



Academic Handbook
Section 40
Assessment Practice

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Assessment Practice is divided into the following sections:

- Introduction
- Section 1 - Formative Assessment
- Section 2 - Principles of Summative Assessment
- Section 3 - Setting Summative Assessment
- Section 4 - Marking and Internal Moderation
- Section 5 - External Moderation
- Annex 1 - Definitions

INTRODUCTION

1. Assessment Practice supports Section 2O of the Academic Handbook in relation to the University's Assessment Policy and Assessment Regulations and applies to all HE credit and award-bearing taught courses.
2. The 4 sections set out the operational processes for assessment setting and delivery, and the staff roles and responsibilities defined by the University, to ensure that students are assessed in a fair and effective way and that consistent standards are maintained.
3. All staff involved in the assessment process must take full account of the operational principles, definitions and processes contained in Assessment Practice. This will help to ensure that the necessary level of consistency and transparency of assessment is evident to students and that their learning is assessed in ways which reflect, and are aligned with, the teaching and learning support provided through the courses they are studying.
4. New course team members involved in the summative assessment of student work should receive a copy of the assessment policy, regulations, Generic Grading and Classification Criteria and this Assessment Practice, along with all unit information (unit descriptors, assessment briefs including Assessment Criteria and, if appropriate, Marking Schemes).
5. The Unit Leader is responsible for the quality, design and delivery of the unit's assessment.
6. The University encourages the provision of formative assessment for students. Unit leaders should incorporate formative assessments in the overall teaching, learning and assessment strategy for each unit.

7. The assessment forms referred to in this document are available on the Teaching and Learning section of the Portal.

SECTION 1 - FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

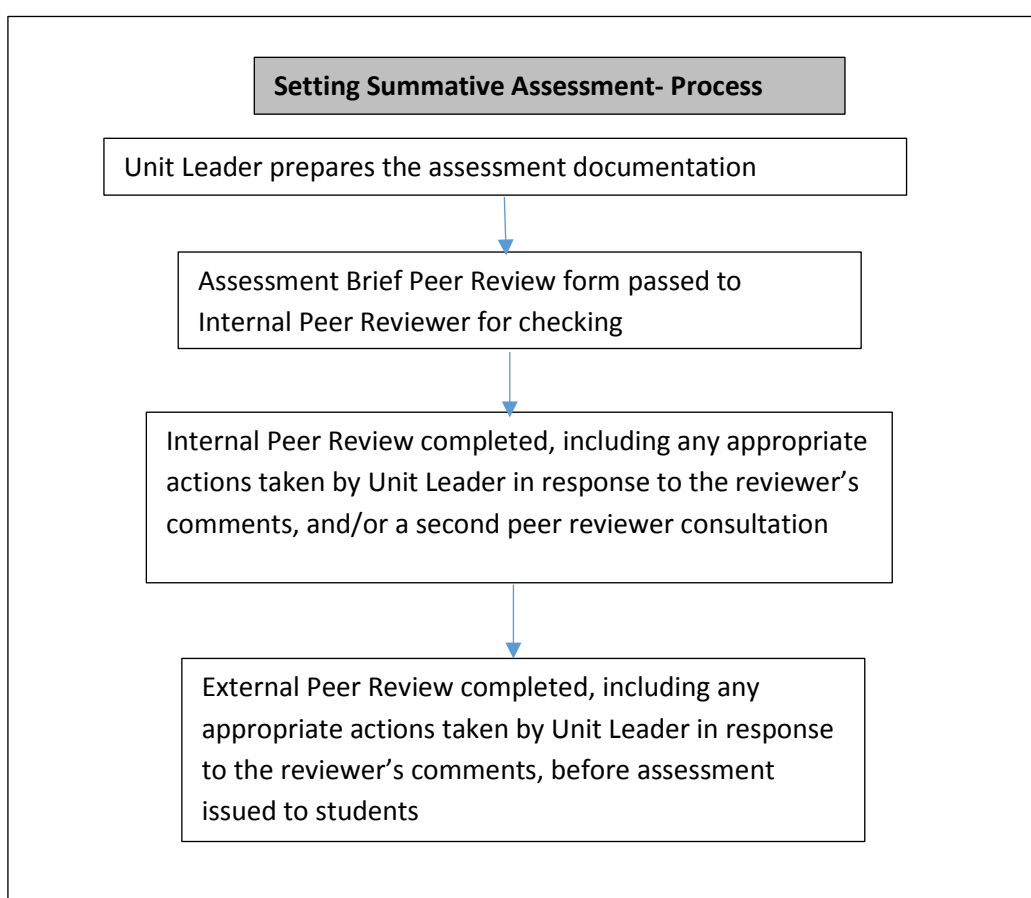
8. Formative assessment may be used to provide feedback on an assignment, or parts of it, before the actual submission date. However, the assignment must only be marked at the time it is submitted for summative assessment and the mark/grade given must reflect the work at the time of final submission.
9. Marks/grades should not be provided as part of the feedback given for formative assessment to avoid confusion with the summative assessment mark/grade and to avoid any suggestion of a guaranteed mark. However, if unit leaders wish to provide students with an indication of progress, an indicative degree classification can be provided for that specific assessment.
10. Students must not be penalised in the summative assessment mark for not submitting work for formative assessment; this will have no impact on their summative marks. However, students who do not participate will not benefit from feedback, and this may impact on their eventual assessment performance.

SECTION 2 - PRINCIPLES OF SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

11. All summative assessment and assessment processes must comply with the relevant provisions of Assessment Practice.
12. All summative assessments must be:
 - Clearly documented
 - Published to students in advance in an appropriate form and medium
 - Transparent in intention and clearly linked to the approved assessment strategy of the unit
 - Designed to reflect the University's regulatory framework, to test students' performance against the agreed learning outcomes for the unit, and structured to align with the teaching and learning strategy for the unit
 - Designed and executed consistently to be fair and equitable, valid and robust
 - Designed in such a way as to ensure appropriate security of assessment in cases where student collaboration is not allowed.
13. All summative assessment elements must:
 - be peer reviewed (the Peer Reviewer must have appropriate academic knowledge and experience)
 - include the relevant document as detailed below
 - be marked using the Grade Marking scale, unless an exemption is in force
 - undergo internal moderation (except where double marking is required) and external moderation in accordance with Section 3 and 4 below;
 - be designed and administered to ensure that appropriate provision is made for students with special needs; and
 - be subject to all relevant school/service and University approved procedures.

14. Assessment elements designated as an examination in the unit descriptor must be administered through the formal University examination procedures managed by the Assessments Team in Academic Services.
15. In-class tests may be conducted in timetabled class sessions, provided the existing booked room is a suitable venue for the test in question. Where this type of assessment is administered to more than one group of students, appropriate arrangements must be made to ensure the security of the assessment.

SECTION 3 - SETTING SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT



Assessment Documentation

16. Each summative coursework assessment element, including referral assessments, should have:
 - an Assessment Brief which sets out the specific assessment task;
 - the assessment criteria;
 - a marking scheme (where appropriate);
 - relevant details, including the issue date, hand-in and planned feedback dates; and

- general information on relevant University policies such as Extenuating Circumstances, Academic Misconduct etc.

Unit leaders should make these available to students via Solent Online Learning (SOL- formerly mycourse).

17. Documentation should take into account the University's generic grading and classification criteria to ensure that the expected student attainment against the unit learning outcomes is set at the right level. These should be written to allow students the potential to demonstrate achievement across the whole marking range, and to explain to students what they should expect from the assessment and the consequent feedback.

Group Work Assessment

18. Group work assessment is an important learning tool but has inherent challenges. The Assessment Brief for group work assessment should clarify whether students are given individual marks or a group mark, and the marking criteria should make it clear whether the final output, or the group work leading to it, or both, is being assessed. (There should also be a clear statement on the unit descriptor that group work applies to an assessment and an additional statement about how referral work is to be assessed.)
19. The Assessment Brief should outline how marks will be allocated if there are disagreements within the group, or if the assessment cannot be completed by the group.

Marks for attendance

20. Students are expected to attend all of their timetabled teaching sessions. Attendance is key to academic success and the University monitors attendance using the electronic swipe system. Students with continued unexplained absence are invited to a participation interview with a Student Achievement Officer and if after that attendance does not improve then students can be considered for withdrawal from their course.
21. Assessment methods are approved by course approval panels to meet the intended learning outcomes of units and courses. Attendance at timetabled sessions does not demonstrate the achievement of intended learning outcomes and therefore cannot be used or graded for an assessment or part of an assessment.

Internal Peer Review of Assessments

22. The Director or nominee will appoint the Internal Peer Reviewer, based on a judgement that they have suitable experience to undertake the peer review.
23. The Unit Leader is responsible for confirming the assessment components listed on the Assessment Brief Peer Review form before details of the assessment are passed to the Internal Peer Reviewer.

24. The Peer Reviewer must check that:
 - i. The exam questions, or completed assessment briefing sheet conform with the assessment strategy, assessment description or referral description in the current, validated unit descriptor;
 - ii. The instructions and/or questions are clearly worded so that students can reasonably be expected to understand them and know what they are expected to do, in the context of the way in which the teaching of the unit content has been covered;
 - iii. The Assessment Criteria and Marking Scheme (if appropriate) are aligned to the task and to the intended learning outcomes for the unit, and comply with the University's Generic Grading Criteria.
25. The Peer Reviewer must complete the record sheet identifying any issues for resolution and a response is required from the Unit Leader. The Unit Leader must take appropriate action in response to the Peer Reviewer's comments. When the Peer Reviewer and Unit Leader are satisfied that the assessment is appropriate to distribute to students they must sign and date the record sheet.
26. If agreement cannot be reached a second Peer Reviewer must be consulted, appointed by the Director or nominee. The second Peer Reviewer will determine the outcome of review.

External Peer Review of Assessments

27. Unit External Examiners should be given the opportunity to provide advice and feedback on the form and content of all proposed assessments for their allocated units, including written and practical examinations and coursework, before they are given to students. The Assessments Team will issue briefing material to external examiners and will receive any feedback.

SECTION 4 – MARKING AND INTERNAL MODERATION

Marking Principles

28. The marking and recording of student results should be consistent, fair, accurate, equitable, reliable, transparent, and an audit trail must be maintained.
29. Anonymous marking will be employed in accordance with University policy and procedures, except where exempted- see below.
30. All assessment elements must be marked as a grade, except for those elements where an approved exemption is in force, where a numeric mark is given. Marks must be entered on the Mark Sheet in accordance with the Marking Scheme. Full account should be taken of the University's generic grading and classification criteria to help ensure accurate and consistent marking of assessments by markers and moderators.
31. Directors, or their nominees, will assign markers and internal moderators to all summative assessments, indicating instances where double marking (see below) is applicable. Moderation and

double marking must be carried out by a Moderator/double marker with appropriate academic knowledge and experience.

32. Internal moderation must be carried out on a sample of all marked work for all summative assessments **excluding** work that has been double marked. A sample of performance based assessments must be recorded for the purposes of internal and external moderation. The Unit Leader must ensure that samples of work from **all** markers involved in assessing a unit are moderated. The Assessments Team will retain the moderation records with the mark sheets.
33. In accordance with the University's Assessment Policy, students must be provided with feedback opportunities for all assessments. Where necessary (e.g. written exams), this feedback can be generic and should be accessible to all students who have taken the assessment via the University's VLE. Students should be told when and in what form they will receive feedback. Students should receive feedback on all summative coursework within **20 working days** of the submission date, this does not apply to work submitted late.
34. Coursework and practical exam marks may be returned to students provided the student is aware that these marks need to be ratified by the Unit Assessment Board and so might change.

Anonymous Marking (AM)

35. All coursework is anonymous at the point of initial marking and double marking, except where it is exempted.
36. Students must anonymise their work appropriately. Students should use their student identifier; a School/Service will be within its rights to refuse to accept the work if a student does not do so. It may mean that the work cannot be marked. There are no coversheets for online assessment submissions; students should enter their student number and the unit code in the document title page and file name as appropriate. For further support see the online submission help page on the portal.
37. The University accepts that there will be justifiable instances where the nature of the assessment process means that the application of AM will not be practicable. Provision will be made as part of the course approval process to identify exemptions to the AM process and the reasons for such an exemption. Where it is not appropriate, Schools/services must ensure that internal moderation is vigorous to ensure that marking is accurate and consistent.
38. The following have been identified as **exempt** from the application of AM:
 - Observed assessments e.g. role play, presentations (individual & group) etc.
 - Reports/projects associated with presentations where the examiners are assessing the presentation as well as the report/project.
 - Lab work, practicals and fieldwork. Except that if a written outcome is required from any of these activities that was not directly connected to an in-class practical demonstration then that could be anonymous. Equally, the production of a practical and tangible thing e.g. a piece of

design could be assessed anonymously if it was not manufactured as part of an in- class test where the article was clearly associated with an individual.

- Some methods of assessment for blended learning courses for example on- line forum activity (unless AM is built into the on-line submission facility)
- Oral presentation and Viva Voce.
- Courses validated and/or run off campus by other bodies.
- Seminar discussions and formative feedback.
- Research, dissertations and theses.
- Linked pieces of assessment where earlier marks or feedback contribute to the marking process for a later piece of work.
- Preliminary work which is used as a qualifying hurdle for a later linked piece of assessment e.g. dissertation pre-reports.
- Group work where the work is submitted individually but the performance of others contributes to the final mark.
- Some placement and placement reports.

39. Students will be advised by their tutors (following consultation with course leaders) whether coursework is exempted from AM, and this will also be detailed on the Assessment Brief and will normally be included in the unit descriptor. Students through their representatives and the appropriate channels within Schools/services can raise any concerns they may have that an assessment is unreasonably not subject to the practice of AM.
40. Wording is included on the Assessment Feedback Form which confirms that the work is the student's own. No additional plagiarism contract derives from the anonymous marking policy. The Academic Misconduct Policy will apply to work submitted by students for assessment.
41. The AM arrangements will not affect the way a student submits an assignment through Turnitin.

Double Marking

42. Double Marking of assessment elements must take place at Level 6 of an undergraduate award and on postgraduate taught awards (Level 7) for:
- i. all major projects, dissertations and portfolios, and
 - ii. any assessment which constitutes 100% of the weighting for units of 20 credit points or more for undergraduate programmes, and for 30 credits or more for postgraduate taught courses.
43. For Double Marking, both markers must independently assess the work according to the defined Assessment Criteria and Marking Scheme (where appropriate). The work and marks awarded should be discussed so that an agreed mark can be arrived at and entered on the mark sheet.
44. If a mark cannot be agreed, a third marker will determine the final agreed mark.

45. The marks and comments of all internal markers, and the final agreed mark, must be kept for reference by the unit leader. Completed final agreed mark sheets should be submitted to the Assessments Team.
46. Performance based assessments (e.g. presentations, shows, concerts etc) should normally be marked and double marked at the time of the performance. When this is not possible, the first marker should make arrangements for the assessment to be recorded. In any case, a sample of performance based assessment should be recorded for the purposes of external review. Where opportunities for effective double marking/moderation are limited, the weighting given to this form of assessment should be carefully considered.
47. Assessment that has been double marked will not be subject to internal moderation.

Internal Moderation

48. For internal moderation purposes, the size of the sample of work submitted for each summative assessment will be a minimum of 10% or at least five pieces of work – whichever is the greater figure, up to a maximum of 15 pieces of work.
49. The moderation sample must be properly representative and include borderline cases between each band of award classification (including pass/fail) and an example of a first class/distinction piece of work and a clear fail, if applicable.
50. A sample of a new staff member's marking for all elements must be moderated by an experienced marker prior to the return of the marked work to the students and, in his/her first academic year at SSU, the sample should correspond to at least twice that required for internal moderation.
51. At the conclusion of the internal moderation process, the internal moderator should indicate, on the Internal Moderation Record form for each piece of work included in the sample, that they have read the work and that the range of marks awarded in the sample are confirmed. They should also note any necessary action points relating to fairness and reliability of the assessment outcome, consistent application of the Assessment Criteria, and appropriateness and consistency of feedback to students. The moderator should sign this statement.
52. Internal moderators should not produce comments on individual pieces of student work.
53. The internal moderation record regarding the sample of work selected must be retained by the Assessments Team for forwarding to the External Examiner.
54. Where an internal moderator identifies a discrepancy in marking (i.e. with an individual mark, a subset of the sample or the entire sample), consultation with the marker must consider the impact of this on the entire cohort. This may require review of a wider sample of work. If agreement can be reached, the marks should be adjusted accordingly and a written record of the process made.

55. Internal moderator(s) cannot change any individual mark in isolation unless the work of every student for that assessment has been moderated to ensure that no students are unfairly advantaged/disadvantaged.
56. If agreement cannot be reached, the sample must be referred to a second internal moderator. The second moderator may arbitrate on the marks, scrutinizing a wider sample if necessary. The judgement of the second moderator will prevail.
57. Where there is a wider issue over the soundness of assessment and/or substantial queries raised concerning the consistency of marking, leading to the re-marking of the assessment for the whole cohort the Programme Group Leader (PGL) must be informed. The PGL will consult with the Head of Quality Management in Academic Services and the External Examiner(s) to agree any actions necessary before the Assessment Board.

SECTION 5 – EXTERNAL MODERATION

Principles

58. External Examiners are asked to moderate the marking of internal markers to ensure that marking is accurate, consistent, fair, equitable, reliable, transparent and in line with national standards for the provision, using the Unit External Examiner Moderation Report form.
59. External Examiners are not expected to mark work themselves.
60. External Examiners must not be asked to arbitrate or moderate disagreements between internal markers/moderators or be used as a third marker. Any disagreements must be resolved by the School/Service.
61. Internal Moderation Record Sheets must be submitted by each marker/moderator to the Assessments Team and be available to the External Examiner(s) in respect of the sample.
62. In order to carry out the role effectively, External Examiners must have available to them:
 - A representative sample¹ of marked student work for all summative assessments;
 - A sample of recorded performance based assessments for the purposes of external review (where appropriate);
 - The unit descriptor, relevant assessment brief(s), assessment criteria and marking schemes (where appropriate) for each assessment element;
 - A copy of the Internal Moderation Record clearly showing the mark/grade for each piece of work and any comments of the Internal Moderator;

¹ At minimum, the sample should correspond with that required for internal moderation

- Completed mark sheets with the moderation sample highlighted for ease of reference, a copy of which must be kept by the Assessments Team for reference and audit purposes.
63. Where the external moderation of assessment raises substantial queries concerning the standards or consistency of marking, the External Examiner has the right to recommend to the Examination Board a change to element marks and where appropriate unit marks for a cohort of students.
64. External Examiner(s) cannot recommend that any individual mark be changed in isolation unless the work of every student for that assessment has been reviewed to ensure that no students are unfairly advantaged/ disadvantaged.

RETENTION OF ASSESSED MATERIAL

65. The requirements for the retention of assessed material are set out in Policies, Procedures & Guidelines, Academic Services, Maintenance of Records, available on the Portal.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

66. Arrangements for additional support will have been put in place as advised to schools/services and the Assessments Team by Access Solent. No further allowances will be made at the time of marking except as detailed in the procedures outlined in 'Dyslexia or Pre-Lingual Deafness: Information for academic staff'. Extenuating circumstances claims will be processed in the normal way, precluding the incidence of double compensation.

Annex 1: Definitions

Anonymous Marking	Where the identity of students is concealed during the marking process.
Assessment Criteria	Based on the intended learning outcomes for the work being assessed, these set out the knowledge and understanding, cognitive, practical and transferable skills markers expect a student to display in the assessment task and which are taken into account in marking the work.
Coursework	Coursework covers written assignments, (including essays, reports, dissertations, portfolios), and assignments in other media, including art portfolios and project outputs (HESA definition).
Formative assessment	Feedback used to give students information about their achievement and progress to date BEFORE an assignment is finally submitted for marking. Formative assessment does not contribute to the overall mark or grade for a unit, level or award and the feedback given does not guarantee a mark or grade for the summative assessment.
Mark Sheet	A list of all students eligible to take the assessment/unit and the agreed grades or marks awarded, and including first and second markers' grades or marks, where second marking has taken place.
Marking Scheme	A detailed breakdown of how grades or marks for the assessment are allocated to specified components, assessment criteria and/or model answer.
Moderation	A process intended to ensure that an assessment outcome is fair and reliable, that the Assessment Criteria have been applied consistently, and that feedback to students is appropriate and consistently provided.
Peer Reviewer	Responsible for the Peer Review of assessment elements
Practical exams	Practical exams cover oral assessments, presentations and practical skills assessment focussing on whether, and/or how well, a student performs a specific skill, technique or competency (HESA definition).
Sampling	A sample of student work is reviewed for either the purpose of moderation, or double marking.
Set exercises	Set exercises, such as in-class tests, are tasks designed to assess the application of knowledge, analytical, problem-solving or evaluative skills. Examples may include data interpretation, data analysis and problem-based or problem-

solving exercises. The categorisation of set exercises will depend on the nature of the exercise being set. Typically, set exercises will be coursework or practical exams. Where the set exercise is performed under exam conditions it should be treated as a written or practical exam. (HESA definition with additions)

**SSU Generic
grading and
classification
criteria**

These are set out in the Academic Handbook section 2O Annex 2 with an accompanying explanation of their purpose and the expectations of their use. They provide a common matrix of statements describing the characteristics of student attainment across the levels and the full range of marks. They provide a common language for assessment judgements for those marking student work, and a carefully graded and integrated set of descriptors to inform assessment design and marking schemes for assessors and students.

**Summative
assessment**

Assessment derived from the unit descriptor's learning outcomes and assessment strategy for the unit and used to establish what a student has achieved. Marks or grades given for summative assessment contribute to the overall mark for a unit, level and award, as specified.

Written exams

Written exams usually occur at the end of a period of learning. They may be 'seen', where the student is aware in advance of the questions(s) they are expected to answer, or 'unseen', where the questions are only revealed 'on the day'. In an 'open book' exam, a student is allowed to use a selection of reference materials during the assessment. The questions asked as part of a written exam may be essay, short answer, problem or multiple choice. Written exams usually (but not always) take place under timed conditions (HESA definition).