UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

CODE OF PRACTICE ON TAUGHT PROGRAMME AND MODULE ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

Index of points

1. Introduction

1.1 This Code of Practice applies to all undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate taught programmes, and the taught elements of postgraduate research programmes, including part-time provision, collaborative provision and distance learning.

1.2 This Code of Practice applies to all summative assessments (i.e. those contributing to the module mark, designed to measure how much a student has learned). Various sections of this Code of Practice also apply to formative assessments (i.e. those that do not contribute the module mark, designed to measure how a student is learning). Assessment types include examinations, coursework, projects, worksheets, oral presentations, and other forms of assessment[1].

1.3 In the case of Registered Students based at the University's overseas campuses working days will reflect national public holidays and any locally designated closed days.

1.4 Written communication with students regarding assessment, feedback and other teaching matters must only be undertaken using the institutional Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), University email and/or other institutionally approved platforms. Communication must not be undertaken through social media, messaging apps or any other platforms that are not approved for this purpose and supported by the University.

2. Setting of Assessments

2.1 The Head of Principal Academic Unit (PAU) shall have overall responsibility for the management of all assessment. The Head of PAU (nominally the Head of School) may choose to delegate this responsibility, as appropriate.

2.2 A single member of academic staff shall have overall responsibility to the Head of PAU, or their nominee, for each module and all of the assessments within the module. It shall be the responsibility of the Head of PAU concerned, or their nominee, to ensure that examination question papers and other forms of assessment, as appropriate, are submitted to the relevant External Examiner for their approval, in line with the Code of Practice on External Examiners.

2.3 Programmes and modules should have a published schedule of assessments, to include the type of assessment, submission and return dates, the type of feedback provided (including specific quantitative marks and qualitative comments) and who will issue the feedback. Registered Students should be made aware of this information at the beginning of each programme and module.

2.4 To ensure consistency and transparency, PAUs should publish assessment criteria appropriate to the module being assessed and the method of assessment and should make this information available to internal and External Examiners and Registered Students. Criterion (not norm) referencing should be used for all assessments. The contribution of all assessments to the determination of the final award should be notified to Registered Students in advance of the assessment.

[1] Further information on the types of assessment the University uses can be found in the 'Assessment Categories' section on the Module Development Intranet page.

2.5 When working with an institution or organisation in a collaborative arrangement, PAUs should ensure that the collaborative organisation understands and follows the University's requirements for the conduct of assessment where relevant. Arrangements for Boards of Examiners should be set out in the Memoranda of Agreement covering programmes.

2.6 On apprenticeship programmes the Employer may have input in the setting of assessments.

2.7 PAUs should refer to the Code of Practice on Academic Integrity and publish guidelines on the conduct of assessment (for example on plagiarism or late submission of work) for modules and should make this information available to internal and External Examiners and Registered Students. Any amendments to programme and module assessments should also be made available to all internal and External Examiners and Registered Students. Where Registered Students are required to pass specific assessments within a module ('internal hurdles'), module descriptions must specify whether the assessment has to be passed to achieve overall modular credit.

2.8 A Registered Student who does not attend teaching and assessment, as required by the PAU, will be investigated in accordance with the Code of Practice on Student Attendance and Reasonable Diligence. Where there is unexplained absence from all assessments that contribute to the module mark the Registered Student will be awarded a mark of 0 for the module and will not achieve credit. Where the unexplained absence is for an assessment that contributes less than 100% to the module mark, the mark of 0 for the assessment will be combined with the marks for the other assessments as for all other Registered Students. This may result in the Registered Student not achieving the pass mark for the module and failing the module.

2.9 All assessments (formative and summative) should be timetabled and sequenced across the academic year to ensure that feedback on an assessment can be used to feed-forward to a similar type of exercise.

2.10 There should be a similar load of summative assessment in modules of the same credit value, comprising examinations and coursework. Where examinations to be taken under controlled conditions[2] are deemed necessary, they should not normally contribute more than 50% to the overall module mark. There may be exceptions to this if there are PSRB requirements or specific pedagogic reasons, but in these cases, it is not expected that exams will contribute more than 80% to the overall module mark[3]. There should also be opportunities for formative assessment and feedback in all modules.

2.11 All Registered Students should be supported to become assessment literate and informed about the types of assessment they will undertake, the feedback they will receive and how to use feedback effectively in subsequent assessments.

[2] These examinations are traditional on-campus timed ‘closed book’ exams and on-campus timed ‘open book’ exams that are normally centrally scheduled (by the Timetabling and Examinations team) in the designated exam periods. It is these exams that should not normally contribute more than 50% to the overall module mark.
[3] This specific rule does not apply to re-assessment. Where a module has been failed, if a student is trying to retrieve the failure through re-assessment, up to 100% of the module mark can be from traditional on-campus examinations.

2.12 Registered Students should be given the opportunity in all years to analyse and understand how marking criteria are used. This should be achieved through the use of peer marking of assessments and a bank of assessed work.

3. Feedback on Assessment

3.1 Registered Students should be given feedback on their academic performance in order to facilitate improvement and promote learning. Feedback from module tutors should focus on performance against module learning outcomes. It is a shared dialogue to support the continual learning process and Registered Students should discuss feedback themes with their Personal Academic Tutor. The link between the Personal Academic Tutor and those teaching a Registered Student is therefore very important and all staff should ensure that there is effective communication. Please refer to the Code of Practice on Personal Academic Tutoring.

3.2 All Registered Students should:

3.2.1 Have feedback made available to them within 15 working days of the submission (or the deadline, whichever is later) of **mid-module coursework**[4].

Have feedback made available to them within 20 working days of the submission (or the deadline, whichever is later) of **end of module coursework**[5].

If the 15 or 20-day turnaround is not possible, Registered Students should be notified in advance of the expected return date and the reasons for the delay.

College Directors and Deputy Directors of Education have the ability to approve extensions to, and exemptions from, the 15 and 20 working day turnaround requirement. College Education Committees or Quality Assurance and Approval Committees (or equivalent), depending on practice in each College, are responsible for oversight of the timeliness of feedback. A College report should be sent to the University's Quality, Enhancement, and Standards Committee (QESC) periodically (as directed by QESC) identifying areas of non-compliance.

3.2.2 Be informed of specific quantitative (marks and grades) and qualitative (content and skills) feedback arrangements for all assignments and coursework prior to the submission deadlines (as explained in sections 2.3 and 2.4 of this Code of Practice);

3.2.3 Be aware of who will issue feedback to them and how this will be communicated to them. Arrangements for academic feedback will vary across the University, however, it would be expected that Registered Students receive specific feedback from module tutors on assessed work and have the opportunity to seek further clarification from an appropriate academic member of staff.

3.3 Types of Feedback

[4] This is defined as coursework that is submitted before the final week of teaching for that module.
[5] Final year projects and dissertations are exempt from this requirement. Coursework submitted in the summer term does not need to meet this requirement, however, feedback on these submissions must be released when the summer term ends.

3.3.1 Formative feedback provides indicators on performance and helps to identify improvement to support a Registered Student's continued development.

3.3.2 Summative feedback is evaluative and measures a Registered Student's performance against the learning outcomes of the module.

3.3.3 Feedback used as feed-forward should help a Registered Student identify what they need to do to improve in future assessments.

3.4 Coursework assessment, where possible, should be undertaken or submitted online and marking and feedback should be completed online.

3.5 Feedback should be useful, meaningful and constructive. Appropriate strategies should be developed at programme-level for the issuing of feedback on assessments, with flexibility to be tailored to individual Registered Student needs.

3.6 Formative feedback should be provided on the first piece of work of a particular type in a programme / module. This can be done either by the use of formative assessments or by providing formative comments during the preparation of summative assessments. Formative feedback should be provided on final year projects across the academic session. Formative feedback should normally be returned to students within one week of submission of the formative assessment.

3.7 Registered Students should be required to indicate in, or along with, summative coursework how they have used feedback from previous formative and summative assignments.

3.8 Consistency in the quality of feedback should be delivered by using standardised proformas within Schools that allow the marker to indicate areas of good practice and areas for improvement. Consistency in the quality of the feedback given on assessments should be monitored by programme and module leads. Staff should gain a shared understanding of assessment and feedback good practice.

3.9 Assessments and feedback should be discussed where possible in academic tutorials or seminars, and opportunities should be given to Registered Students to meet and / or receive feedback from the module leader and / or academic who has marked the work.

3.10 Academic staff should make it explicit to Registered Students, in all contexts (e.g. lecture, practical, seminar, tutorial) whenever any form of 'feedback' is being provided.

3.11 Following an examination period, Registered Students who are not in their final year of undergraduate study should be provided with generic feedback on each examination question within an assessment (e.g. essay style or numerical problems) or for the assessment as a whole (e.g. MCQ-based examinations). Generic feedback should be provided within 10 working days of the publication of results, whether those are provisional or final results. Following the January examination period, PAUs should mark and provide generic feedback on examinations to Registered Students in time for the Personal Academic Feedback Tutorial (which is normally held in week 5 of the Spring term). Registered Students who have failed examinations in the

January or May / June examination periods should be offered additional feedback as soon as practicable after the publication of the results.

3.12 Feedback on assessment performance does not permit any challenge to academic judgement.

4. Conducting Assessments

4.1 Formal Written Examinations

4.1.1 The University classes a variety of assessment types as an Examination, details of which can be found in the "Assessment Categories" Section on this Programme and Module Development page. This section (4.1) relates to formal written examinations, which are defined as a time-limited assessment undertaken by a Registered Student at a previously specified time, date and venue and based upon written responses to a question paper (these are referred to as "traditional on-campus timed 'closed book' exams" and "on-campus timed 'open book' exams" in the Assessment Categories). This also covers examinations which are conducted away from the University campuses, including examinations conducted abroad by agents or partners of the University.

4.1.2 The University will follow the Code of Practice on Accommodating Students' Religious Observances when drawing up examination timetables.

4.1.3 Registered Students must comply with the Code of Practice on Academic Integrity when undertaking assessments. Any concerns about the conduct of a Registered Student at an exam will be investigated in accordance with the procedures in Regulation 7.2.3 (d) (iv). The University will appoint to each examination venue a team of invigilators to ensure that the examination session is conducted in a proper manner and in accordance with the published guidelines.

4.1.4 The University will provide suitable examination conditions for Registered Students sitting formal written examinations.

4.1.5 All Registered Students must leave all question sheets and answer books provided during an examination sitting in the examination venue when the Registered Student leaves the venue.

4.1.6 The PAU is responsible for the production of the examination question paper, which shall be of the duration and format specified in the module descriptor and course handbook. The External Examiner should be involved in reviewing the draft examination papers and PAUs will follow the Code of Practice on External Examining (Taught) in this regard. The headings of all examination papers will include either the words "Final Examination" or a statement that the result of the examination will, or may, contribute to the final degree classification, weighted mean mark and grade point average, where necessary.

4.1.7 The rubric of each examination question paper must comply with the Guidance provided by Academic Services and include all necessary information. Registered

Students are required to answer all questions in pen except for exams that need to be answered in pencil e.g. multiple choice answer sheets.

4.1.8 PAUs should review each question paper to ensure that the final version is not subject to textual error or is drafted in a way which is likely to require clarification during the sitting.

4.1.9 All Registered Students will be required to provide evidence of their identity during the sitting. This will usually be done by displaying their Identity Card on the desk. Where there is uncertainty over the identity of a Registered Student during the sitting, the Registered Student will be permitted to finish the examination before any enquiries relating to their identity are made. Repeated failure to present valid evidence of the Registered Student's identity in different examination sittings will constitute an Examination Irregularity.

4.1.10 Each examination session will begin promptly. Where an examination is also being held overseas in a different time-zone, the Examinations Office will ask the host organisation to schedule the examination sitting at a time which will minimise the possibility of a breach of the security of the examination.

4.1.11 All Registered Students must ensure that they write legibly in their examination answer books. If it is necessary because of illegibility to arrange for a transcription of the script to be produced in advance of marking, the Registered Student will be liable to the School for the direct costs involved in this work (see Regulation 7.2.3 (d) (vi)).

4.1.12 Advice on using a dictionary can be sought from the Code of Practice on Academic Integrity. Any Registered Student wishing to make use of a dictionary must fully complete a self-certified dictionary approval letter[6], which must be signed prior to the examination, and bring this to every examination attended. Failure to produce the letter during an examination sitting may constitute an Examination Irregularity.

4.1.13 Registered Students with additional requirements as defined under the Code of Practice on Reasonable Adjustments for Students

(a) Student Services will administer the identification of all Registered Students who require extra time or other resources in examinations, and will confirm this fact to the Registered Student's Wellbeing Officer and the Examinations Office in a timely manner.

4.1.14 Registered Students requiring temporary examination arrangements outside of those defined in the Code of Practice on Reasonable Adjustments for Students

(a) Some Registered Students may require a temporary exam accommodation to be put in place to enable them to sit their exams.

[6] This letter is available at the following link: https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/academic-support/registry/documents/public/exams/dictionary-authorisation-form.pdf

(b) The relevant form to request a temporary exam accommodation is available from a Registered Students Wellbeing Officer.

(c) The relevant College Wellbeing Officer requires a minimum of 48 hours' notice before any temporary alternative examination arrangements can be put in place. Medical evidence needs to be submitted to the relevant College Wellbeing Officer at the time of the request.

4.1.15 Alternative forms of assessment

(a) Alternatives to examinations should be considered where all possible accommodations have been explored but where the Registered Student is still unable to undertake examinations due to a disability. Before implementing any alternative form of assessment, advice should be sought from Academic Services.

4.1.16 Examination Timetables

(a) The complex nature of examination scheduling, together with the limited time available for examinations, may lead to Registered Students having two examinations scheduled on the same day. This cannot be avoided and no adjustment of the timetable will be undertaken.

(b) To facilitate the production of stable examination timetables Registered Students are responsible for notifying their PAUs of any changes to their module registrations. PAU's must update a Registered Student's record to accurately reflect their module registrations. Registered Students may not normally change their module registrations after the first two weeks of the relevant term (at the latest).

(d) A final, personalised, timetable for the January, May / June and supplementary examination periods will be made available ahead of each examination period to Registered Students who are due to sit examinations.

(e) Registered Students who have been permitted extra entitlement to time and / or provision on their assessments will be able to see their personal timetables with the alternative exam venues, they will not be able to see the provision they are entitled to as this should be reflected in the Reasonable Adjustment Plan (RAP) that they are given by Student Services.

(g) It will be the responsibility of each Registered Student to make sure that they are aware of the finalised date, time, duration and venue of each of their examination papers and to arrive in good time for each sitting.

(h) Where it is necessary to make a change to the arrangements for an examination after the final timetable has been published, those Registered Students who are registered for the relevant examination will be notified in writing via University e-mail accounts. This notification will be provided in

sufficient time to allow any necessary adjustment to patterns of revision, travel arrangements, etc.

4.1.17 Overseas and off-campus examination sittings

(a) A Registered Student who is classified as overseas for fee purposes will, where possible, be allowed to undertake any necessary supplementary assessment (usually in late August / early September) in their home country. This concession also covers EU Registered Students normally domiciled outside the UK. Examination sittings will be arranged through the British Council. Where there is no local British Council representation, alternative arrangements will be made, where possible, providing that the security of the University's examination procedures is not compromised. To make use of this facility, Registered Students must pay the overseas re-sit fee no later than the advertised deadline[7].

(b) Overseas sittings are not available to Registered Students going on holiday or attending the University as part of the Erasmus scheme.

(c) Host organisations running overseas or off-campus examination sittings must be able to:

(i) Arrange the examinations concerned in the time period required.

(ii) Conduct the examinations in accordance with this Code of Practice.

(d) Guidance, for PAU's, regarding the assessment of Exchange Students can be found in Appendix C of this Code of Practice.

4.1.18 Retention of Examination Scripts

(a) PAUs shall ensure that, with the exception of dissertations, all written examination answer books and other papers shall normally remain confidential to the examiners and shall be destroyed after a period of not less than sixty months / five years after a Registered Student's final engagement with the University..

(b) PAUs shall allow Registered Students to view their examination scripts. This right may be applied to whole cohorts and not solely to any individual Registered Student. Access to examination script(s) is provided to Registered Students purely for their own educational use; they must not share, publish or otherwise disseminate their script/answers or the exam questions. Furthermore, unless their original scripts have been formally released to them, Registered Students must not mark/modify them in any way.

4.2 **Coursework**

[7] Please refer to the following webpage for more information on this: https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/academic-support/registry/exams/alternative/overseas.aspx

4.2.1 Coursework includes a wide variety of assessment tasks that are undertaken during the term. Coursework is normally submitted outside the assessment periods but can be submitted anytime during the term, including during assessment periods. Extensions to coursework can be requested. Detailed information on what the University defines as 'Coursework' can be seen in the "Assessment Categories" Section on this Programme and Module Development page.

4.2.2 Deadlines and Submission

(a) The PAU should have clear submission procedures for assignments that form part of the assessment for a module. These procedures should be made clear to Registered Students, at the beginning of the academic year and again at the beginning of each module.

(b) PAUs should issue a receipt to Registered Students upon submission of assessments. Registered Students should be made aware of what they can expect.

(c) Registered Students submitting work by post should ensure that they obtain proof that the assignment has been posted.

(d) In conjunction with paragraph 2.3, Registered Students should be informed where and to whom assignments should be submitted, as well as the penalties for late submission.

(e) Deadlines should be set taking into account, where possible, revision and examination periods and Registered Student workload.

4.2.3 Extensions

(a) The PAUs should have a clear procedure for granting extensions, set within the context of institutional guidance and including guidance on circumstances that will and will not be considered acceptable. Valid circumstances must normally involve both substantial and unforeseeable disruption, but each case should be considered on its merits.

(b) Registered Students should be required to apply in writing for an extension explaining the reasons why they require an extension. Appropriate evidence should be attached.

(c) To ensure equity of treatment for all Registered Students, extensions should normally be granted by one person from the PAUs or Department that owns the module, or authorised nominee, such as the Year Tutor, who has oversight of the Registered Student's programme of study.

(d) The Head of PAU (or nominee) should be responsible for ensuring that appropriate staff are informed of extensions that have been granted.

(e) In addition, Registered Students who are standing for election to Guild Officer posts during the main Officer Elections (which are normally held in March, as notified to the Head of School by the Guild of Students) will be eligible for extensions to their coursework deadlines (where coursework is understood as work being submitted where the question paper has been set in advance. This does not include class tests or presentations or preparation for seminars or online multiple choice questions or equivalent). Registered Students acting as campaigners for candidates will not be eligible.

(i) Under these circumstances, extension to coursework deadlines will be for the purpose of replacing lost time through election commitments. Therefore, the extension period will relate to the deadline and not to the size of the piece of coursework.

(ii) The campaigning period for Guild elections will be confirmed by January of each year. If the deadline falls within the final five days of campaigning, the Registered Student is entitled to a two week extension from the expected date of submission for each piece of work. If the deadline falls up to two weeks after the end of the voting, the candidate is entitled to an extension of one week from the expected date of submission for each piece of work.

4.2.4 Penalties for Late Submission of Work

(a) Where Registered Students are required to submit coursework that contributes to the module mark, PAUs should have in place published arrangements for the applying of penalties for the late submission of such work. Coursework that is not submitted by the initial deadline given shall be subject to a penalty applied to the mark achieved for that piece of work.

(b) If work is submitted late and no extension has been granted, then a penalty of 5% should be imposed for each day[8] that the assignment is late until 0 is reached, for example, a mark of 67% would become 62% on day one, 57% on day two, and so on. The days counted should not include weekends, public holidays and University closed days.

(c) Those PAUs that wish to adopt a different penalty[9] from that as set out above must seek the approval of the College Education Committee (or equivalent) and the Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education Policy and Academic Standards). Should this occur, the PAU must inform Students, in writing, before the new penalty can be applied. A rationale to explain the decision to introduce a different penalty should also be contained.

[8] The day starts immediately after the submission deadline has passed / submission window has closed. For example, if the submission deadline was 13:00 / 1pm, then day 1 would be from 13:00 on the submission date, to 12:59 the following day, and carry on as such.
[9] A PAU may also decide to refuse to accept work that is submitted late; this would also be classed as a “different penalty”.

(d) Assignments should be marked in the normal way and penalties applied afterwards.

(e) The original mark and the penalty should be clearly indicated in documentation submitted to Boards of Examiners. In exceptional circumstances, Boards of Examiners may modify decisions that have been implemented in accordance with standard procedures, but which seem excessively harsh or generous.

4.3 Request for Deferral of Examinations or other Assessments

(a) Where known circumstances that may impact upon a Registered Student's ability to sit or prepare for a centrally co-ordinated examination, a Registered Student may request a deferral of one or more examination(s) or other assessment(s) prior to the assessment(s) taking place. Schools may adopt this for class tests and departmental examinations if appropriate.

(b) If the assessment in question is coursework, such as a written assignment, a Registered Student may request an extension to the submission deadline in accordance with 4.2.2 and any relevant local or institutional guidance. Alternatively, a Registered Student may request a deferral of the assessment to the next available submission period in accordance with 4.3 (h).

(c) Each School will decide how the response to requests for deferral will be determined and will designate one or more members of staff to determine such requests.

(d) Registered Students must submit requests for deferral of examinations in writing within 10 University working days of the notification of the final examination timetable. Requests for deferral of other assessments should be made by the deadline advised by the School. Any requests after these dates should be dealt with under the University's Code of Practice on Extenuating Circumstances. Requests can be made to a designated person appointed by the Head of School, which can be a Personal Academic Tutor, Wellbeing Officer or Extenuating Circumstances Officer.

(e) A request for a deferral of any assessment should be accompanied by evidence by the stated deadline.

(f) Registered Students on joint or multidisciplinary degree programmes should make requests to defer an assessment to the 'home' PAU. Where necessary the 'home' PAU will liaise with the module-owning department and will provide notification to the module-owning department when a deferral has been granted.

(g) On receipt of a request for a deferral, the School will ensure that the Registered Student is advised of any consequences which will or are likely to arise from the deferral of the assessment(s) in question before the request is considered. Having been so advised, a Registered Student proceeding with a request for a deferral is deemed to understand the consequences of deferring the assessment(s).

(h) If the request is granted by the School, the Registered Student's sitting of the examination(s) or submission of the coursework will be deferred to the next available

opportunity, which will normally be the supplementary examination period for all years of study, including finalists. The Registered Student will be advised of the provisional dates of the next appropriate sitting. It is the responsibility of the Registered Student to ascertain the actual date(s) of re-scheduled examination(s) or submission deadlines once personalised timetables have been released.

(i) When a deferral has been refused the Registered Student will be expected to attend the examination or submit the coursework.

(j) Examination(s) or submissions missed without an authorised deferral will incur a fail and a mark of zero.

5. Marking and Moderation

5.1 Preparation for Marking

5.1.1 All staff involved in marking should be required to familiarise themselves with relevant material and practices and attend formal or informal briefing sessions.

5.1.2 Part of this relevant material must include marking criteria that has been approved by the appropriate PAU / Department / Programme. Marking criteria should be reviewed regularly, to ensure they remain fit for purpose, and should include reference to English Language proficiency as appropriate to the discipline.

5.1.3 Where inexperienced internal examiners[10] and / or Postgraduate Registered Students undertake marking of work, which contributes towards the module mark, this should be under the guidance of an experienced internal examiner and in accordance with the Code of Practice on Teaching and Support Provided by Registered Students.

5.1.4 The Head of PAU (or nominee) shall establish a formal timetable to ensure that internal and External Examiners have scripts in their possession sufficiently in advance of Board of Examiners' meetings. The PAU shall make the timetable known to all examiners, internal and external, normally at the start of the academic session. Opportunity should be given to the External Examiner to express an informed opinion on the examination scripts as per the information contained in the Code of Practice on External Examining (Taught Provision).

5.2 Marking Practices

5.2.1 Heads of PAUs will appoint internal examiners annually, ensuring that their knowledge and experience is appropriate for the assessments they are marking. Internal examiners are responsible for the assessment of the performance of Registered Students and are automatically members of the Board of Examiners that makes recommendations on progression and decisions on module marks and final awards. Actual membership of the Board may vary according to the size of the provision and the cases being considered. All members of the academic staff of a

[10] The level of experience of an internal marker, and whether additional guidance is required, will normally be based on the academic judgement of the Head of the PAU or the Head of Education in the PAU (or their nominee). Additional guidance may also be requested by the internal examiner.

PAU are eligible to serve as internal examiners for programmes of study and modules that are the responsibility of that PAU, and may examine modules or work within their disciplinary expertise even if they do not teach on the module in question.

5.2.2 PAUs should ensure that:

(a) All written examinations that contribute to the final award are marked anonymously, with anonymity extending to the second marker stage and to the stage at which the scripts are considered by the External Examiner.

(b) Where possible, anonymous marking of assessed work is undertaken for coursework.

(c) A technical check of assessment marks is carried out (i.e., to ensure that simple arithmetic errors or omissions have not been made).

5.2.3 The academic judgement of the examiners is paramount and shall not be open to challenge.

5.3 Moderation[11]

5.3.1 All work submitted for assessment must be marked by an internal examiner. All assessment that contributes to the weighted mean mark used to calculate the final award must be internally moderated where the individual component of assessment contributes more than 10% to the module mark. Where individual components of assessment are excluded from moderation on the basis that they do not contribute more than 10% to the module mark, Schools must ensure that at least 60% of the assessment for the module is moderated. It is not necessary to moderate undergraduate first year work, although Schools should check and confirm any fail marks between 30 and 39 awarded for assessed work by first year undergraduates (whether that assessed work is a first attempt or a resit attempt).

5.3.2 Methods of Moderation

Method of moderation	Definition	Application
Single marking plus non-blind sampling	Where a specified sample of the range of assessed work is reviewed by a member of academic staff other than the first marker (or team of markers) to assess the standard and consistency of the marks allocated by the markers,	Sampling is likely to be used for the majority of types of assessment.

[11] Guidance on moderation is available

	with reference to the marking criteria.	
Non-blind double marking	Where ALL pieces of work are marked by two or more markers, and the marks and annotations of the first marker are available to the second marker(s).	**Required** for all undergraduate and Master's level projects and dissertations and other substantial, individualised pieces of work. **Recommended:** • for modules at levels I, H and M which are assessed by a single piece of assessment*. • where first markers are less experienced, or where there are several first markers and consistency may be an issue.
Blind double-marking	Where ALL pieces of work are marked by two or more markers, but the marks and comments of the first marker are not available to the second marker(s).	**Not required in any circumstances** but **advisable** for assessments where it might be difficult to ensure the anonymity of the candidate (e.g. projects).

** Where the only assessment for the module is an examination composed of multiple essay questions, moderation can be by sampling (see below).*

5.3.3 Apart from the requirements noted above, for all other assessments, Schools should determine the most appropriate form of moderation, taking into account the nature of the assessment, the contribution made to the module mark and the overall contribution of the assessment to the degree classification, weighted mean mark and grade point average, or to the achievement of the award (determined by the level and credit value of the module).

5.3.4 <u>PAU Policies on Moderation and Scaling</u>

Schools may choose to implement a more comprehensive approach to moderation than the specified minimum requirements. All such decisions should be clearly set out in a PAU Policy on moderation. If it is deemed necessary, separate Policies may be introduced at departmental, or programme level. All local Policies on Moderation must be approved by College Quality Assurance and Approval Committee (CQAAC) (or equivalent) and be reviewed at regular intervals.

5.3.5 <u>Allocation of moderation duties</u>

(a) Moderation can be carried by a team of staff, or by an individual. The allocation of moderation duties will be approved by the Head of PAU, or nominee.

(b) For all types of moderation, the moderator(s) must be provided with the relevant marking criteria and statistical data, as set out in guidance, and may also be provided with a model / outline answer, in order to enable them to fulfil the role.

5.3.6 How to carry out sampling

(a) Although only a sample of work will be reviewed, it is necessary that the moderator has access to ALL the pieces of assessment from the cohort.[12]

(b) When selecting a sample for review, moderators should:

(i) Check the range of marks provisionally awarded for the assessment. The sample must include a representation of the full range of marks.

(ii) Confirm the total number of pieces of work submitted for the assessment. This will determine the minimum sample size (as per 5.3.6 (c)).

(c) The sample must meet the minimum sample size, as follows :

Number of pieces of work in the cohort	Minimum sample to be reviewed
100 or more	Square root of the total number, rounded up
Between 10-99	10 pieces of work
Below 10	All pieces of work

5.3.7 Outcomes of all methods of moderation

(a) When all the pieces of work subject to moderation have been awarded marks by the first and second marker or moderator(s), the marks should be reviewed by both markers.

(b) Markers are unlikely always to agree exactly on the appropriate mark to be awarded for a piece of work, particularly in discursive subjects. Therefore, it is necessary to decide when the difference between the marks awarded by the first and second markers, or moderator(s), is considered to be of sufficient significance to warrant further action. The margin of difference between both should be set by the PAU at the start of each academic session and clearly signposted to Registered Students, as a minimum in the PAU moderation policy. Further detail on the outcome of moderation can be found in the Guidance on Moderation.

[12] Within this context, a 'cohort' is defined as 'a group of Registered Students who have taken the assessment in question for a particular module', thus ensuring that Registered Students who take the same assessment but are registered on different modules, and are therefore subject to different learning outcomes, are not regarded as a single homogeneous cohort.

(c) As part of the moderation process, marks may, under certain circumstances, be adjusted or scaled. Where the marks for a module fall outside of the normal range (on the basis of historical data) or where concerns or issues have been raised about the module or its assessment before or during moderation, an investigation should be made into the reasons why this might have happened. Where the reasons are identified as being due to an error in the assessment process or to some factor which would have affected Registered Students, the marks for all Registered Students may be adjusted. The extent of adjustment should be agreed with the External Examiner.

5.3.8 Adjustment of marks

(a) All adjustments to marks must be recorded in the minutes of the Board of Examiners and reported to the University Progress and Awards Board.

(b) PAU quality assurance mechanisms should ensure that any concerns identified in the assessment process or other aspects of the module (such as teaching delivery) result in a review of that module.

(c) Adjustment is the process applied to assessments within modules in the following circumstances:

(i) When the marks awarded by a first and second marker / moderator differ by broadly the same number and most or all of the differences are in the same direction.

(ii) Where an error has been identified with one particular question in an assessment; this problem can be overcome by modifying the marking scheme for the question or by excluding the question from the assessment, with the mean mark for the assessment and for the module calculated on the basis of the remaining components of the assessment.

(iii) Where a mean mark for an optional component of a module differs by more than an agreed level from the mean of all the optional components taken together; the agreed level will be determined by the module team.

(d) Adjustment of marks cannot be applied when the same assessment is taken by Registered Students at more than one level (e.g. level H and level M) by adjusting the marks according to the level of the Registered Student; the marks awarded should be the actual marks achieved in the assessment. Adjustment can be applied to the awarded marks within a level of assessment. There should be no adjustment to marks if they accurately reflect the achievement, or otherwise, of the learning outcomes and have not resulted from an error in the assessment process or some other factor which would have affected Registered Students.

(e) The adjustment of marks can take place for work where either sampling or double-marking has been carried out. An agreed adjustment of marks is applied to all assessments marked by the particular internal examiner. The normal

method of mark adjustment might be a simple addition or subtraction of an agreed percentage. All instances of mark adjustment should be reported to the External Examiner(s) and recorded in the minutes of the Board of Examiners' meeting.

5.3.9 Scaling of marks

(a) Scaling is a process which may be employed, on an exceptional basis, to enable the mean mark for a given module to fall within expected ranges derived from previous Registered Student performance over an appropriate time period (e.g. 3-5 years).

(b) The key principles of any scaling of module marks are that the process is transparent, triggered only when the mean mark for a module lies outside of the expected range, and that the algorithm then applied is the minimum required to bring the mean within the expected range. As such, scaling is envisaged to be a rare event.

(c) Scaling of marks within a single module to a previously agreed distribution is not permitted. The marks for one module should not be normalised against the marks for other modules.

(d) Scaling of marks within a single assessment (for example, when an assessment is available at more than one level) is not permitted. The marks should not be scaled depending on the level, and should reflect the "actual" mark achieved in the assessment.

(e) After completion of the moderation process for each module, and any resulting adjustments to marks have been made, the range of mean marks for all modules within a year of study that contribute to the final award should be reviewed. As part of this review process, Schools may determine expected ranges within which all mean module marks for a year of study should lie, derived from (i) and / or (ii) above.

(f) The range of expected mean module marks may differ between degree programmes, Departments, and Schools, but in each case will be based on the evidence of Registered Student performance.

(g) After investigation of any module with a mean outside the expected range derived from 5.3.8 (a) the marks can be either:

(i) confirmed, if the marks awarded are deemed to be a fair and accurate reflection of Registered Student performance on the module in comparison with performance on other modules in the same year of study; or

(ii) Scaled, if the marks awarded are deemed not to be a fair and accurate reflection of Registered Student performance in comparison with performance on other modules in the same year of study. Scaling should

take place using an appropriate algorithm, agreed with the External Examiners, such that the mean is changed by the least amount to lie within the expected range.

(h) Instances of scaling should be discussed with, and approved by, the External Examiner(s); full justification on academic grounds must be provided. Where used, records should be kept and held within the PAU, along with actions taken to address underlying issues.

5.3.10 It is necessary for PAUs to retain evidence demonstrating that internal moderation has taken place e.g. recording details of the particular pieces of assessment which have been selected within the sample for review; recording comments on the script / piece of work, or separately[13]. This evidence should be provided to the External Examiner.

5.3.11 Information for Registered Students

(a) Registered Students should be provided with an explanation of the purpose of moderation of assessment, for example in a PAU / Programme Handbook. This explanation should contain either University moderation practices (i.e. section 5.3. of this Code of Practice), or the PAU / local Policy on moderation (see section 5.3.4 for more information). The relevant Policy on Moderation should be made available as a matter of course to all External Examiners.

(b) Registered Students should not normally be provided with evidence of the moderation process applied to their own work submitted for assessment: they should only receive the final agreed mark for their piece of work. However, Registered Students do have a right under Data Protection Legislation to request to see the details of how the moderation process was applied to their piece(s) of work.

5.4 Provision of Marks

5.4.1 Mark sheets shall be treated as strictly confidential, although the marks awarded to an individual candidate may be disclosed to the candidate in a way which protects the confidential nature of the marks of other candidates. Attention is drawn to the University Data Protection Policy and the implications for storage of Registered Students' information and provision of information.

5.4.2 Registered Students will be entitled to know their marks for both coursework and examinations as part of their tutorial support[14]. This is within the provisions of Data Protection Legislation relating to the release of data. For more information, contact the University Data Protection Officer.

5.4.3 Provisional marks (i.e. those that have been internally moderated but not yet ratified by a Board of Examiners) will be disclosed to Registered Students, but should clearly

[13] Schools should note that Data Protection Legislation enable Registered Students to access any comments on their assessed work made by internal or External Examiners. Comments should be professional and constructive.
[14] The marks awarded to a Registered Student on an apprenticeship programme may also be shared with their Employer.

state that the marks are not confirmed and could change. Assessments must go through the moderation process prior to any release of marks.

5.5 Recording of Marks

5.5.1 A module is a coherent and identifiable unit of learning and teaching with defined learning outcomes. A module is passed if its specified learning outcomes have been achieved. The assessment of each module shall be designed so as to assess the achievement of the learning outcomes of the module. The assessment of each module shall generate a single integer mark between 0 and 100. A number of different assessments may be combined within a module to generate the single mark.

5.5.2 (a) **Calculation of Sub Component / Component Marks**

(i) Aggregated marks at component or subcomponent level should be calculated with the maximum available precision.

(ii) BIRMS, or any replacement system, should provide for the entry of aggregated component or subcomponent marks with up to *four* decimal places. Where a mark of greater precision is entered into BIRMS, or any replacement system, then it should be *rounded* to four decimal places. Marks of *less than n.nnnn5* (unrounded) should be rounded *down*.

(b) **Calculation of the Module Mark**

The module mark is an integer. It is achieved by *rounding* the result of the aggregation of component marks. A (module) mark of *less than n.5* (unrounded) is rounded *down*.

(c) **Calculation of the Stage Mark**

(i) The stage mark is the mean mark, weighted for credits, for a stage of a degree programme. For UG programmes this applies to the stage 2 and stage 3 weighted mean marks. For PGT programmes there are two stage marks: the taught weighted mean mark and the dissertation mark.

(ii) The integer module marks (referred to in 5.5.2 (b)) are used in the calculation of the stage mark(s).

(iii) The stage mark is calculated with the maximum available precision and is not rounded.

(d) **Calculation of the Overall Mark**

(i) The overall mark is the mark calculated from the stage marks that contribute to the Registered Student's degree result using the appropriate stage weightings.

(ii) The overall mark is calculated with the maximum available precision and then rounded to an integer. An (overall) mark of *less than n.5* (unrounded) is rounded *down*.

(iii) Where a more precise mark is needed, a Display Overall Mark should be provided. This should be the overall mark before rounding, *truncated* (not rounded) to *three* decimal places. Truncation ensures that there is no visible discrepancy between the Display Overall Mark and the Overall Mark. Thus a mark of 59.4995 would *not* be displayed as 59.500 but as 59.499, as it is below the unrounded 59.50 required for rounding to 60.

(iv) Overall marks for use with the Distribution of Module Class (DMC) scheme should be the overall mark before rounding. Therefore marks between 37.5 and 37.999 inclusive, between 47.5 and 47.999, between 57.5 and 57.999 inclusive, and between 67.5 and 67.999 inclusive are insufficient overall marks to allow a Registered Student to be considered for the Distribution of Module Class Scheme.

5.5.3 Where there is more than one assessment contributing to the module mark, principal academic units may specify that particular assessments must be passed in order to pass the module (known as 'internal hurdles'). The weighting of each assessment, or the requirement to pass a particular assessment, must be clearly stated as a percentage of the module mark in the approved module descriptions, as published on the Academic Services website. Within a single module principal academic units may permit poor performance in one assessment to be compensated by strong performance in another assessment. Where this is applied, a set of guidelines should be agreed by the Board of Examiners, and the guidelines applied to all Registered Students taking the module. There is no compensation between modules or on postgraduate programmes[15].

5.5.4 The pass mark for all Level M and D modules is normally 50 and the pass mark for Level C, I and H modules is normally 40. Pass marks may differ according to specific programme requirements, which must be approved via the University's programme approval or module alteration route.

5.5.5 Module marks and progression / award decisions must be entered into BIRMS, or any replacement system. This must be completed by the dates specified each year in guidance issued by Registry. Principal academic units not using BIRMS, or any replacement system, will be reported to the University Progress and Awards Board.

5.6 Recording of Marks Following Re-assessment or Repeat

5.6.1 Following successful re-assessment or repeat of a failed module, the mark used for the purpose of arriving at decisions on progress or the final award will be the pass mark for the module. The mark actually achieved in any re-assessment or repeat will however be recorded in BIRMS, or any replacement system, and on the Registered Student's transcript with an indication of the number of sits taken. In cases where any

[15] Regulations of the University of Birmingham, Section 7.2.1 (l)

re-assessment or repeat mark is capped as a result of a sanction imposed by a Misconduct and Fitness to Practise Committee, the mark recorded in BIRMS, or any replacement system, and on the Registered Student's transcript will be recorded as the capped figure determined by the Committee.

5.6.2 Where a Registered Student following a Foundation Year programme has been reassessed in a module for which credit had already been achieved, except when recommended as a result of extenuating circumstances, the mark used for calculating the Registered Student's weighted mean mark and progress decision shall be higher of the marks achieved.

5.6.3 Following unsuccessful re-assessment or repeat of a failed module, the mark used for arriving at decisions on progress or the final award shall be the higher of the two fail marks achieved, at initial assessment and at reassessment.

5.6.4 Where a Registered Student has failed to attend a re-examination or not submitted re-assessed work, without adequate cause, the mark recorded for the module will be 0.

5.6.5 Where the Registered Student has been permitted to substitute a module the mark achieved will be recorded and used on the transcript. The mark used for the purpose of arriving at decisions on the final award will be the pass mark.

5.7 Opportunities for Re-assessment

5.7.1 In accordance with Regulation 7, all Registered Students who fail a module shall have one opportunity to retrieve the failure, either by re-assessment or by repeating. The decision on whether a Registered Student should be allowed to be reassessed or repeat should be made by the Board of Examiners. The normal expectation is that Registered Students will retrieve the failure by re-assessment.

5.7.2 For re-assessment a Registered Student is required to complete such further assessments as specified by the Board of Examiners as being necessary to demonstrate achievement of the stated learning outcomes. This re-assessment may take the form of additional or re-submitted coursework or an examination.

5.7.3 Registered Students who have already achieved the requisite number of credits to progress to the next stage may progress 'carrying' the outstanding reassessment, except for Registered Students who have successfully completed the requirements for progression from year zero of a Foundation Year programme who shall not be recorded as 'carrying' the outstanding reassessments. Registered Students who have not achieved the requisite number of credits to progress to the next stage may not progress and will be required to achieve the requisite number of credits before being permitted to progress.

5.7.4 Registered Students whose programme is spread across several academic sessions and who fail a module can exercise the right for one reassessment at an appropriate time up to the final opportunity specified by the Board of Examiners.

5.7.5 For full-time Registered Students re-assessment will normally take place at the time of the supplementary assessment period and the results should be considered by the September meeting of the Board of Examiners. (With the support of the PAU, Registered Students may – where appropriate – apply to take their reassessment at a time other than the supplementary assessment period.) For part-time Registered Students the re-assessment should normally be within one calendar year. The nature of the re-assessment should be made clear in the approved module description as published on Academic Services website.

5.7.6 A Registered Student who is required to repeat a module is required to attend teaching sessions as specified by the PAU and to complete all the assessment requirements associated with the module in order to achieve the stated learning outcomes. Repeat Registered Students should normally complete the repeat of the module within one calendar year of the initial failure. Registered Students may repeat some or all modules from a stage of a programme as determined by the Board of Examiners.

5.7.7 In some modules the nature of the module will be such that retrieval of failure can only be by means of repeat (e.g. laboratory-based modules). Such modules should be designated as repeat only in module specifications.

5.7.8 With the agreement of the Head of PAU, a Registered Student required to sit; be re-assessed in; or repeat a module may be allowed to choose a substitute module, subject to programme requirements and availability. In such cases, the Registered Student shall normally be required to attend the teaching sessions and to complete all the assessments. If the module replaces a re-assessment or repeat module, the assessment mark in the replacement module will be capped at the pass mark.

5.7.9 Registered Students who have not submitted coursework or been examined for a module due to illness or other reason accepted by the Board of Examiners[16] may be permitted to repeat a module or be re-assessed in a module or a number of modules as though they were taking the module for the first time. The Registered Student will retain the right to an opportunity for re-assessment should they fail the module / modules.

5.7.10 If repeating the module as if for the first time, the Registered Student is required to attend teaching sessions as specified by the PAU and to complete all the assessment requirements associated with the module in order to achieve the stated learning outcomes. If being re-assessed as if for the first time, the Registered Student is required to complete such further assessments specified by the Board of Examiners as necessary to demonstrate achievement of the stated learning outcomes. The re-assessment should normally be by or at the time of the supplementary assessment period.

6. Governance

[16] Please see the Code of Practice on Extenuating Circumstances for further information.

6.1 Board of Examiners

6.1.1 Membership, Meeting and Documentation Requirements

(a) Membership of Boards of Examiners will be determined by the relevant PAU(s) and will normally include a Chair (Head of PAU or nominee), Examinations Officer, all Internal and External Examiners. Guidance will be provided by Registry.

(b) PAUs may delegate responsibility for convening Boards of Examiners to Department level.

(c) PAUs should establish a quoracy for each Board of Examiners. All meetings of Boards of Examiners should have a quoracy (defined at the start of each academic session) in addition to at least one External Examiner. Only academic members of staff (including Honorary Lecturers) may be members of a Board of Examiners, with non-academic staff attending to provide administrative support. A minimum quoracy is 3 (three) members of academic staff and an External Examiner (or a consulting mechanism to the External Examiner if they are not physically present). The External Examiner must be informed of any decisions that affect progress or final results.

(d) All Boards of Examiners should establish written terms of reference using guidance provided by Registry

(e) Boards of Examiners may refer to Registered Students by their six or seven digit ID numbers only. Paperwork considered at Boards of Examiners meetings (e.g. mark sheets) and subsequent minutes should also be anonymised. ID numbers should be used until marks, progress decisions and awards have been agreed. Full minutes should be kept of all Boards of Examiners meetings and returned to Registry along with the signed Chair of Board of Examiners statement and (if required) appropriate mark sheets. Failure to return full documentation to Academic Services by the deadline will be reported to the University Progress and Awards Board.

(f) PAUs should ensure the provision of adequate notice of meetings of the Board of Examiners, and in particular any reconvened meetings, to all who are expected to attend.

(g) PAUs should give consideration to the timing of the Board of Examiners' meetings on a programme-by-programme basis, ensuring that they are held on a timely basis.

(h) Members of the Board of Examiners should declare personal interest, involvement, or relationship with a Registered Student either before the meeting to the Chair, or during the meeting and, if appropriate, withdraw from the meeting while that Registered Student is being considered.

(i) For Postgraduate Research Students undertaking taught modules, the module marks will be assessed by the Board of Examiners and the final award of the qualification is normally determined when the thesis is examined. However, when a Postgraduate Research Student withdraws without submitting their thesis, but has successfully completed taught modules that provide sufficient credits for a lower taught award, this will be considered by the Board of Examiners, providing it meets the appropriate learning outcomes of the intended alternative qualification.

(j) The taught component of a graduate or postgraduate programme must be considered at a meeting of the Board of Examiners. Where no dissertation is involved, the final award of a qualification must be considered at a meeting of the Board of Examiners; where a dissertation is involved, the final award of a qualification must be considered either at a meeting of the Board of Examiners, or according to alternative arrangements which must involve the External Examiner.

(k) Registered Students should be notified in advance of the Board of Examiner meetings at which the results of their assessments will be considered.

6.1.2 Roles and Powers of Boards of Examiners

(a) The Board of Examiners will make decisions on all module marks and the final award. This includes modules provided as part of the programme of study by other PAUs. Such decisions will be made only on the basis of actual performance in those assessments, which have formally been defined as contributing to the final award. In all cases, the Board of Examiners must be satisfied that the learning outcomes of the module and programme have been achieved.

(b) Boards of Examiners have the formal authority, on behalf of Senate, to make final award and progress decisions in all cases where the relevant Regulations and Codes of Practice have been followed.

(c) All recommendations made notwithstanding the Regulations where extenuating circumstances do not apply should be submitted to Registry for referral to the University Progress and Awards Board for consideration and final decision.

(d) In multi-department PAUs, where there are departmental level Board of Examiners meetings, the PAU's Board of Examiners must ratify the assessment processes and take appropriate measures to review and confirm decisions / recommendations as appropriate.

(e) Where Registered Students have taken modules outside their PAU, the Board of Examiners for the 'home' PAU shall be responsible for considering the Registered Student's overall results for the programme and recommendations.

(f) For joint or multidisciplinary degree programmes, academic staff from the relevant PAUs, which contribute modules to the programme, should attend the

Board of Examiners of the 'home' PAU as appropriate to the cases under consideration. Responsibility for convening Boards of Examiners for these programmes shall be determined prior to the start of each academic session and communicated to appropriate staff, internal and External Examiners, and Registered Students.

6.1.3 Consideration of extenuating circumstances by Boards of Examiners[17]

(a) It shall be the responsibility of the Head of College concerned to ensure that such procedures comply with basic principles of good practice including the need:

(i) For the Extenuating Circumstances Panel to act on behalf of the University in maintaining the greatest possible level of confidentiality concerning the personal affairs of Registered Students.

(ii) To maintain a clear and permanent record of all cases.

(iii) To define clearly the nature of admissible evidence (which should be provided in writing, where possible with independent third party evidence).

(iv) To provide sufficient publicity for Registered Students about the extenuating circumstances process for them to be aware of the importance of raising extenuating circumstances before the meeting of the Board of Examiners.

(b) The Board of Examiners will not have the right to receive or review any specific details of the extenuating circumstances that have been raised.

(c) The Board of Examiners will determine marks without reference to any extenuating circumstances. The Board of Examiners will then consider recommendations from the ECs Panel. In consultation with, and with the full agreement of the External Examiner, the Board of Examiners may then decide to recommend a final award or progress decision which is consistent with the performance which, on the evidence available, the Board of Examiners judges the individual would have achieved if their performance had not been affected by extraneous factors. Any change to a progress decision or award which would permit a Registered Student to proceed to the next stage of their programme or receive an award having passed fewer credits than specified in Regulations or Programme Specifications should be submitted to Registry for referral to the University Progress and Awards Board for consideration and final decision. In such cases the marks attained should not be adjusted[18], but a written record of the factors and the action taken by the Board of Examiners should be made available to the University Progress and Awards Board. The original, unamended mark will appear on the Registered Student's transcript.

[17] Please see the Code of Practice on Extenuating Circumstances for further information

[18] A Registered Student's weighted mean mark and grade point average will not be changed even if the Registered Student's degree classification is raised due to extenuating circumstances.

(d) If circumstances occur which seem to require a change to the level of an award determined by the Board of Examiners (for example, as a result of an Academic Appeal), any such change should be approved by the Chair of the Board of Examiners on behalf of the Board of Examiners concerned. External Examiners must be consulted on all such changes. However, if it is not possible to contact all External Examiners in the time available, it will be the responsibility of the Board of Examiners to determine whether the change can be made on the basis of whatever consultation has been possible and to report this fact to the University Progress and Awards Board. All such changes should be forwarded as soon as possible before the beginning of the next academic session.

(e) Once the Board of Examiners, or University Progress and Awards Board, has approved all module marks, progress decisions and awards, any subsequent changes made to these must either be approved by the Board of Examiners and reported to Registry or approved in accordance with the Code of Practice on Academic Appeals.

6.1.4 Recording decisions made and discussions held at meetings of Boards of Examiners

(a) All PAUs will keep a formal record of the attendance at, discussions held, and decisions made at the meeting of the Board of Examiners. Heads of PAUs should ensure that adequate systems are in place in order that they are able to satisfy themselves that appropriate Regulations and Codes of Practice have been adhered to in reaching any such decisions. Heads of PAUs will be asked to confirm that the appropriate Regulations and Codes of Practice have been adhered to when submitting module marks and recommendations (where relevant) to Registry.

(b) As a minimum, all evidence on which a decision was based should be retained until 12 months after the Registered Student's last interaction with the University.

(c) For all undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes Boards of Examiners should consider the following data: mean, standard deviation and failure / pass rate for each module, with corresponding figures for at least 3 and preferably 5 previous years, where available. For each cohort mean mark and distribution across classes (firsts, 2:1, pass, merit, etc.), with historical comparators, there should be:

(i) A standard one-page examination report form produced by the internal examiner / Examinations Officer, which provide the data required.

(ii) A brief commentary, for the benefit of the External Examiner and the audit trail, on any unusual events that were relevant (e.g. interruption to the exam by a fire evacuation as an extreme) or any unusual features in the outcome where a question was answered particularly well or badly.

(iii) An endorsement or additional comment from the internal moderator / second marker.

6.1.5 Communication of decisions to Registered Students

(a) Module marks, progress decisions and final awards will be published by the PAU and made available for Registered Students to view after the meeting of the Board of Examiners at which they are determined, by the date set by Registry. In the exceptional circumstances where a recommendation is made 'notwithstanding Regulations' and extenuating circumstances are not involved, the results should not be published through BIRMS, or any replacement system, until after the meeting of the University Progress and Awards Board.

(b) PAU's may also provide information to Registered Students on their marks and progress and award decisions in addition to what is provided in section 3. Methods of providing information are to be agreed locally and publicised to Registered Students. Where a recommendation is made 'notwithstanding Regulations' and extenuating circumstances are not involved, information provided should indicate that the decision is 'pending' until after the meeting of the University Progress and Awards Board.

6.2 **University Progress and Awards Board**

6.2.1 The University Progress and Awards Board will normally meet three times a year.

6.2.2 The University Progress and Awards Board is a Sub-Committee of the University's Quality, Enhancement, and Standards Committee (QESC).

6.2.3 For taught programmes, the role of the University Progress and Awards Board is:

(a) To determine recommendations made notwithstanding Regulations (where extenuating circumstances have not been considered by the PAU) received from Boards of Examiners for taught programmes.

(b) To identify quality issues relating to examination processing, and report as appropriate to QESC.

7. Awards

7.1 Marks should be aggregated for the purposes of determining the final award according to the credit weighting of the module. Marks for the taught and research components of a programme must be aggregated separately.

7.2 **Undergraduate Awards: Classified Degrees**

7.2.1 The class of degree of each Registered Student shall be determined in accordance with the agreed University classification scheme.

7.2.2 In order to be awarded a classified honours degree, Registered Students are required to:

(a) Achieve the minimum number of credits at each level as specified in Regulation 7.3.1 (b); and

(b) To have achieved an overall mark of at least 40 from a combination of module marks in the proportions as specified in Regulations 7.3.1 (b).

7.2.3 There is provision for Registered Students on Undergraduate Masters programmes to be awarded a Bachelors (Honours) degree.

7.2.4 Registered Students in identified PAUs may be subject to Adjusted Regulations. The classification system for Adjusted Regulations is detailed in the Code of Practice on Adjusted Regulations and Bachelor's Degrees and the Code of Practice on Adjusted Regulations and Undergraduate Masters Degrees. PAUs operating Adjusted Regulations must obtain permission to do so from the University's Quality, Enhancement, and Standards Committee (QESC) and ensure that all affected Registered Students are informed.

7.2.5 Where a Registered Student was previously registered on an Honours degree programme, the Certificate or Diploma of Higher Education awarded will normally have the same title as that programme. The title of the award should reflect the content.

7.2.6 Where a year of study abroad or in industry is an equivalent alternative to study that would otherwise have been taken within the University, it must be assessed and contribute to the degree classification, weighted mean mark and grade point average in the same way as the equivalent study undertaken within the University.

7.2.7 Where the semester / year abroad / in industry is either an integral part of the programme to which the Registered Student has been admitted, or recognised in the title of the degree awarded, it must be assessed and produce a mark or marks which contribute to the stage 2 contribution to the degree classification, weighted mean mark and grade point average. It must be passed (at least 100 credits) for the purpose of progression within that programme. The proportion of the contribution to the overall stage 2 contribution to the degree classification, weighted mean mark and grade point average shall be subject to approval by the University Quality Assurance Committee and will be published in the programme specification.

7.2.8 Where the semester / year abroad / in industry is assessed and contributes to the final classification, weighted mean mark and grade point average, the University Quality Assurance Committee will approve assessment arrangements (which must be carried out either by this University or the 'host' institution) that will produce a mark or marks, which can be used with confidence in the final degree classification, weighted mean and mark and grade point average.

7.2.9 A Registered Student on an apprenticeship programme will need to successfully pass their End Point Assessment (EPA) to be eligible for the award of their Degree. For apprenticeship programmes that are not integrated the EPA will be administered by an external organisation. Before the EPA, a Registered Student is required to pass the gateway, where they are assessed to ensure they are ready to undertake the EPA.

7.3 Graduate and Postgraduate Awards

7.3.1 The class of award of each Registered Student shall be determined in accordance with University Regulations.

7.3.2 In order to be achieve the award of Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma or Taught Postgraduate Degree, Registered Students are required to:

(a) achieve the minimum number of credits as specified in Regulation 7.3.2 (a); and

(b) have gained the weighted mean marks as specified in Regulation 7.3.2 (a); and

(c) have achieved a mark of at least 40 in the specified number of credits

7.3.3 To pass with Merit, a Registered Student must

(a) achieve the weighted mean marks stated in Regulation 7.3.2 (b)

(b) pass all modules taken as part of the programme

7.3.4 To pass with Distinction, a Registered Student must

(a) achieve the weighted mean marks as stated in Regulation 7.3.2 (b)

(b) pass all modules taken as part of the programme

7.3.5 For Postgraduate Research Students taking taught modules as part of their research programme, the satisfactory completion and achievement of credit in the taught modules is required before they can be recommended for the award of the research qualification for which they are registered.

7.3.6 A Registered Student on an apprenticeship programme will need to successfully pass their End Point Assessment (EPA) to be eligible for the award of their Degree. For apprenticeship programmes that are not integrated the EPA will be administered by an external organisation. Before the EPA, a Registered Student is required to pass the gateway, where they are assessed to ensure they are ready to undertake the EPA.

7.4 Other Awards

7.4.1 Where a Registered Student does not fulfil the requirements for the Postgraduate Diploma or Master's degree; the modules the Registered Student has undertaken may be reviewed against the module learning outcomes for a Graduate Diploma or

Graduate Certificate to ascertain whether it meets the requirements of these awards. If a Registered Student does not fulfil the requirements for a Postgraduate Certificate, the modules may be reviewed against the learning outcomes for a Graduate Certificate. These provisions will require that learning outcomes and assessment requirements for a related Graduate Diploma and / or Graduate Certificate have been specified in programme specifications and approved by Senate or delegated authority.

7.4.2 Where a Registered Student was previously registered on a Master's programme, the Postgraduate / Graduate Certificate or Postgraduate / Graduate Diploma awarded will normally have the same title as that programme. The title of the award should reflect the content.

7.5 Oral Examinations and Final Awards

7.5.1 Calculations of degree classification, weighted mean mark and grade point average, or on the achievement of an award are based on credit accumulation and aggregation of individual module marks according to the University scheme and programme level learning outcomes. All assessment is related to the learning outcomes of a specific module. Consequently all assessment that may affect degree classification, weighted mean mark and grade point average, or the achievement of an award must be related to a specific module and the mark included in the module mark.

7.5.2 Oral examinations are permitted as one of a range of assessment methods available within modules. Where such oral examinations are used, they should be used where the competences / achievements of the stated learning outcomes for the module may only be demonstrated through these means, or where the oral examination is an integral part of the assessment of a module. Registered Students taking a module should be subject to the same form of assessment.

7.5.3 Generic additional oral examinations when determining the final degree classification, weighted mean mark and grade point average, or the achievement of an award are not permitted.

7.6 Absence from Assessment and Final Awards

7.6.1 Registered Students should refer to the Codes of Practice on Extenuating Circumstances and, where necessary, Code of Practice on Leave of Absence Procedure when anticipating absence from study.

7.6.2 Where there is no prospect that a Registered Student will be able to complete their programme of study, for example because of death or significant illness, the Board of Examiners may recommend to the Progress and Awards Board the award of either a Certificate; a Diploma; an aegrotat degree; or a classified degree. For the award of a classified degree the Registered Student must have achieved both:

(a) For a Bachelor's degree:

(i) Successful completion of stages 1 and 2 of their programme, and any additional stages which form part of the programme requirements, for example a year abroad; and

(ii) At least 40 credits in the final stage of the programme.

Or

(b) For an Undergraduate Master's degree:

(i) Successful completion of stages 1 and 2 of their programme, and any additional stages which form part of the programme requirements, for example a year abroad; and

(ii) At least 160 stage 3 credits, including at least 40 credits at Level M.

7.6.3 The weighted mean mark for the final stage will be determined by using the total number of credits achieved in the final stage as the "sum total of the credit values of the modules required" for that stage (Regulation 7).

7.6.4 Work that has been completed but not submitted may be submitted on the Registered Student's behalf.

7.6.5 These circumstances are likely to be rare and exceptional such that the Extenuating Circumstances procedure will not apply. The Head of PAU will make an appropriate recommendation to the Board of Examiners after receiving independent, third-party evidence confirming the circumstances. The Board of Examiners, having endorsed the recommendation, will further recommend the award to the Progress and Awards Board which has final authority on the matter.

7.7 Bachelor's Degree Classification: 'Profiling' – The Distribution of Module Classes (DMC) Procedure

7.7.1 Basic Principles[19]

(a) The system of DMC operates under the following conditions:

(i) The starting point of the system is the credit-weighted arithmetic mean mark, for each relevant stage of study, averaged with the same mark for other relevant stages of study in a prescribed proportion, and truncated (not rounded) to 3 decimal points;

(ii) When the final average falls within a prescribed band below the minimum for achieving a given classification on average alone (the 'borderline'), attention is given to the profile of the relevant marks. (This principle

[19] A Registered Student's weighted mean mark and grade point average will **not** be changed as a result of any 'profiling' applied.

ensures that consideration can only be given to the median when the less successful module outcomes do not fall below an acceptable level.)

(iii) Where there are marks available for all modules required to be attempted under the programme requirements.

(iv) Where there is a preponderance, after credit-weighting, of marks in the class above the relevant borderline. (The purpose of the DMC system is to recognise the prevailing character of a candidate's performance on the basis of judgements of the class to which each module outcome belongs. In this way, recognition is given to the fact that a Registered Student may have more weighted module marks, which lie above the degree classification indicated by the arithmetic mean.)

(v) A limited measure of failure to gain credit is allowable subject to achieving additional credits in or above the higher class.

7.7.2 Step One: The Arithmetic Mean

In accordance with Regulation 7.3.1 (d),where candidates are eligible for the award of a classified first degree, the class will be determined initially on the basis of the weighted arithmetic mean (to take account of the credit rating of a module) using the weighting between stages:

70+ = 1st;
60-69 = 2i;
50-59 = 2ii;
40-49 = 3rd.

7.7.3 Step Two: Identifying Borderline Cases

(a) Those candidates with weighted arithmetic means that are within predetermined margins less than the degree classification hurdle values provided above, will be borderline cases and eligible for classification on the DMC basis as set out below. This profiling system makes use of the class band in which each module mark falls. In order to obtain a relative weighting of final year to second year, credits are transformed into units. Some examples are as follows:

	3 yr programme credits = units	**4 yr programmes with year abroad credits = units**	**4 yr Undergraduate Masters programme credits = units**
Proportions between years / stages	25 : 75	12.5 : 12.5 : 75	20 : 40 : 40
	Credits ⇔ Units	**Credits ⇔ Units**	**Credits ⇔ Units**
Year 2	120 = 120	120 = 60	120 = 120
Year 3	120 = 360	120 = 60	120 = 240

Year 4		120 = 360	120 = 240
Total of units	**480**	**480**	**600**

(b) A candidate will be eligible for classification according to the DMC system only if all the following conditions are met:

(i) The candidate has attempted all credits on which the classification is based.

(ii) The candidate has failed not more than 60 units for a classified honours degree and 70 units for an Undergraduate Master's degree

(iii) The candidate has a weighted arithmetic mean in the ranges as follows:

≥ 68.0 and < 69.5 - for consideration for a 1st
≥ 58.0 and < 59.5 - for consideration for a 2i
≥ 48.0 and < 49.5 - for consideration for a 2ii
≥ 38.0 and < 39.5 - for consideration for a 3rd

7.7.4 Step Three: Determination of the Degree Class for Borderline Cases

(a) As explained above, the Distribution of module classes (DMC) system makes use of the class band in which each module mark falls. The candidate will achieve one class higher than indicated by the arithmetic mean, if the following conditions are met:

(b) Classified Bachelor's degree, with more than 240 units in the classification bands above the degree class indicated by the calculation of the arithmetic mean:

(i) Where a Registered Student has achieved more than 240 units above the degree classification indicated by the calculation of the arithmetic mean and has no fails.

(ii) Where a Registered Student has achieved more than 240 units above the degree classification indicated by the calculation of the arithmetic mean, but there are failed units up to a maximum of 60 units. The failed units should be compensated by an equal number of additional units in the degree classes above that indicated by the arithmetic mean (e.g. if 20 units are failed, then more than 260 units are required in the degree classes above that which is achieved).

(c) Classified Bachelor's degree, with exactly 240 units in the classification bands above the degree class indicated by the calculation of the arithmetic mean and no failed units:

(i) A Registered Student whose arithmetic mean mark lies between of 68.0 and 69.49, inclusive should be awarded a 1st class degree if they have achieved 240 units in class I, with not less than 80 units in class 2i.

(ii) A Registered Student whose arithmetic mean mark lies between 58.0 and 59.49 inclusive, should be awarded a 2i class degree if they have achieved 240 units in the 2i class or above, including 20 units in 1st class.

(iii) A Registered Student whose arithmetic mean mark lies between 48.0 and 49.49 inclusive, should be awarded a 2ii class degree if they have achieved 240 units in the 2ii class or above, including 20 units in the 2i class or above.

(iv) A Registered Student whose arithmetic mean mark lies between 38.00 and 39.49 inclusive, should be awarded a 3rd class degree if they have achieved 240 units in the 3rd class or above, including 20 units in the 2ii class or above.

(d) Undergraduate Master's degree, with more than 300 units in the classification bands above the degree class indicated by the calculation of the arithmetic mean.

(i) Where a Registered Student has achieved more than 300 units above the degree classification indicated by the calculation of the arithmetic mean and has no failed units.

(ii) Where a Registered Student has achieved more than 300 units above the degree classification indicated by the calculation of the arithmetic mean, but there are failed units, up to a maximum of 70 failed units. The failed units should be compensated by an equal number of additional units in the degree classes above that indicated by the arithmetic mean (e.g. if 20 units are failed, then more than 320 units are required in the degree classes above that which is achieved).

(e) Undergraduate Master's degree, with exactly 300 units in the classification bands above the degree class indicated by the calculation of the arithmetic mean and no fail units:

(i) A Registered Student whose arithmetic mean mark lies between 68.0 and 69.49, inclusive, should be awarded a 1st class degree if they have achieved 300 units in class I, with not less than 100 units in class 2i and have no fails.

(ii) A Registered Student whose arithmetic mean mark lies in the following ranges should be awarded a higher class of degree if they meet the following requirements: A Registered Student whose arithmetic mean mark lies between 58.0 and 59.49 inclusive, should be awarded a 2i

class degree if they have achieved 300 units in the 2i range, including 40 units in 1st class.

(iii) A Registered Student whose arithmetic mean mark lies between 48.0 and 49.49 inclusive, should be awarded a 2ii class degree if they have achieved 300 units in the 2ii range, including 40 units in the 2i class or above.

(iv) A Registered Student whose arithmetic mean mark lies between 38.0 and 39.49 inclusive, should be awarded a 3rd class degree if they have achieved 300 units in the 3rd class or above, including 40 units in the 2ii class or above.

7.8 Withdrawal

7.8.1 Registered Students who do not achieve the required number of credits and / or the required module marks to proceed to the next stage of their programme, as set out in the Academic Regulations, or in programme requirements, following re-assessment or repeat shall be required to withdraw. Such Registered Students will be informed of their right of appeal. Registered Students who have achieved the requisite number of credits may be eligible for the award of an alternative qualification.

7.8.2 Registered Students on an apprenticeship programme, who leave or are dismissed from their employment, will be required to withdraw from the programme. Such Registered Students may be eligible for the award of an alternative qualification.

Appendix A

Semester / Year Abroad Mark Conversions

1. Wherever it is available a numeric result from the overseas institution should be used.

2. Registered Students will be permitted to use the best 75% (90 out of 120 credits) of their marks for their year abroad.

   (This will not apply to Registered Students on the Liberal Arts and Natural Sciences programme for whom separate provision is made within Programme Regulations.)

3. ***Numeric***
   One of the following two formulae as appropriate:

   a) Where the mark from the host institution is **higher than a bare pass** the following formula is used to produce a converted Birmingham mark:

   $$\left(\left(\frac{\text{Original mark – host pass mark}}{\text{100 – host pass mark}} \right) \times (100 - \text{UoB pass mark}) \right) + \text{UoB pass mark}$$

   b) If the host institution is in **France** or **Belgium** the **actual pass mark** achieved will be used without conversion

   c) Where the mark from the host institution is **a fail mark** the following formula is used to produce a converted Birmingham mark:

   $$(40 \div \text{host institution pass mark}) \times \text{actual mark obtained}$$

4. ***Grade bands (Letter)***

   The attached table (Appendix B) presents the conversions

5. ***Erasmus partners***

   Registered Students to take 30 ECTS per semester; the best 75% of marks will constitute the year abroad mark.

Appendix B

Conversion of Letter Grade Bands to UoB Marks

No of **pass** grade bands	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)	(v)	(vi)	(vii)	(viii)	(ix)	(x)	(xi)	(xii)	(xiii)	(xiv)
1	**70**	85	90	93	94	95	96	96	97	97	97	97	98	98
2	10	**55**	70	78	82	85	88	88	90	91	91	93	93	93
3		25	**50**	63	70	75	78	80	83	85	85	88	88	88
4			20	**48**	58	65	69	72	76	79	79	83	83	83
5				33	**46**	55	60	65	69	73	73	78	78	78
6					34	**45**	52	58	62	67	68	73	73	74
7						35	**44**	51	55	61	63	68	68	70
8							36	**44**	49	55	58	63	63	66
9								37	**43**	49	53	58	58	62
10									37	**43**	48	53	54	58
11										37	**43**	48	50	54
12											38	**43**	46	50
13												38	**42**	46
14													38	**42**
15														38

Fail grades/ marks

Appendix C

Assessment for Exchange Students

1. It will normally be necessary for Schools to determine an alternative form of final assessment for each module being taken by an exchange student attending the University for one term only.

2. This will enable those students to complete their modules before they return to their home institution, and will also facilitate the return of module marks to exchange students' home institutions (following Chair's Action approval by the relevant Board of Examiners), in accordance with the University's agreements with its partner institutions.

3. In certain cases, it may be more appropriate for exchange students attending for one term only to undertake the same final assessment on a module as any other student. This decision may only be made by the module-owning School, and will only be made if it will not require these students to return to the University and will not affect the University's commitment to returning module marks to exchange students' home institutions as agreed.

4. In such cases, exchange students attending for one term only may either submit a coursework assessment via electronic means (e.g. Canvas) or may sit an examination in their home country (concurrently with students sitting the same examination in Edgbaston). However, in either case, the necessary arrangements will need to be made by the module-owning School.

5. Concurrent sittings of the same examination in Edgbaston and overseas will only be possible if the predetermined examination schedule allows. It should be noted that overseas examinations for exchange students attending for one term only will not determine or constrain the examination schedule.

6. If a concurrent examination sitting is not possible but an overseas examination will still go ahead, the overseas examination paper will need to differ sufficiently from the Edgbaston paper to assure the integrity of both examinations.

7. This supplementary note does not apply to exchange students attending for the whole academic session. These exchange students will undertake the same assessments as any other student.