. A separate session is available for Examiners to visit individual departments or Programme Teams for more specific discussion of the programmes. The primary purposes of the plenary session 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 Externals concerning University-wide policies relating to assessment and the External Examiner role
- to obtain feedback from Externals concerning their perceptions of the role, its responsibilities and their operational delivery, in the light of developments in the wider HE quality agenda.

### **11.6 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:

Invite the incoming External Examiner to attend the final Subject Assessment Board of the previous session, as an observer, and to meet the University examiners and the outgoing External Examiner;

Encourage dialogue between the outgoing Examiner and the new appointee, and agree that ongoing support will be provided, either by the outgoing External or by another External Examiner in the Department/Programme, who could act as Mentor;

Provide the new External Examiner with the name 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;

Provide the new External Examiner with copies of recent Annual Reviews (past three years), and the Department or Programme Team's response;

Encourage the new appointee to attend the University or Faculty-based Induction programme, to meet the Chief External Examiner and fellow Examiners on other

programmes. Arrange for the new External Examiner to visit the Department or Programme Team (possibly a separate site visit in Health and Social Care) at this time.

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

## **11.7 Documentation to be provided to External Examiners**

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

Early in each academic session, Academic Quality Support Services writes to all External Examiners to confirm their appointment for that year. Each examiner is e-mailed an information pack, the content of which may vary from year to year but will typically contain:

- information on the role and responsibilities of External Examiners;
- where to find information on Assessment Board structure and operation;
- Data Protection Act: Assessment Guidelines;
- Rules of Procedure on Degree Classification and Progression Between Levels of Study (where appropriate);
- undergraduate and/or postgraduate External Examiner Overview Report from the Dean of Academic Quality and Standards;
- QAA Code of Practice: Section 4 External Examining;
- explanation about the route of the External Examiner's report;
- fee and expenses schedule and claim form;
- acceptance form, to be completed and returned by the External Examiner.

Additional documentation can be provided on request.

Academic Quality Support Services e-mails a copy of the Annual Report Form Template to all External Examiners at the appropriate time. Examiners are provided with a username and password to enable them to access information such as Principles and Regulations on the University's SharePoint system.

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

Upon appointment, all External Examiners should be provided by Programme Teams with copies of the relevant Programme Specification(s), and Student Handbook(s), and updated copies of these should be sent to the Examiners as necessary. External Examiners should also be provided with 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.

Each External Examiner should receive an annual letter from the Programme Leader or Head of Subject, detailing action taken in response to the previous year's External Examiner report, and/or the relevant extract from the programme Annual Monitoring Report addressing this issue.

## **11.8 Rights and Responsibilities of External Examiners**

Recommendations of an Awards Assessment Board for the conferment of an award (including interim awards) of the University of Chester shall have the support of the External Examiner(s). Subject External Examiners shall participate in the decisions of, and

contribute to, the recommendations of the appropriate Programme (or Subject) Assessment Board.

### 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 Programme (or Subject) or Awards Assessment Boards as appropriate and, in the case of subject Externals, additionally to attend the superordinate Awards Assessment Board;
- (c) expect that the report submitted to the Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement (on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor, as Chair of the Senate) on the conduct and outcomes of the most recent assessment will be considered by the relevant programme team and University committee and that a written response to this report be sent to the External Examiner for his or her information by the Programme Leader or Chair of the relevant committee within six months of the date of submission of the report;
- (d) 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;
- (e) request to meet students at least once during the term of office.

### Responsibilities

It is the duty of External Examiners to attend Assessment Board meetings of which they are members or to confer with the Chair of the Board, programme or subject leader in order to agree arrangements which ensure that the business of the meeting can still be effected properly and thoroughly in their absence.

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 Programme (or Subject) and/or Awards Assessment Boards at which decisions on recommendations for an award are made and ensure that those recommendations have been reached through agreement and in accordance with the stated regulations and requirements, as well as the norms of practice in higher education;
- (c) participate as required in any reviews of decisions about individual students' awards;
- (d) 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;
- (e) be associated with all recommendations for the assessment of modules which may lead to an exit award.

An External Examiner shall 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. Other than at Level 4, Departments should request that the External Examiner confirm individual marks in the First class and Fail categories, and see samples of student assessed work from the top, middle and bottom of the range and at class borderlines, in order to ensure that each student is fairly placed in relation to the rest of the module cohort.

At Level 4, an External Examiner shall confirm all the marks for all failed modules but in order to do so may request to see all the work proposed as failures or only a representative sample.

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.

External Examiners may also be asked to scrutinise claims for APL and should contact Colin Taylerson, Principal Assistant Registrar in AQSS for guidance in these matters. [c.taylerson@chester.ac.uk](mailto:c.taylerson@chester.ac.uk) or (01244) 512937.

The External Examiner(s) shall also:

- (a) 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;
- (b) have the right to scrutinise and comment in advance upon the assessment tasks, in respect of those modules which are within their jurisdiction. 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;
- (c) moderate and provide comments on component and overall module grades achieved by students. External Examiners have the right to propose the moderation of marks of a module cohort, where this is deemed to be justified, but not to adjust individual module marks on the basis of only a sample of assessed work. However External Examiners – in the interests of assuring standards – may propose changes to the marks of students in the ‘first’ or ‘fail’ categories, or at the borderlines of these classifications, provided that the final decision in such cases is taken by the Programme/Subject Assessment Board. If an External Examiner wishes to propose changes to marks other than those in the ‘first’ or ‘fail’ categories and at the borderlines thereof, she/he must scrutinise the work of the full module cohort before doing so. Any such proposed changes must be confirmed by the Programme/Subject Assessment Board (further guidance on External Examiners’ role in the changing of marks is provided in Appendix P).
- (d) attend the Programme (or Subject) Assessment Board held at the end of each academic session and participate as required (by correspondence if necessary) on issues such as academic irregularities;
- (e) confirm the award of prior credit for those modules contributing to degree classification;

- (f) be responsible for reviewing whether in their judgement the assessment process has accorded with the University's regulations and requirements and has been fair;
- (g) have the right to 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.
- (h) report any suspected instances of academic malpractice to the Chair of the Programme (or Subject) Board via the Programme Leader as soon as possible;

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).

The External Examiner's main function when attending the relevant Programme (or Subject) and/or Awards Assessment Board is to participate in discussions and confirm recommendations for awards. 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.

External Examiners are required to observe the confidentiality of all Assessment Board proceedings.

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

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

### **11.9 The Appointment of a Chief External Examiner**

To each undergraduate Awards Assessment Board there shall be appointed no less than one Chief External Examiner, whose role shall be to oversee the conferment of awards resulting from the academic provision which falls within the scope of that Awards Assessment Board. In addition to the criteria stated above 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. The Chief External Examiner shall also be a member of the Assessment Review Board (see section 7, Annex B of this handbook) and shall advise the Assessment Review Board in matters relating to assessment decisions following successful academic appeals.

For postgraduate programmes a Chief External Examiner per Faculty shall normally be appointed to act in a role akin to that of the Chief External Examiner on the undergraduate programmes and assure the process of making awards.

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

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

- (a) consistency with requirements of the National Academic Infrastructure (UK Quality Code for Higher Education), including the Foundation degree benchmark (where applicable);
- (b) the appropriateness of methods of assessment and consistency of marking standards (in the case of Foundation degrees, please pay particular attention to the distinctive aspects of the FD qualification);
- (c) the standard of student performance in comparison with similar provision within the HE sector;
- (d) the aims, learning outcomes and content of the curriculum;
- (e) learning and teaching methods, and the resources to support them;
- (f) issues specific to a module or a programme;
- (g) documentation, including feedback to students on their assessed work;
- (h) the operation of Assessment Boards;
- (i) the level and effectiveness of administrative support;
- (j) evaluation and review processes;
- (k) collaborative provision (where appropriate);
- (l) shortcomings or specific issues requiring attention or development;
- (m) examples of good practice;



- (n) a brief overview of the term of office (for examiners in their last year).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

all undergraduate reports (including for the Faculty of Health and Social Care):

**submission date: 16 July 2012**

reports for postgraduate programmes with an Assessment Board held in January (including P/G programmes in Education, within the CPD umbrella):

**submission date: 24 February 2012<sup>4</sup>**

reports for undergraduate Assessment Boards held after 16 July, or for postgraduate programmes with an Assessment Board which takes place outside the January schedule:

**submission date: within 2 weeks of the Assessment Board meeting**

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<sup>4</sup> Please note that this date is for submission of postgraduate reports relating to the 2010-2011 cohort.

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.

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

The External Examiner's report follows the template set out below.

### PART ONE

#### **1. Consistency with requirements of the National Academic Infrastructure (UK Quality Code for Higher Education), institutional requirements and/or industry practice (if applicable)**

- (a) consistency with the QAA Code of Practice (Chapter of the UK Quality Code) and adherence to the University assessment regulations and requirements.
- (b) appropriateness of standards and assessment tasks with reference to relevant subject benchmarks(s), Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), the Foundation Degree benchmark (where applicable), industry standards and practice (where applicable) and/or programme specification(s).

#### **2. Standard of Student Performance (in the case of Foundation Degrees, Examiners are invited to pay particular attention to the distinctive characteristics of the FD qualification)**

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

#### **3. Modules/Programme of Study**

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

#### **4. Assessment**

- (a) variety and appropriateness of assessment in relation to learning outcomes and extent to which they enable students to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes (Examiners are also invited to comment on use made of formative assessment);
- (b) marking and classification schemes; grading criteria; consistency of marking standards; level of double-marking and procedures for resolution of discrepancies;
- (c) extent and quality of feedback to students on their assessed work;

- (d) appropriateness of documentation received (note: in addition to standard documents such as the programmes specification(s) and student handbook(s), this should include assessment briefs, assessment criteria, marking schemes, marking criteria, sample of scripts, profile of marks etc).
- 5. Operation of Assessment Boards (e.g. - arrangements for scrutiny of student work; meeting arrangements, conduct and procedures; adherence to marking/classification guidelines and mitigating circumstances procedures).**
- 6. Level and effectiveness of administrative support**
- 7. Evaluation and Review Processes**
- (a) formal methods of monitoring and evaluation to enhance quality, including the use made of student feedback on their student experience;
- (b) Programme Team's response to issues raised in previous External Examiner's report.
- 8. Please ensure you complete this section if your role includes the examination of work from a Partner College/Organisation, identify any issues (such as communication and comparability of standards) which are specific to that work and refer back to earlier sections of this report where appropriate.  
Your comments will be fed back to the Partner College/Organisation.**
- 9. Shortcomings or specific issues requiring attention or development (programme or specific modules).**
- 10. Examples of good practice (strengths or distinctive or innovative features).**
- 11. A brief overview of the Examiner's term of office (for Examiners in their last year of office)**

An amended version of this template is provided for Chief External Examiners. A small number of additional questions are added to the template used by External Examiners for programmes located within the Faculty of Education & Children's Services.

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