

Guide to the Code of Assessment – 1

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1.1 Courses and course credits

§16.1 Each approved course¹ contributing to an award of the University shall have a credit rating based upon the notional learning hours required for its completion, and determined in accordance with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)². Regulations governing awards of the University may express the criteria for making such awards directly or indirectly in terms of accumulated credit points. The minimum requirement for the award of credits is addressed in §16.40 - §16.44.

Nearly all courses in the University are rated at 10, 15, 20, 30, 40, or 60 credits.

1.2 Schemes of assessment

§16.2 a) Each such course will incorporate a scheme of assessment which:

- i) assesses candidates' performance against the intended learning outcomes of the course;
- ii) includes an appropriate combination of formative and summative elements;
- iii) deploys forms of assessment appropriate to the intended learning outcomes of the course, taking due account of its credit rating;
- iv) where re-assessment is provided for in the degree regulations, makes provision for the re-assessment of candidates in accordance with the regulations;
- v) may be changed only through procedures approved by Senate;
- vi) may be varied exceptionally in a given session in response to specific circumstances subject to the approval of the Clerk of Senate;
- vii) is as far as practicable anonymous.

b) Each scheme of assessment will set out the individual components of assessment and their respective weighting in the calculation of the final grade for the course.

- i) 'Component of assessment' means each of the weighted assessments set out in the course specification document.
- ii) Each component of assessment may include sub-components except that individual questions in an examination or other piece of coursework shall not be regarded as sub-components.

Assessment here is the measurement of student attainment in respect of:

- Knowledge and understanding;
- Skills and other attributes consisting of:
 - Subject specific and/or practical skills
 - Intellectual skills
 - Transferable/key skills.

Assessment is an integral part of any academic programme or course of study but to be effective it needs to be thoughtfully designed to reflect the [principles](#) which underpin good practice. When designing a scheme of assessment three questions must be addressed:

- What is the purpose of the assessment?
- What is being assessed?
- What method of assessment is most appropriate?

¹ The term 'course' refers to a self-contained unit of study on a particular topic with defined level, credit value, aims, intended learning outcomes, mode(s) of delivery, scheme of assessment and possibly also pre- and co-requisites. [Footnote in the Code.]

² Information about the SCQF may be obtained at: <https://scqf.org.uk/> [Footnote in the Code.]

These questions apply to the entire scheme as well as to the individual components of assessment within it.

1.3 Intended learning outcomes and the choice of assessment method

Useful information on this topic can be found at the [Assessment and Feedback Toolkit](#).

What is the purpose of the assessment?

There are two major aspects of assessment: **formative** and **summative**. Formative assessment provides material for feedback to students and teachers, while summative assessment should result in evidence of achievement and will be used to make decisions about progress or qualification.³

What is being assessed?

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) describe what a student should know and be able to demonstrate at the end of a programme or course. They are a required component of Programme Specifications and Course Specifications. Explicit expression of ILOs serves a number of important purposes:

- to direct student learning;
- to make clear what aspects of student learning may be assessed; and
- to point the way towards appropriate methods of assessment.

Accordingly, assessments must allow the student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the required knowledge, understanding and skills. The process of linking ILOs, teaching and learning, and assessment, is known as 'constructive alignment'.

What methods of assessment are most appropriate?

Validity: This question makes the assumption that some methods may be more appropriate than others, and the choice of method will depend upon the nature of the ILO being assessed. An obvious example is that, in order to demonstrate the acquisition of some practical skill, the student must perform it - simply to write about it would be insufficient. However, the situation is not always so clear cut. Multiple Choice Questions can be used to assess factual recall and, to some extent, problem solving and interpretation. Longer written answers are better suited to the assessment of skills such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Therefore the way in which ILOs are expressed is extremely important. They should be explicit enough to allow students to understand exactly what is expected of them, and to allow teachers to design valid assessments.⁴

Reliability: The range and depth of attainment of ILOs in individual assessments and over a scheme of assessment may be expressed in terms of a grade, and this link to ILOs is made explicit in Schedules A and B of the Code of Assessment. Such determinations are, however, rarely straightforward or entirely objective, and academic judgement will be required at some stage in the process. The reliability of an assessment is the extent to which its outcomes are reproducible: if two or more examiners assessed the same piece of work, would they award the same grade? A number of factors impact upon this: the objectivity of the questions, the internal consistency of markers, consistency between markers, and sampling error.

³ The two purposes are not mutually exclusive but there will be circumstances where it is desirable to separate them, particularly in the mind of the student. For instance, summative assessment can, and often should, have a formative function, but students should always be made aware of assessments that are intended to be purely formative and the results of these should never be used to make summative decisions.

⁴ Guidance on the writing of Intended Learning Outcomes can be found at: https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/Media_868967_smx.docx (see section 4, p.8. Please note that this is a legacy document, but provides helpful advice). Further useful information and discussion can be found in the [guidance on Programme Specifications](#).

Blueprinting: For any scheme of assessment then, it is necessary to ensure adequate coverage of the Intended Learning Outcomes and that appropriate assessment methods have been used for each individual outcome. “Blueprinting” is a means by which those responsible for assessment schemes can be reassured that both of these objectives have been met. An assessment blueprint is a table in which the ILOs are listed on one axis and the methods of assessment on the other.

Example 1.A.

	Examination Paper – Essays	Examination Paper – MCQ’s	Assignment	Practical Test
ILO1	Questions 3 & 6		Assignment 1	
ILO2		Questions 17-25		
ILO3			Assignment 2	
ILO4				Yes
ILO5		Questions 30-41		
<p>This represents a selection from a larger table in which all the ILOs would be listed with the methods used to assess them. It is possible to confirm firstly that all the ILOs have been assessed (if not at a single diet then, by collating information from multiple blueprints, over the course of a number of diets) and secondly that the ILOs are matched against appropriate methods of assessment.</p>				

1.4 Components of assessment

Components of assessment will be the individual assessments described in the Course Specification for the course, e.g. individual exams and coursework. They may also be assessments which include a number of different events, e.g. a grade for laboratory work based on a number of labs. These individual events will be sub-components of the component of assessment.

§16.2 b) Each scheme of assessment will set out the individual components of assessment and their respective weighting in the calculation of the final grade for the course

- i) ‘Component of assessment’ means each of the weighted assessments set out in the course specification document.
- ii) Each component of assessment may include sub-components except that individual questions in an examination or other piece of coursework shall not be regarded as sub-components.

1.5 Rules, including rules on provision for disabled students

§16.3 The scheme will be implemented in accordance with the following requirements:

- a) the scheme shall be fully described in the School Instructions issued in written or electronic form to all students enrolled in the course (at the beginning of the course, or as soon as practicable thereafter), with particular regard to dates, deadlines and formats of required work, weights of components of the assessment scheme, the method of marking (e.g. single marking, blind double marking), procedures for informing students of results and the returning of work, requirements for progression in the relevant programme and provisions for appeal;
- b) due notice shall be given of dates, times and places of written and oral examinations and other assessment events;

- c) appropriate provision shall be made for candidates with a formally recognised permanent or temporary disability (see [Examination and other Assessment Arrangements for Disabled Students](#));
- d) candidates shall be supplied with relevant information on assessment criteria and on schemes for grading, classification and aggregation.

The University has a validated, quality assured system to support disabled students. A needs assessment interview is conducted with a Disability Adviser in which disability related needs are identified and recommendations for support and access arrangements are made. These are communicated to the Registry and to Schools via MyCampus. Each School has a Disability Co-ordinator who is responsible for addressing and promoting the needs of disabled students within their School. While arrangements for extended examination times and separate accommodation for any on-campus exams are largely dealt with centrally, Schools should ensure that needs relating to course documentation, in-course assessment and online exams are met. The [Accessible & Inclusive Learning Policy](#) provides further information on this. Such provision includes online availability of the ILOs and scheme of assessment, and access to a computer if required. Tutors may also need to make reasonable adjustments to group work assessments where groups might include disabled students, for example students with hearing impairment or those with Asperger's Syndrome.

Teaching staff should be aware that students with a chronic illness, whether a mental health or other medical condition, are covered under the Equality Act and should be encouraged to seek advice at an early stage from the Disability Service which publishes [advice for staff](#). [Regulation 24](#) of the 'University Fees and General Information for Students' chapter of the *University Regulations* describes procedures to be followed and the range of provision available to students with disabilities or specific learning difficulties.

1.6 Feedback to students

§16.4 The scheme shall describe how candidates will receive feedback to guide their subsequent learning. That feedback may include the results of summative assessment. Where these are provided they will be provisional until they are confirmed or amended by the appropriate Board of Examiners.

The timing and content of assessment feedback to students constitutes part but only part of the much larger topic of how assessment may contribute to the effectiveness of teaching and enhancement of the learning experience. To support this, the University's [Assessment and Feedback Toolkit](#) contains [extensive guidance regarding the provision of valuable feedback](#) to students. Students should be made aware that assessment outcomes remain provisional until they are confirmed or otherwise by the appropriate Exam Board.

A separate University policy is available concerning [feedback following summative examinations](#). The provision of individual feedback to all students after exams is not expected to be the norm. However, the policy requires each School to establish a series of minimum standards of feedback to be applied on all courses for which it is responsible.

1.7 Joint and Combined Honours

§16.5 Where an Honours programme involves two or more subjects, the way in which the results of assessment are to be aggregated, averaged or profiled to produce an overall classification of the degree should be agreed when the degree is approved.

Where the responsibility for assessment of a programme is shared by two or more Schools, as in the case of Joint or Combined Honours, the description of the scheme should include reference to the agreed procedure for combining results into a single programme outcome. This is discussed fully in [Chapter 2](#) of the Guide.

1.8 Collection and publication of exam results

§16.73 The Head of Registry shall:

- a) provide lists of candidates upon which the official return of the results shall be made by the Assessment Officer;
- b) prescribe the way in which each result shall be recorded and the completed lists returned;
- c) reject any returned list which does not conform to the prescription;
- d) authenticate the accepted lists for releasing the results.

Schools must seek to reconcile their own candidate lists with those generated from MyCampus to ensure that examination lists delivered to Boards of Examiners are as accurate as possible. All changes to student course records are the responsibility of Advisers of Studies and accordingly all discrepancies found by Schools should be reported to the relevant Adviser. If there are any difficulties resolving discrepancies then the relevant Chief Adviser should be contacted. Students should be encouraged to check their own MyCampus record to confirm its accuracy. Results of assessment undertaken before the end of the course are delivered directly from Schools to students rather than reported to the Registry.⁵ (As noted above (§16.4) Schools must make clear to students where such results are subject to ratification by the Exam Board.) This division of responsibility for results should not be used to sanction the release of overall course or programme results by Schools prior to their authentication by Registry on behalf of Senate.

The Assessment Officer should familiarise themselves with Registry instructions and deadlines for the return of assessment results and should ensure that the Board of Examiners meets in time. A late or missing return from the winter diet may cause difficulties in preparing transcripts required by visiting students' home institutions, while a late return from the spring diet may prevent a student from graduating in summer.

The return to the Registry of a student's final Honours classification will imply the student's qualification to graduate. As there are circumstances (e.g. where a Progress Committee has authorised the 'carrying' of a non-Honours course in the final year), where the Honours results will not necessarily qualify the student for graduation, care should be taken by Schools to identify such students and to ensure that Honours results are deferred until other requirements have been met.

§16.74 Responsibility for releasing the results on behalf of Senate shall rest solely with the Head of the Registry who shall determine and administer, subject to the approval of Senate, appropriate procedures for processing the overall assessment results provided by the Assessment Officer(s) for a course to enable:

- a) the publication of results via any internet-enabled computer either on or off-campus;
- b) the recording of results on the candidates' central records maintained by the Registry.

Candidates, nonetheless, are responsible for informing themselves of the results.

All assessment results are published via MyCampus. Examination results will not be published for any student who has a tuition fee outstanding. The Registry can be contacted for further guidance on this.

Schools should ensure that they respond to Registry requests for details of the dates on which they expect to submit results for each of their courses, as this information is published on the Registry website for student use. Accurate information on the website as to when students may expect to find their results announced should reduce unnecessary enquiries to School offices and to the Registry.

⁵ Schools need to be aware of the privacy protection rights of students under data protection legislation, and advice may be obtained from the [Data Protection and Freedom of Information Office](#).

1.9 Appeals

§16.59 The Head of the College shall ensure that appeals against the outcomes of assessment are considered in accordance with the relevant provisions of the prevailing [Appeals Code](#).

1.10 Errors and corrections

§16.75 It shall be stated that all released results are subject to correction in the event of detection of an error.

§16.76 If an error is detected in the return made to the Registry or in the published result, and the Exam Board confirms the error, then:

- a) where the erroneous result is less advantageous than the result to which the candidate is entitled, the Clerk of Senate shall be informed and shall authorise the Head of Registry to correct the result;
- b) where the erroneous result is more advantageous than the result to which the candidate is entitled, the School will inform the candidate of the error and also the Head of Registry, who in turn will immediately alert the Clerk of Senate. The Clerk of Senate shall initiate a reconsideration of the result in conjunction with the relevant Head of College and Head of School and the Head of Registry; they may decide to sustain or correct the result in the light of all the factors known to them and shall communicate their decision forthwith to the Head of Registry.

In either case the Head of Registry shall communicate the outcome to the candidate in writing and shall correct if necessary the candidate's record. Any decisions regarding further progression or award dependent on the incorrect result shall be null and void, and the candidate reconsidered on the basis of the correct result.

1.11 Student transcripts

§16.77 The Registry shall produce and make available a transcript of the results obtained by each candidate which shall conform in scope and layout to principles agreed by Senate.

All graduating students receive a copy of their transcript of results along with their degree parchment. Further copies are available from the Registry on request (via MyCampus) and payment of a fee. Current students may request an interim transcript at any time. The University supports the European Diploma Supplement which records attainment in terms of the European Credit Transfer System.

1.12 Infringements of the Code

§16.78 Exceptionally when on an occasion some provisions of this Code have not been followed, the assessment results shall remain valid provided that the Head of the Registry, in consultation with the Clerk of Senate, is satisfied that the assessment has been conducted substantially in accordance with the Code.