



Senate

Paper title	Assessment Governance Review 2014/15
Outcome requested	Senate is asked to consider and approve (or otherwise) eight recommendations related to assessment governance.
Points to note and further information	<p>QMUL recently consulted on proposals related to the issues detailed below. This paper summarises the feedback from the consultation, and makes revised recommendations for Senate's consideration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quorum for Subject Examination Board meetings; • the Degree Examination Board governance structure; • maximum duration of study; • late submission penalties; • penalties for assessments that exceed specified word counts; • scaling and standard setting; • mock assessments; • a minor amendment to the borderline classification policy. <p>The paper also requests consideration of the level of quality assurance in marking required for late summer resits, following a query in a response to the consultation.</p>
Questions to consider	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is Senate content to approve the proposals? 2. Proposals 4 and 5 (late work penalties and word count penalties) did not achieve a consensus. How should work on these matters be progressed?
Regulatory/statutory reference points	The matters under consideration link to chapters B6 and B7 of the QAA's UK Quality Code. They are, however, matters for interpretation by QMUL and link more specifically to the Academic Regulations and Assessment Handbook, which would be adapted to accommodate any approved changes from 2015/16.
Strategy and risk	The proposals are (variously) intended to improve consistency, clarity, efficiency, and good practice in assessment and assessment governance. They support strategic aims 1 and 2 of the Student Experience, Teaching and Learning Strategy 2014.
Reporting/consideration route for the paper	Senate to approve. The paper was also presented at Education Quality Board on 11 March 2015 for discussion.
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Assessment Governance Consultation 2014/15

QMUL recently consulted on a number of issues related to assessment governance:

- the quorum for Subject Examination Board meetings;
- the Degree Examination Board governance structure;
- maximum duration of study;
- late submission penalties;
- penalties for assessments that exceed specified word counts;
- scaling and standard setting;
- mock assessments;
- a minor amendment to the borderline classification policy.

Responses were received from all schools and institutes, and the Students' Union. This paper summarises feedback, and makes new proposals for consideration and approval. The paper is in four parts; the main section takes the original proposals, summarises the feedback, and makes revised proposals. Appendix 1 shows the current and proposed examination board structures under proposal two, while Appendix 2 (digital version only), contains the complete feedback for each proposal. Finally, a summary of revised proposals and actions requested is included for review during Senate's meeting.

Proposal 1: Subject Examination Board quorum

The introduction of late summer resits from 2015/16 means that some schools and institutes will need to hold additional Subject Examination Board (SEB) meetings to agree results and progression, and award resits. This prompted QMUL to re-examine the requirements for the SEB quorum, to ensure that it remained both robust and proportionate.

The current policy is built on an expectation that all staff should attend, but with a minimum quorum of 50 per cent of the total membership, including the Chair/Deputy and (except in exceptional cases, where alternative provisions apply) at least one external examiner. This does not always work well for meetings with little business to discuss, and would cause particular problems for late summer SEB meetings. At that time of year staff availability can be limited, and it was proposed that a new policy should be adopted with a lower attendance threshold but an increased focus on ensuring expert oversight of the issues. As with the current policy, the proposal was for a minimum threshold and all staff were encouraged, where possible, to attend.

Proposal 1 (original)

The quorum for a Subject Examination Board shall be at least 50 per cent of the total membership or five members, whichever is fewer. This shall include the Chair and/or Deputy Chair, and at least one external examiner.

Members, including external examiners, may be counted as in attendance if using video conferencing technology, or similar.

Exceptionally, a meeting may go ahead without the presence of an external examiner where comments have been received in advance from the external(s), those comments are considered and recorded in the meeting, and the outcomes of the meeting are subsequently agreed by the external(s).

1. An either/or system was proposed because some boards, particularly at postgraduate level, had small total memberships. In such cases, the existing 50 per cent rule remained more appropriate.
2. Counting members as in attendance when using video conferencing software was already accepted, but not formally captured in the regulations.
3. The exceptional provision for a meeting to go ahead without the presence of an external examiner was a longstanding policy, not a change (*Academic Regulations 2014/15: 1.34*).
4. There was no proposal to amend the quorum for Degree Examination Boards.
5. If approved, this proposal would have come into effect from 2015/16. The late summer 2015 SEBs and the postgraduate boards in October 2015 fall under the 2014/15 regulations.

Feedback

The proposal was uniformly welcomed, though a number of refinements were suggested.

Minimum attendance requirement

Three schools questioned whether the change might be too extreme, with one noting that its undergraduate SEB could take place with only the Chair and external examiners in attendance. Another suggested that senior examiners could be identified and mandated to attend. While the proposals are for a minimum requirement and all staff are encouraged to attend, Senate may consider whether it deems five members sufficient. The revised proposal has also been amended to state that internal members should normally outnumber external members.

One school suggested that a minimum of three members would be preferable for small programmes. The provision for a 50 per cent quorum where that is less than five members should already cover those scenarios.

External examiners at late summer and associate SEBs

Five schools raised concerns over the requirement for externals to attend all SEBs except in exceptional circumstances, particularly for late summer and associate boards where business was short and straightforward. QMUL has never required that externals attend associate boards, and the proposal was not intended to change that position. With the introduction of late summer resits for finalists, late summer boards will in future take a wider range of decisions, including award recommendations. However, the numbers of cases will be small, and it is questionable whether actual attendance from an external is needed. The recommendation has been amended to state that externals are not required to attend late summer or associate SEBs, though (as now) their views and approval should be sought. Externals are not required to attend SEB sub-boards.

Attendance by telephone

One school asked for the clause that counted members as in attendance when using video conferencing technology to be expanded to cover telephones. This was seen as reasonable.

Approval of decisions where an external could not attend

One school requested additional flexibility in the policy on ratifying decisions where an external could not attend. The policy asks externals to review matters before the meeting, for their comments to be raised at the meeting, and for the external agree to the SEB's decisions after the meeting. The respondent noted that new matters could be identified at the meeting, on which externals' views might be sought. An amendment to the phrasing is suggested to allow for discussions after the meeting with the external and, where needed, the SEB. Chair's action would be taken to confirm any decisions.

Proposal 1 (revised)

Senate is asked to **approve** the revised recommendation 1, below, to come into effect from 2015/16 without further consultation, unless it has amendments or concerns. Senate should consider in particular whether it deems five members sufficient to make the quorum.

The quorum for a Subject Examination Board shall be at least 50 per cent of the total membership or five members, whichever is fewer. This shall include the Chair and/or Deputy Chair, and at least

one external examiner. External examiners shall not be required to attend late summer or associate SEBS (though they may choose to do so), though their views and endorsement shall still be sought. There should normally be a higher number of internal members than external examiners at a meeting.

Members, including external examiners, may be counted as in attendance if using video conferencing technology, a telephone, or similar.

Exceptionally, a meeting may go ahead without the presence of an external examiner where a SEB has provided the external with the papers beforehand and given the external an opportunity to comment. After the meeting, the SEB Chair shall liaise with the external and, where necessary, the SEB to discuss the matters raised at the meeting and to seek the external's endorsement for any decisions taken.

Additional item: Moderation and late summer resits

One school raised the following point in relation to moderation of assessments for the late summer resits: *“we should really be considering the role of externals in resits alongside the role of moderation, and it appears that the policy for this has not yet been developed. If LSRs are under the same regulations as other examination boards, that means the resit cohort is the determining factor, and a cohort of fewer than 10 will need full second marking. This seems unnecessarily prescriptive, and takes no account of the fact that marking for the module will already have been moderated. Would it not make sense – given that the exercise is pass/fail, with implications for progression – to allow moderation on the basis of the full previous cohort? This would ensure that all potential fails were looked at by a second pair of eyes, which is what matters most. If that were the case, the burden on the external could then also be alleviated.”*

This is not directly related to the proposal on the SEB quorum. However, Senate is asked to consider the issue, and to agree whether the matter requires consultation.

Proposal 2: DEB governance structure

The current structure of QMUL's Degree Examination Boards (DEBs) relates to old organisational structures that are no longer in use. The Boards are nominally ordered by award, and the main award issued by a Subject Examination Board (SEB) dictates the associated DEB. That system of division has become less relevant as schools diversify their portfolios and offer multiple awards (for example, Geography offers BA, BSc and BSc (Econ) awards, SPIR offers MA, MSc and MRes, and EECS offers BEng and BSc awards). This does not cause any problems, but with recent regulatory changes there is less reason for distinction, as common rules apply to all UG and to all PGT programmes.

The system is now anomalous, as all other committees are organised by faculty. It was proposed that DEBs should be reorganised by faculty, allowing a better opportunity to review practice within the faculty. The change would be purely administrative, with no consequences for SEBs other than which meeting they attend.

At undergraduate level, it was proposed that Business & Management and Economics & Finance move from the Science to the Arts DEB. The Engineering DEB would then merge with Science to cover all Science & Engineering schools. All H&SS schools except for Law would then be at the Arts DEB. The LLB award, used only in Law, uses substantially different regulations and it made sense to leave this separate, with an agreement to review the matter in the future. Undergraduate SMD provision was also anomalous; the small number of BSc students in SMD were considered at the Science DEB; it was proposed that this arrangement be retained, as there was no suitable alternative. Again, this was subject to future review. The MBBS and BDS boards operated on programme-specific calendars and could not easily be combined into a UG SMD DEB.

At postgraduate level, it was proposed that Business & Management and Economics & Finance moved from the Science DEB to the Arts DEB. The Arts and Law DEBs would merge to form a new H&SS board. The SMD DEB would be unaffected. The existing Chairs would continue in post, co-chairing where appropriate until the normal end of each term; there would therefore effectively be a trial period of joint meetings rather than merged boards.

Proposal 2 (original)

Restructure the Degree Examination Boards to align with the faculty system.

1. If approved, the new arrangements would apply from 2015/16. The October 2016 PG DEBs could potentially be held under the new procedures, with agreement from Senate.
2. It should be noted that SEBs vary considerably in size and complexity, and although some DEBs may seem to have disproportionate numbers of SEBs the workload is roughly equal. This is particularly the case for PG H&SS, which has a large number of mainly very small and generally straightforward SEBs.

Feedback

Almost all respondents were content with the proposal, and a number actively supported the change. One school opposed the changes to the postgraduate board system.

Opposition to the PG DEB restructure

One school opposed the change to the PG DEB structure on the grounds that the resulting PG H&SS DEB would be too large and unwieldy to manage. It is true that, with the merger of the Law and Arts boards and addition of Economics & Finance and Business & Management, this would become by far the largest PG DEB in terms of student numbers. The numbers from the 2013/14 PG boards are given below. The concerns did not apply to the UG boards, where numbers were more even.

Arts: 274

Law: 760

Science: 1,010

Medicine & Dentistry: 634

If the proposed system had been applied, the breakdown would have been as follows:

Humanities & Social Sciences: 1,754 (similar to the UG Sciences DEB)

Science & Engineering: 290

Medicine & Dentistry: 634

However, student numbers do not necessarily dictate the workload for a DEB. The existing numbers are uneven, but Law is consistently the shortest meeting and SMD the longest, due to the complexity of programmes under consideration; that has no link to the size of the boards. The Arts and Law DEBs combined lasted less than one hour in 2013/14, and produced very few Chair's actions requiring post-DEB consideration. The current system of four very short resource intensive (for Schools and ARCS) meetings, with an External Member travelling to QMUL for each, is inefficient (and was commented upon by the External). Reducing the number of meetings would allow them to be held across a shorter period, increasing the time available by a week or more for one or more of: holding SEBs, producing accurate SEB paperwork, preparing for DEBs, releasing students' awards onto SITS earlier.

The respondent also noted that QMUL operated a more faculty-based system in the past, and that this led to long meetings. However, this predated SITS, which allows for exception reporting and much shorter and more efficient meetings. DEBs were previously scheduled for upwards of three hours, but with improved reporting and data quality it is exceptionally rare for any PG board to exceed an hour.

It is proposed that the original recommendation should be adopted, and reviewed after a year of operation. The existing Chairs will remain in post, meaning that the H&SS board is initially a co-chaired joint board. This will allow for a trial period without any risks, by not overburdening one Chair.

Concerns over nomenclature and individual programmes

Three respondents accepted the proposals, but discussed cross-faculty programmes– specifically biosciences programmes and intercalated programmes. There are no proposals to amend the make-up of programmes within each SEB (e.g. intercalated programmes taught in SEMs), and any such changes would be a matter for negotiation between the schools involved. It was noted that, should there be a general SMD UG DEB in the future, all biosciences programmes including the SBCS BSc Biomedical Sciences should report to the same DEB (be that SMD or S&E) to ensure that cognate disciplines were considered together. The SMD UG response accepted the proposal, but noted that it sat as an exception to the faculty system, reporting to the Science & Engineering DEB (it currently reports to the Sciences DEB, though there isn't the direct faculty link at present). It is proposed that the word 'faculty' should not be used in the formal titles of boards, and that the position of the UG SMD SEB should be reviewed as the number of its programmes and students changes in coming years.

Proposal 2 (revised)

Senate is advised to **approve** the proposal below, without further consultation.

Restructure the Degree Examination Boards to align with the faculty system. The existing Chairs will remain in post so that PG H&SS is initially a joint DEB, and the efficiency of the new system will be reviewed after a year. The existing and revised structures are shown in Appendix 1.

Proposal 3: Maximum duration of study

The Academic Regulations specify a maximum duration for each programme, after which a student is deregistered even where they have attempts remaining. The current policy grants twice the normal duration of study (i.e. six years for a standard bachelors degree, eight for an integrated masters, and two for most postgraduate programmes). This was based upon a system in which students had only one assessment point each year and where, if they failed, they would resit out of attendance. The introduction of late summer resits means that the vast majority of students will never be of attendance as they can have two attempts each year. The maximum duration can therefore be reduced.

Proposal 3 (original)

The maximum duration of study shall be the normal duration of study (as defined in the programme specification) plus one year.

1. The maximum duration of study does not include the following:
 - a. periods of interruption (including primary carer leave);
 - b. first takes (where a student repeats a year on the grounds of extenuating circumstances).
2. The maximum duration of study does include the following:
 - a. years spent in attendance (excepting first takes, as above);
 - b. years spent resitting (or first sitting) out of attendance.
 - c. retakes (where a student repeats a year on the grounds of academic failure).
3. The 'normal' duration varies according to the programme specification. Where a programme is available in a part-time mode, the maximum duration shall be calculated based on the normal part-time duration (this is not a change).
4. Where a student has been granted exceptional permission to study on a part time basis where there is not a standard part-time route available (*Academic Regulations 2014/15: 2.30*), the maximum duration shall be calculated on a pro rata basis.
5. If approved, this policy would apply to students starting a new programme of study in 2015/16 or later; it would not apply to existing students.

Feedback

The majority of respondents were content with, or actively supported the proposal. There were a number of comments and suggestions.

The maximum duration

A small number of schools welcomed a reduction in the maximum duration, but wondered whether the proposal might be cutting back too far. A policy of the normal duration plus two years might be considered as an alternative – this could also resolve some of the other issues raised below, including some of the specific professional body requirements. However, it would actually increase the maximum duration for PG students, and provide six assessment opportunities for two actual attempts. A split policy of the normal duration plus one year for PG, and two years for UG, might be considered.

Managing the maximum duration where students change programme

Two schools raised the need to be clear on how students changing between programmes of different lengths (e.g. bachelors to integrated masters) would be affected. Any years after the change would be calculated on the regulations for the programme transferred onto – these would therefore be looked at on a case by case basis (this is already the case).

Included/excluded categories

Some schools suggested that interruptions and first takes should be included within the maximum duration, or that first sits out of attendance, and retakes should not. One school suggested that counting first sits out of attendance towards the maximum duration might conflict with the Equality Act 2010. This is possible, but disabilities are not primarily dealt with through extenuating circumstances and first sits, but rather through reasonable adjustments. The proposal made no recommendations for changes to what does or does not count towards the maximum duration. It allowed scope for students with extenuating circumstances to first sit out of attendance, and any exceptional cases could be reviewed on an individual basis (see revised proposal). It is not recommended that the existing categories be revisited.

Professional body requirements

The MBBS, Dentistry, and Department of Law noted that professional body requirements might dictate different rules. These should be accepted for accredited programmes, as needed. It may also be noted that LLB students have three attempts (rather than two, as for all other disciplines), and are therefore more likely to resit or first sit out of attendance.

Intercalation

A clarification: intercalation does not count towards the maximum duration of a student's main programme. It is effectively treated as an interruption, and has a maximum duration of its own.

Desire for flexibility

One school, commenting primarily on a specific distance learning programme that currently has special regulations allowing for a longer than usual maximum duration, felt that the proposal, *“would discriminate against mature students, part-time students, especially students who study later in life with a multitude of other commitments (paid work, family, health). If we embrace the concept of life-long learning and more specialist learning during an established career we need to provide these students with a degree of flexibility. [...] [Our] programme has a completion rate of nearly 100% which is a success given the high attrition rate for international DL programmes. But we need to give the students the flexibility to do the degree within their own time. If we want to internationalise and diversify our programmes and diversify the type of students we attract- we need flexibility.”*

All students must be held to a common standard unless there is an conflict with the Equality Act (see below), but in cases where there is a clear rationale for a longer maximum duration, particularly in distance learning programmes, it is recommended that programmes should be set up as flexible mode, with no specified normal or minimum duration, but just a defined maximum duration particular to the programme. This is already in use across QMUL.

Exceptions

There are likely to be rare cases of students who for very good reasons – generally items falling under the Equality Act 2010 – need further extensions to their studies. It is recommended that these are treated as exceptions, but they should not (as now) be handled through suspensions of regulations when it is an issue that can be regulated for. It is recommended that the same policy be applied as for those seeking interruptions of more than two years – a formal request from a School to the Academic Registrar, who would have delegated authority to consider and approve it.

Proposal 3 (revised)

Senate is advised to **consider** whether an additional one or two years should be permitted over the normal duration, and then to **approve** the policy without further consultation.

The maximum duration of study shall be the normal duration of study (as defined in the programme specification) plus *one year* or plus *two years* (Senate to recommend).

1. The maximum duration of study does not include the following:
 - a. periods of interruption (including primary carer leave);
 - b. first takes (where a student repeats a year on the grounds of extenuating circumstances).
 - c. intercalation (which is treated as a interruption from the main programme).
2. The maximum duration of study does include the following:
 - a. years spent in attendance (excepting first takes, as above);
 - b. years spent resitting (or first sitting) out of attendance.
 - c. retakes (where a student repeats a year on the grounds of academic failure).
3. The 'normal' duration varies according to the programme specification. Where a programme is available in a part-time mode, the maximum duration shall be calculated based on the normal part-time duration (this is not a change).
4. Where a student has been granted exceptional permission to study on a part time basis where there is not a standard part-time route available (*Academic Regulations 2014/15: 2.30*), the maximum duration shall be calculated on a pro rata basis.
5. If approved, this policy would apply to students starting a new programme of study in 2015/16 or later; it would not apply to existing students.
6. Where a student changes programme, s/he shall be treated as having met the requirements up to the point of transfer. The maximum duration for the years yet to be studied shall be calculated against the new programme.
7. Where an accrediting body specifies different arrangements for a programme, these may be used in place of the generic rule if included in the programme specification.
8. Additional years beyond the maximum duration may be agreed for exceptional cases by the Academic Registrar with the delegated authority of Senate, on the recommendation of a School or Institute.
9. The policy does not apply to flexible mode programmes, which have specific maximum durations agreed upon programme approval.

Proposal 4: Late submission penalties

Differing penalties for late coursework submission (without extenuating circumstances) is a key area of student dissatisfaction, and the Students' Union submitted a request to Senate for QMUL to adopt a single policy, following a consultation with their members. There is considerable variation in the policies used in schools; a working group in H&SS undertook work in this area, which was built upon, here. A single policy is desirable for parity of treatment, clear understanding of penalties, and consistency of academic standards. Students on joint honours programmes, where different rules

apply to different assignments, are particularly affected. While it was acknowledged that each school/institute was likely to have a different preference, it was strongly recommended that a single policy should be introduced, and respondents were asked to confirm whether they could accept the proposal below.

Proposal 4 (original)

Where an assignment is submitted late (and there are no extenuating circumstances), five per cent of the total marks available shall be deducted for each 24 hour period after the set submission time. An assignment submitted 14 calendar days or more after the deadline shall be awarded a mark of zero (ONS, as if it had not been submitted); assignments may be marked for feedback purposes only at the discretion of staff.

Notes

1. Some existing policies ceased deduction of marks once the pass mark was reached. It was not recommended that this approach was followed, as weak assignments suffered little or no consequence from a late submission, exacerbating the lack of parity. Deducting to zero also discouraged students from tactically delaying submissions, as there were repercussions.
2. If approved, the policy would take effect from 2015/16, for all students.

Feedback

Opinion was strongly divided, on both the nature of the penalty applied and the desirability of a common policy. There is no consensus on which to base a decision. It is recommended that Senate should consider how to proceed from this point; if a single policy is to be adopted, it is unlikely to be agreed upon through further open consultation.

Full feedback is provided in Appendix 2 (digital version only), but some common themes have been summarised below. It should be remembered that the goals of the proposal were clarity and consistency; while many valid and important suggestions were made, they would in many cases exacerbate the inconsistencies.

Disagreement over the point at which a late penalty should be applied

CCLS noted that adhering to deadlines was a key skill for lawyers, who needed to submit court papers to fixed deadlines. The Centre proposed a harsher penalty (-10% for up to 24 hours late, and a mark of zero for anything beyond that), or else exemption for CCLS from a harmonised policy. SEMS and SBCS also noted that working to deadlines was a key skill.

SBCS queried the penalty for something submitted up to 24 hours late. The intention had been that this would mark the first deduction, and that would be made clear in any revised proposal.

Disagreement over the nature of the penalty to be applied

English & Drama, which assessed almost wholly by coursework, noted that a key requirement of any policy was simplicity of application, and that a sliding scale calculated against each individual student did not meet that criterion. The school instead suggested something akin to its existing policy, which applied fixed deductions at appointed stages after the deadline.

The Students' Union proposed this alternative, "*Where an assignment is submitted late, five percent of the total marks available shall be deducted for each 24 hour period after the set submission time; marks shall be capped at forty per cent for work submitted 7 calendar days after the set deadline. After a further 7 days (at 14 calendar days after the set submission date), the assignment is to be awarded with a mark of zero (ONS).*"

Disagreement over the size of the penalty to be applied

SMD PG, SEMS and SBCS saw the penalty as rather light, and anticipated that some students would deliberately delay submission to gain extra time, holding up the marking process. SBCS also noted that application of a penalty for late work was part of the learning process.

History saw it as harsh and only wished to deduct down to the pass mark, noting that students with temporary problems might be demoralised, and that the penalties could affect retention rates.

Disagreement over the need for a harmonised approach

The SMD PG response suggested that PG students, who were often working or engaged in other activities alongside studies, should have a more lenient approach than UG students.

Disagreement over the assessments to be covered by the policy

SEMS, SPA, SMS, SEF, and Dentistry felt that it would be unworkable and undesirable to apply the penalty to certain types of assessment – generally small, frequent assessments such as weekly tests. Senate may consider exempting either certain categories of assessment, or all assessments beneath a particular weighting within a module (one school suggested ten per cent, another 30 per cent).

Other

Law suggested a clarification in the phrasing, such that five per cent of the maximum available mark should be deducted per day from a student's actual mark (this had been the intention of the proposal).

SEMS queried whether or not weekends would count towards the penalty. A weekend gives extra time to work on a submission, but where there is hard copy only submission, there is no opportunity to submit until the Monday.

The CAPD felt that there should always be a requirement to give feedback, even if no mark was given.

A UG response from a programme with a pass mark of 50 noted that its students would fail a module in a shorter period than students in schools with pass marks of 40. The same would apply to PG students, and would be a result of the programme's academic level or professional requirements.

One response, from a School that assessed almost exclusively by coursework felt that its students would be disproportionately affected by this policy. This is debatable, as students assessed by examination also work to deadlines in which they must revise, but this could be explored further.

Schools in broad agreement with the proposal

Geography, SPIR, SLLF, SBM, SMD UG, MBBS, Law, CAPD, and SEF (on condition that some categories of assessment were excluded), accepted the proposal. A number of these respondents actively welcomed the attempt to create a consistent rule, which was viewed as beneficial within disciplines as well as across QMUL.

Proposal 4 (revised)

No policy recommendation is made, but Senate is asked to consider whether and how it wishes to progress the issue of consistency of penalties for late submission of assessment.

Proposal 5: Word count policies and penalties

This issue is similar to that of late submission penalties in that there is currently great variation in practice, which can be confusing for students and creates inconsistencies in academic standards. It was recommended that a single policy should be adopted.

The existing policy is as follows:

1. Schools/institutes may choose whether or not to apply penalties where students exceed a specified word count.

2. A school/institute must publish the details of any penalty to students in advance of submission.
3. Each school/institute (or SEB) should have a single penalty policy for assignments where penalties apply.
4. There is no penalty for submissions that are under the specified word length. In these cases, students will either have displayed skill in covering the material very concisely, or else will have failed to fully address the materials; in either situation the normal marking scheme should take this into account.

Proposal 5 (original)

Schools wishing to impose a mark deduction for over-length work shall adopt a standard tolerance of 10 per cent over the specified word limit. Beyond that limit, a standard penalty of five marks deducted shall apply.

Schools and institutes are not required to apply the penalty to all assessments. However, it must be made clear to students in the module material where the standard penalty will and will not be applied.

Where schools and institutes do not use the standard penalty for some or all assignments they can (and should) still take the length of the assignment into account as part of the normal marking process (for example, whether the material is presented clearly and concisely, or whether it is rambling and incoherent).

There shall be no statutory penalty for under-length work, which shall be marked in accordance with the standard assessment scheme.

Feedback

As with the proposal on late work penalties, feedback was mixed. While a slight majority of respondents supported the proposal, there was no clear outcome. It is recommended that Senate should consider whether and how it wishes to progress this matter.

Harmonisation not desirable

CCLS noted that it would not wish to apply a standard penalty.

Ten per cent tolerance

Not all schools supported the ten per cent tolerance, which it was felt simply extended the permitted word count. It was not apparent that all schools felt this way, though it would be possible to factor tolerances into specified word counts where schools wished to do so.

Still insufficiently harmonised

The CAPD and Students' Union felt that the proposal, which allowed either a fixed deduction and/or factoring the word count into the marking scheme, still had the potential to confuse students. The SU supported the statutory deduction, but requested the removal of the second and third paragraphs.

SPIR suggested that those using the statutory deduction should use it for all assessments or for none.

Too lenient/insufficiently discriminatory

Several schools felt that a deduction of five marks was too lenient. A considerable number felt that a flat deduction was inappropriate, as it could not take into account the scale of the excess wording. Several suggested systems of graduated deductions, though it was unclear how these could be accurately applied to hard-copy only submissions.

Penalty unclear

A number of schools noted that the number of marks to be deducted was unclear. It had been phrased assuming that an assessment was marked out of 100, which was not always the case. The intended meaning was minus five per cent of the maximum available mark from the student's actual mark.

Content with the proposal

The following schools were broadly content with the proposal: SPA, SLLF, SMS, History, Geography, SPIR, SEF, SMD UG, MBBS, Law, and – with caveats – SBM and SEMs.

Proposal 5 (revised)

No policy recommendation is made, but Senate is asked to consider whether and how it wishes to progress the issue of consistency of penalties for assessments exceeding a specified word count.

Proposal 6: Scaling and standard setting

At a Degree Examination Board in July 2014, it was noted that two schools had used mark scaling to a greater extent and in a different manner to standard usage. The matter was discussed at the Board, and following discussions between the affected schools and the Vice-Principal (SETL) it was agreed that work would be undertaken to clarify and codify acceptable practices in scaling and standard setting. This related to scaling that mapped the difficulty of an assessment against the standard QMUL marking schemes, rather than scaling as a possible outcome of the double marking and moderation process (no changes were deemed necessary to that latter policy).

A meeting with representation from all faculties was held to develop ideas for a scaling policy, the result of which is presented below as a proposal. The Group noted that the policy would build upon a number of recent refinements to assessment policies at QMUL, and noted the importance of having process that was clear and accessible to staff, external examiners, and students.

The group agreed that the new policy should be an overarching framework applicable to all faculties and disciplines, within which schools and institutes could operate local policies. These would be set in advance of the marking process, and would be subject to approval from the Subject Examination Board and review by the associated Degree Examination Board.

It was proposed that section five of the Assessment Handbook (Marks and Marking) should be edited to include a new section on scaling and standard setting. References to 'mark scaling' in the pre-existing section on moderation would be amended to read 'mark adjustment' to avoid confusion between the two procedures.

Proposal 6 (original/revised (unchanged))

A new policy on scaling and standard setting, for inclusion in the Assessment Handbook.

Scaling and standard setting

1. Scaling and standard setting covers a range of processes in which marks are reviewed to ensure that the assessment criteria are applicable and properly reflect the academic standards that students are expected to meet. These processes are distinct from moderation in that scaling and standard setting calibrate the difficulty level and other settings against the assessment criteria, and are not intended to address differences between markers or issues related to the quality of marking.
2. Where scaling or standard setting is used, the relevant Subject Examination Board (SEB) must have a formal policy, agreed in advance of the board. Scaling and standard setting policies should not normally be devised as reactive measures to address specific issues, but instead should be a standard part of the assessment process. Policies shall be proposed at SEB level, and approved by the associated Degree Examination Board (DEB), and shall be accessible to staff, external examiners, and students.

3. Scaling and standard setting policies should be developed to take account of the varying expectations in marking at different academic levels, and different assessment types. The standard marking schemes should also be included for reference. The policy should establish appropriate scaling processes that consider expected mark distributions based on the known abilities of the present cohort, and the performance of past cohorts on the same assessment. It may be appropriate, following review of marks across assessments and over a period of time, to establish a predetermined mark range for each marking scheme; where results do not fall within that range, scaling should be considered. However, in the case of very small cohorts, predetermined ranges and statistical comparisons are likely to be of very limited value.

Scaling

4. Scaling may be necessitated by an issue in the assessment process (such as an error in a question), or if the results indicate that the assessment was harder or easier than anticipated by the marking scheme.
5. Scaling will not always be linear, as distortions may only appear at one or two points in the marking range – typically the top and/or the bottom.
6. Should the results of an assessment element fail to adequately map onto the approved marking scale for that assessment, the module organiser and the SEB Chair must review the matter in accordance with the SEB's scaling and standard setting policy.
7. Scaling shall only be applied at the level of an individual element (or sub-element) of assessment and not at the level of the module mark.
8. SEBs must maintain written records of all instances of scaling, and such cases must be included in a SEB's report to its associated Degree Examination Board.

Standard setting

9. Standard setting is principally used in the design of assessments to calibrate the difficulty level. There are nationally accepted approaches to standard setting that may be used by SEBs, including the Angoff method. Some methods will not be suitable for all disciplines. In disciplines that do not set standards nationally, it may not be possible to apply such methods. Where standard setting is used, the appropriate SEB should develop a written policy.

Notes

1. If approved, the new policy would formally come into effect from 2015/16. However, Schools and Institutes would be able to adopt the policy before that point.

Feedback

The vast majority of respondents accepted the recommendation. A number queried the need for such a policy and/or noted that it would not be used in their disciplines at the current time, but the introduction of a general framework for such policies was broadly welcomed.

Length and complexity of policy

Two responses suggested that the policy could be shorter and clearer, but most respondents did not comment on this point. Senate is invited to discuss the phrasing and length of the proposal, but the recommendation has not been revised at this stage.

One response suggested a contradiction within the proposal in the following sentences: "*Scaling and standard setting policies should not normally be devised as reactive measures to address specific issue*" whilst 4 above states: "*Scaling may be necessitated by an issue in the assessment process (such as an error in a question), or if the results indicate that the assessment was harder or easier*

than anticipated by the marking scheme.” This is not a contradiction – the first sentence concerns the policy, which should not be devised each time on an *ad hoc* basis, while the second concerns the actual scaling, which will necessarily be reactive.

Risk to standards and rigour

One school noted that where a cohort performed badly, it was not always a cause for scaling as it might be to do with the cohort’s ability rather than the difficulty level of the paper. This is a matter that should be taken into account by schools and institutes when devising their policies. Maintaining data sets on cohort performance, as well as on performance in the specific module over multiple years, allows this to be factored in.

Effect on individuals

One school felt that the policy should state that calibration should not be used where it would disadvantage an individual. It is not proposed that this should be included; where a paper was judged too easy, it would be correct for one or more students’ marks to be reduced.

Proposal 6 (revised)

Senate is advised to approve the policy on standard setting and scaling as set out above, without amendment, for immediate implementation.

Proposal 7: Mock assessments

The Assessment Governance Review 2013/14 proposed the introduction of January examinations. This was rejected, but Senate agreed to a new consultation exercise to establish other means by which students could experience throughout the year the forms of assessments used for end of year examinations (e.g. invigilated hand-written essay exams, specific types of computer marked exams).

The new consultation proposed that all semester one and full year modules (in all developmental years) should include formative assessment, of the same type as that used in the final summative assessment. This could be a shortened version and need not be conducted under full examination conditions. Students would gain experience in the assessment type, become familiar with the marking scheme, and gain useful feedback. This would assist them in preparing for the end of year exams. These are all points annually flagged as requiring address in the National Student Survey. Conducting an assessment at this stage would also encourage students to engage with module material at an earlier stage. Such assessments could be group-marked by students, allowing them to engage directly with the marking scheme, and become familiar with the expectations for each grade at the relevant academic level.

This proposal could also have reduced the negative effect on students' performance of being faced with an unfamiliar testing format or one that they have not recently practiced. It was not intended to replace other formative assessments that encourage learning.

Proposal 7 (original)

Introduce mock/formative examinations for all semester one/full year modules to provide experience of examination techniques and familiarity with marking criteria.

Notes

1. If approved, the new policy would have taken effect from 2015/16, for all students.
2. The proposal only applied to examination-type assessments.

Feedback

This proposal generated a great deal of feedback, generally along common lines. The majority of schools and institutes supported the initiative to better prepare students for examinations (and other

assessments), but felt that the proposal as it stood was impractical, and in some instances unnecessary. Points raised included:

- It was unclear whether the proposal would be a good practice guide or a requirement. Many respondents, including the Students' Union, felt that it would be better framed as good practice.
- The time spent on the examination and marking would detract from teaching time, and students might see group-marking as a "cop-out".
- Many schools already used summative assessment (e.g. in-class tests) that provided experience of invigilated assessment, or other formative/summative assessments specifically designed to prepare students for end of module assessments.
- It was unclear why semester two modules were not included, given that all assessments took place at the end of the year.
- It was unclear why an examination was needed for every module in every year, rather than one exam in the first year designed to give experience of the assessment type itself.
- It was unclear how the resource requirements for the examinations would be met.

There was general consensus that schools and institutes should prepare students for all assessments through summative and/or formative assessment, and that the means of doing so should be decided by the school/institute in accordance with its own teaching design and subject specialism. The revised proposal makes a good practice policy statement to that effect.

Proposal 7 (revised)

Senate is asked to **consider** the proposal below, and to **agree** on how to take this forward. The new proposal would appear relatively uncontroversial, but Senate may wish to consult upon it.

Schools and Institutes should ensure that the design of their modules provides students with experience of the required assessment techniques and familiarity with the marking schemes. This may include formative or summative preparatory assessments, skills workshops, or other initiatives.

Proposal 8: Borderline classification policy

QMUL adopted a new borderline classification policy for 2014/15, which replaced the previous discretion policies. The new policy is as follows:

1. Students with College Marks within one per cent of a borderline (except at the pass/fail border) shall be determined to fall within the 'zone of consideration';
2. Students with College Marks within 1.5 per cent of a borderline and with significant extenuating circumstances in the final year not taken into account elsewhere may be determined to fall within the zone of consideration. However, if this approach is taken then the extenuating circumstances may not also be used as a reason to raise the classification itself;
3. All students falling within a zone of consideration shall be considered as possible cases for application of the borderline policy;
4. Students falling within the zone of consideration and with at least half of their final year credits (half of all credits at PG level) with marks at the level of the upper classification (or higher), shall be raised to the higher classification. The credits at the higher level may include the dissertation or project, but this is not a requirement;
5. Students falling within the one per cent zone of consideration and not meeting the requirements of point 4, but with significant extenuating circumstances in the final year not taken into account elsewhere shall be raised to the higher classification provided the SEB is confident that – without the effect of the extenuating circumstances – the student would have achieved the higher classification.

It should be made clear that where a student studies on a part time basis, the 'final year' should be the full-time equivalent final year. Without this amendment, part-time students could potentially be raised with only a quarter of these credits at the higher level.

Proposal 8 (original)

Amend point four of the borderline classification policy as follows:

Students falling within the zone of consideration and with at least half of their *full-time equivalent* final year credits (half of all credits at PG level) with marks at the level of the upper classification (or higher), shall be raised to the higher classification. The credits at the higher level may include the dissertation or project, but this is not a requirement.

Feedback

The proposal was uniformly accepted, with many respondents noting that this was just a technical clarification. A suggestion to clarify the phrasing in the new section has been adopted in the revised proposal. It was also noted that the policy does not apply to programmes that do not classify, or that do not classify on the College Mark (notably the MBBS, BDS, and LLB).

Proposal 8 (revised)

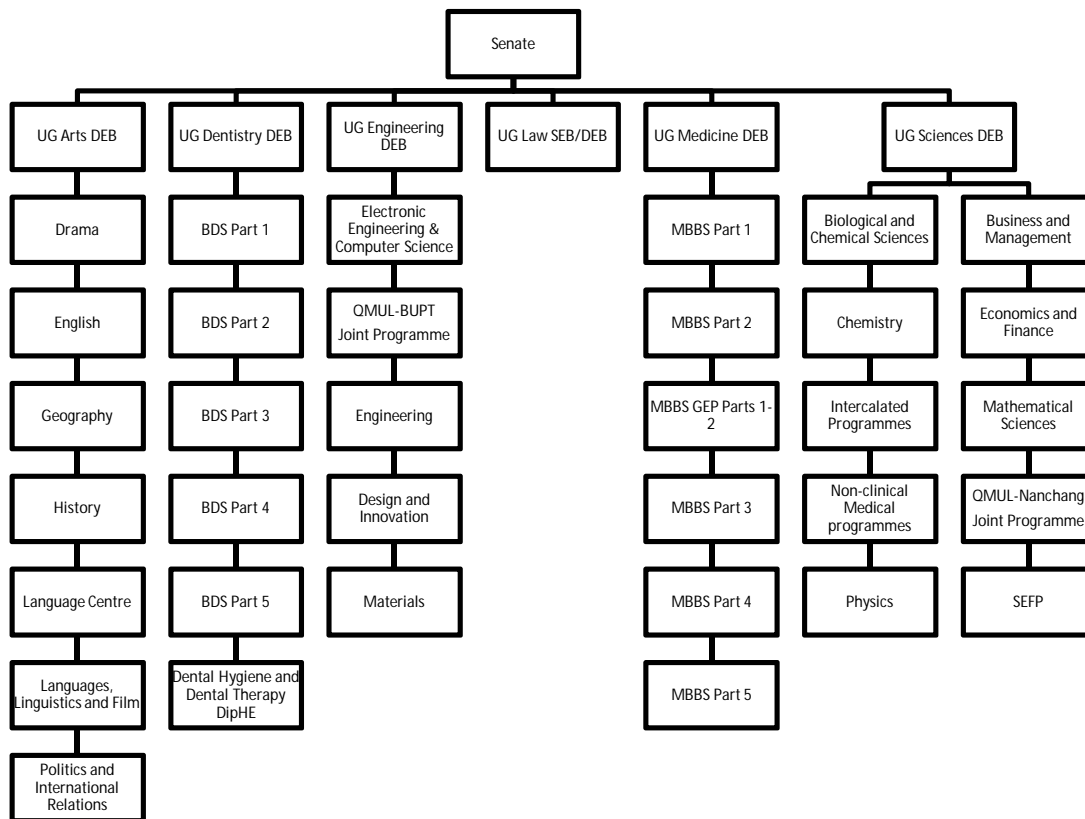
Senate is asked to approve the following amendment to borderline classification policy for immediate implementation, without further consultation:

Students falling within the zone of consideration and with at least half of their final year credits (half of all credits at PG level) with marks at the level of the upper classification (or higher), shall be raised to the higher classification. The credits at the higher level may include the dissertation or project, but this is not a requirement. Where a student studies on a part-time basis, all modules comprising the full-time equivalent final year shall be used in the borderline policy.

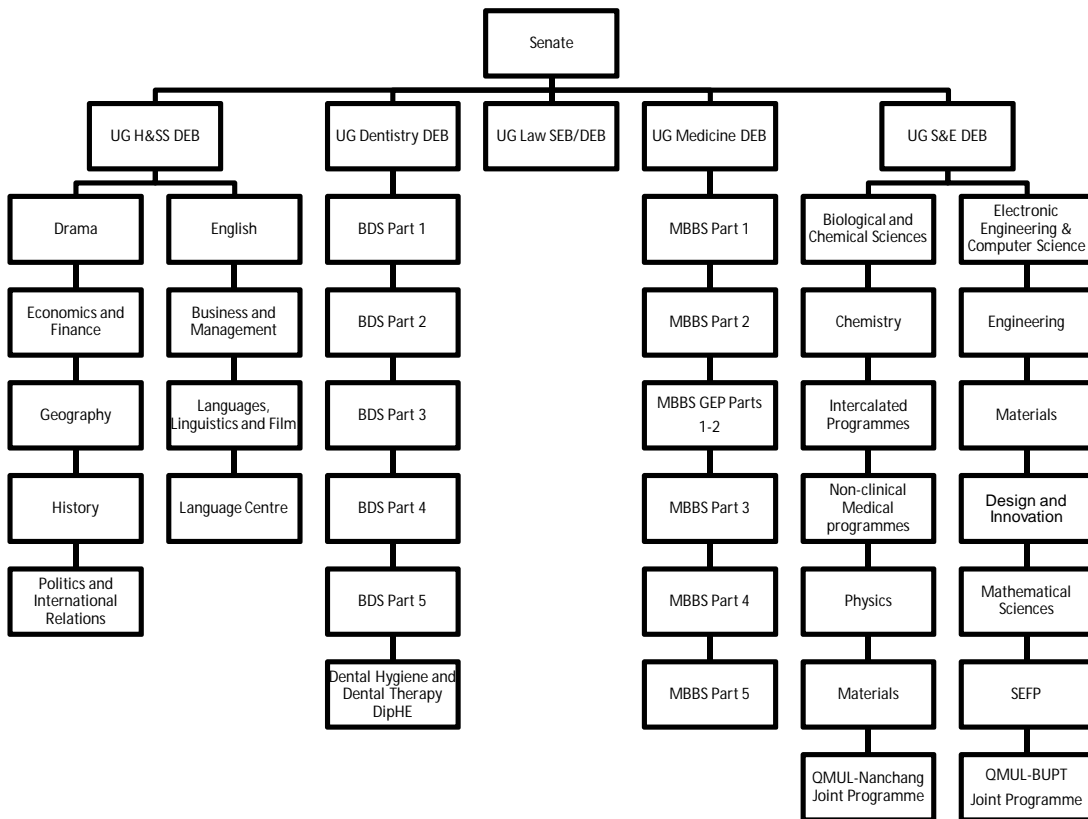
Appendix 1: Existing and proposed SEB and DEB structures (proposal 2)

N.B. Each SEB reports directly to the associated DEB.

Undergraduate Examination Boards - current



Undergraduate Examination Boards - proposed



Postgraduate Examination Boards - current



Postgraduate Examination Boards - proposed



Appendix 2: Full consultation feedback

<p>Proposal 1</p> <p>The quorum for a Subject Examination Board shall be at least 50 per cent of the total membership or five members, whichever is fewer. This shall include the Chair and/or Deputy Chair, and at least one external examiner.</p> <p>Members, including external examiners, may be counted as in attendance if using video conferencing technology, or similar.</p> <p>Exceptionally, a meeting may go ahead without the presence of an external examiner where comments have been received in advance from the external(s), those comments are considered and recorded in the meeting, and the outcomes of the meeting are subsequently agreed by the external(s).</p>	
CCLS	The goal is to lower the quorum to provide more flexibility esp late summer resits- the proposed rule may not due that for very small programmes. A minimum of 3 may be preferable (as a very minimum one External, the Chair/Deputy and one teaching member).
SED	We can accept this proposal in general terms but with one important amendment: that the word 'exceptionally' should be deleted from the final paragraph. We foresee serious difficulties in getting external examiners to attend the September SEBs for late summer resits (even via video conferencing). In our view the measures set out in the rest of the paragraph offer adequate safeguards in terms of quality assurance and will ensure fairness and consistency in decision making at the late summer boards.
SLLF	Accept.
Geography	The School of Geography supports the new quorum rules for internal members of the board but query the expectation that external examiners are normally present at late summer exam boards. The 'exceptional' rule allows for them not to be but I imagine this would be routinely used unless external examiners are willing to travel for a relatively short meeting in late summer. It would be useful to know whether this rule of at least one external examiner also applies to Associate Exam Board and whether external examiners should see Associate student reports to comment upon. I expect it does not but clarity would be helpful on this. If it does then the 'exceptional' rule would also be used as a matter of course.
History	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The reduction of the quorum is eminently sensible. 2. The requirement that an external be present at meetings of the board is more problematic. (Our understanding is that this will be a requirement only for meetings where marks are being considered, but this should be made explicit in the proposal.) Our late summer meeting has invariably been a rubber-stamping exercise in which we collectively confirm marks and thus progression or failure to progress. We consider the presence of an external at this meeting to be unnecessary, and we do not anticipate that the introduction of compulsory Late Summer Resits is going to change this position. We believe that external examiners should only be consulted where there are special circumstances (which may include review of extenuating circumstances). If the proposal is accepted we believe that consultation with an external before the meeting, and approval of outcomes after it, will be a sufficient safeguard. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At stake here is the viability of the externalling system. We already expect a lot of work from our externals, for little in return, and the growth in volume of work has been accompanied by a decline in their power; externals now have very little discretion to do much other than approve marks and comment on our processes. The more rubber-stamping we add to their load – especially if we require their participation at meetings that only have this on their agenda – the harder it will be to find colleagues willing to take on this increasingly unrewarding task. 3. A final issue: we should really be considering the role of externals in resits alongside the role of moderation, and it appears that the policy for this has not yet been developed. If LSRs are under the same regulations as other examination boards, that means the resit cohort is the determining factor, and a cohort of fewer than 10 will need full second marking. This seems unnecessarily prescriptive, and takes no account of the fact that marking for the module will already have been moderated. Would it not make sense – given that the exercise is pass/fail, with implications for progression – to allow moderation on the basis of the full previous cohort? This would ensure that all potential fails were looked at by a second

	pair of eyes, which is what matters most. If that were the case, the burden on the external could then also be alleviated.
SPIR	This is a good idea, but I am not convinced that it is worthwhile having an external come in for our late summer SEB, neither for them nor for us.
SBM	This makes sense given the new rules on borderline students.
SEF	UG: we agree PG: we agree
Law	<p>In our view, the regulations should clearly distinguish between “main” Boards and Late Summer Resit Boards with respect to external examiner attendance.</p> <p>While external examiners presence should normally be expected at the May/June Boards, the same should not be true for LSR boards: relatively few students are concerned and decisions are for the most part the automatic result of application of the regulations with little room for exercise of discretion. What discretion there is is usually related to extenuating circumstances with a large part of the work already done by extenuating circumstances sub-committees. It would not be a sensible use of external examiners’ time to ask them to attend LSR boards and it would be difficult to convince them to attend.</p> <p>Admittedly, the last paragraph allows a Board to take place without an external examiner but this is viewed as “exceptional”. It is problematic to describe something as “exceptional” in the regulations if, in practice, it is the default practice for LSR boards.</p> <p>In our view, therefore, the regulations should make it clear that external examiners presence is not normally expected at LSR boards.</p> <p>While it is true that, with final year resits, LSR boards may have to occasionally consider issues of classification, in relation to which the case for external examiner involvement is stronger, this should still remain a relatively small number of cases that could be handled in another way, such as consultation of external examiners by e-mail, for instance.</p> <p>As regards the mechanisms for oversight/consultation of external examiners when no external examiner attends the meeting, in the last paragraph of the proposal, it seems to us that more flexibility could be introduced. While comments from external examiners prior to the meeting may be useful, there might be cases where an issue does not surface until the meeting, in which case there should be some possibility of seeking views/comments from external after the meeting and allowing the Chair to open a written/e-mail procedure for consultation of board members in appropriate cases. As currently drafted, this would strictly speaking not fall within the parameters of the proposal since all that is envisaged is that the external(s) agree the outcome without any possibility for variation. A lot of decision-making in Board of Examiners is routine, mechanistic application of the academic regulations, for which external examiners have little to contribute. What is needed is enough flexibility to allow for meaningful consultation of externals when that consultation is useful and can make difference to outcomes. We would propose that this part of the proposal could perhaps be revised broadly along the following lines: A meeting may go ahead without the presence of an external examiner provided that measures are taken to ensure effective participation of external examiners in the decisions of the Board, bearing in mind the nature of the decision being taken, the powers of the Board and the requirements of the academic regulations. Such measures may include seeking comments from external examiners prior to the meeting, approval of outcomes and e-mail consultation of external examiners and other board members as well as other measures regarded by the Chair as necessary to ensure appropriate consultation of external examiners.</p>
SMD PG	<p>Attendance at a Subject Examination Board is often dependent on the business under consideration and so can change from one meeting to the next. It was felt that the proposals were general enough to accommodate these fluctuations</p> <p>It was suggested that attendance requirements should be extended to encompass telephone contact.</p>
SMD UG	Agreed.
MBBS	MB BS is supportive of this proposal.
Dentistry	We concur with this suggestion. However, the current timings of the Postgraduate Subject examination boards for Dentistry preclude the presence of the external examiners for the different courses. This perhaps could be noted as an exception for the final comment above.
SPA	Accepted.

SMS	No issue with the change, noted that we feel it is lenient for larger schools. Accept.
SEMS	We don't have a problem with relaxing the quorum requirements, but the proposal seems to be going a bit too far and may be sending the wrong message to staff if adopted. For example the proposal will allow us to run the Engineering UG SEB with only the externals and Chair present.
SBCS	SBCS supports a reduction in the SEB quorum. However, the proposed minimum may be too extreme; an SEB could be quorate with only two internal examiners (the Chair and Deputy Chair) and three external examiners. It would be helpful to require "senior examiners" for each discipline within each School to be required to attend to ensure that there are at least as many (if not more) internal than external examiners in attendance.
EECS	Regulation appreciated. This is and was good practise for small boards (e.g. DL students) where few key members of staff were present and the external was online (voice over internet).
CAPD	This looks eminently fine to me
Stu. Union	QMSU supports this proposal.

Proposal 2	
Restructure the Degree Examination Boards to align with the faculty system.	
CCLS	This seems a good idea.
SED	Agreed.
SLLF	UG: Accept PG: Reject. The rationale for the restructuring of DEBs is not particularly convincing. Nobody in Geography or SPIR last year complained that the Arts PG DEB was confirming the occasional award at MSc or MRes. The proposal is to 'better balance the size of the boards'. This claim is made without giving us any figures. We understand that the vast majority of PGT students at QM study Law, Econ, or Bus Management related programmes and that this is a reason why the old DEB was disaggregated and restructured under Alasdair King's predecessor, Adam Fagan. Law currently has its own DEB and Econ and BM are in Science. The Arts DEB works very well and smoothly at the moment and there were no concerns about its structure last year from internal members or from the External. We fear is that we will return to the huge DEB that existed up to a few years ago that was, apparently, at times impractical and unwieldy. We would like to insist that we see the numbers of students to be processed at the proposed new DEBs and compare them to the numbers under the current system. As Chair of the Arts DEB, Alasdair King argues that we should only make changes first, where there are existing problems and secondly, where the proposals are likely to improve the situation. We don't see a strong case made here that there are existing problems, and we don't see a case yet that the proposed restructure will improve the situation.
Geography	The School of Geography has no objection to this restructuring.
History	This makes clear sense; we are happy with it.
SPIR	Good idea.
SBM	Accept. Sensible, logical and overdue.
SEF	UG: we agree. PG: we agree
Law	This proposal does not affect the undergraduate Law SEB/DEB and we have no objection to it.
SMD PG	Agreed with no additional comments
SMD UG	We have some concern about moving from a Science DEB to a S&E DEB in view of the increased contribution of SMD to UG Science degrees. We are content to be pragmatic but would prefer a solution that included SMD in title/remit. (We estimate approx 10-15% of students will be on programmes that SMD is formally responsible for.)
MBBS	MB BS is supportive of this proposal. No change to the MB BS structure has been identified.
Dentistry	We concur with the rationalisation of the procedure for the non SMD and also recognition of the uniqueness of the Institute of Dentistry undergraduate and postgraduate courses.
SPA	Accepted.
SMS	Accept.
SEMS	Fine in principle, but some thought needs to be given to the SEB dealing with the iBSc in Biomedical Engineering and Clinical Materials. The programme is currently considered by the Engineering UG SEB and we would prefer continuing this as all the modules are delivered as part of Engineering or Materials degree programmes. The results of deliberations in the Engineering UG SEB could be reported to the SEB in SMD.
SBCS	SBCS supports the proposed restructure / realignment. The only specific consideration to raise would be the new biomedical BSc programmes proposed and managed by SMD which should be considered by the same DEB as all sister programmes (specifically B990 Biomedical Sciences). This would be achieved by a common biomedical SEB that should report to a single DEB (rather than to one for FS&E and another for SMD).
EECS	Ok.
CAPD	Now these link directly to Faculties makes the Educational Development SEB look more out of place. The proposal is fine as long as we in the CAPD get timely information about exam boards, etc.
Stu. Union	QMSU supports this proposal.

Proposal 3	
The maximum duration of study shall be the normal duration of study (as defined in the programme specification) plus one year.	
CCLS	<p>1) Agreed, on the basis that this is about completion years before a student runs out of time to take exams.</p> <p>2) A change of this rule would discriminate against mature students, part-time students, esp students who study later in life with a multitude of other commitments (paid work, family, health). If we embrace the concept of life-long learning and more specialist learning during an established career we need to provide these students with a degree of flexibility. So for example for our Distance Learning LLM/Diploma programme the max duration is six years (normal part time duration is two years) as some students need to cope with other commitments and therefore need flexibility. This programme has a completion rate of nearly 100% which is a success given the high attrition rate for international DL programmes. But we need to give the students the flexibility to do the degree within their own time. If we want to internationalise and diversify our programmes and diversify the type of students we attract- we need flexibility.</p>
SED	<p>We agree with this proposal with one amendment: that 2.b in the Notes ('years spent resitting (or first sitting) out of attendance') should become 1.c, as follows:</p> <p>6. The maximum duration of study does not include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> periods of interruption (including primary carer leave); first takes (where a student repeats a year on the grounds of extenuating circumstances). years spent resitting (or first sitting) out of attendance. <p>7. The maximum duration of study does include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> years spent in attendance (excepting first takes, as above); <p>retakes (where a student repeats a year on the grounds of academic failure).</p>
SLLF	<p>Seven of our eight departments are happy to accept this but the department of German would like to reject for the following reason:</p> <p>The German department felt that there were potential dangers involved when it comes to special cases, eg. when a student misses the late summer resit or other complex cases. It would need to be made sure that resits out of attendance would still be possible for those students who obtain extenuating circumstances for late summer resits.</p>
Geography	The School of Geography supports this proposal.
History	We have no problems with this proposal.
SPIR	We are happy with this.
SBM	Accept.
SEF	<p>UG: we agree.</p> <p>PG: we agree</p>
Law	<p>As an initial point, it is somewhat perplexing that the clock runs against out of attendance first sitters (point 2b in the notes), who by definition have extenuating circumstances, and this could potentially give rise to a breach by the College of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010, let alone be objected to by the OIA.</p> <p>More generally, however, it is not clear to us what the purpose of this modification is. Maximum period of study are usually meant to constitute 'long-stop' deadlines to ensure that students complete their study within a reasonable period of time and, in particular, avoid the situation of the knowledge and skills acquired in the early stages have become 'stale' by the time the student graduates. While long, such deadlines are therefore normally absolute"= deadlines, which keep on running even when the student has extenuating circumstances, first takes, etc... This clearly is not the purpose of the proposal since interruption and first takes do not count towards the maximum duration of study and the one extra year would be too short for a long-stop absolute maximum duration.</p> <p>The proposal seems to be an indirect way to place an additional limit to the number of attempts. If so, it is not entirely clear why this is needed. As noted in the proposal, outside law, the vast majority of students will never resit out of attendance since they have two attempts that will be exhausted after the late summer resits. In the majority of departments, the persons most likely to be concerned about maximum duration rules are students who are or have been first taking</p>

	<p>or first sitting or interrupting students, viz. students to whom the maximum duration of study does not apply or should not apply.</p> <p>Thus, while the rule does not seem to serve a clear purpose for the majority of departments, it has the potential to affect law since law students, in accordance with the rules adopted by the legal professional bodies for qualifying law degrees, are allowed three attempts at examinations and are therefore susceptible to resit out of attendance and therefore more likely to be affected by the proposal, which would result in a student being deprived of their three attempts if they have had three attempts in a previous year, or even 2 or 1 attempt but sat out of attendance the following year.</p> <p>It should be noted that legal professional bodies have a 'long-stop' maximum duration of studies of six years for qualifying law degrees and we would not have strong objections to such a system but we feel that the proposal of normal duration+1 year would have a negative impact on the law department when most other law schools typically align themselves to professional QLD requirements for these kinds of rules.</p>
SMD PG	Agreed with no additional comments
SMD UG	Agreed.
MBBS	<p>The MB BS course can be up to 6 years (including intercalation) and if this proposal were to be accepted, the School would like to have an exception added for MB BS students. The proposal seeks to not include "first takes (where a students repeats a year on the grounds of extenuating circumstances)"; note 1b, however the School would like to see this included as part of "retakes (where a student repeats a year on the grounds of academic failure); note 1c. The School would like to see note 1c reworded for the MB BS course to read, "<i>ab initio</i> retakes (where a student repeats the year in its entirety on the grounds of extenuating circumstances or academic failure)". The MB BS course would then have the exception of "The maximum duration of study shall be the normal duration of study (as defined in the programme specification) plus two years". This would give double the permissible length of BSc students.</p> <p>Therefore, the notes to support the above for MB BS should read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The maximum duration of study does not include the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) periods of interruption (including primary carer leave) b) periods taken out of the course for intercalated degrees c) first takes (where a students repeats the year in its entirety on the grounds of extenuating circumstances) d) periods taken out of the course following deregistration and successful appeal 2. The maximum duration of study does include the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) years spent in-attendance (first sitting or resitting) b) <i>ab initio</i> retakes (where a students repeats the year in its entirety on the grounds of academic failure)
Dentistry	<p>This seems a fair approach, noting the flexibility provided by extenuating circumstances and interruptions etc.</p> <p>A point for clarification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occasionally some students need to retake a year to consolidate clinical skills. This is not always a result of extenuating circumstances but may be a result of reflection leading to a recognition that extra time is required. How would this be dealt with under this approach. • The maximum may be affected external licensing bodies e.g. GDC; GMC and these may need to be taken into account
SPA	Accepted.
SMS	Accept, after some discussion.
SEMS	We agree that it is sensible to consider reducing the maximum duration of study, but feel that the proposed reduction may be too drastic. Also careful consideration should be given to how this would be affected by transfers between BEng and MEng programmes
SBCS	SBCS supports a reduction in the maximum duration of study to a defined number of years, rather than a degree-specific extension. (When SBCS students switch back and forth between

	BSc and MSci programmes in Biochemistry, Chemistry and Pharm. Chem., the maximum duration of study can change from 8 to 6 back up to 8 years dependent on their academic progress.) SBCS notes that a maximum duration that is the normal duration of study plus TWO years (inclusive of any interruptions of studies and deferred first takes) may be easier to manage (avoiding such a long list of exclusions).
EECS	Agreed.
CAPD	This seems reasonable.
Stu. Union	<p>QMSU would like to recommend adding a third clause under <i>Notes 1</i>. The clause would be:</p> <p><i>1.c. where a student had valid extenuating circumstances and has to defer.</i></p> <p>QMSU would also like to recommend that the following change be made to <i>Notes 2</i>:</p> <p>Delete: <i>The maximum duration of study does include the following:</i></p> <p>Insert: <i>The maximum duration of study normally includes the following:</i></p>

Proposal 4	
Where an assignment is submitted late (and there are no extenuating circumstances), five per cent of the total marks available shall be deducted for each 24 hour period after the set submission time. An assignment submitted 14 calendar days or more after the deadline shall be awarded a mark of zero (ONS, as if it had not been submitted); assignments may be marked for feedback purposes only at the discretion of staff.	
CCLS	While students are understandably negotiating for softer rules on this, it is not necessarily to their educational benefit. Late Submission Penalties may well reflect different cultures in different disciplines. For lawyers, one of the main learning objectives in a law degree is time management and the importance of strict deadlines. Submitting court papers after a deadline will do no good for a client! The policy as drafted may well invite students to gamble to see whether if they have 2 days more they could improve their marks by 12%. Hence leading to a substantial number of late submissions, undermining the deadline and being unfair to those students who do submit on time. Surely the only point of a late submissions policy is to prevent hardship, not to compensate for a student's bad time management. A much simpler and clearer rule would achieve this (eg 10% off if 24 hours late; 20% off if 48 hours late- thereafter mark of zero). As long as students are clearly told the submission deadlines and late submission policy there should be no issue (Induction, Student Handbook, Supervision Process). We consider deadlines to be part of the learning process of professional life. If this proposal is adopted, we would request that the LLM programme be granted an exemption.
SED	<p>SED cannot approve this proposal, which we consider both punitive and potentially difficult to administer. Assessment by coursework is the norm in SED: very few students are assessed by written examination after Year 1. In 2014-15 we will assess and process more than 14,500 coursework assignments (approximately 98% of all assessment in the School) which might be subject to late-work penalties and this number will increase next year when we will have a larger final-year undergraduate cohort. Our existing policies for late assignments, which are a simplified (and in our view more manageable) version of Proposal 4, work well and we see no compelling reason to change them. Where lateness cannot be excused by extenuating circumstances the following penalties currently apply in SED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 24 hours late: 5 marks deducted • Up to two weeks late: 10 marks deducted • Two weeks or more late: the maximum mark will be a bare pass (40% for UG; 50 for PGT%) <p>The clarity and simplicity of our current policy has been an important factor in its success and acceptance by both students and staff in the School.</p> <p>When we first introduced a system of penalties for late work in 2009 we implemented a daily sliding scale of marks deductions very similar to those described in Proposal 4 but the number of individual assignments submitted to the School made it cumbersome and very time-consuming to administer. Proposal 4 as it stands would have a negative impact on our students and would involve a significant increase in administrative workload. It should be considered in the context of the previous Assessment Governance Review, which made QMUL's regulations for progression and final award significantly more stringent. Proposal 4 would further tighten the screw, especially on students assessed principally by coursework, and would do nothing to improve student retention, currently a matter of pressing concern.</p>
SLLF	Clarification is required about whether the proposal means 5 marks or 5%. Apart from that, we are happy to accept.
Geography	The School of Geography supports this proposal. It is already our practice.
History	We are strongly opposed to this. We feel that our system of penalising lateness down to a minimum of 40, and a final April deadline for assignments, works well. The 0F proposal risks demoralising students who have temporary problems, with potentially serious consequences for retention. We do not believe that it encourages students to 'play the system', and in any case the new LSR regime will give them a much more enticing opportunity to do so.
SPIR	This is already SPIR policy, so we are happy to sign up for this. However, we propose that a mark of 0FL is given where a student has attempted an assessment, albeit too late, and a mark of 0NS where the student has not attempted an assessment (that is, non-submission).
SBM	Accept.
SEF	UG: the proposed formula seems well designed. However, it should be clarified that the policy does not apply to all types of coursework and we believe that the same logic as to proposal 5 below applies. To be specific, across the various schools and the many modules there are

	<p>many different types of coursework, types that may differ rather fundamentally in many important ways. Allowing late submissions and applying the formula proposed may not be appropriate from a practical or academic point of view. For example, with weekly online tests, with 240 students submitting each 12 online tests, or 2880 tests in total, the bookkeeping of late submissions would seem prohibitively costly. Some pieces of coursework may also be too closely related to material discussed in class, such that waiting until after the next class may give students an advantage that substantially exceeds the 5 marks deducted per day.</p> <p>Therefore, we propose to apply the formula included in the current proposal. And then to add: "Schools and institutes are not required to apply this deduction scheme to all pieces of coursework. However, it must be made clear to students in the module material where the standard deduction scheme will and will not be applied.</p> <p>Where schools and institutes do not use the standard deduction scheme for some or all assignments they must make clear to students what rules apply to the piece of coursework concerned."</p> <p>PG: We agree that this policy should be applied to only some types of course works and to the Dissertation.</p>
Law	<p>As phrased, the reference to marks "available" could be read as suggesting that the maximum mark diminishes by 5 point each 24 hours (viz. maximum mark is 95 after 24 hours, then 90 after 48 hours, etc.), with the consequence that, for instance, a delay of 6 days would have no impact on the mark unless that mark would otherwise have been over 70 ($70=100-(5 \times 6 \text{days})$). Assuming that the intention is that 5 marks be deducted from the mark for each 24 hours, a clearer wording would be preferable.</p> <p>On the substance rather than wording, we have no strong objection of principle to the proposal. We feel, though, that the deduction should be proportional to the value of the piece of work concerned in the overall, otherwise it would create inequalities between modules which have multiples pieces of work. One solution would be to express the deduction in percentage terms by reference to the value of the piece of work concerned rather than number of points as such.</p>
SMD PG	<p>It was felt that there was a difference between undergraduate and postgraduate students and that this should be reflected in the regulations</p> <p>A number of postgraduate students study part-time while working full-time. It was felt that it would not be appropriate to treat them in the same manner as you would undergraduate students</p> <p>There was agreement that a consistent approach should be applied for all coursework across all postgraduate programmes</p> <p>However, a number of different approaches have been adopted across a variety of programmes over the years and this was reflected in the differences of opinion</p> <p>The following points were raised if the proposal were adopted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It might lead to a higher percentage of delayed submissions as students spend extra time on their work for a loss of only 5% per day • Examiners shouldn't be kept waiting two weeks just in case a student submits late work • It would present difficulties for distance learning programmes as electronic submission is often unreliable
SMD UG	<p>Agreed [This has generated a bit of discussion as all programmes have their own rules they are used to. Overall consensus is that there is sufficient merit in a consistent rule to support this.]</p>
MBBS	<p>MB BS is supportive of this proposal.</p>
Dentistry	<p>In general we would support the standardisation of the penalty. Two items of note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BDS and DCP courses, however, have a pass mark of 50% and therefore the student would fail the assignment if it was submitted more than 10 days after the submission rather than 14 days. • Clarification of the term 'assignment' is required as this proposal could not be applied to patient based assessments that are an integral part of the IoD clinical programmes.
SPA	<p>Major concerns.</p>

	<p>This would not worked with the methods of assessment integral to a physics degree. The vast majority of our coursework is formed of weekly mathematical exercises with each student submitting one exercise per week for each module. The adds up to 1,600 items of coursework per week for the School. Current policy is that students are not allowed to submit exercises late and that students with ECs are exempted from that week's exercise(s). We publish the exercise solutions a day or two after the weekly submission deadline so that students get quick and relevant feedback as soon as possible. Obviously we could not publish solutions if there were still exercises pending from some students.</p> <p>We suggest that a threshold is introduced for this proposal, whereby only individual elements of assessment that count for more than 10% of a module are subject to the late submission rules. This would exempt our weekly courseworks that are typically worth only 1% of the module.</p>
SMS	<p>Disagree strongly, we believe it should be guidelines only. Within the School we have processes that work and are tailored to our subject needs. Do not accept.</p> <p>If this must be policy, it absolutely needs to be restricted to assessment components worth more than 30% of module mark reflecting the practice with school based discipline panels.</p>
SEMS	<p>As learning to work to deadlines is an important skill, we actually think that the proposed 5% is too lenient. Moreover, the proposal should consider the distinction between hard copy and electronic submission: would students automatically lose 15% if they would fail to make a Friday deadline?</p> <p>We further feel that the proposal is too rigid as it may prevent provision of quick feedback on weekly assignments.</p>
SBCS	<p>SBCS welcomes the introduction of a clearly defined, College wide policy, addressing local variations in practice which are inconsistent and easily appealed. However, the wording implies no penalty for work submitted within a 24 hour 'grace period', and that the penalty incurred between 24 hours and 47h 59min would only by a 5% mark reduction. This fails to underscore the importance of deadlines in professional life, and could lead to strategic late submissions (e.g. a student elects to submit 2 days late if that allows them to improve their submission by at least 10%). SBCS would prefer a harsher penalty (10% deduction) for any work not submitted (without EC's) by the deadline, and then a 5% step up in penalty for each working day thereafter. This is to help students develop the graduate attribute of an ability to work to deadlines (not simply as a punishment).</p>
EECS	<p>5% per day is a good guideline.</p> <p>14 calendar days feels too long. We currently allow for 5 working days. If the submission is open for 14 days after deadline, this means that feedback (solutions) cannot be discussed before final closure. Question is whether one uses working days or calendar days. Working days can run Mo-Fri or Fri-Th, where one could argue that students are advantaged if the WE is part of it.</p> <p>For 14 days, the max penalty is 70%. For 5 days, 25%. Is 70% realistic? Again, this is a point for a shorter period than 14 calendar days.</p> <p>Taking things into consideration, it appears that seven calendar days could be best.</p>
CAPD	<p>have no problem with the late mark docking bit. I do think that not giving feedback on late work will further entrench the feeling that marks are the most important thing about assessment – staff ought to be obliged to give feedback on all work, in my opinion.</p>
Stu. Union	<p>QMSU recommends that the proposal be amended to read as follows:</p> <p><i>Where an assignment is submitted late, five percent of the total marks available shall be deducted for each 24 hour period after the set submission time; marks shall be capped at forty per cent for work submitted 7 calendar days after the set deadline. After a further 7 days (at 14 calendar days after the set submission date), the assignment is to be awarded with a mark of zero (ONS).</i></p>

Proposal 5	
Schools wishing to impose a mark deduction for over-length work shall adopt a standard tolerance of 10 per cent over the specified word limit. Beyond that limit, a standard penalty of five marks deducted shall apply.	
Schools and institutes are not required to apply the penalty to all assessments. However, it must be made clear to students in the module material where the standard penalty will and will not be applied.	
Where schools and institutes do not use the standard penalty for some or all assignments they can (and should) still take the length of the assignment into account as part of the normal marking process (for example, whether the material is presented clearly and concisely, or whether it is rambling and incoherent).	
There shall be no statutory penalty for under-length work, which shall be marked in accordance with the standard assessment scheme.	
CCLS	We do not consider this appropriate and would not apply a standard penalty.
SED	<p>A difficulty with Proposal 5 is that there is no incentive for a student who exceeds the specified word length to limit the extent of the overshoot. The same penalty applies whether the word limit is exceeded by one word or by two thousand. Consequently, we would prefer to retain our existing policy, which is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work over the 10% allowance will be penalised by 2 percentage points per 100 words or part thereof • Penalties will be applied by markers and explained to students in feedback • Under-length work will not be penalised. <p>We have found this policy straightforward to implement because over-length writing beyond the 10% allowance is a relatively unusual occurrence and certainly a much smaller problem than late work.</p>
SLLF	SLLF would like to continue with the current practice of examiners using discretion/judgement: work submitted with a word count of over 10% above the specified limit will be considered deficient in handling the assignment brief and any such deficiency will be reflected in the grade.
Geography	The School of Geography supports this proposal which allows both standardisation of practice when a penalty system is desired and sound principles for addressing word length as part of the normal marking process.
History	This is our current policy, and we are happy with it.
SPIR	<p>The current SPIR policy for all assessments is to take the length of the assignment into account in the normal marking process rather than having an automatic mark deduction. We have trialled the latter approach in the past and found it unworkable. Word counting every submission in order to ensure parity of a common policy at UG and PGT level is unworkable. We also note that the fact that the proposal allows Schools not to impose the penalty means that there will still be variation of the kind that, allegedly, leads to confusion on the part of students.</p> <p>We do not plan to introduce the standard penalty for any of our assessments. Some Schools may, and to make the policy clearer we suggest:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clarifying that five marks are deducted whatever the excess over the standard tolerance (if this is indeed what is meant). 2. Schools wishing to use the standard penalty should apply it across all assessments, as otherwise it will be confusing to students for the same reasons that the current differences in policy are confusing to them.
SBM	We do not see the need for a 10% tolerance. If there is a word limit, then it should be fixed and any student exceeding the limit should be subject to a penalty. We do not support the proposal if it includes the 10% tolerance as expressed in paragraph 1. We do support paragraphs 2, 3 and 4.
SEF	<p>UG: We agree with the proposal because we think that it is desirable to avoid a fixed, uniform rule for all schools and all modules. We have recently agreed on a policy that is in line with the above recommendation and states:</p> <p>“Work that exceeds the stated word limit is noted in the feedback and reflected in the grade awarded. In this case, it should be made clear to students, either in the design of marking criteria or in a policy to be included in the student handbook, that work that is over the limit</p>

	<p>shows a failure to synthesise material and edit the work so as to present arguments/data concisely.”</p> <p>PG: We agree, however we think that this should not be applied to Midterm tests, which are a set of practical and theoretical questions where students have the opportunity to show their knowledge and which run "in a classroom". As well, it seems a very costly policy to be implemented for weekly assignments.</p>
Law	We have no objection to this proposal.
SMD PG	<p>There was disagreement as to how this issue should be tackled</p> <p>On the one hand, it was felt that no penalty should be applied as the length of the assignment should be taken into account as part of the normal marking process</p> <p>However, others agreed that a penalty should be applied although felt that 5% would not be a sufficient deterrent and was too lenient</p> <p>It was also felt that adopting a 10% tolerance level would just be setting an alternative word limit</p> <p>There was also a suggestion that anything over the specified word limit should not be read or marked</p> <p>Another suggestion was that students should be required to indicate the word count as part of their submission</p> <p>There was general agreement that there should be no statutory penalty for under-length work</p>
SMD UG	Agreed [Has also generated some discussion, but consensus is to support a consistent approach.]
MBBS	MB BS is supportive of this proposal, but would not implement the policy of mark deduction.
Dentistry	<p>The implication of this proposal seems to be that the maximum penalty for anything greater than 10% over the word limit can only be a reduction of 5 marks. There was some concern over this and thus</p> <p>2 suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could there be a gradation of penalty as has been suggested for the late submission. • the penalty should be a % of the total to allow for variation in mark schemes
SPA	Accepted, probably not relevant to any assessment in SPA.
SMS	Accept.
SEMS	Agreed, with the caveat that some consideration needs to be given to the question how this can be honestly/accurately implemented in cases of hard copy submission only.
SBCS	<p>SBCS again welcomes the introduction of a clearly defined College wide policy which addresses local variations in practice which are inconsistent and easily appealed. However, an explicit definition of a 10% tolerance band does not prepare students for a graduate career: if a journal or a funding body has a 250 word limit for their abstract, they mean 250 words (not 275 words) and may simply reject any paper/grant application that falls foul of that limit. Likewise, a 6 page funding application can't be 6.5 pages long without consequence. There is the danger that students come to regard a '1000 word essay' as actually an 1100 word essay, a '10,000 word dissertation' as being 11,000 words, etc. To avoid this, SBCS contends that penalties need to operate for any work which exceeds the limit and that penalties should be meaningful (e.g. a 5 mark deduction for work which exceeds the specified length by up to 10%, a 10 mark deduction for any work which is between 10% and 25% over length and a 20 mark deduction for submissions exceeding the stipulated limit by more than 25%). Although this may seem Draconian, lesser penalties may again encourage students to exceed limits strategically – it would be worth a 5% penalty if the extra text increases the raw grade (before application of any penalty) by at least 5%. Again, this is to help students develop the graduate attribute of working within defined limits (rather than as a punishment).</p>
EECS	To clarify: Given 5 pages is the limit, this means that 5.5 pages are accepted, and 6 pages are too long, and so are 10 pages. We understand that a "standard" penalty is a flat

	<p>penalty in the sense that too long means -5 marks, independent of the submitted length, independent of the mark.</p> <p>What happens for the hypothetical case of 100 pages? Should there be a scale for a penalty that is proportional to length? As for the proposal, too long is binary.</p> <p>How are 5 marks to be understood? We mark CW out of 15 or out of 100, which is why a total of marks would have very different effects. Therefore, it needs to be clarified what are 5 marks. 5% of 100%?</p> <p>Another question is whether the examiner actually should consider the over-length part in his/her assessment.</p> <p>In summary, we propose to rephrase this proposal. For example, the policy should state that the over-length part is not considered for the assessment, because the submission did not follow instructions. This is the policy for exam papers (if a student answered more than the required number of questions). The penalty could be proportional to the mark or could be flat, where in the latter case, the notion of “standard penalty of five marks” needs to be clarified.</p>
CAPD	<p>I think this should be clearer and more standardised – I cannot see that this proposal improves the current confusing system, all it does is apply a standard penalty, rather than standardising practice.</p>
Stu. Union	<p>QMSU agrees with paragraphs 1 and 4 of the proposal as it strongly believes in the adoption of standardised penalty across all schools.</p> <p>Therefore, QMSU believes that paragraphs 2 and 3 of the proposal should be deleted as these would allow discretion within schools and thus do not support the notion of a standardised penalty.</p>

Proposal 6	
A new policy on scaling and standard setting, for inclusion in the Assessment Handbook.	
CCLS	This may not make sense in law- each answer will be different and other than general criteria, standard setting becomes meaningless. Scaling discriminates against students as cohorts in international postgraduate programmes vary each year and it would mean pressing students into arbitrary models, which they as individuals do not fulfil.
SED	SED does not employ scaling and standard setting as described in Proposal 6 and does not have a view on the desirability of the proposed changes.
SLLF	The proposal is acceptable, although it is not clear why it is considered necessary.
Geography	The School of Geography does not object to this proposal but also does not intend to adopt a scaling or standard setting policy.
History	We do not currently use scaling or standard setting (except in the moderation process which is as separate issue). We can however envisage circumstances where it might be appropriate, especially as we develop new, experimental modes of assessment which might take more than one year to bed down. We therefore welcome the proposal.
SPIR	We are happy with this. Both our UG and PGT handbooks have level descriptors and detailed marking criteria.
SBM	Accept.
SEF	UG: as far as we are able to interpret this proposal, it seems in line with our current practices and we have no objections to it. However, we would like to point out that it is formulated in a rather obscure way which seems to make compliance (in the rare cases where the policy is needed) extremely complicated. PG: We are in favour of the scaling but the standard setting, like the Angoff method, looks complicated to be implemented.
Law	It is our understanding that this proposal would only be of relevance to schools who use scaling in an ex-ante standard/calibration mechanism and would not affect in any way the possibility for examiners, external examiners and board of examiners to adopt corrective measures to ensure consistency and appropriateness of marking standards when a problem has been identified at the marking stage. If that is so, we would have no objection to it but note that it would require rephrasing of the assessment handbook, since the handbook does use the term "scaling" for such corrective measures.
SMD PG	Agreed no additional comments
SMD UG	Agreed [Most courses don't use this but may consider whether they wish to be able to.]
MBBS	MB BS is supportive of this proposal, as standard setting has been a part of our assessments for a number of years.
Dentistry	The IoD concurs with this approach
SPA	Accepted.
SMS	Accept.
SEMS	Agreed.
SBCS	SBCS is broadly supportive of this proposal, but concerns arise from paragraph 4 and the identification of an "assessment that was harder or easier than anticipated by the marking scheme". This seem to imply a move to norm-referencing, whereby the marks of any module with a preponderance of high or low grades are simply scaled such that the majority of students obtain B and C grades irrespective of effort. This could deny marks to students who have genuinely exceeded expectations through their own effort and gift marks to students who failed to meet the expected standards. In the latter event, students can collude (consciously or subconsciously) to perform badly in an assessment, safe in the knowledge that their marks will then be uplifted by scaling. Staff in SBCS have experience of application of the Cohen method, and the consequences have been as referred to in this response; if a group of students all struggle with an assessment, the mark depends on the performance at the 95 th centile rather than the assessment criteria. Based on that experience, it is hard to see that scaling could be applied to assessments in which students have performed poorly without compromising academic standards and rigour.
EECS	The length of this proposal speaks for itself. It might be worthwhile to consider a more concise proposal. Our practise is in line with the lengthy proposal, but there are few things not mentioned in the proposal:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avoid scaling wherever possible. - If scaling is required, prepare options before the exam board. Report options to exam board – board decides. - Base scaling options on the mean and median (over exam, and per question). - Consider the difficulty of questions, and maximum mark a good student could achieve. Leads to a weighting over questions. - Calibration of marks must not disadvantage individuals! This is not explicitly mentioned in the proposal?
CAPD	This is fine – I do not think, however, that disciplines outside Medicine and Dentistry are likely to make any moves to adopt either of these approaches
Stu. Union	<p>QMSU recognises why scaling occurs in SMD, but believes that this would cause more disquiet in other faculties and/or subjects, where students would not readily understand why/how this occurs.</p> <p>QMSU notes that 2 above states: <i>'Scaling and standard setting policies should not normally be devised as reactive measures to address specific issue'</i> whilst 4 above states: <i>'Scaling may be necessitated by an issue in the assessment process (such as an error in a question), or if the results indicate that the assessment was harder or easier than anticipated by the marking scheme.'</i></p> <p>We believe that these two statements appear contradictory (in that an error in a question, or an unanticipated result are specific issues) and need to be further clarified.</p>

Proposal 7 Introduce mock/formative examinations for all semester one/full year modules to provide experience of examination techniques and familiarity with marking criteria.	
CCLS	Not clear whether this will be mandated or recommended. We do consider such practices to be an important part of the learning process. However, as we are moving to a modular system, with one semester courses, would the proposal not apply?
SED	SED opposes this proposal for the following reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The formative assignments the students already undertake are explicitly designed to prepare students for the tasks they must complete in the examination. They are explained as such and specifically linked to the skills and learning the examination tasks measure. • In modules assessed in part by examination the final lecture of the year is always given over to examination preparation and there are further opportunities for students to discuss the requirements in the final seminar. We consider that this sort of preparation is more effective than a mock-exam taken earlier in the year. • The mock-exam would focus students on the examination long before they need to. It would raise anxiety levels rather than alleviate them. • Peer-marked examination scripts have no obvious value, and students perceive this practice as a 'cop-out' by the academic staff.
SLLF	Proposal 7: Reject. Formative assessment should be at the discretion of the module organiser. (Why are only semester one and full-year modules included in the proposal? Semester two modules finish teaching at the same time as full-year modules.)
Geography	The School of Geography strongly rejects the introduction of mock or formative assessments for each module for reason of the logistical problems involved and considerable costs in terms of staff time. But we do support alternative methods through which students can gain experience of examination techniques and familiarity with marking criteria and support this as good practice e.g. a single mock examination for all Level 4 students covering a range of modules, and formative feedback on essay plans which is our current practice.
History	This is problematic for us. While we understand why it is being proposed, we are seriously concerned at the implications should it become compulsory rather than a recommended option. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. History students have been sitting conventional examination papers right through their school education, and we therefore do not see a need for mock examinations. Nor have our students been asking for them through the many avenues they have for telling us their views. Some of us already incorporate mock examination questions and/or papers where the assignment is of a type for which we feel students need training. Others have found that offering students the option of unseen take-away questions to be answered in a set time (as part of revision support) meets their needs. In short, we have a variety of informal processes, and feel that our provision of training in this respect is appropriate and innovative, and would not benefit from being made compulsory for all modules. 2. Even with all the positive and innovative suggestions as to how mock/formative examinations may be achieved (non-examination conditions, group marking by students), their introduction would make significant inroads into the time available for the teaching of content. The alternative, finding additional times and venues for the mock examinations, is surely not feasible (as well as imposing an unacceptable additional burden of work). 3. Imposition of mock examinations is likely to drive more modules away from examinations, to 100% coursework-assessment, which we do not consider desirable.
SPIR	We suggest that this is not introduced as a formal policy. We are not convinced that actually having students do mock exams would be of much use, especially for essay format exams. Instead, and in addition to inducting students in how to prepare for exams more generally, we propose that students are given examples of past exam papers and are given the opportunity to work through them if they wish to do so. This can be done in class and/or via QMPlus. However, we propose that the decision whether it is necessary to do practice exams on which they get feedback is left to Schools. We also note that our students already have revision sessions (including those in revision week), which are designed to help with exams. In addition, our first year students have a special meeting with their personal advisor specifically to discuss exams related questions. Finally, we have in place a system whereby students are encouraged

	to get feedback on their exams from their personal advisor, and module convenors post general exam feedback on QMPlus.
SBM	<p>We reject this proposal because we consider that it is not sufficiently thought through. The full impact of these changes would have a considerable impact on the School and presently we do not see sufficient strength in the pedagogic argument being presented. The rationale provided suggests the intended purpose of the proposal is to prepare students for end of year exams, but the supporting rationale does not give us any confidence that this objective would be met. The rationale suggests that students could do a shorten version of an exam, in non-exam conditions, which is then marked by other students, in groups, and leading to a mark that does not count (i.e. is not summative). All this would have to be organised at the end of the semester when students are probably doing assignments that do count. Our view is that the case has simply not been made convincingly, and the costs/drawbacks of the proposal have not been adequately considered. A more convincing argument would need to be presented to the School for us to support this proposal. In particular we would need to be convinced that the proposal is superior to the current practices used within the school – for example, working through previous exam questions in seminars, having dedicated lectures on exam technique and marking schemes, distributed examples of worked and marked answers to students for discussion, using Q&A sessions at the end of lectures and having dedicated revision and exam preparation lectures for all Semester 1 modules following the Easter break.</p> <p>It should be noted that as a School we were not opposed in principle to the earlier assessment governance proposal of the introduction of January examinations. Indeed our suggestion was that a further evaluation of the costs and benefits of this should be undertaken by the College. This new proposal similarly suffers from inadequate analysis of the full impact. We are totally against this initiative, yet are still receptive to the idea of proper end of semester/January exams, and would support further exploration of the practicalities of this by the College.</p>
SEF	<p>UG: we are completely and unanimously against this proposal. We agree that it is our academic duty to prepare students well for the final exam. But what is best in this respect is a matter of academic judgement. As many aspects may matter, aspects that may differ from case to case, we strongly believe this is best left to the judgment of the module organiser.</p> <p>PG: We disagree with the proposal and we think if applied it has to be at discretion of the module leader.</p>
Law	<p>The Department does use “mock exams” in the first year to familiarise students with examination technique and we find it a useful tool. On the other hand, it seems to us that systematic introduction of mock/formative examinations in all modules would represent an excessive assessment load, both for students and staff, and is not warranted from a pedagogical perspective. Teaching teams should remain free to design the formative assessments that they regard as most appropriate for the particular module. We would agree, however, that modules that contain a mode of assessment which is significantly different to the forms of assessment students are familiar with should endeavour to include in their formative assessment some familiarisation which novel assessment modes used.</p>
SMD PG	<p>While a number of programmes already have formative examinations, others felt that there would be insufficient time to mark a formative examination before the formal examinations which would mean that students would not benefit from any feedback</p> <p>It was also felt that it would be difficult to facilitate for distance learning programmes which had end of year clinical examinations which overseas students were expected to attend</p>
SMD UG	<p>We fully support the use of formative assessment, including assessment of the same type as the final assessment, as good practice. We would be keen to see flexibility in how this can be applied, both to avoid generating a series of formal tests for students that risk detracting from the intended purpose, and to avoid excess workload for staff. An option we would consider meets these needs is to have a single mock/formative exam with a format common to several modules in that year. We note that in the commentary it is made clear this need not be conducted under formal exam conditions, but this is less apparent in the wording of the proposal.</p> <p>We would suggest an alternative wording “Ensure that experience of examination techniques and familiarity with marking criteria is provided for all semester one/full year modules through formative assessments and/or mock examinations”.</p>

	In discussion with the MBBS team we would also support the more flexible wording “Ensure that adequate experience of examination techniques and familiarity with marking criteria is provided prior to end of year exams through formative or summative assessments and/or mock examinations”.
MBBS	<p>The MB BS course currently provides extensive formative and summative assessments to all semester one/full year modules prior to end of year exams, with the exception of year 5. To ensure that the regulation does not add additional workload to staff and examinations to MB BS students, the MB BS course proposes the following wording “Ensure that adequate experience of examination techniques and familiarity with marking criteria is provided prior to end of year exams through formative or summative and/or mock examinations”.</p> <p>Alternatively, MB BS could be excluded from this regulation due to the number of formative and summative assessments MB BS students experience from year 1, and the absence of formative tests in year 5.</p>
Dentistry	<p>IoD recognises the value of the use of a range of formative assessment, including assessment of the same type as the final assessment, as good practice. We would however be keen to avoid the danger of over assessing our students. Thus we would concur with the suggestions from the SMD Science Undergraduate Programmes that the wording be amended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Ensure that experience of examination techniques and familiarity with marking criteria is provided for all semester one/full year modules through formative assessments and/or mock examinations”. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Ensure that adequate experience of examination techniques and familiarity with marking criteria is provided prior to end of year exams through formative or summative assessments and/or mock examinations”.
SPA	Significant concerns. We already run mock examinations in the form of mid-term and late-term examinations for a lot of modules in SPA, however they are summative and not formative and they typically count towards 10% of the module. We would need to see a summative mid-term/late-term examination count towards providing experience of examination techniques.
SMS	<p>We oppose this strongly on the basis that we do not feel that offering mock exams will aid the learning of students. We believe that only fully engaged students will attempt them missing the students who would benefit most (struggling and poorly engaged students). The role of exams is to be assessed fairly on knowledge developed and we believe that offering mock examples is simply training students to pass exams and this mimics bad practice from secondary education.</p> <p>Do not agree.</p>
SEMS	<p>Strongly disagree: unworkable.</p> <p>First of all it should be noted that this is not an Assessment Governance issue. Also the proposal appears to attempt to impose a “one size fits all” on all Schools, without taking into consideration current good practice in many Schools.</p> <p>Does semester one mean semester A modules - if so, why only these? Actual mocks for all exams is unrealistic and unmanageable - we can just about fit exams and marking in as it is (rooms, timetabling and our marking time!). This degree of additional work does not seem thought through, which is an essential consideration for Schools with SSRs of over 20, and other important things would need to give to enable implementation of this proposal.</p> <p>We run a workshop covering exam technique and process for all first years to help them prepare and there are past papers available for all modules. For the first year modules we also have worked answers and videos of the exam from the previous year all students could access to help them which is pretty comprehensive. Given the jump in retention rates in the years since their introduction, these measures appear to be highly effective whilst requiring much less investment in staff time than the proposal.</p>
SBCS	While accepting the value of providing students with experience of exam techniques and the application of the marking criteria, SBCS does not support this proposal in its current form.

	<p>Staff already face increased workloads for 2015-16 with the introduction of LSE's across all years of study. Introducing mock examinations for all modules studied (in whole or in part) in semester one would be impractical and could result in sub-standard marking of formative assessments in a way which would mislead students (rather than providing them with meaningful practice). Instead, SBCS would simply encourage all organisers of semester one modules to introduce summatively assessed coursework which achieves the same outcome (<i>i.e.</i> providing students with practice and an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the marking criteria, possibly through moderated peer assessment of each other's work). This is already in place in several SBCS modules, and the November SEB meeting agreed to spread this practise such that students get more opportunities to hone their skills for examination. (In prior discussions within SBCS, it was agreed that any such exercises <i>have</i> to be summative so that students and staff alike find it to be worth the effort and take it seriously. Students on semester one modules are already given opportunities to produce practice essays marked formatively, and less than 5% of the students take up those opportunities because it "doesn't count".)</p>
EECS	<p>Which resource implications would introducing mock exams have? Would additional resources be created or would resources be shifted from other teaching activities towards mock exams? Other implications include rules for happens if students miss mock/formative examinations (EC's)? It is questionable whether shifting time from other teaching activities to more exam training will lead to a better learning experience and to better (more employable) graduates.</p> <p>Overall, we feel that mock exams go a step to far (are too specific), but what the proposal reflects is that there should be guidelines for elements of exam preparation. Exam preparation activities in place include first year mid-term tests, revision lectures, past exam papers, and for selected exam papers, solutions on QMPlus.</p> <p>To guide this proposal, one could propose that (1) there must be a revision lecture for each module, and (2) the lecture discusses the solution of a past exam. Students should be encouraged to solve the question before the revision lecture. This gives them the opportunity to assess themselves. Such a proposal could guide exam preparation across the college.</p> <p>Moreover, exam prep is essential for first years, and we cover this by mid-term tests. Again, to guide this proposal, we believe that mid-term tests are an important element for exam preparation.</p>
CAPD	<p>Why only examinations? The proposal assumes that most assessment types are examination and that these are the ones which student find hardest/most unfamiliar. I think this is potentially an unfair change, as students with large exam components will get a 'mock', whilst students with large coursework components may not.</p>
Stu. Union	<p>QMSU notes that the supporting text refers to <i>'formative assessment, of the same type as that used in the final summative assessment'</i>.</p> <p>QMSU believes that the introduction of mock/formative assessments should be framed as good practice. QMSU is in favour of more formative assessment.</p> <p>Therefore QMSU believes that the text of this proposal should be changed to read:</p> <p><i>Introduce mock/formative assessments for all semester one/full year modules to provide experience of assessment techniques and familiarity with marking criteria.</i></p>

Proposal 8

Amend point four of the borderline classification policy as follows:

Students falling within the zone of consideration and with at least half of their final year credits (half of all credits at PG level) with marks at the level of the upper classification (or higher), shall be raised to the higher classification. The credits at the higher level may include the dissertation or project, but this is not a requirement. Where a student studies on a part-time basis, all modules comprising the full-time equivalent final year shall be used in the borderline policy.

CCLS	OK, but it should be made clear that where a student studies on a part time basis, the 'final year' should be the full-time equivalent final year. Without this amendment, part-time students could potentially be raised with only a quarter of these credits at the higher level.
SED	Agreed.
SLLF	Accept.
Geography	The School of Geography supports this proposal.
History	We fully support this proposal.
SPIR	We are happy with this.
SBM	Accept.
SEF	UG: we agree. PG: we agree with this proposal.
Law	Law degree awards are classified primarily on profile rather than the College mark. It is our understanding that this proposal therefore does not apply to law and, on this basis, we do not object to it.
SMD PG	The dissertation is seen as an integral element of postgraduate study and the difference between an MSc and a Postgraduate Diploma It was felt that it should be a requirement that the credits at the higher level should include the dissertation
SMD UG	Agreed.
MBBS	MB BS is supportive of this proposal, but would not apply to MB BS.
Dentistry	In general we see the value of this recommendation within QMUL. However we do not feel it is appropriate for the clinical courses within the IoD as these are designed to meet the GDC guidelines for a safe beginner. Clarification is required please: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The borderline approach only applies to the final award – however this is not explicit in the text / regulations • Similarly it does not apply to the BDS as it is a non-classified degree – again it would be helpful that this was made clear in the text
SPA	Accepted.
SMS	Accept.
SEMS	Agreed.
SBCS	SBCS supports this proposal.
EECS	Ok.
CAPD	Unless I've missed something, this is a technical clarification, which is fine.
Stu. Union	QMSU supports this proposal.

Recommended actions for Senate

Proposal 1 (revised)

Senate is asked to **approve** the revised recommendation 1, below, to come into effect from 2015/16 without further consultation, unless it has amendments or concerns. Senate should consider in particular whether it deems five members sufficient to make the quorum.

The quorum for a Subject Examination Board shall be at least 50 per cent of the total membership or five members, whichever is fewer. This shall include the Chair and/or Deputy Chair, and at least one external examiner. External examiners shall not be required to attend late summer or associate SEBS (though they may choose to do so), though their views and endorsement shall still be sought. There should normally be a higher number of internal members than external examiners at a meeting.

Members, including external examiners, may be counted as in attendance if using video conferencing technology, a telephone, or similar.

Exceptionally, a meeting may go ahead without the presence of an external examiner where a SEB has provided the external with the papers beforehand and given the external an opportunity to comment. After the meeting, the SEB Chair shall liaise with the external and, where necessary, the SEB to discuss the matters raised at the meeting and to seek the external's endorsement for any decisions taken.

Additional item: Moderation and late summer resits

One school raised the following point in relation to moderation of assessments for the late summer resits: “we should really be considering the role of externals in resits alongside the role of moderation, and it appears that the policy for this has not yet been developed. If LSRs are under the same regulations as other examination boards, that means the resit cohort is the determining factor, and a cohort of fewer than 10 will need full second marking. This seems unnecessarily prescriptive, and takes no account of the fact that marking for the module will already have been moderated. Would it not make sense – given that the exercise is pass/fail, with implications for progression – to allow moderation on the basis of the full previous cohort? This would ensure that all potential fails were looked at by a second pair of eyes, which is what matters most. If that were the case, the burden on the external could then also be alleviated.”

This is not directly related to the proposal on the SEB quorum. However, Senate is asked to consider the issue, and to agree whether the matter requires consultation.

Proposal 2 (revised)

Senate is advised to **approve** the proposal below, without further consultation.

Restructure the Degree Examination Boards to align with the faculty system. The existing Chairs will remain in post so that PG H&SS is initially a joint DEB, and the efficiency of the new system will be reviewed after a year. The existing and revised structures are shown in Appendix 1.

Proposal 3 (revised)

Senate is advised to **consider** whether an additional one or two years should be permitted over the normal duration, and then to **approve** the policy without further consultation.

The maximum duration of study shall be the normal duration of study (as defined in the programme specification) plus *one year* or plus *two years* (Senate to recommend).

10. The maximum duration of study does not include the following:
 - a. periods of interruption (including primary carer leave);
 - b. first takes (where a student repeats a year on the grounds of extenuating circumstances).
 - c. intercalation (which is treated as a interruption from the main programme).
 11. The maximum duration of study does include the following:
 - a. years spent in attendance (excepting first takes, as above);
 - b. years spent resitting (or first sitting) out of attendance.
 - c. retakes (where a student repeats a year on the grounds of academic failure).
 12. The 'normal' duration varies according to the programme specification. Where a programme is available in a part-time mode, the maximum duration shall be calculated based on the normal part-time duration (this is not a change).
 13. Where a student has been granted exceptional permission to study on a part time basis where there is not a standard part-time route available (*Academic Regulations 2014/15: 2.30*), the maximum duration shall be calculated on a pro rata basis.
 14. If approved, this policy would apply to students starting a new programme of study in 2015/16 or later; it would not apply to existing students.
 15. Where a student changes programme, s/he shall be treated as having met the requirements up to the point of transfer. The maximum duration for the years yet to be studied shall be calculated against the new programme.
 16. Where an accrediting body specifies different arrangements for a programme, these may be used in place of the generic rule if included in the programme specification.
 17. Additional years beyond the maximum duration may be agreed for exceptional cases by the Academic Registrar with the delegated authority of Senate, on the recommendation of a School or Institute.
 18. The policy does not apply to flexible mode programmes, which have specific maximum durations agreed upon programme approval.
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Proposal 4 (revised)

No policy recommendation is made, but Senate is asked to consider whether and how it wishes to progress the issue of consistency of penalties for late submission of assessment.

Proposal 5 (revised)

No policy recommendation is made, but Senate is asked to consider whether and how it wishes to progress the issue of consistency of penalties for assessments exceeding a specified word count.

Proposal 6 (revised)

Senate is advised to approve the policy on standard setting and scaling as set out above, without amendment, for immediate implementation.

Proposal 7 (revised)

Senate is asked to **consider** the proposal below, and to **agree** on how to take this forward. The new proposal would appear uncontroversial, but Senate may wish to consult upon it (or an amended version of it).

Schools and Institutes should ensure that the design of their modules provides students with experience of the required assessment techniques and familiarity with the marking schemes. This may include formative or summative preparatory assessments, skills workshops, or other initiatives.

Proposal 8 (revised)

Senate is asked to approve the following amendment to borderline classification policy for immediate implementation, without further consultation:

Students falling within the zone of consideration and with at least half of their final year credits (half of all credits at PG level) with marks at the level of the upper classification (or higher), shall be raised to the higher classification. The credits at the higher level may include the dissertation or project, but this is not a requirement. Where a student studies on a part-time basis, all modules comprising the full-time equivalent final year shall be used in the borderline policy.
