

04.15

**SCHOOL ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES –
CORE CONTENT**

School Assessment Guidelines: Core Content

1. The purpose of School Assessment Guidelines

School Assessment Guidelines are produced annually. Their purpose is to present policies, procedures and practices relating to assessment, within a user-friendly, easily accessible document available to all academic staff and students across Schools and Collaborative Partners.

The core content for School Assessment Guidelines addresses a 'middle ground' that is somewhere between the very specific programme information included in handbooks and the regulatory academic language of assessment regulations. Schools and Collaborative Partners may augment these guidelines with further context specific guidelines.

The guidelines apply to all programmes and describe assessment procedures that:

- Ensure fairness and equity to students across all programmes
- Ensure consistency with relevant external bodies
- Ensure compliance with the assessment policy and guidelines in the University's [Academic Handbook](#)
- Take cognisance of the [Quality Code, Section B6](#)
- Take cognisance of the following frameworks:
 - [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland \(FHEQ\)](#)
 - [The Credit and Qualification Framework for Wales \(CQFW\)](#)
- Take cognisance of Professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRB) requirements.
- Take cognisance of relevant [Subject Benchmark Statements](#)

2. Further information relating to the Guidelines

This document should be read in conjunction with the generic Student Handbook and the relevant Programme and Module Handbooks. In addition, further information may be available in Placement Learning Handbooks and Dissertation Handbooks.

3. QAA Expectations

The [Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education \(QAA\)](#) sets out the **Expectations** that all providers of UK higher education are required to meet in the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#). This Quality Code makes clear what UK higher education providers are required to do and what students can expect of them.

In the context of this document the following sections are of particular significance:
[Part A](#)

This chapter contains the [FHEQ](#) which is an important reference point for providers of higher education and assists them in maintaining academic standards. For example it defines in generic terms what students who have achieved a particular level of qualification should be able to demonstrate and the qualities they should have.

[Chapter B6](#)

The Quality Code sets out the following Expectation about the assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning, which higher education providers are required to meet:

Higher education providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought.

The Expectations associated with the Quality Code are summarised in the QAA's [list of Expectations](#).

4. Academic Session 2015/2016

- i) The structure and schedule of events is determined at School/ Collaborative partner level, and for each programme is set out in its Programme Handbook.
- ii) There have been no relevant structural changes at the University level.

5. The purpose of assessment: underlying principles

Assessment can be defined as follows:

Assessment is a generic term for the set of processes that measure and appraise the outcomes of a student's learning in terms of knowledge acquired, understanding developed and skills and abilities gained.

General principles of assessment can be found in the University's Assessment and Feedback Policy, [Assessment and Feedback Policy](#)

and they include the following:

- Assessment will be of and for learning.
- Assessment will be designed so as to maximise the opportunities for students to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do.

6. Types of assessment

There are many different forms of assessment. Broadly assessment can be split as follows:

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is designed to provide learners with feedback on progress and inform development helping learners to learn more effectively.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment provides a measure of achievement or failure in respect of a learner's performance in relation to the achievement of intended learning outcomes of a programme of study.

7. Methods of assessment

The performance of students may be assessed by any combination of assessment methods appropriate to the level and learning outcome(s) of the assessment exercise. Common examples are outlined in the [Assessment Regulations](#) in the Academic Handbook (v1-04.1 Point 3) and include:

Assessment Type	Description	Examples (and further subdivision)
EXAM	written examination	seen; unseen; closed book; open book; timed; untimed; online; multiple-choice questions; laboratory-based; problem-based; class test
WRIT	written assessments	analysis; case study; design; dissertation; essay; evaluation;
PRES	presentation	individual and/or group; seminar; (non)-interactive with audience
PRAC	practical	individual and/or group; coaching; fieldwork; laboratory technique; OSCE; OSPE; performance; phonetics
PORT	portfolio	a collection of evidence, frequently including a contextual statement; poster; website
PLAC	placement	clinical placement; school placement; experiencing the world of work
VIVA	viva voce / verbal examination	oral; language
EXHI	exhibition	

8. Intended learning outcomes (and relationship to FHEQ)

Learning Outcomes express what a student should be able to demonstrate at the end of a programme of study or an individual module. Learning Outcomes for programmes of study and modules will have been aligned to the [FHEQ](#) levels at validation.

9. Use of band descriptors

The University's Band Descriptors are set out in [Guidance on Assessment Marking](#) in the Academic Handbook (v1-04.3) and are linked to the levels set out in the [FHEQ](#) and the [CQFW](#)

10. Key skills/Graduate attributes

Key Skills/[Graduate Attributes](#) are a set of competencies students should develop throughout the duration of their study. They correspond to areas most commonly highlighted by Academic Handbook 2018/19 - Volume 1 – 04.15 – School Assessment Guidelines – Core Content – Introduced 22.01.14, modified 15.10.14, 21.08.15, 19.11.15; last modified 17.05.18

employers as desirable when recruiting graduates and are contextualised for each programme and integrated into the programme and module design. They are intrinsically assessed at module level.

11. Assessment criteria

Assessment criteria are linked to the knowledge, understanding and skills that markers expect a student to display in the assessment task and which are taken into account in marking the work, based on the learning outcomes being assessed. The weighting given to assessment tasks and associated assessment criteria will be clearly set out in the assignment brief.

12. Alignment of Learning Outcomes with assessment tasks/assessment criteria

Assessment tasks and the criteria against which a student's performance is measured will be derived from the module learning outcomes to which they relate. The module learning outcomes assessed within an individual assignment should be clearly stated.

13. Submission of assignments

Requirements for the submission of assignments will be clearly stated within each assignment. Receipts will be issued for any assignments submitted as a proof of submission.

14. Marking/Second Marking/Moderation

The moderation process is a process by which the validity of marks awarded can be demonstrated to be accurate, appropriate and consistent to ensure parity of standards.

Guidelines and information relating to marking, second marking and moderation processes can be found in the following entries in the Academic Handbook:

[Guidance on Assessment Marking](#) (v1-04.03)

[Procedure for Double Marking and Internal Moderation of Assessed Work](#) (v1-04.12)

15. Methods of assessment feedback/feed-forward (including generic and individual).

Feedback on assessment plays a crucial part in supporting learning. The University Assessment and Feedback policy sets out a common approach across the University and supports the enhancement of feedback practices.

Assessment is a particularly important aspect of the student experience and feedback is thought to be one of the most influential factors in the improvement of student achievement. This is highlighted in the [University's Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy](#) where the 'Curriculum Development' thematic priority promotes the timeliness and quality of feedback to students.

This emphasis on effective feedback for students supports Cardiff Metropolitan's learning-oriented approach to assessment which emphasises that assessment not only measures but also contributes to learning.

Feedback provides students with the opportunity to reflect on their current or recent level of attainment. It can be provided individually or to groups and can take many forms. Therefore opportunities for the receipt of feedback by students will vary at different stages of students' programmes.

The following aspects of feedback can be distinguished.

1. **Formative Assessment Feedback**
Formative assessment feedback provides students with information on their performance in a specified assessment task and helps them identify how to improve and develop.
2. **Summative Assessment Feedback**
Summative assessment feedback measures student performance against learning outcomes via the specified assessment criteria in order to make decisions on progression and awards. Summative feedback can provide formative information.
3. **Feed-forward**
The term 'feed-forward' is used to denote advice regarding possible strengthening of a student's next work and encourages the use of tutors' comments to inform future assignments.

16. Format of feedback

The University promotes the following principles regarding feedback on assessment.

- **Feedback should be provided to students as soon as possible after the assessment has been completed.** Students need to know when to expect their feedback. For this reason it has been agreed that the timing of assessments and feedback shall be made explicit in all programme handbooks/module handbooks. Feedback will normally be issued within 4 working weeks of submission. It is University policy that assessment feedback is made available to students in all cases. For modules that occur at the end of the programme, students are entitled to request and receive assessment feedback on their work over and above the marks awarded. Students may make this request for assessment feedback at the end of the programme directly to the programme director, module leader or other designated member of staff. More information about this entitlement and how to go about making such requests will be provided during taught sessions and/or plenary sessions. This entitlement extends to feedback on performance in examinations.
- ***Student engagement with feedback is strongly encouraged. Tutors should use feed-forward in order that students are encouraged to engage with their feedback in ways that result in improvements in their satisfaction and their performance.***
- **The form in which feedback is offered should be appropriate to the module and assessment task.** Different forms of feedback may be made available to students and feedback may not be restricted to written comments on essays. For example feedback may be offered electronically, by audio file, and by video file. Feedback may also be provided individually (i.e. identifying specific issues relating to one student's work), and/or generically, (i.e. referring to general points about the assessment as a whole, arising from an overview of the work produced by the student group).
- **The feedback provided should be relevant, motivating, and constructive.** Feedback should be seen to relate to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria and should enable students to consolidate and develop their learning. Band Descriptors provide guidance for markers in deciding the level of student attainment and will indicate how well the assessment criteria have been met (see [Guidance on Assessment Marking](#) Academic Handbook(v1-04.3))

17. Examinations

Some modules will have an end-of-session or end-of-module examination associated with them. Academic Registry will publish the final schedule for end-of-session or end-of-module

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examinations at least two weeks prior to the first examination. Further information relating to examinations including the responsibilities of staff and students can be found in the [Assessment of Students \(Taught Programmes\)](#) sections of the Academic Handbook (v1-Section 4)

18. Extensions and Mitigating Circumstances

Cardiff Metropolitan University's [Mitigating Circumstances Procedure](#) is set out in the Academic Handbook(v1-05.1). It exists to ensure that students are not placed at a disadvantage as a result of exceptional personal circumstances.

It is impossible to provide a definitive list of all possible mitigating circumstances, but typical examples include:

- illness of the student
- illness of a partner/spouse, close family member or close friend
- bereavement
- issues related to pregnancy and child birth.

A disability or chronic illness does not constitute exceptional personal circumstances unless there is medical evidence of a sudden and unforeseen deterioration or a particularly severe episode. When a student initially experiences difficulties they should approach their personal/year tutor to attempt to prevent significant impact on their academic performance. In cases where this is insufficient, the student will need to submit a [Mitigating Circumstances Form](#)

19. Special cases

Any extension to a submission deadline must be within the overall deadline for completion of studies. If it is not, the School must complete a [Special Request Form](#) for approval by The University's Regulations and Special Cases Committee for an extension to the deadline for completion of studies.

20. Reasonable adjustments

Variation of assessment arrangements are intended to enable all students to have the same opportunity to demonstrate the achievement of specific learning outcomes. Variation of assessment is covered in the [Academic Handbook \(v1-04.5\)](#)

21. Unfair practice and Electronic Plagiarism Detection Software

Cardiff Metropolitan University takes issues of unfair practice extremely seriously and defines unfair practice as follows:

“It is unfair practice to commit any act whereby a person may obtain for himself/herself or for another, an unpermitted advantage. This shall apply whether the candidate acts alone or in conjunction with another/others. Any action or actions shall be deemed to fall within this definition whether occurring during, or in relation to, a formal examination, a piece of coursework, or any form of assessment undertaken in pursuit of a qualification of Cardiff Metropolitan University or other awarding body.”

The University has distinct procedures and penalties for dealing with unfair practice in examination or non-examination conditions. These are explained in full in the [University's Unfair Practice Procedure](#) In relation to non-examination conditions there are several categories:

For example:

1. **Plagiarism**, which can be defined as using without acknowledgement another person's words or ideas and submitting them for assessment as though it were one's own work, for instance by copying, translating from one language to another or unacknowledged paraphrasing. Further examples of plagiarism are given below:

Use of any quotation(s) from the published or unpublished work of other persons, whether published in textbooks, articles, the Web, or in any other format, which quotations have not been clearly identified as such by being placed in quotation marks and acknowledged.

Use of another person's words or ideas that have been slightly changed or paraphrased to make it look different from the original.

Summarising another person's ideas, judgments, diagrams, figures, or computer programmes without reference to that person in the text and the source in a bibliography or reference list.

Use of services of essay banks and/or any other agencies.

Use of unacknowledged material downloaded from the Internet.

Re-use of one's own material except as authorised by the department.

2. **Collusion**, which can be defined as when work that has been undertaken by or with others is submitted and passed off as solely as the work of one person. This also applies where the work of one candidate is submitted in the name of another. Where this is done with the knowledge of the originator both parties can be considered to be at fault.

3. **Fabrication of data**, making false claims to have carried out experiments, observations, interviews or other forms of data collection and analysis, or acting dishonestly in any other way.

Plagiarism Detection Software(PDS)

As part of its commitment to quality and the maintenance of academic standards, the University reserves the right to use Plagiarism Detection Software(PDS), including Turnitin. Such software makes no judgement as to whether a piece of work has been plagiarised, it simply highlights sections of text that have been found in other sources.

The use of plagiarism detection software fulfils two functions. The first is to enhance student learning (i.e. as a developmental tool); the second is to guard against and identify unfair practice in assessment.

Further information and guidance can be found in the University's policy on the [Use of Plagiarism Detection Software](#)

Further information can be found in the [Unfair Practice Procedure](#) in the Academic Handbook (v1-08.1).

22. External Examiners

External Examiners are a key element in the University's pursuance of quality enhancement and the maintenance of academic standards.

They provide an objective view of the operation of the programmes they are associated with, and they enable comparisons with the standards of programmes offered in other institutions of which they have knowledge.

The full range of general duties of expected of External Examiners can be found in the [External Examiners](#) section in the Academic Handbook.

External Examiners are expected to approve the form and content of proposed examination papers, programme work and other assessments that count towards the award in order to ensure that all students will be assessed fairly in relation to the programme syllabus and regulations and in such a way that they as external examiners will be able to judge whether students have fulfilled the learning outcomes of the programme and reached the required standard.

External Examiners also see a sample of work reflecting the full range of achievements of students and the full range of markers, in order to ensure that each student is fairly placed in relation to the rest of the cohort.

23. Submission of marks

Once finalised through the moderation process, marks are entered onto the University's Student Record System.

24. Examination Boards

Examination Boards are responsible for considering student assessment profiles in accordance with the extant regulations of the Academic Handbook at the time that the Board is convened. Regulations relating to Examination Boards can be found in the in the Academic Handbook [Assessment Regulations](#) (v1-04.1 Points 8-15).

25. Verification/appeals/complaints

[Volume 1 Section 7](#) of the Academic Handbook gives information on Cardiff Metropolitan University's Complaints Procedure, Verification Procedure and Appeals Procedure, Appeals Procedure (Unfair Practice Decisions), Appeals Procedure (Postgraduate Research Degree) and other appeals procedures.