



Senate

Paper title	Penalty for the late submission of assessment
Outcome requested	The Senate is asked to consider a revised proposal for a new penalty policy, and – if appropriate – to approve that policy.
Points to note and further information	<p>Queen Mary undertook a review of its late work penalty in 2017/18. The results of a benchmarking exercise were presented to the Senate in March 2018, and the Senate commissioned a consultation on three possible models.</p> <p>This paper summarises the results of that consultation, and makes a revised proposal based upon that feedback.</p> <p>The consultation document and the three original proposals have been included as an appendix.</p>
Questions to consider	Would the revised proposal constitute an appropriate late work penalty that is (i) in line with national standards, and (ii) workable at Queen Mary?
Regulatory/statutory reference points	Queen Mary Academic Regulations.
Strategy and risk	2.01 – student experience.
Reporting/consideration route for the paper	Senate only (following an institution-wide consultation exercise).
Author	Simon Hayter and Kaya Wiles (ARCS)
Sponsor	Professor Rebecca Lingwood Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching & Learning)

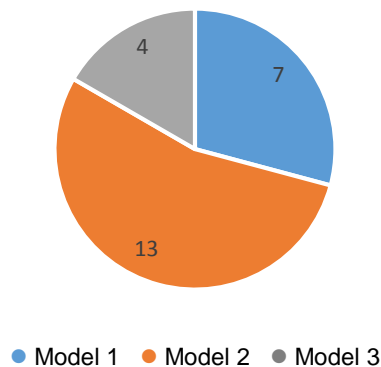
Penalty for the late submission of assessment

Queen Mary recently consulted on three proposals for a revised penalty for the late submission of assessment. This followed a benchmarking exercise, a position paper, and consultation by the Education Quality and Standards Board and the Senate. The three proposals are detailed in appendix one (the consultation paper).

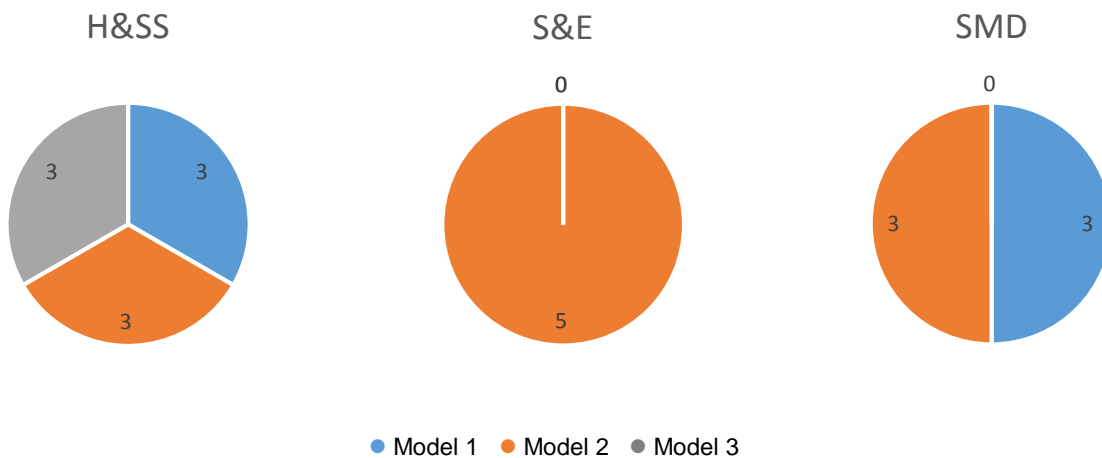
The consultation was sent to faculty executive teams, Heads of Schools/Directors of Institutes, Directors of Administration, Directors of Taught Programmes, examination board contacts, Student Services, and the Students' Union. Responses were received from all three faculties, QMSU and Student and Academic Services. The full responses have been included as appendix two, and are summarised below.

In summary, model one was the present policy, model two was an amended version of the present policy that did not count weekends as penalty days, and model three was a more lenient proposal. A majority of respondents favoured the second model, with recommendations for some amendments.

Preferred Model



The Faculty breakdowns were as follows:



Additionally, QMSU and the SMD intercalated programmes favoured model two, while Student and Academic Services favoured model three.

Summary of feedback

Model 1

Six respondents favoured retention of the current policy (SPIR, SEF, Law, Blizard, Dentistry, and Wolfson). The policy was seen as clear and consistent. The other options were viewed by this set of respondents as complex to explain and/or administer, and (in the case of model three) overly lenient and out of line with national standards.

Those who did not favour model one deemed it overly harsh. Although benchmarking had demonstrated that the system of graduated deductions was well in line with sectoral norms, the alternative of an immediate mark of zero was less common. One response suggested a number of exceptions and alternatives. The Senate previously agreed that Queen Mary would adopt a single policy that is transparent and easily communicable to students. This was one of the original reasons for reviewing current practice, and it is not recommended that exceptions be introduced into any revised policy.

Model 2

Thirteen respondents favoured model two, including the Students' Union (QMSU, CCLS, History, SBM, Intercalated Programmes, BCI, WHRI, IHSE, EECS, SBCS, SEMS, SPA, and SMS). It was seen as appropriate in terms of national standards, clear for students, and relatively straightforward to administer. There were two principal points of dissent.

Model two proposed that non-working days would not count as penalty days (unlike model one, the present system). The majority of those who favoured model two felt that non-working days should continue to count as penalty days. This would make the policy simpler to operate (penalties could be calculated simply by looking at the difference between the deadline and the submission date), but would put Queen Mary out of line with other institutions, which tend to either not count non-working days or else to have a slightly longer deduction period before the mark drops to zero. Amending the proposal so that there are seven calendar days of deductions before the mark drops to zero, rather than five working days, may be a reasonable compromise.

The second point of dissent concerned point d: "In a case where a student has submitted work of passing standard but fails the module because of the late submission penalty and the student has a resit attempt remaining, the student shall be deemed to have passed the module with the minimum pass mark for that module. This gives the same outcome as putting the student into reassessment, but without delaying progression or award outcomes or requiring resubmission of the late assignment. Where a student does not have a further resit attempt remaining, this provision shall not apply and the penalty shall be applied in its standard form."

The intention of point d was generally welcomed, but there were concerns over its practicality in terms of complexity and manageability. It is not something that can be automated in SITS (assuming that the penalty is applied to the first attempt at the module, the record for the resit attempt is not even created until after the exam board has confirmed a pass or fail in the module overall (this rule cannot and should not be changed)). The realistic alternative is that the pre-deduction mark should be entered as the actual mark for the resit attempt. This creates a need to keep records of the original marks for re-entry, but also removes the need for students to resubmit work and for exam boards to re-mark that work. Queen Mary may wish to explore whether there is a way to easily store pre-deduction marks in SITS or elsewhere, but this would not be possible prior to 2018/19 and this need not delay implementation of a revised policy.

As with the other models, there were some suggestions for exceptions (e.g. immediate marks of zero for 'minor' assessments), but the overarching need for consistency should again be considered.

Model 3

Four respondents favoured model three (SED, SLLF, Geography, and Student & Academic Services). These respondents considered that its relative leniency was in line with Queen Mary's student demographic, and that was not problematic if it helped students to achieve their best possible outcomes. It should be noted that academic standards should never be modified dependent on demographics. There was also one request for further flexibility so that this penalty would only be applied to large elements of assessment.

Many of those who favoured the other models felt that model three was too lenient, and out of line with the benchmarked data. It was deemed that such a long grace period would cause problems for examination boards, as it would not be possible to consider final marks until the end of that period. The long grace period would also delay marking and feedback both for late submitters and for those who submitted by the deadline. The importance of working to deadlines as a learning outcome and general life skill was highlighted in the responses.

Other points

One response queried whether an equality impact assessment had been undertaken. An assessment has not been undertaken; the late work penalty is a matter of academic standards that must be equally and objectively applied in the same way as progression and classification rules. However, Queen Mary may wish to conduct further research into whether particular groups are more likely to make late submissions, why that is the case, and how we can support them to submit on time. This is not directly linked to the nature of the penalty policy, however – a penalty, of whatever type, will always be applied when a student makes a late submission.

Student and Academic Services suggested that a separate form should be developed for the request of extensions. Queen Mary does not have a consistent policy on extensions, and there would need to be agreement on whether, where, and why extensions were permitted, the nature of the extensions, and the required standards of evidence. Undertaking this work would be beneficial, but introducing standardised documentation may not be advisable without a standardised process.

Student and Academic Services also recommended that additional consideration should be given students with long-term conditions but who did not have approved special arrangements with the Disability and Dyslexia Service. This might include students with chronic conditions who also had regular acute episodes. So as not to require these students to apply separately for extensions/extenuating circumstances on each occasion, it was suggested that DDS introduce a new category of special arrangements for the regular award of extensions (in addition to existing support measures to help students submit on time).

Revised proposal and recommendations

1. The Senate is asked to consider for approval a revised version of model two, which takes into account feedback from the consultation. If approved, the policy would come into use for all students (new and continuing) from the start of the 2018/19 academic year.
 - a. If an assignment is submitted after the specified deadline, it shall be recorded as late and a penalty shall be applied.
 - b. For every period of 24 hours, or part thereof, that an assignment is overdue there shall be a deduction of five per cent of the total marks available (i.e. five marks for an assessment marked out of 100). After seven calendar days (168 hours or more late) the mark shall be reduced to zero, and recorded as OFL (zero, fail, late).
 - c. A student may submit work of passing standard but fail the module because of the late submission penalty. Where the student is eligible for a resit attempt in such a case, the student shall not be required to resubmit the assessment; instead, the pre-deduction mark from the first attempt shall be entered for the resit. Where a student is not eligible for a resit, this provision does not apply.
 - d. Certain assessments may cease to be a valid measure of a module's learning outcomes prior to the seven calendar day cut-off. For example, where feedback has been provided to the class, any submission made after that point would not be an accurate measure of attainment. In such cases, the late submission policy shall apply as normal up to the day on which feedback is given; at that point, a mark of zero (OFL) shall be applied, even if this is within seven calendar days of the deadline. Schools and institutes must make clear to students in advance where this variant policy applies, or else the general policy shall be applied.
 - e. A late work penalty may be removed where a student provides good reason for the late submission under the extenuating circumstances policy. A student must submit a formal claim with supporting evidence in line with that policy in order for the circumstances to be considered.
 - f. Schools and institutes may award extensions to submission deadlines. This is at the discretion of the school/institute. Where a school/institute does consider the award of an extension, a student must apply before the submission date with an extenuating circumstances claim and supporting evidence. In no circumstances shall an extension set a new deadline beyond the next meeting of the relevant Subject Examination Board.
2. The Senate is asked to consider whether Queen Mary should seek to establish a common policy on extensions.
3. The Senate is asked to consider whether Queen Mary should consider the introduction of a new category of special arrangements that would allow regular extensions for students with specified conditions.



Consultation Penalty for the late submission of assessments

1. Queen Mary's Senate agreed, in March 2018, to consult on a revised policy on penalties for the late submission of assessments for taught programmes. This decision was taken following comments and suggestions from a number of schools and institutes, and a detailed benchmarking and review exercise by the Education Quality and Standards Board.
2. The Senate agreed that Queen Mary should adopt a single policy for use across all faculties, schools, institutes, and examination boards. The Senate has previously designated this policy as a matter of academic standards, where consistency of approach is important. A single policy also allows for consistent communications to students, allowing for clearer understanding of the policy.
3. QMUL's current policy on penalties for late submission was introduced in 2014/15. Notwithstanding efforts at the time to agree a single approach across the university, the established policy permits schools and institutes to opt for either a 'scaled' or 'immediate zero' scheme of penalties, as follows:
 - a. where an assignment is submitted late, five per cent of the total marks available will be deducted each day, up to five days, after which a mark of zero is applied;
 - b. where an assignment is submitted late, a mark of zero is applied immediately.
4. More recently, a number of schools have expressed concern that the scaled scheme of penalties may be disproportionate and overly complex. Benchmarking has indicated that this is not the case, but there is nonetheless an opportunity to review the policy in light of that research, and to agree a single approach across the university.
5. The Education Quality and Standards Board considered a detailed paper on approaches to late work penalties at Queen Mary and elsewhere; an updated version is appended to this document for context.
6. The Board and the Senate agreed that Queen Mary should establish a single model for use across the institution, and agreed to consult on three models as set out in this document. Any new scheme would be subject to approval by the Senate and would come into effect for all students on taught programmes from 2018/19.
7. One response per school/institute/department is requested (or joint faculty responses if that approach is preferred). Responses should state which of the three options is preferred, whether the other options would be acceptable, whether the proposals are appropriate in terms of national standards, and should give any additional feedback that is deemed relevant.
8. Please send responses to Kaya Wiles (k.wiles@qmul.ac.uk) by the end of the day on Friday 11 May.

Proposal 1

9. Proposal 1, the existing policy of graduated deductions:
- b. Where an assignment is submitted late (and there are no extenuating circumstances) a mark of zero (OFL – zero, fail, late) shall be applied immediately, unless the School/Institute has made it explicit that the alternative penalty of graduated deductions applies.
 - c. Where the penalty of graduated deductions applies, five per cent of the total marks available (i.e. five marks for an assignment marked out of one hundred) shall be deducted for each 24-hour period or part thereof after the submission date and time, including weekends and bank holidays. An assignment submitted more than 120 hours late shall be awarded a mark of zero (OFL).
 - d. Where the penalty of graduated deductions applies, a school/institute must make students aware of the penalty in advance, or else the default penalty (an immediate mark of 0 FL) will apply. This may be published in the programme handbook and/or - where a school/institute does not use the same policy for all assessments - in module handbooks.
 - e. Where a student fails a module as a consequence of one of these penalties in an assessment, normal resit provision shall apply (where attempts remain).

Proposal 2

10. Proposal 2, based upon the existing policy, with enhancements from the review exercise:

- a. If an assignment is submitted after the specified deadline, it shall be recorded as late and a penalty shall be applied.
- b. For every period of 24 hours or part thereof that an assignment is overdue there shall be a deduction of five per cent of the total marks available (i.e. five marks for an assessment marked out of 100). After five working days (120 hours or more late) the mark shall be reduced to zero, and recorded as OFL (zero, fail, late).
- c. Deductions shall not be applied on weekends or days on which QMUL is closed. Schools and institutes are advised not to set deadlines on days preceding non-working days.
- d. In a case where a student has submitted work of passing standard but fails the module because of the late submission penalty and the student has a resit attempt remaining, the student shall be deemed to have passed the module with the minimum pass mark for that module. This gives the same outcome as putting the student into reassessment, but without delaying progression or award outcomes or requiring resubmission of the late assignment. Where a student does not have a further resit attempt remaining, this provision shall not apply and the penalty shall be applied in its standard form.
- e. Certain assessments may cease to be a valid measure of a module's learning outcomes prior to the five working day cut-off. For example, where feedback is provided to the class, any submission made after that would not be an accurate measure of attainment. In such cases, the late submission policy shall apply as normal up to the day on which feedback is given; at that point, a mark of zero (OFL) shall be applied, even if this is within five working days of the deadline. Schools and institutes must make clear to students in advance where this variant policy applies, or else the general policy shall be applied.
- f. A late work penalty may be removed where a student provides good reason for the late submission under the extenuating circumstances policy. A student must submit a formal claim with supporting evidence in line with that policy in order for the circumstances to be considered.
- g. Schools and institutes may award extensions to submission deadlines. This is at the discretion of the school/institute. Where a school/institute does consider the award of an extension, a student must apply before the submission date with an extenuating circumstances claim and supporting evidence. In no circumstances shall an extension set a new deadline beyond the next meeting of the relevant subject examination board.

Proposal 3

11. Proposal 3 has many of the same characteristics as proposal 2, but with a fixed deduction and a much longer timeframe. This scheme would be the most generous of any in the Russell Group (see benchmarking, overleaf). Points d-h are identical to those in proposal 2.
- a. If an assignment is submitted after the specified deadline, it shall be recorded as late and a penalty of minus ten marks shall be applied. Deductions shall not be made below the minimum pass mark.
 - b. After ten working days (120 hours or more late) the mark shall be reduced to the minimum pass mark
 - c. After a further ten working days (240 hours or more late), the mark shall be reduced to zero and recorded as OFL (zero, fail, late).
 - d. Deductions shall not be applied on weekends or days on which QMUL is closed. Schools and institutes are advised not to set deadlines on days preceding non-working days.
 - e. In a case where a student has submitted work of passing standard but fails the module because of the late submission penalty and the student has a resit attempt remaining, the student shall be deemed to have passed the module with the minimum pass mark for that module. This gives the same outcome as putting the student into reassessment, but without delaying progression or award outcomes or requiring resubmission of the late assignment. Where a student does not have a further resit attempt remaining, this provision shall not apply and the penalty shall be applied in its standard form.
 - f. Certain assessments may cease to be a valid measure of a module's learning outcomes prior to the five working day cut-off. For example, where feedback is provided to the class, any submission made after that would not be an accurate measure of attainment. In such cases, the late submission policy shall apply as normal up to the day on which feedback is given; at that point, a mark of zero (OFL) shall be applied, even if this is within five working days of the deadline. Schools and institutes must make clear to students in advance where this variant policy applies, or else the general policy shall be applied.
 - g. A late work penalty may be removed where a student provides good reason for the late submission under the extenuating circumstances policy. A student must submit a formal claim with supporting evidence in line with that policy in order for the circumstances to be considered.
 - h. Schools and institutes may award extensions to submission deadlines. This is at the discretion of the school/institute. Where a school/institute does consider the award of an extension, a student must apply before the submission date with an extenuating circumstances claim and supporting evidence. In no circumstances shall an extension set a new deadline beyond the next meeting of the relevant subject examination board.

Benchmarking

The Education Quality and Standards Board undertook benchmarking of QMUL's existing late work policies against those of other institutions (Russell Group, large multi-faculty University of London, and the top five institutions in the recent Times Higher Education Student Experience Survey 2018 (Loughborough, Harper Adams, Bath, Sheffield, Leeds). A summary table is given below, but respondents are advised to read the full paper for additional context. The table ranks the policies in order of severity, beginning with the most lenient (QMUL appears twice, as it currently has two policies).

Rank	Institution	Policy
1	Birmingham LSE Nottingham QUB Warwick	-5 per day until zero is reached. Warwick deducts only 3 marks per day for PGT, but 5 for UG – the logic is unclear, but this may be because the (higher) PG pass mark would be reached faster through deductions.
2	Leeds	-5 per day for 14 calendar days, then zero.
3	Edinburgh Sheffield	-5 per day for seven calendar days, then zero.
4	QMUL (2)	-5 per day for five calendar days, then zero.
5	Bristol	-10 immediately and a mark of zero after seven days. Faculty level policies for the interim deductions.
6	UCL	-10 for the first 48 hours, cap to the pass mark between 2 and 5 days, then zero.
7	Manchester Southampton York Glasgow	-10 per day for five days, then zero. (Glasgow uses GPA, but the policy is directly equivalent).
8	RHUL	-10 immediately then zero after 24 hours.
9	Harper Adams	-20 immediately then zero after 24 hours.
10	Durham Newcastle Bath	Cap to the pass mark immediately, then zero after five working days.
11	Imperial KCL	Cap to the pass mark immediately, then zero after one day.
12	QMUL (1) Cardiff Goldsmiths Loughborough	Immediate mark of zero.
-	Liverpool Exeter Cambridge Oxford City	No centralised policy. However: Liverpool requires that there <u>is</u> a penalty. Exeter requires that all local policies result in a mark of zero after 14 days. Example local Cambridge policies give an immediate zero. Example City policies give -5 per day for four days, then zero.

