

Summary

The University's key policy and procedural information related to Assessment can be found on the [Learning and Teaching Policy Bank](#), and covers aspects such as:

- Heriot-Watt Assessment and Progression System (HAPS)
- Academic Decision-Making by Boards of Examiners
- Guidelines and Assessment Procedures for Boards of Examiners
- Coursework Scheduling and Submission (incl. Late Submission)
- Feedback on Assessment (Coursework and Exams)
- Making Changes to Assessment
- Review of Assessments (Coursework and Exams) by External Examiners
- Related policies including: Academic Integrity; Mitigating Circumstances; Use of Calculators and Dictionaries; Exams in Different Timezones

As a means of helping Schools work through this information in terms of their own policies and procedures related to assessment, it was agreed that a short guide should be produced summarising roles and responsibilities in Schools for assessment.

The School-level roles and responsibilities information already exists in the roles descriptors/committee remits within the University's [Regulations](#), the [Global Academic Management Structures and School Leadership Roles](#) and in the above policy documents. However, it has been pulled together into this **single summary on School roles and responsibilities for assessment** for ease of access and communication.

From 2025/26, a new section has been added: **Security of Off-Campus and Off-Line Marking**.

Additionally, in the final section, there is a summary of the **recommended assessment information which should be communicated to students**; this too is a synthesis of existing information outlined in the University's Regulations, policies, procedures and guidance.

School Roles and Responsibilities for Assessment

The following table summarises the institutional specifications for School-level roles and responsibilities relating to assessment [see [Remits of School Leadership Roles for other responsibilities](#)]. Schools may adapt this as suits the size and scale of their provision.

School Role	Responsibilities related to Assessment
Executive Dean	Ultimate responsible for all matters related to assessment in their School, across all programmes and across all modes and locations of delivery. Specific requirements as per the University's Regulations include: 1) Nominate Chairs of Boards of Examiners (Course Assessment Board, Progression Board, Award Board) to the Chair of UCQS for approval; 2) Chair Boards of Examiners (Course Assessment Board, Progression Board, Award Board) or appoint nominee for approval as above; 3) Ensure that all Chairs of Boards of Examiners participate annually in the University briefing/training session; 4) Seek approval from the UCQS for assessment of courses in languages other than English; 5) Manage, in collaboration with the Director of Learning and Teaching, any impact on assessment due to, for example, industrial action.
Director of Learning and Teaching (new title: Associate Executive Dean)	If acting with the delegated authority of the Executive Dean, responsible for all matters related to assessment in their School, across all programmes and across all modes and locations of delivery. Key tasks include:

(Education and Student Life) from 2024/25)	1) Contribute to the development, approval and implementation of institutional assessment policies and procedures; 2) Communicate throughout the School, across all locations/modes, all approved institutional assessment Regulations policies and procedures, and ensure their consistent implementation across the School; 3) Develop, and oversee the implementation of, the School's own policy/framework on assessment, setting out School-wide approaches; 4) Develop, and oversee the implementation of, the School's approach to clear and consistent communication of assessment-related information to students (<i>see final section of this document for suggestions</i>); 5) Communicate and clarify throughout the School the institutional parameters around in-person exams and coursework, including late submission; 6) Ensure that there is cross-School engagement with the Transforming Assessment initiative and related policy and procedural changes; 7) Ensure that the School's approach to assessment has been communicated to, and agreed by, relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs); 8) Manage, in collaboration with the Executive Dean, any impact on assessment due to, for example, exceptional circumstances such as severe weather or industrial action.
Director of Academic Quality (new title: Associate Executive Dean (Academic Quality) from 2024/25)	If acting with the delegated authority of the Director of Learning and Teaching, responsible for some aspects of the assessment-related process, such as: 1) Approval of changes to assessment type (coursework; exam) via the School Studies Committee; 2) Oversight of moderation of assessment (internal and external); 3) Responding to, and acting upon, School-wide issues from External Examiner Reports; 4) Oversight of GCM processes related to approval and accuracy of assessment information; 5) Management of quality, academic standards and associated risks in relation to assessment. Other delegated tasks will be as specified by the DLT and may include some of those listed above under the DLT remit. The DAQ is likewise responsible for communicating throughout the School, across all locations/modes, all approved institutional assessment Regulations policies and procedures, and ensuring their consistent implementation across the School.
Global Head of Discipline/Head of Discipline (and teaching-related responsibilities for Global/Head of Department)	Responsible for managing assessment across an entire subject area and across all modes and locations in which the subject is delivered, ensuring a consistent approach to implementation of assessment approaches, policies and procedures across the discipline and all its constituent programmes and across all modes and locations. Ensure effective collaboration between Global/Programme Directors in all aspects of assessment management across the discipline.
Global Programme Director	Responsible for managing assessment across all offerings of a programme, ensuring a consistent approach to implementation of assessment approaches, policies and procedures across all modes and locations. The role of the GPD incorporates the tasks specified below for the Programme Director, but the GPD has the additional responsibility of ensuring that these are implemented across all modes and locations in which the programme is offered and for ensuring effective collaboration between PDs in all aspects of assessment management. Remit is progressed via the Programme Board of Studies
Programme Director	Responsible for managing assessment at the programme level and, in conjunction with the other campus/online/partnership PDs of the same programme, ensuring a consistent approach to implementation of assessment approaches, policies and procedures across all modes and locations. Specific areas for programme level management of assessment include:

	1) Communication and consistent implementation of the institutional Regulations, policies and procedures on assessment, as applicable at the programme level, including any changes introduced each academic year; 2) Collaboration with the PDs responsible for other offerings of the programme in relation to assessment; 3) Programme-level approach to design of assessment across all modes and locations, ensuring that: all programme outcomes are assessed; effort hours are proportionate to weighting; SCQF level requirements are met; 4) Balance of assessment types (coursework/exam) and methods within each stage and across all stages of the programme; 5) Appropriate volume of assessment within each stage and across all stages of the programme; 6) Spread of assessment deadlines across each semester, avoiding clashing and bunching where possible, particularly in Exams and Assessment Diets; 7) Clear expectations set and communicated for feedback (format, return dates and use); 8) All key assessment information (methods, submission dates, % weighting, feedback format, feedback return dates, late submission consequences) is communicated clearly and consistently to students and on Canvas and other relevant documentation, eg programme or year handbook (<i>see final section of this document for suggestions</i>); 9) Co-ordination of assessment requirements for submission to RAS for Exams and Assessment Timetables; 10) Co-ordination of assessment information for internal and external (by External Examiners) moderation via RAS; 11) Programme's approach to assessment has been communicated to, and agreed by, relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs); 12) Annual review of assessment undertaken, for example, as part of contribution to School Annual Monitoring and Review process and in response to External Examiner Reports. All of the above is progressed via the Programme Board of Studies and implemented in collaboration with the PDs of other offerings of the programme, Year Co-ordinators and Course Leaders.
Year Co-ordinator	Responsible for managing assessment within a particular UG stage of a programme, acting with the delegated authority of the Programme Director. Tasks are similar to that of the PD, but with a particular focus on individual stages, and so the YC might be responsible specifically for: 1) Communication and implementation of the institutional Regulations, policies and procedures on assessment, as applicable at the stage/programme level, including any changes introduced each academic year; 2) Balance of assessment types (coursework; exam) methods within each stage; 3) Appropriate volume of assessment within each stage; 4) Spread of assessment deadlines across each semester, avoiding clashing and bunching where possible, particularly in Exams and Assessment Diets; 5) Clear expectations set and communicated for feedback (format, return dates and use); 6) All key assessment information (methods, submission dates, % weighting, feedback format, feedback return dates, late submission consequences) is communicated clearly and consistently to students and on Canvas and other relevant documentation, eg programme or year handbook (<i>see final section of this document for suggestions</i>); 7) Co-ordination of assessment requirements for submission to RAS for Exams and Assessment Timetables.
Global Course Leader	Responsible for managing assessment at the course level across all offerings of the course, including: 1) Communication and implementation of institutional Regulations, policies and procedures on assessment, as applicable at the course level, are implemented across the course in all its modes and locations, including any changes introduced each academic year;

	2) Assessment methods are appropriate and evaluate student performance against course learning outcomes at the relevant SCQF level and reflect expected notional student effort hours; 3) Oversight of assessment methods being used across all modes and locations, and where there is difference, there is comparability in terms of level, outcomes and academic standards; 4) Consistency across all modes and locations in assessment deadlines, feedback mechanisms and deadlines, marking, moderation, and input/release of marks; 5) The requisite numbers of assignments have been produced in accordance with the institutional timezones policy; 6) Each offering of the course includes formative assessment and formative feedback; 7) The accuracy of information in terms of assessment type (% coursework versus % examination) on GCM; 8) Authorising the release of past exam papers and solutions; 9) Informing students of instances of illegible handwriting in assessment; 10) Proposals for changes in assessment are managed at the appropriate level, eg through the School Studies Committee as required, and updated on GCM; 11) Annual review of assessment (incl. report to Course Assessment Board and in response to External Examiner comments) and management of resulting changes; 12) Clarity and consistency of communication of assessment-related information to students (<i>see final section of this document for suggestions</i>). This role is conducted as part of the leadership of the global course team.
Course Leader	Responsible for managing assessment of a course in a specific mode or location: 1) Communication and implementation of the institutional Regulations, policies and procedures on assessment, as applicable at the course level, including any changes introduced each academic year; 2) Assessment methods are appropriate and evaluate student performance against course learning outcomes at the relevant SCQF level; 3) The volume of assessment and weighting are appropriate and reflect notional student effort hours; 4) Formative assessment and formative feedback are incorporated; 5) Appropriate schedule/spread of assessments across the course; 6) Time of day of submission of coursework is fair and appropriate for all timezones; 7) Consistent implementation of policy on late submission of both coursework and of timed assignments; 8) Appointment of Approved Teachers/Tutors/Markers/Demonstrators involved in assessment; 9) Arrangements in place for students with a learning profile/reasonable adjustments; 10) Management of marking and moderation of assessment; 11) Provision of timely, useful feedback to students on formative and summative assessment, and deadlines for return and requirements for format are met; 12) Annual review of assessment (incl. report to Course Assessment Board and in response to External Examiner comments) and management of resulting changes; 13) All relevant assessment-related information is communicated clearly and consistently to students (<i>see final section of this document for suggestions</i>). This role is conducted as part of the leadership of the local course team.

Off-Campus Marking

All assessments should be treated as confidential information.

The marking of hard copy assessments (coursework assignments and exam scripts) should be undertaken at secure location such as a University campus or a partner's campus. If hard copy assessments are being removed for marking purposes to another location, the transportation of the assessments should be undertaken securely and marking should be undertaken in a secure setting such as a family home and not in any public locations (eg cafes, airports, trains).

These requirements relating to security of off-campus marking align with the University's policies on [Information Security](#), [Information Management](#) and [Data Protection](#).

All existing requirements relating to secure removal and return of exam scripts apply equally to on-campus and off-campus marking.

Online and Off-Line Marking

All assessments should be treated as confidential information.

The marking of online assessments (coursework assignments and exam scripts) should be undertaken within the [Heriot-Watt approved online assessment platforms](#). Access to these platforms should be via Heriot-Watt devices and marking completed online wherever possible. Where personal devices are used to access the platform this should be done in keeping with the [IT and communications facilities acceptable use policy](#) and marking should be completed online.

Where markers require to mark offline, they should do so on Heriot-Watt managed devices. Markers should not download online assessments to personal devices, unless they have prior authorisation from their Head of Unit (or other relevant officer) to do this as part of a reasonable adjustment for the marker. Where such authorisation has been received, only secure encrypted methods provided by the University may be used to transmit assessments.

These requirements relating to security of online and offline marking align with the University's policies on [Information Security](#), [Information Management](#) and [Data Protection](#).

Guide on Communicating Assessment Information to Students

The following section summarises and synthesises the University's various Regulations, policies and procedures on the **types of assessment-related information to be communicated to students**. It also includes the information and guidance developed by the three Student Representative Bodies (Scotland, Dubai and Malaysia).

See [Scheduling and Submission \(incl. Late Submission\) of Coursework Policy](#); [Feedback on Coursework Policy](#); [Feedback on Exams and Access to Scripts](#).

It is recommended that Schools have a clear, consistent and globally applicable policy on communicating assessment and feedback to students. It is further recommended that the following guidance on assessment and feedback is provided to students across all modes and locations, at the programme and course level:

- 1) students are fully aware of where all School-specific assessment-related information can be found (eg Canvas, programme handbook, course descriptors, School intranet/website) and of how any assessment-related updates and/or changes will be communicated to them;
- 2) students are fully aware of where all institutional assessment-related information can be found (eg timetables for [Exams and Assessment Diets](#); policies and procedures related to [academic integrity](#), [mitigating circumstances](#), [late submission](#); [arrangements for students with a learning profile/individual reasonable adjustments](#));
- 3) students are fully aware of how to seek advice and support on assessment-related matters, both at the institutional level (eg [Student Success Advisors](#), [Skills Hub](#), [Supporting Our Students SharePoint](#)) and at the School level (eg Personal Tutor, Course Leader, Student Advisor);
- 4) clear information on the types of assessment (exam; coursework) and the specific methods (eg for coursework, this might be a case study, a lab report, a time-limited coursework) and on the percentage contribution to the overall mark. See [Types of Assessment: Policy and Administrative Definitions](#) for examples of methods of coursework;
- 5) clear information on expectations and professionalism in assessment in relation to [academic integrity](#) and time management to ensure that sufficient planning, prioritisation, time and effort are spent on tasks and deadlines are met, particularly where several assignments are due close together;
- 6) advice and support on time-limited coursework assignments, including procedures for late or non-submission;
- 7) advice and support on invigilated in-person exams (hand-written or online; exam venue or computer lab; open book or unseen) held during the formal Exam and Assessment Diet;
- 8) notification that the formal Exams and Assessment Diets will be used for coursework submissions, as well as in-person exams, and that there will be occasions when these might take place on consecutive days;
- 9) clarification on how assessments relate to learning outcomes;
- 10) inclusion of descriptive criteria or a rubric for each assessment;
- 11) clarification that assessment tasks are proportionate to the weighting and notional student effort hours required to complete the task are clear and proportionate;

- 12) provision of a published schedule of assessments for all courses for each semester;
- 13) notification that deadlines for assessments will be scheduled across the course, semester/stage and wider programme to ensure that they are reasonably spread out and students are not being over-assessed and submission dates are not clustered together; however, there will be occasions where there might be multiple deadlines in a short timeframe (see no.5 above in relation to students managing such deadlines);
- 14) clarification on submission methods and, where electronic, signposting to students on guidance on how to use these tools;
- 15) clear information on the University's policy for late submission of coursework (up to five working days; 30% penalty);
- 16) promotion of professionalism and academic integrity, through resources and integration into the curriculum, and clarification on academic integrity in context of different types and methods of assessment (in person exams; timed, online coursework; other forms of coursework); information on consequences of academic misconduct;
- 17) information and help on understanding assessment expectations, eg through providing exemplars or class discussion of marking criteria;
- 18) information on feedback (date for return, type and method of availability) and how to engage with feedback to help with subsequent assessments, particularly in relation to formative assessment and formative feedback;
- 19) notification to students of coursework which will not be returned within the institutional policy of 3 working weeks, including, for example, projects and also summative coursework where the marks will need to be reviewed by a Course Assessment Board prior to release. See separate [Feedback on Coursework Policy](#) on providing feedback on such assessments prior to the release of results. It should be made clear that, in such examples, generic whole cohort feedback might be provided in advance of, or as an alternative to, individual feedback;
- 20) Information on Mitigating Circumstances: examples of acceptable circumstances; application process; outcomes of non-acceptance and acceptance;
- 21) Information on opportunities for reassessment and repeat of courses, and for criteria required for progression and award.