



UNIVERSITY OF  
LIVERPOOL

# **Code of Practice on Assessment**

## **2023-24**

Applicable to all cohorts

In the Code of Practice on Assessment and all Appendices the term “student” includes apprentices on degree apprenticeship programmes

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accreditation	In the context used in this Code, accreditation refers to the recognition by a professional or statutory body of a University award for the purpose of qualifying or partially qualifying a candidate for membership of the professional/statutory body concerned.
Annual Subject Action Planning (ASAP)	The University's system for monitoring the operation of Departments' taught programmes on an annual basis.
Apprentice	A learner who receives an apprenticeship training through an approved apprenticeship standard which is delivered by the University as the main training provider.
Assessment	A generic term for a set of processes that measure the outcomes of students' learning in terms of knowledge acquired, understanding developed and skills gained.
• Diagnostic	Assessment which provides an indicator of a learner's aptitude and preparedness for a programme of study and identifies possible learning problems.
• Formative	Assessment designed to provide learners with feedback on progress and to inform development.
• Summative	Assessment which provides a measure of achievement or failure in respect of a learner's performance in relation to the intended learning outcomes of the programme of study.
Assessment component	A weighted assessment method, detailed in the module specification, to measure student attainment of one or more module learning outcomes.
Assessment criteria	Descriptions of how an assessor will determine whether a student has demonstrated the achievement of the required learning outcomes.
Assessment methods	The various different means by which students' learning can be assessed e.g. examinations, essays, reports, oral presentations etc.
Assessment strategy	The plan adopted for assessing learning and enabling students to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes; this might be at module, programme or Departmental level. An assessment strategy should set out the aims and objectives of assessment, the means or methods of assessment and the timing.

Assessment task	An individual exercise performed by a student for the purpose of measuring the outcomes of their learning.
Cohort	A student belongs to the cohort in which they started at FHEQ Level 4 provided they have a continuous student record regardless of interruptions of studies, suspensions, transfers etc. A student articulating into a programme above FHEQ Level 4 belongs to the cohort which commenced that programme at FHEQ Level 4. If a student withdraws from a programme and then restarts a new programme there would not be a continuous record and therefore the student would be on the cohort corresponding to FHEQ Level 4 of the new programme.
Credit	A quantitative measure of learning effort. Credit is normally awarded for the achievement of a set of specified learning outcomes and is related to the amount of learning needed to achieve the learning outcomes.
Degree classification	A means of distinguishing between the levels of achievement by different students of the outcomes of a degree programme.
Examination	An assessment task (usually written but sometimes practical or oral) formally scheduled and supervised by the University which takes place over a specified period, in a specified location and at a specified time.
Feedback	Comments (whether written or oral) given by assessors to students on their performance in an assessment task.
Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland	A set of reference points drawn up by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education to determine whether the intended learning outcomes for a programme of study and actual student achievement are appropriate to the level of the qualification being awarded. The <i>Frameworks for England, Wales and Northern Ireland</i> distinguish five levels in higher education and set out descriptors exemplifying the outcomes of the main qualification at each level.
Learning outcomes	The knowledge, understanding skills, capabilities and attributes which a student can be expected to have gained on successful completion of a programme or element of a programme of study.

Level	An indicator of the relative demand, complexity and depth of the learning required of a learner in relation to particular modules or elements of study.
Marking criteria	See 'Assessment criteria'.
Marking scheme	A detailed framework for the allocation of marks in relation to what is expected to be demonstrated in an individual assessment task.
Mark scale	The correlation of marks with degree classifications and with qualitative marking descriptors.
Marks scaling for an assessment task	The systematic adjustment of a set of marks for an assessment task in order to ensure that they properly reflect the achievements of the students concerned as defined by the marking descriptors.
Marks scaling for a module	The systematic adjustment of a set of marks for a module in order to ensure that they properly reflect the students' achievement of learning outcomes of the module or of the programme of which the module forms a part.
Model answer	An example or template of what is expected to be demonstrated in an individual assessment task.
Moderation of marks	The examination of a selection of pieces of work from an assessment task by an individual to verify or otherwise the level and consistency of the marks allocated by the marker(s), particularly at the borderlines.
Moderator	A person responsible for examining a selection of pieces of work from an assessment task to verify or otherwise the level and consistency of marks allocated by the marker(s), particularly at the borderlines.
Module	A discrete component of a programme of study having stated learning outcomes, teaching and learning opportunities to achieve those outcomes and assessment tasks to enable students to demonstrate achievement of the outcomes. Modules are normally allocated credit values and have a defined level.
Periodic review	The University's system of internal scrutiny and review of a Department's teaching provision, carried out every six years.

Programme of study	Structured teaching and learning provision leading to one or more awards.
Programme specification	A concise description (required by the Quality Assurance Agency for each programme of study) of the intended learning outcomes of a programme of study and the means by which those outcomes are achieved and demonstrated.
Qualitative marking descriptors	Verbal descriptions of what a given range of marks or grades represents in terms of students' achievement of learning outcomes.
Recognised Prior Learning	Learning (either formally certificated learning or learning acquired through experience) undertaken prior to entry on a particular programme of study for which academic credit on that programme of study is granted.
Subject benchmark statements	A means of describing the nature and characteristics of programmes of study in a specific subject. Subject benchmark statements represent general expectations about the standards for the award of qualifications at a given level and articulate attributes and capabilities that those possessing such qualifications should be able to demonstrate. Most of the subject benchmark statements produced to date at the request of the Quality Assurance Agency by the relevant subject communities refer to bachelor's degrees with honours.
Transcript	A summary record of a student's academic achievements on a particular programme of study.

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Code of Practice has been formulated as an authoritative statement of the philosophy and principles underlying the University's assessment activities and of the University's expectations in relation to the design, implementation and review of assessment strategies for all taught programmes of study.
- 1.2 The Code is intended to inform both staff and students as well as individuals from outside the University, such as external examiners and external reviewers.
- 1.3 The Code refers to institution-wide assessment policies but also sets out guidelines within which Departments must design and operate their assessment strategies. It also refers to external reference points such as the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*, the *Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and subject benchmark statements.
2. In **section 2** the Code gives a definition of assessment and identifies the different forms of assessment (diagnostic, formative and summative).
3. **Section 3** sets out the factors to be taken into consideration in formulating assessment strategies and the requirements for such strategies to be approved and monitored.
4. **Section 4** underlines the necessity of setting appropriate assessment criteria and of using qualitative marking descriptors. It sets out the requirements in relation to examiners and moderators. It also deals with the rules concerning the return of marks to students and the publication of results.
5. **Section 5** refers to the rules governing the progression of students to the next stage of their studies and to the means of classifying degrees.
6. The Code refers to the necessity for students to submit their coursework for assessment by the deadline set by the assessor. In **section 6** the penalties to be imposed if work is submitted late are set out. There is also reference to the provision for ill-health and other special circumstances to be taken into account in assessing a student's performance. Appendix Q sets out the University's Policy on coursework submission.
7. **Section 7** deals with formal examinations, whether written or practical. It refers to the University's Regulations for the Conduct of Examinations, deals with the provisions relating to students who are prevented by illness or other extenuating circumstances from sitting the whole or part of an examination, or whose performance in an examination may have been affected by illness or other extenuating circumstances, and covers the issue of cheating in examinations. Section 7 also sets out the University's policy on the use of *viva voce* examinations.
8. **Section 8** deals with the University's policy for making adjustments to examination arrangements for disabled students, including students experiencing learning difficulties, such as dyslexia.
9. **Section 9** covers academic integrity. Appendix L of the Code sets out the University's Policy on Academic Integrity.
10. **Section 10** covers failure in assessment, the provisions relating to re-assessment and student progress procedures. Appendix F of the Code sets out the procedure to be followed in the event that a student wishes to appeal against the decisions of a Board of Examiners in respect of the determination of a taught degree or other award or the classification of a degree.
11. The principles and procedures relating to the provision of feedback on assessment to students are covered by **section 11**. Appendix N of the Code outlines the University's Policy on Feedback on Assessment.

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12. In **section 12** the University's requirements in relation to the retention of students' assessed work are set out.
13. **Section 13** defines the functions of Boards of Examiners, refers to the constitutions of such Boards and sets out some of the general operational requirements in relation to their meetings. (Further details on this are contained in Appendix D to this Code.) It also defines the purpose of the external examiner system, the University's code of practice relating to which forms Appendix H to this Code.
14. **Section 14** states the general principle that students should have clear information about all relevant aspects of the assessment of their performance and sets out the information about assessment which should be available to students.
15. In **section 15** the principle is enunciated that staff responsible for carrying out assessment should be fully aware of the University's policies, rules and procedures relating to assessment. It places the responsibility on Heads of Departments for ensuring that all individuals involved in the assessment of students are competent to undertake the role.
16. **Section 16** sets out the requirements placed on Boards of Studies for monitoring the effectiveness of assessment strategies and states that the University will monitor and review periodically the University-wide procedures and regulations governing assessment.

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## **THE CODE**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This Code of Practice on Assessment has been formulated as an authoritative statement of the philosophy and principles underlying the University's assessment activities and of the University's expectations in relation to the design, implementation and review of assessment strategies for all taught programmes of study by those who have responsibilities for these. It covers a range of matters within the scope of assessment and it refers, where appropriate, to other University codes, policies or Ordinances and Regulations which pertain to assessment. It is intended to inform both staff and students as well as individuals from outside the University, such as external examiners and external reviewers. In formulating this Code consideration has been given to the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*.
- 1.2 The University of Liverpool as an institution needs to be able to assure itself that the standards of its awards are consistent with the general expectations for such awards within the higher education sector nationally and, indeed, internationally and that actual student achievement is consonant with those standards. In this respect, it uses as reference points the *Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and, for individual subjects, the appropriate subject benchmark statements. It has in place institution-wide policies and regulations relating to certain aspects of assessment, but it also recognises that Departments must have flexibility within accepted parameters to adopt the most appropriate assessment practices in the light of the particular needs of the subject discipline and the students concerned. This Code, therefore, not only refers to the institution-wide assessment policies which are in place but also sets out guidelines within which Departments must design and operate their assessment activities. The University will continue to develop its systems for monitoring the effectiveness of its assessment strategies. Periodically this Code of Practice will be reviewed to ensure its currency and usefulness and that it reflects developments within the higher education sector and more widely, and the need to comply with the terms of relevant legislation.

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### **2. Definition of Assessment**

- 2.1 Assessment forms an essential element of the learning process. Students learn both from assessment activities and from their interaction with staff about their performance in those activities. There are many different forms of assessment, serving a variety of purposes. These include:
- promoting student learning by providing the student with feedback, normally to help improve their performance;
  - evaluating student knowledge, understanding, abilities or skills;
  - providing a mark or grade that enables a student's performance to be established. The mark or grade may also be used to make progress decisions;
  - enabling the public (including employers), and higher education providers, to know that an individual has attained an appropriate level of achievement that reflects the academic standards set by the awarding institution and agreed UK norms, including the frameworks for higher education qualifications. This may include demonstrating fitness to practise or meeting other professional requirements.
- 2.2 Assessment may be:
- diagnostic: assessment which provides an indicator of a learner's aptitude and preparedness for a programme of study and identifies possible learning problems;
  - formative: designed to provide learners with feedback on progress and inform development, but does not contribute to the overall assessment;
  - summative: provides a measure of achievement or failure made in respect of a learner's performance in relation to the intended learning outcomes of the programme of study.

Any assessment component can, and often does, involve more than one of these elements.

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### **3. Assessment Strategies**

- 3.1 In designing and reviewing assessment strategies, consideration should be given to the role of formative and summative assessment and, if appropriate, diagnostic assessment. Care should be taken to ensure that there is an appropriate mix of formative assessment and summative assessment.
- 3.2 Assessment strategies should be formulated so as to ensure that the academic/professional standard for the award or award element is set and maintained at the appropriate level and that student performance is properly judged against this. In this respect the *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications* and the appropriate subject benchmark statement(s) should act as points of reference.
- 3.3 A range of assessment techniques should be adopted which are appropriate to the teaching and learning methods and the specified learning outcomes. The assessment methods used should provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate the achievement of the learning outcomes being assessed, whether at programme/subject component level or module/element of programme level. Assessment policies, practices and procedures should take account of the diversity of the student population and should not unfairly discriminate against any student. The assessment methods adopted should be rigorous, reliable and equitable and should facilitate differentiation between achievement at the threshold and at other levels.
- 3.4 Care should be taken to ensure that the amount of assessment for a programme, subject component or module/element of a programme is commensurate with the need for students to be able to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes and is not excessive. Assessment strategies should also be formulated so as to allow students adequate time to reflect on their learning before being assessed.
- 3.5 Assessment strategies for programmes of study should be clearly indicated in programme/subject component specifications and for modules/elements of programmes in the appropriate module specification. The components of the assessment for a module/element of a programme (i.e. the assessment method) must be defined in the module specification. Assessment strategies should be carefully scrutinised by the relevant School Scrutiny Panel and/or University Approval Panel in the process for the approval of new programmes and revisions to existing programmes. The effectiveness of assessment strategies should also be monitored and reviewed by Boards of Studies, taking advice, as appropriate, from the Boards of Examiners and external examiners, and as part of the annual subject review and periodic review processes.
- 3.6 It is permissible to offer a choice of different types of assessment within a module only if the learning outcomes of the module can be shown to be demonstrable by all the proposed assessment options. Where options for assessment within a module are available these must be approved as part of the approval process for the module. It is not normally permissible for alternative assessment arrangements from those approved for the module to be made available on an individual basis. Where, exceptionally, alternative assessment arrangements from those approved for the module need to be made for individual students, the approval of the Chair of the relevant Faculty Academic Quality and Standards Committee must be obtained.
- 3.7 Where a programme forms part of the qualification's regime of a professional or statutory body, clear information should be given in the programme documentation about the specific assessment requirements which must be met for progression towards the professional qualification, including the options/modules which must be passed and the level at which the programme or any part of it must be passed in order to meet the requirements of the professional or statutory body.
- 3.8 Where appropriate, assessment strategies should take account of the role of, and processes involved in, Recognised Prior Learning.
- 3.9 All assessments should be completed and submitted in English. The University Academic Quality and Standards Committee will consider requests, on a programme-specific or subject component

specific basis, for students to be allowed to submit work for assessment in languages other than English.

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#### **4. Grading Criteria and Marking**

- 4.1 For each module or element of a programme or subject component the assessment tasks should be clearly defined and should be related to the learning outcomes which they are designed to test. For each individual assessment task the following should be clearly defined: purpose; criteria to be used in allocating marks; the proportion of the marks allocated to different parts of the assessment (if appropriate); the proportion of the total marks for the module which the assessment represents (if appropriate); and whether or not failure in the assessment may be compensated for by higher marks in other components of the module. If there is a word limit attached to the assessment, the marking criteria must make it clear to students if they will be penalised for exceeding the word limit, and if so the penalty must be clearly explained. The information should enable students to understand what is expected of them to pass the assessment at the threshold and to obtain higher grades. Marks should also relate to the qualitative marking descriptors drawn up by Departments in the light of the appropriate subject benchmark statements. Where appropriate, marking schemes and model answers should be used. For undergraduate programmes marks awarded should relate to the University's marks scale and the general marking descriptors set out in Appendix A.
- 4.2 For every assessment task which contributes to an award of the University or to determining whether a student may proceed to a subsequent stage of study there must be one or more internal examiner(s) appointed from those approved by or on behalf of the management team of the relevant Faculty, one of whom shall be designated as the internal examiner responsible for the assessment as a whole. Postgraduate research students or postgraduate/postdoctoral research staff may be appointed as internal examiners or markers for undergraduate level work, in accordance with the expectations of the PGR Code of Practice Appendix 5. The internal examiner(s) shall be responsible for marking the assessment in relation to the stated criteria for the assessment, any agreed marking scheme and the qualitative marking descriptors and marks scale.
- 4.3 Moderation is the examination of a selection of pieces of work from an assessment task by an individual to verify or otherwise the level and consistency of the marks allocated by the marker(s), particularly at the borderlines. Postgraduate students or postgraduate/postdoctoral research staff cannot act as moderators. Moderation of the marking of the internal examiner(s) must be undertaken in the following circumstances and according to the following rules:
- 4.3.1 Except in circumstances where there is a detailed marking scheme for the assessment which has been developed in conjunction with another examiner not involved in the setting of the assessment which has the assent of the external examiner and whose operation is monitored by the Board of Examiners in consultation with the external examiner, any component of the assessment of a module (i.e. assessment task) that contributes 20% or more to the overall module mark must be moderated. Moderation must be applied to a sufficient number of assessment components of a module to ensure that at least 60% of the overall module mark has been subject to moderation.
- 4.3.2 If assessment components marked by postgraduate research students or postgraduate/postdoctoral research staff total 20% or more of the overall module mark, then those assessments must be subject to 100% moderation. Normal rules for moderation, as set out in 4.3.3, apply to the rest of the assessment components of that module.
- 4.3.3 Where moderation is carried out:
- where the number of students undertaking an assessment task was less than or equal to 149, at least 25% of all assessment items should normally be examined by the moderator.
  - where the number of students undertaking an assessment task was 150-299, at least 15% of all assessment items should normally be examined by the moderator

- where the number of students undertaking an assessment task was 300 or more, at least 10% of all assessment items should normally be examined by the moderator.

Where there are fewer than 40 items, a minimum of 10 items should be examined. Items covering the range of achievement should be considered. The moderator should check both standards and consistency of marking, particularly at the borderlines.

- 4.3.4 If there are two examiners for an assessment task, each may mark half the assessment tasks and moderate the other half.
- 4.3.5 If the moderation of an assessment task indicates that the marking was inconsistent, *all* items should be re-marked. If the moderation indicates that the level of the marks awarded for the assessment task was incorrect or inappropriate, the marks should be scaled appropriately. The relevant external examiner should confirm that they were satisfied that the moderation was undertaken properly and agreed with any consequent scaling of the marks.
- 4.3.6 The relevant Board of Studies must be satisfied that each assessment task has appropriate moderation arrangements.
- 4.3.7 Assessment tasks which are double-marked need not also be moderated, but Departments must have in place procedures for determining the mark to be awarded to a student in the event of a disagreement between two markers. As far as possible, such differences of opinion should be resolved internally, but in the last resort the external examiner may be asked to adjudicate.
- 4.3.8 Where there is requirement to moderate an assessment task, this may be waived by the Board of Examiners with the agreement of the external examiner in the exceptional circumstances of there being no one inside the University with the necessary subject expertise to act as moderator for the assessment task.
- 4.4 Online programmes delivered in partnership with Kaplan Open Learning have different moderation arrangements that are detailed in the relevant 'Quality Assurance Operational Framework for Online Programmes' documents.
- 4.5 Departments must have in place systems for checking the computation of marks in individual assessment tasks and for whole modules and for ensuring that marks are recorded accurately. Where marks are stored electronically provision should be made for appropriate back-up copies.
- 4.6 Boards of Examiners, in their capacity as Module Review Boards, must ensure that a procedure is in place for the identification and investigation of any unusual patterns of distribution of marks (for example, a particularly low pass rate in a module) before any final decisions about module marks are taken. Where unusual patterns of distribution of marks are identified, mark scaling may be applied, if appropriate. The decision to scale module marks and the method of scaling used must be agreed with the external examiner.
- 4.7 Consideration should be given to the use of second (double) marking of assessments, where feasible and appropriate.
- 4.8 A system of anonymous marking of examination scripts is in place and the marking of all assessed coursework that contributes to the final degree result should also be anonymous. Where it is not feasible for coursework to be marked anonymously, then the Department or School should explain this clearly in the module specifications.
- 4.9 Except in the case of group work where all students in the group gain the same mark, the marks gained by an individual student should not be disclosed to other students, nor discussed with them. Students' results should be made available on the University's student records system as promptly as possible, consistent with rigour of assessment and accuracy. Final classification lists may be published with the names of successful candidates shown in alphabetical order or, in appropriate cases, within each programme of study and where appropriate, the degree classification may also be indicated. Students may opt out of having their name published in

such lists, by writing to the Head of their Department or Dean of School at least a week in advance of the results publication date.

- 4.10 Marks for modules completed at the end of the first semester should be released to students as soon as possible after the completion of the module but should be labelled as 'provisional', as they will be subject to scrutiny by the external examiner(s) at the summer meeting of the Board of Examiners.
- 4.11 Students will be provided with a transcript of their marks following completion of their programme of studies or their withdrawal from the University. Students are also able to access their own records, including the marks they have achieved, via the Student Web.

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## **5. Progression Requirements and Rules Governing Degree Classification**

- 5.1 The progression of students taking non-clinical undergraduate degrees to the next stage of their studies is governed by the Model for Non-Clinical First Degree Programmes which is set out in Appendix B to this Code. Non-clinical undergraduate degrees will be classified in accordance with the relevant degree classification system.
- 5.2 The progression requirements and criteria for the award of clinical first degrees shall be clearly defined and readily available in the appropriate programme documentation.
- 5.3 Postgraduate awards shall be made in accordance with the Ordinance and Regulations for the particular award. Details of the model for modular Master's degrees, postgraduate diplomas, postgraduate certificates and postgraduate awards, including the fail/pass/merit/distinction criteria, are set out in Appendix C to this Code. Details of the model for the Diploma and Certificate in Professional Studies are set out in Appendix C(i) and Appendix P to this Code<sup>1</sup>.

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## **6. Submission of Assessed Coursework**

- 6.1 The University requires all students to submit assessed coursework by the deadline set by the assessor. From the point of view of the student, this requirement encourages them to develop their time-management skills. From the point of view of the assessors, it enables them to plan efficiently the marking and feedback process. In order to assist students to submit their work on time, assessors should ensure that there is sufficient time between the setting of the piece of work and the deadline for its submission for students to carry out the work, while providing some flexibility to them in arranging their study workloads. The submission deadline should normally allow for the work to be marked and feedback given to students before the end of the semester. Clear information should be provided to students about the deadlines for the submission of work and where and/or to whom the work should be submitted. Departments must have in place robust systems for receiving and recording the date of receipt of assessed work.
- 6.2 Except in circumstances where late submission would allow a student to benefit from feedback given to other students on an assessment, late submissions of work should be accepted for a set period beyond the submission deadline, but a penalty should normally be imposed. This policy reflects a belief that students who have misjudged the amount of work required or have failed to manage their study priorities properly should be given additional time to complete, but that students who do submit work late should not benefit from the additional time by being able to increase their mark. A standard system of penalties for the late submission of work for assessment has been agreed as follows:
- 6.2.1 5% of the total marks *available for the assessment* shall be deducted from the assessment mark for each working day after the submission date or each 24 hour period immediately following the submission deadline for assignments submitted electronically, up to a maximum of five working days e.g. for work marked out of 100, five marks per day will be deducted; for

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<sup>1</sup> This reference to Appendix C(i) applies only to cohorts that commenced between 2010-11 and 2013-14. Appendix P applies to cohorts that commenced in and since 2014-15.

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work marked out of 20, one mark per day will be deducted; however, the mark will not be reduced below the pass mark for the assessment. Work assessed below the pass mark will not be penalised for late submission of up to five working days, or five 24 hour periods for assignments submitted electronically.

- 6.2.2 Work received more than five working days after the submission deadline will receive a mark of zero. In such circumstances, where a student is required to re-sit/re-take the assessment, the re-assessment task must be different from the original assessment. Re-submission of the original piece of work is not permissible, except in the case of project work or dissertations.
- 6.2.3 For assignments that are not required to be submitted electronically a working day is defined as a day when the University is open and staff would normally be available for work and thus also be available for contact by students. For assignments that are required to be submitted electronically a working day is defined as the 24 hour period immediately following the submission date and time.

The raw mark and the penalty imposed should be calculated and marked on the script.

- 6.3 Assessment submission dates should be set so that the assessment load for students is balanced over each year of study; clustering of assessments, particularly at the end of the module delivery, should be avoided wherever possible. Assessment submission dates should not normally be set in vacation periods, other than when approved by the relevant Faculty Academic Quality and Standards Committee and only in exceptional circumstances. Such submissions should be electronic only and clear guidance to students regarding any late submission should be provided.
- 6.4 Exemption from the requirement to apply the standard system of penalties for late submission of work to a particular module or element of a programme of study may be granted by the University on submission of a reasoned case for consideration by the University Academic Quality and Standards Committee.
- 6.5 Dispensation (without penalty) for the late submission of work may **only** be granted by the Head of Department or their designated nominee on medical or other exceptional grounds in accordance with the Policy on Extenuating Circumstances in Relation to Performance in Assessments and Examinations (Appendix M to this document) **for students on the online programmes delivered in partnership with Kaplan Open Learning**. There can be no extensions to coursework submission deadlines for any other students, other than in accordance with a student's learning support plan. Students submitting coursework late because of unforeseen medical or other exceptional circumstances may instead apply for exemption from late penalties.
- 6.5.1 Students are entitled to request exemption from late penalties for any coursework that has the opportunity for late submission. However, exemption from late penalties should only be applied up to the point when feedback that would benefit late-submitting students is released. Marks will only be recorded in Banner if the work is submitted before the feedback is released. In exceptional cases, where feedback will not lead to an unfair advantage (e.g. dissertations, individual research projects), students may request exemption from late penalties provided that the work is submitted within two working weeks of the original deadline. If necessary a decision on whether the release of feedback would lead to an unfair advantage should be referred to the Head/Dean of Institute/School, or their designated nominee, who should consult the module coordinator.
- 6.5.2 The latest that coursework may be submitted after a deadline is the earliest of:
- (i) The time of release of feedback on the assessment task that would benefit the student, or
  - (ii) Two working weeks from the date of the original deadline, or
  - (iii) The last day of the relevant assessment period.

Coursework submitted after this time shall be treated as a non-submission and dealt with under the Policy on Extenuating Circumstances in Relation to Performance in Assessments and Examinations, which forms Appendix M to this document.



- 6.5.3 Coursework with no opportunities for late submission shall be dealt with under Policy on Extenuating Circumstances in Relation to Performance in Assessments and Examinations (Appendix M) or other relevant sections of this Code of Practice.
- 6.5.4 The policy on exemption from late penalties applies to all assessment components of a module regardless of the weighting of that component towards the overall module mark.
- 6.5.5 Requests for exemption from late penalties should be submitted at the same time as the late coursework or at the earliest opportunity thereafter, and decisions communicated to students as soon as practicable. Students are able to request exemption from late penalties for two individual assessments per academic session without the need for supporting evidence (i.e.: they may self-certify), but for any additional requests, students should submit evidence to support their application (normally the type of contemporaneous evidence required to support claims for extenuating circumstances) at the same time as the late coursework, to the department or School responsible for delivering the affected module. However, if a student is unable to submit an application for exemption from late penalties and/or to provide evidence with the late coursework (if required), the final deadline for any request for exemption from late penalties and submission of supporting evidence shall be the deadline specified by the relevant Extenuating Circumstances Committee for receipt of Extenuating Circumstances claims.
- 6.5.6 For consistency, applications for exemption from late penalties should not be dealt with by the individual module coordinators but should be processed by a single person or small team of staff nominated by the Head/Dean of Institute/School. The nominated staff would be authorised to reinstate a mark without penalty.
- 6.6 It is the responsibility of students to keep their Department/School informed of illness or other factors affecting their progress during the year. In order for illness to be taken into account in assessing a student's performance, an extenuating circumstances claim form must be submitted according to the requirements of the Policy on Extenuating Circumstances in Relation to Performance in Assessments and Examinations which forms Appendix M to this document.

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## **7. Formal Examinations**

- 7.1 Formal written or practical examinations (as opposed to 'coursework' or 'continuously assessed work' undertaken throughout the semester) are governed by the University's Regulations for the Conduct of Examinations, which are contained in Appendix D to this Code of Practice. At the beginning of each academic year the dates of examination periods are published on the Student Administration and Support website and details of how examination timetables will be promulgated are provided along with the Regulations for the Conduct of Examinations. It is the University's policy that, if a module is assessed by formal examination, this should take place at the end of the semester in which the teaching of the module is completed, unless an exemption from this requirement has been granted by the University Academic Quality and Standards Committee, on an exceptional basis, for individual modules.
- 7.2 Where an assessment designed to be completed on a computer or similar device requires a significant period of display screen work without other non-display screen work, a time allowance for short breaks of 5 minutes per hour of assessment must be factored into the total duration of the assessment.
- 7.3 The University recognises that students may be prevented by illness or other exceptional extenuating circumstances from attendance at the whole or part of an examination or that, while they may have attended the examination, nevertheless their performance in that examination may have been impaired by illness or other extenuating circumstances. Boards of Examiners are empowered to take into account such illness/extenuating circumstances in assessing the performance of the students concerned in accordance with the Policy on Extenuating Circumstances in Relation to Performance in Assessments and Examinations, as set out in Appendix M to this Code.

- 7.4 Due regard must be paid by those setting and marking examination papers to the security of the examinations process. The University has in place procedures relating to the printing and distribution of examination papers which are notified to those setting examinations at appropriate points in the academic year. All examinations must be properly invigilated, in accordance with the requirements of the Regulations for the Conduct of Examinations.
- 7.5 Breaches by examination candidates of Regulation 1 of the Regulations for the Conduct of Examinations shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of Regulation 6 of the same. For the avoidance of doubt, cheating in examinations is defined as:
- 7.5.1 communicating with or copying from any other student during an examination;
  - 7.5.2 communicating during an examination with any person other than a properly authorised invigilator or another authorised member of staff;
  - 7.5.3 introducing any written or printed material into the examination room unless expressly permitted by the School Scrutiny Panel or the relevant module specification;
  - 7.5.4 introducing electronically stored information into the examination room, unless expressly permitted by the School Scrutiny Panel or the relevant module specification;
  - 7.5.5 gaining access to unauthorised material during or before an examination;
  - 7.5.6 the provision, or assistance in the provision, of false evidence of knowledge or understanding in examinations.

Cases of suspected cheating will be dealt with under the University's disciplinary procedure.

- 7.6 Unless specifically allowed by the University Academic Quality and Standards Committee, selective *viva voce* (oral) examinations will not normally be held for any taught programme of study. External examiners may, however, wish to meet groups of students to gain information to inform their report on the programme and its assessment. Where the use of *viva voce* examinations has been approved clear statements of their use and purpose must be drawn up and brought to the attention of students.

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## **8. Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Students Under the Equality Act 2010**

- 8.1 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) have now been superseded by the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act continues to require the University not to discriminate against disabled people and to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people.
- 8.2 The University's Policy on Adjustments to Examination and Assessment Arrangements for Disabled Students, including students experiencing specific learning difficulties is set out in Appendix K. This policy aims to ensure that all students have equal opportunity to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes in assessments and allows reasonable adjustments to assessment arrangements to be made for individual disabled students.
- 8.3 Reasonable adjustments, for example a variation in examination conditions, are considered on an individual basis as part of the overall process to put in place support for disabled students. This process is co-ordinated by the University's Disability Advice and Guidance, in liaison with the individual disabled student, the student's academic Department/School and other University Departments as appropriate.
- 8.4 All recommendations or requests for adjustments to assessment arrangements must be supported by appropriate documentary evidence of a disability, medical condition or specific learning difficulty in order for any adjustments to be considered and implemented. Guidance for students on the types of documentation they should provide can be found on the Disability Advice and Guidance website at: <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/studentssupport/disabled-students/>

Reasonable adjustments are normally based on recommendations from specialist external Needs Assessors.

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## **9. Academic Integrity**

- 9.1 A student submitting work for assessment is expected to adhere to the conventions of academic integrity by producing their own work, acknowledging explicitly any material that has been included from other sources or legitimate collaboration and presenting their own findings, conclusions or data based on appropriate and ethical practice. The Policy on Academic Integrity, which is Appendix L to this Code, sets out the University's policy and procedures for dealing with poor academic practice or, if there is a clear intention to deceive examiners and assessors, with unfair and/or dishonest practice.
- 9.2 Cases of poor academic practice or of unfair and/or dishonest practice shall be dealt with by examiners and the Board of Examiners in accordance with the provisions of the Policy. (Appendix L).
- 9.3 Those responsible for assessment should consider whether any special measures might be necessary in relation to the assessment of materials based on work placements or periods of study abroad.

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## **10. Failure in Assessment**

- 10.1 In designing assessment strategies, Boards of Studies and Curriculum Boards shall have discretion to allow compensation between the elements of assessment of a module or to determine that a pass or minimum mark must be obtained in all or certain elements for the module to be passed.
- 10.2 Students who fail assessments may be allowed, or required, to be re-assessed in the failed assessments according, as appropriate, to the provisions of the Model for Non-Clinical First Degree Programmes (Appendix B to this Code), the Framework for Modular Postgraduate Programmes (Appendix C to this Code), the University Framework for the Diploma/Certificate in Professional Studies (Appendix C (i) and Appendix P to this Code)<sup>2</sup>, or the relevant programme-specific Ordinance and Regulations. Re-assessment opportunities should always be provided where it is practical to do so. However, for some assessments the opportunity to re-sit may not be offered, provided that the approval of the University Academic Quality and Standards Committee has been obtained. In such circumstances, the Board of Studies and Curriculum Board concerned must make a case, for School Scrutiny Panel endorsement as to why it would not be practical or appropriate to offer a re-sit opportunity. If exemption from the provision of a re-sit opportunity has been granted by the University Academic Quality and Standards Committee, students must be made aware of this when they register for the module concerned.
- 10.3 Where re-assessments are set, the assessment task must be different from the original assessment (except in the case of project work, dissertations or skills-based assessments) but the method of assessment should normally be the same. However, the use of a different method of assessment is allowed, provided that the re-assessment tests the same learning outcomes as the original assessment.
- 10.4 Assessment/re-assessment arrangements should not encourage students to 'opt out' or fail to make a genuine attempt at each assessment component/task of a module. Where it is deemed by a Board of Examiners, on the advice of the Extenuating Circumstances Committee, that a student has failed to provide good reason for absenting themselves from an assessment component, the Board of Examiners shall reserve the right to deny the student the opportunity to re-assessment of the failed component during that year of study. Where a re-assessment opportunity is not available for an assessment, students with accepted extenuating

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<sup>2</sup> This reference to Appendix C(i) applies only to cohorts that commenced between 2010-11 and 2013-14. Appendix P applies to cohorts that commenced in and from 2014-15

circumstances who fail that assessment and fail the module to which it relates may be allowed to re-sit a formal examination element of the module's assessment which they have already passed in order to increase their mark and meet the progression criteria only if the mark from the failed element is carried forward and used in the calculation of the overall mark achieved following the re-sitting of the examination.

- 10.5 Re-sit examinations for non-clinical examinations will normally be held in August/September, unless special permission for re-sits at another time has been granted by University Academic Quality and Standards Committee. Failed coursework assessments will normally be completed over the summer vacation and submitted for re-assessment in September.
- 10.6 Students who fail to satisfy the criteria for progression following re-assessment may be allowed to repeat all or part of the year with or without attendance, at the discretion of the Board of Examiners. Where a student is declared unsatisfactory or is deemed to have withdrawn, the student may appeal to the Faculty Progress Committee. Details of the procedures in relation to student progress are attached as Appendix E to this Code of Practice.
- 10.7 Under the standard degree classification systems for three year, four year and five year non-clinical undergraduate degrees the opportunity will be provided for the re-sitting/re-taking of failed final year assessments as detailed in Appendix I and Appendix J of this Code. The rules governing the opportunity for re-sits/re-takes following failure in the final assessments for other awards are detailed in the Regulations for the particular awards.
- 10.8 Candidates who fail to meet the criteria for the award of the qualification for which they were registered may, nevertheless, be eligible for the award of a different qualification, provided that they have met the appropriate criteria.
- 10.9 Appeals by students against decisions of a Board of Examiners in respect of module marks, determinations of degrees or other awards or against the classification of degrees shall be considered by the University, provided that such appeals are submitted on appropriate grounds, as set out in the Assessment Appeals Procedure (for taught programmes of study) which is attached as Appendix F to this Code of Practice. The procedure for Research Degree Appeals is set out in the PGR Code of Practice.

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## **11. Feedback on Assessments to Students**

- 11.1 Consideration should be given by Boards of Studies and assessors to the most appropriate means of giving feedback, whether written or oral, to students so as to ensure that they gain the maximum benefit from it. Such feedback should be timely, informative and helpful and should be clearly related to the assessment criteria; written feedback should be clearly legible. Timescales for the return of work/feedback should be established and made known to students. Work should normally be returned within the stated timescale and if, unavoidably, there is to be a delay in the return of work this should be made known to the students concerned. The University's policy on feedback on assessment is set out in Appendix N.
- 11.2 Each Department should have a written statement on the policy on the provision of feedback to students. Standards for the quality and quantity of feedback should be established and mechanisms devised for monitoring the achievement of these standards by assessors.
- 11.3 Where it is a Department's policy not to return coursework to students, students should be informed that they should retain a copy for themselves. The feedback given should clearly indicate the part of the assessment to which the individual comments relate. When assessed work has been returned to students it is the responsibility of the student to retain the work as evidence in the event of an appeal.
- 11.4 The University does not return examination scripts to students. However, if written comments have been made on the student's examination script, the student concerned may apply through the normal Data Protection procedures to receive a copy of those comments. Examiners should

bear this in mind if they write comments on examination scripts. Staff may show examination scripts to students in a controlled setting as part of feedback.

- 11.5 Departments should, wherever possible, provide generic feedback to students on their performance in examinations; this should include a general commentary and suggested strategies for improving performance.
- 11.6 Departments should provide opportunities for students to receive individual feedback on their performance in examinations, the arrangements for which should be agreed with the relevant Staff Student Liaison Committee and clearly communicated to students in the Department's written policy on feedback.

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## **12. Retention of Examination Scripts and Other Assessed Work**

Boards of Examiners have a duty to retain all work undertaken under examination conditions and which contributes to a final award, for a period of one year from the date on which the award was determined by the Board. For internal and external review purposes, a sample of any work contributing 20% or more of a module's mark should be retained and Departments/Schools must ensure that they retain samples of work totalling at least 60% of the module's mark. The work retained should be a representative sample, including two each from the top, middle and bottom of the ability range; this should be retained for one year after the determination of the award.

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## **13. Boards of Examiners and External Examiners**

- 13.1 The function of Boards of Examiners is to be responsible to the Senate for the assessment of candidates and the determination of results of examinations. In so doing, they are empowered to take into account illness and extenuating circumstances which may have affected a candidate's performance and they must have procedures in place for the consideration of such cases. They also are responsible for determining whether instances of plagiarism, copying, collusion and dishonest use of data have taken place and for applying the appropriate penalties; and for advising Boards of Studies on the effectiveness of assessment strategies and procedures.
- 13.2 Boards of Examiners are appointed from among the members of the teaching staff of the University and other designated teachers of the University. The constitution and quorum requirements of the Boards of Examiners in each Faculty shall be as set out in the Regulations for the Conduct of Examinations (attached as Appendix D to this Code of Practice). The external examiners (see below) of the University shall be members *ex officio* of the appropriate Boards of Examiners.
- 13.3 Boards of Examiners are subject to the provisions of the Regulations for the Conduct of Examinations (in particular Regulation 13). Each Board of Examiners must also have a set of guidance notes which:
- 13.3.1 draw attention to the Regulations for the Conduct of Examinations;
- 13.3.2 set out the marking descriptors and the University's rules governing progression and the award (and, if appropriate, classification) of the particular qualifications within the Board's remit;
- 13.3.3 set out the courses of action which may be taken by the Board in the cases of candidates whose performance may have been affected by illness or other extenuating circumstances;
- 13.3.4 set out what student work should be available to the Board to assist it in its decision making;
- 13.3.5 draw attention to the requirement for members of the Board to declare any personal interest, involvement or relationship with a candidate being assessed.

- 13.4 All assessment decisions must be recorded and documented accurately and systematically. Boards of Examiners must identify an individual to act as Secretary to the Board and who will be responsible for producing an accurate formal record of the proceedings and decisions of the Board. Copies of the formal record of the proceedings and decisions of the Board should be forwarded to the external examiners(s) and submitted to the Board at its next meeting.
- 13.5 External examiners are appointed by or on behalf of the appropriate Faculty Management Team, under delegated power from the Senate and the Council, for all programmes of study offered by the University. The purpose of the external examiner system is:
- 13.5.1 to assist the University in monitoring the standards of its awards;
- 13.5.2 to verify that those standards are appropriate to the particular award or award element which the external examiner has been appointed to examine and are comparable with standards for similar subjects and awards in other UK universities;
- 13.5.3 to ensure that the assessment processes are appropriate, fair and fairly operated and are in line with both institutional regulations and published programme guidelines;
- 13.5.4 where appropriate, to ensure that the accreditation requirements of any professional or statutory body are met.

The University's Code of Practice on the External Examiner System, which is attached as Appendix H to this Code, governs the work of external examiners.

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#### **14. Information for Students**

- 14.1 Students should have clear information about all relevant aspects of the assessment of their performance in the programme of study. Programme, subject component and/or module documentation in particular should contain details, as appropriate, of:
- 14.1.1 the purpose, methods and schedule of assessments during and at the end of the module or programme of study;
- 14.1.2 any role played by Recognition of Prior Learning and the processes involved;
- 14.1.3 the criteria for assessment including, where appropriate, descriptors of expected standards of attainment, i.e. what is expected of the student in order to pass or gain a particular grade or classification;
- 14.1.4 the University's definitions and rules on academic integrity;
- 14.1.5 the role of the Board of Examiners and, in particular, of the external examiner;
- 14.1.6 the fact that Boards of Examiners are empowered to take into account extenuating circumstances such as illness or personal circumstances which may have adversely affected performance and that:
- (i) it is the student's responsibility to keep their personal tutor or Head of Department informed of illness and other factors affecting their progress during the year and especially during the examination period;
- (ii) students who believe that their examination performance may have been impaired by illness or other extenuating circumstances must complete and submit an extenuating circumstances claim form according to the requirements of the Policy on Extenuating Circumstances in Relation to Performance in Assessments and Examinations and which forms Appendix M to this document, in order that this information can be taken into account by the Board of Examiners;

- (iii) a valid doctor's certificate must be supplied to verify reported illness; self-certification will not be acceptable. For extenuating factors other than illness to be taken into account, independent documentary evidence must be submitted to support the claim of extenuating circumstances.
- 14.1.7 the circumstances in which students may be required to attend a *viva voce* examination, the purpose of such an examination, its implications in terms of possible mark adjustments and whether such examinations are compulsory or are held at the discretion of the examiners;
- 14.1.8 the marking criteria, grading descriptors and, where appropriate, the classification systems which apply, including any word limit attached to the assessment and whether students would be penalised for exceeding the word limit (see also 4.1 above);
- 14.1.9 the minimum requirements for proceeding through each stage of the programme of studies, including the extent to which borderline or fail marks may be compensated for by satisfactory marks gained in other assessed components;
- 14.1.10 which assessments will and which will not count towards progression and towards the final award and, where appropriate, the weightings applied;
- 14.1.11 timescales and arrangements for the submission of assessed work, for the return of marks and feedback to students, and for the publication of results. Students should be informed that no formal examination marks contributing to the award of a degree, diploma or certificate will be published and that all such marks gained by an individual student will not be disclosed to other students;
- 14.1.12 the rules governing the late submission of work and the penalties involved;
- 14.1.13 the rules relating to re-assessment. In particular, if the opportunity for the re-sitting of an assessment is not available, this should be highlighted;
- 14.1.14 the student progress procedures;
- 14.1.15 the criteria for the award of a different qualification in the event that a candidate fails to meet the requirements for the qualification for which they are registered;
- 14.1.16 the alternative arrangements in relation to assessments which may be made for disabled students and the sources of support and advice within the University for such students.

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## **15. Information for and Training of Assessors/Examiners**

- 15.1 Heads of Departments should ensure that all staff responsible for carrying out assessment are fully aware of the University's policies, rules and procedures relating to assessment, as summarised in this Code of Practice. To assist them each Head of Department should appoint one or more members of academic staff to perform the roles of:
  - 15.1.1 Assessment Officer whose role is to be a point of contact with the central University on all matters relating to assessment policy, to be a source of advice to staff and students on assessment issues and to be responsible to the Head of Department for the implementation of this Code of Practice
  - 15.1.2 Academic Integrity Officer whose role is specifically to investigate academic misconduct allegations and provide reports to the relevant Academic Integrity Committee.
- 15.2 Assessors/examiners must be completely conversant with all the appropriate assessment information for the programme/subject component/module concerned. Particular attention should be given to ensuring that placement and practice assessors have the information and support necessary to conduct assessments in line with requirements. External examiners must also be provided with all the necessary information (as detailed in the Code of Practice on the External Examiner System) to enable them to carry out their duties effectively.

- 15.3 Heads of Departments must satisfy themselves that all individual, particularly newly appointed, staff involved in the assessment of students are competent to undertake this role and that any training needs in this respect are identified and met. They should also encourage reflection on assessment issues and the sharing of best practice by staff. Departmental or School administration staff who, for example, receive coursework for assessment from students should also be made fully aware of the appropriate practices and procedures.
- 15.4 The University will provide staff development sessions aimed at promoting understanding of the theory and practice of assessment and its implementation within the institution.
- 15.5 The Director of Student Experience and Enhancement will ensure that central administrative staff involved in the administration of examinations are appropriately trained and conversant with examination processes and procedures. They are also responsible for ensuring that examination invigilators are fully informed of their duties and responsibilities.

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## **16. Monitoring and Review**

- 16.1 It shall be the responsibility of Boards of Studies, taking advice as appropriate from Boards of Examiners and external examiners, to monitor on an ongoing basis the effectiveness of assessment strategies. Such monitoring should also be informed by student feedback. Where changes to assessment strategies or requirements are proposed, an appropriate period of notice of their implementation should be given to staff, students, external examiners and, if appropriate, professional or statutory bodies.
- 16.2 At the beginning of each academic year, each Faculty Academic Quality and Standards Committee is responsible for checking that the programme/subject component specification for each programme of study is correct and has been updated. Changes made to assessment strategies and requirements should be incorporated into programme/subject component specifications through this process and, if necessary, approved through the University's established procedures for the approval of new programmes/subject components and amendments to programmes/subject components.
- 16.3 Consideration should also be given as part of the annual subject action plan system to comparative statistical information (both internal and external) relating to student entry qualifications and assessment outcomes in order to identify and evaluate trends relating to the achievement of standards.
- 16.4 The University shall, through its Academic Quality and Standards Committee, monitor and review periodically the University-wide procedures and regulations relating to assessment, taking into account both feedback from Faculties/Departments, especially through the annual subject review system, and external developments. Proposals for major changes shall be subject to consultations with Faculties and an appropriate period of notice of the implementation of such changes shall be given to staff, students and other interested parties.
- 16.5 Enquiries relating to this Code of Practice should be directed to the Academic Quality and Standards Division: [agsd@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:agsd@liverpool.ac.uk).
- 16.6 Schools and Departments will be informed of updates made to this Code during the session and all changes will be recorded and available on request.

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