

ASSESSMENT POLICY

The University of Law's Assessment Policy has been informed by the Office for Students Sector-Recognized Standards and the General Ongoing Conditions of Registration and has regard to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. These definitive reference points for all English higher education institutions set out how academic standards are established and maintained and how excellence in the quality of learning opportunities is assured.

This policy sits within The University of Law's Quality and Standards Code, which provides a suite of policies designed to safeguard the academic standards of The University of Law and to assure the quality of learning opportunities offered; this policy should therefore be read in conjunction with other relevant policies within the code.

Applicability

- 1 This Policy applies to all summative and formative assessments of the University, including those delivered collaboratively, unless otherwise stated.
- 2 This Policy does not apply to assessments designed and delivered by other organisations, for example, as part of a placement or exchange activity, or centralised assessments administered by or on behalf of a Professional Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB).
- 3 Where an assessment or assessment practice for a University programme or module is set by a PSRB or other Accrediting Body or is otherwise outside the control of the University then the University delivers the assessment and complies with the specified assessment practice to the extent that it is lawful to do so. If that assessment or assessment practice does not meet the expectations established under this Policy the University will make representations to the relevant PSRB or Accrediting Body.

Accountabilities

- 4 The Academic Board is accountable for setting the requirements for progression and award which are set out in Regulations.
- 5 Line Managers are accountable for ensuring academic staff are supported to perform their duties under this policy via effective workload management and training and professional development.
- 6 Design and approval programme assessment strategies is the responsibility of the Programme Approval Committee.
- 7 Summative assessment instruments will be regularly reviewed as part of the scrutiny and annual review processes to determine their continued compliance with this Policy, external reference points, developments in the specific subject area, and in pedagogy best practice.

- 8 The Board of Examiners will confirm that individual students have met the necessary standard for the award of credit. Where an award is made the Board of Examiners will determine whether individual students have met the required standard for the award by successfully completing the specified credit and grade requirements.
- 9 The Recognition of Prior Learning and Exemption Panel may accredit prior learning or achievement where it is deemed to be equivalent in volume, level, content, and standard to University credit.

Principles of Assessment

- 10 The programme assessment strategy, as detailed in the approved Programme Specification, must be consistent with the requirements of the University Learning, Teaching, and Assessment Framework, including the Catalogue of University Supported Assessments.
- 11 All assessments must provide all students with an equal and fair opportunity to satisfy the learning outcomes through suitable inclusive and accessible forms of assessment.
- 12 Summative assessment must provide all students with the opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the programme and module learning outcomes at the relevant academic level, and to comply with any PSRB or other accrediting body requirements that form part of the expected programme or module outcomes.
- 13 Formative assessment should be used to provide students with the opportunity to understand what is expected of them in the relevant summative assessment, develop their skills, and reflect on their performance and how it can be maintained or improved.
- 14 Assessments must be designed to support student progression over time in terms of subject knowledge, skills, and attributes.
- 15 Assessments must make best use of the technologies available and seek to reduce the opportunities for students to plagiarise, collude or commit other forms of academic misconduct.
- 16 All assessment will be conducted in English and/or British Sign Language as necessary.
- 17 Each assessment instrument, including assessment criteria, student guidelines, marking guidelines, and feedback/feedforward methods, for a programme/module must:

- 17.1. Be designed by a member of the academic staff trained and competent to do so;
- 17.2. Promote effective learning;
- 17.3. Comply with the requirements of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and other relevant external benchmarks such as PSRB requirements and OfS conditions of registration;
- 17.4. Be consistent with the assessment strategy for the relevant programme or module;
- 17.5. Effectively assesses the module and programme outcomes;
- 17.6. Take into account any data collected by the Academic Registry as to the effectiveness of the assessment and the relative level of difficulty;
- 17.7. Enable Markers to differentiate between different levels of student performance in that assessment.

Word Counts and Limits

- 18 A maximum word count will be allocated to each written assessment. Allowance will not be made for upper nor lower limits e.g. plus or minus 10% on word limits is not permitted.
- 19 Word counts include everything in the main body of the text including titles, headings and sub-headings, in-text citations, and titles for figures and tables. The word count will exclude reference lists, bibliographies, footnotes, and the contents of figures and tables.
- 20 Work beyond the stated word count will not be marked. No further penalty will be applied for exceeding the stated word count.

Scrutiny and Approval of Assessment Instruments

- 21 Scrutiny of assessment instruments ensures that assessments are fair, valid, reliable, credible, and effective.
- 22 No summative assessment will take place before the assessment instrument has been scrutinised and approved in accordance with the Protocol on Scrutiny of Assessment Instruments.

Information For Students

- 23 Students must be provided, in advance of a course commencing, with specific details about the assessment approach for each module so that they are able to plan effectively. Information provided to students must include:

- 23.1. The method(s) of assessment, including the delivery/submission platform e.g. Online MCQ, in-person presentation;
 - 23.2. When assessments will take place (the relevant assessment period rather than a specific date);
 - 23.3. The learning outcomes to be assessed, marking criteria and standards to be met at differing levels;
 - 23.4. The moderation and external examiner processes;
 - 23.5. Resources to refer to, and other support available;
 - 23.6. How and when feedback and marks will be provided;
 - 23.7. The resit or reassessment method, timing, and how enrolment on resits will take place;
 - 23.8. Conduct expectations, including whether collaboration with other students is permissible, whether plagiarism detection software will be used, and where to find sources of support and guidance on good academic practice;
 - 23.9. How and when to apply for Mitigating Circumstances, Deferral, and Extensions; and
 - 23.10. The academic appeal process.
- 24 A link to the Assessment Regulations, including any programme-specific Assessment Regulations should be provide within the programme handbook along with a clear description of the requirements for progression from stage to stage and for each award level.
 - 25 The composition of the relevant Board of Examiners, and the dates of the meetings of the Board should be included in the student handbook.

Information for staff

- 26 The National Programme Director is responsible for ensuring all academic staff teaching, assessing or otherwise supporting their programmes and modules are provided with useful information relating to their role. This must include as a minimum:
 - 26.1. A link to the Assessment Regulations, including any programme-specific Assessment Regulations;
 - 26.2. The method(s) of assessment, including the delivery/submission platform e.g. Online MCQ, in-person presentation;

- 26.3. When assessments will take place (the relevant assessment period rather than a specific date);
- 26.4. The learning outcomes to be assessed, marking criteria and standards to be met at differing levels;
- 26.5. The moderation and external examiner processes;
- 26.6. Resources to refer to, and other support available;
- 26.7. How and when feedback and marks will be provided;
- 26.8. The resit or reassessment method, timing, and how enrolment on resits will take place;
- 26.9. Conduct expectations, including whether collaboration with other students is permissible, whether plagiarism detection software will be used, and where to find sources of support and guidance on good academic practice;
- 26.10. How and when to apply for Mitigating Circumstances, Deferral, and Extensions; and
- 26.11. The academic appeal process.

Conduct of Assessments

- 27 Students are responsible for complying with the assessment conduct requirements specified in the assessment brief, course materials, this Policy, and in Regulations.
- 28 Students studying an attendance-mode programme are expected to sit their assessments in the UK. Assessment that requires attendance at a campus must be completed at the student's home campus. International students undertaking reassessment which is scheduled outside their usual term time may sit their reassessments overseas with prior approval from the University and subject to feasibility. A fee may be charged to cover the reasonable costs of providing an overseas sitting.
- 29 For all assessments students must adhere to the expectations and requirements set out in the Student Protocol on Assessments. Failure to comply with the requirements of an assessment, including in relation to the students' surroundings during an online assessment, may result in an allegation of academic misconduct.

Religious Observance

- 30 The University will make reasonable endeavours to accommodate observance of significant religious events during assessment periods.
- 31 Students must notify the Assessment Office as early as possible of religious obligations which may compromise their ability to attempt an assessment using the Religious Observance Form.

Reassessment

- 32 The University will provide students with the opportunity for reassessment in failed modules as specified in the University's Regulations.
- 33 Students are not permitted to utilise campus facilities, or attend other campuses to use any of the facilities, until they have registered for their outstanding resit assessment.
- 34 If a student has not registered for an outstanding resit, but they are in receipt of ULIP arrangements, or learning needs which are evidenced independently by a relevant professional, they may – on occasion – be permitted Campus access by the discretion of the Campus Dean.

Marking and Moderation

- 35 Summative assessments will be marked anonymously insofar as it is reasonable. It is not possible, for example, for oral assessments to be marked anonymously, however, reasonable steps should be taken to ensure objectively is enabled through marking and able to be verified via moderation.
- 36 For each assessment instrument the same marking schema will be applied irrespective of where the student sits the assessment or where marking takes place.
- 37 In advance of the commencement of marking Markers must familiarise themselves with the assessment instrument, marking scheme, and any other guidance issued, including via attendance at meetings as requested by the National Programme Director.
- 38 The role of Moderation is to ensure that assessment outcomes are fair and reliable. Moderation determines whether the marking criteria have been applied consistently across the cohort, and whether the marks or levels of achievement awarded are appropriate and consistent across modules and programmes. Where more than one Moderator is appointed the Moderators must agree in advance the moderation standards to be applied.
- 39 The Moderator(s) will review a representative sample of the students' work from an assessment, which must include a sample from each marker and each level of achievement.

- 40 Moderators may require remarking where the outcomes of marking are not consistent with the expected standard. It is not expected that individual scripts will be remarked, nor that individual marks will be changed in response to Moderation.
- 41 Summative presentations and oral examinations will be recorded for later review by a Moderator.
- 42 Statistical analysis of each marker's marks for the assessed work is produced and reviewed by the Moderator to ensure that there has been no deviation from the agreed standard.
- 43 Before any scripts are sent to the External Examiners, a statistical check of the overall results profile for each module and cohort is conducted by the Academic Registry to identify any problem areas worthy of further investigation to ensure that moderation has achieved consistency.

Feedback and Feedforward on Assessment

- 44 The University will provide timely and appropriate feedback to students on their academic progress and achievement, thereby enabling students to reflect on their progress.
- 45 Feedback and feedforward will be provided to the deadlines and standards set out in the Feedback and Feedforward Policy.

External Examiners

- 46 The External Examiner will be asked to review and approve all summative assessment instruments, including the marking scheme and any further guidelines for marking, before they are put into use.
- 47 Following marking and moderation the External Examiner will be asked to review a sample of the marked assessments. The External Examiner's review is intended to confirm, or otherwise, the appropriateness of the marking standard compared to the wider sector. The External Examiner may not change individual marks, but may comment on any noted deviations from the standard.
- 48 In relation to Boards of Examiners, the External Examiner will be asked to:
 - 48.1. Confirm, or otherwise, that the University's Policies have been applied correctly;
 - 48.2. Confirm, or otherwise, that the Moderation process has been effective across all Campuses and classification levels;

- 48.3. Consider and, if thought appropriate, endorse the marks, credits, and awards recommended to the Board of Examiners;
- 48.4. Consider and, if thought appropriate, endorse recommendations made under the Board of Examiners' discretionary powers;
- 48.5. Provide such advice and guidance as requested by the Chair of the Exam Board;
- 48.6. Provide an annual report to the Academic Board which, amongst other things, highlights good practice and brings to the attention of the Academic Board, any causes for concern.
- 49 External Examiners will be provided with a response to their report by the relevant area.
- 50 External Examiners will be asked to comment upon academic appeals against the decisions of Boards of Examiners upon which they sit.
- 51 The External Examiners Policy and the External Examiners appointment letter specify the full expectations of External Examiners, including the criteria for appointment.

Boards of Examiners

- 52 Boards of Examiners take decisions on behalf of the Academic Board after having taken appropriate consideration of the comments of the External Examiner.
- 53 Board of Examiners make all decisions on final marks, credit(s), progress decisions, and awards made under the specified academic responsibilities, usually a programme or group of programmes within an academic discipline.
- 54 Where students have taken a module outside their core academic discipline (for example, a student enrolled on a law programme studying a business module):
 - 54.1. The award of marks and credit for the module shall be the responsibility of the Board of Examiners for the academic discipline that provided the module;
 - 54.2. Confirmation of progress or award shall be the responsibility of the Board of Examiners for the academic discipline upon which the student is enrolled.
- 55 The Chair is free to determine whether Boards of Examiners are combined Boards which confirm marks, credits, progress decisions, and awards, or whether separate module and awards boards should be held.

Membership

- 56 The membership of Boards of Examiners must be quorate, as defined in Regulation, and include:
- 56.1. A Chair, who will usually be the relevant National Programme Director or Programme Director;
 - 56.2. External Examiner(s) for the programme(s) under consideration;
 - 56.3. Module Leader(s) for the Modules under consideration, and/or the Programme and Student Leads from each Campus.
- 57 A Secretary will be appointed by the Assessment Office. The Secretary will not be a member of the Board.

Responsibilities

- 58 Boards of Examiners are responsible for:
- 58.1. Confirming that the assessment processes, including drafting of assessments, marking, and moderation, were conducted correctly and consistently according to University rules;
 - 58.2. Applying Regulations correctly and consistently in the confirmation of marks, award of credit, and confirmation of progression (or otherwise); and
 - 58.3. Applying Regulations correctly and consistently in the confirmation of Awards (including exit awards), and to confer those awards on behalf of Academic Board.
- 59 In addition, the Chair of the Board is specifically responsible for:
- 59.1. Ensuring all Board meetings are conducted properly and fairly and in line with relevant Regulations, Policies, Protocols.
 - 59.2. Taking such Chair's action as has been authorised by the Board; and
 - 59.3. Ensuring full and accurate minutes are taken, and approved by those present.
- 60 Each Board of Examiners will provide an annual report to the Academic Board.

Mitigating Circumstances

- 61 Circumstances which have impacted a student's ability to complete an assessment, including the ability to attend an exam, will be considered by the University via the Extensions, Deferrals, and Mitigating Circumstances Policy.

- 62 The Mitigating Circumstances Panel will provide reports to the Board of Examiners which may include recommendations in respect of individual student cases.
- 63 The Board of Examiners does not have the right to receive or review any specific details of the mitigating circumstances that have been raised.

Conflicts of Interest

- 64 Conflicts of interest may arise from personal, familial, commercial, or other relationships between members of the Board and the students being considered by the Board. Members are responsible for considering whether they have a conflict of interest (actual, apparent, or potential) and reporting this to the Chair of the Board.
- 65 The Chair of the Board will consider the specific circumstances and determine whether a conflict of interest exists and, if so, whether the member should be absent from all or some of the meeting of the Board.
- 66 Members of the Board should report conflicts of interest to the Board and all reports must be included in the minutes of the meeting.

Recognition of Prior Learning, External Assessment, and Exemptions from Study

- 67 The University will award specific credits against individual, specified module(s) where there is appropriate and sufficient evidence that the student has achieved the learning outcomes of the module(s) via either:
- 67.1. Relevant prior learning; or
- 67.2. External Assessment.
- 68 Specific credits can only be mapped against entire modules and not against parts or fractions of modules.
- 69 The University will award notional credits where there is appropriate and sufficient evidence that, through relevant prior learning the student has successfully completed a course of study consistent with the overall programme learning outcomes. Students granted notional credits must complete any specified elements of the relevant programme and/or may be restricted in their module choices to avoid content overlap.
- 70 Students who gain exemption from the designated PSRB's requirements to study and achieve credit in specific modules will not be eligible for a University award unless they have also applied for and been awarded specific or notional credits by the University.

- 71 In all cases credit will only be awarded for learning that can be demonstrated; experience alone is not sufficient.
- 72 Credit from other sources must not exceed 50% of the total credit considered for an award of the University, and is awarded only on the basis that the learner completes the programme.
- 73 The University will consider the extent to which the award of credit will impact upon the student’s learning experience – the main considerations are to ensure completeness of content coverage and thus fulfilment of the programme learning outcomes.
- 74 Credits cannot be claimed against modules that a student has attempted and failed previously, nor can a student attempt a module for which specific or notional credits have been awarded.
- 75 No grade is given to notional credits nor to specific credits which are awarded on the basis relevant prior learning and such those credits do not contribute to the award grade or classification. Specific credits awarded via external assessment are assigned a grade and do contribute to the award grade and/or classification.
- 76 The relevant PSRB requirements supersede University rules for credit from other sources where the final award for which equivalency is claimed is accredited by such a body.
- 77 The Protocol on Recognition of Prior Learning, External Assessment, and Exemptions from Study sets out full details of the processes to be applied.

Responsibility for Monitoring and Evaluation of the provision

- 78 Responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Assessment Policy rests with the Academic Standards & Quality Committee.

Version history

Version	Amended by	Revision summary	Date
V1.0	Centre Director – York	Initial drafting group	22/02/13
V1.1	Learning Quality & Assessment Director	QA group	20/03/13
V1.1	External Consultant	External amendments	06/09/13

V1.2	Academic Registrar	Review	26/09/13
V1.3	Student Officer	Review	04/11/13
V1.4	Academic Board	Approval	03/10/13
V1.5	VP – AGQS	Sign-Off	19/12/13
V2.0	Vice Provost – Programme and Student Affairs	Review	02/02/16
V2.1	Academic Board	Approval	10/02/16
V2.2	Senior Quality Officer	Change to the document coding convention	30/03/20
V3.0	Project working group	Review – approved by Academic Board	October 2021
V3.1	Project working group	Minor additions regarding resit students' access to campus facilities	January 2022
V4.0	Director of Assessment Organisation & Delivery	Re-draft of Policy	June 2023
V4.0	Academic Board	Approval of review	27/06/2023